

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2022

THE CHRISTIAN Writer

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A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



Mission: *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

Vision: *To encourage and inspire Christian writers throughout New Zealand.*

Values: *Christian faith, God's Word, professionalism, quality and social outreach.*

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Book Review Requests: (current members only)

Mail a copy of your book to our Book Reviewer, Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496 or email: reviews@nzchristianwriters.org

The Christian Writer is our bimonthly magazine published by NZ Christian Writers and distributed to all members. Contributions from members are always welcome. If you have some advice, encouragement, or an announcement of an event of interest to members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 10th of the month before the next publication date. Submissions should be emailed as a word document attachment and be no more than 500 words long, except at the discretion of the editor.

The editor reserves the right to condense and/or edit any contributions for reason of space. Ideas and opinions will not be edited but editing of a technical nature may occur to maintain a high standard of writing. Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

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This issue printed locally by

BookPrint.
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Contact David at
hello@bookprint.co.nz
09 443 1775
www.bookprint.co.nz

The Christian Writer

Oct – Nov 2022

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 39. No 5

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

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Website:

Our vibrant, user-friendly website is full of interesting information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It also gives each individual member an online presence. We encourage all members to reach out to other Christian writers. Feel free to share our website link with them so they can join us. As a member you are the best advocate for growing our collective of NZ Christian Writers.

www.nzchristianwriters.org

President's Report



I've been inspired by studying First Corinthians chapter three. I find the writings of the apostle Paul provide a guiding light and spiritual compass for how to pursue an authentic walk with

Jesus Christ. In particular it is important to recognise it's God to whom we give all the thanksgiving, glory and honour for what He does to achieve His purposes.

During 2022, we've experienced a positive season of growth among our membership. I'm reminded that it's God who determines and gives the increase as shared in 1 Corinthians 3:7, (NKJV): *So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.* Our board is very happy to share that God has grown NZ Christian Writers' membership to 321-plus nationwide. This means NZCW is making more impact and reaching further than ever before. For that, we thank God.

In addition, we've found that our online community group of over 220 people on Facebook has provided writers with an opportunity to give and share advice on their own publishing and writing journeys. If you are a member of NZ Christian Writers and would like to join the conversations online, or even invite others, it's as easy as one click here: www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters

Thank you to our Competition Coordinator, Debbie McDermott, who has done a brilliant job in preparing our Competition Topics & Criteria for 2023. You'll find a printed copy of this reference sheet together with this magazine, plus a digital PDF version available on our website. This gives all members the opportunity to prepare their entries for the upcoming competitions. We're also excited to share that next year our competitions will have mid-year and end-of-year monetary prizes for all three levels. These are awarded as eVouchers to redeem at any Manna Christian Store online or in person. More details about our competitions are on our website: www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/

Recently I was able to revisit Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga on the Coromandel and connect with the new managers, Andrea and Shane. I was once again positively impacted by the stunning beauty and tranquil nature of this remarkable place. For those who plan to join us at our 40th Anniversary Christian Writers Retreat from April 27th to 30th 2023, please register promptly to secure your Writers Retreat accommodation here: www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat-2023/

Congratulations to Imelda Cruz Wood for this issue's cover photo of Cape Egmont Lighthouse. Imelda certainly has a talent for photography.

Kia Manaakitia – be blessed.

Justin St Vincent

Editorial: Temporary Sludge

by Kathryn Paul



Looking for the positive in one's circumstances can sometimes be a challenge. Fortunately, it's a good thing to have a challenge to rise to. As soon as you've conquered the challenge by being positive you've achieved more than one positive.

I enjoyed writing a Bible character's monologue as an entry for this issue's Level Two competition. It gave me the opportunity to try and see the positive in extremely devastating circumstances. (See page 30 if you'd like to read it.) I've discovered God will always highlight a positive aspect for me in the worst of moments if I invite Him to show me what it is. I admit that every now and then I have a 'moment' when I've become so fed up or upset that I want to wallow in my grumpiness. But it reminds me of the water buffaloes, that live next door to me, when they're wallowing in the mud. When I wallow in my grumpiness it just splashes all over me. I remind myself it's okay to be real and give myself permission for a temporary sludge-moment; I don't have to be fake. But we mustn't allow wallowing to go on too long. The positive thing is to get out of it. However, if I were a water buffalo, I would probably be feeling very positive in cool, slimy mud! (Speaking of water buffaloes – in the previous issue, in my competition entry, the title of the *Vegetales* song should have been, *Everybody's Got a Water Buffalo*.)

There is power in our positive when we write with God's love. When we write a positive statement on social media, for example, we might be surprised how many people have been influenced in a good way. In a supermarket I chatted to a friend I hadn't seen in a while and felt encouraged when she expressed appreciation of some of my Facebook posts. She said she had been writing the ones she liked in a journal. (I don't write many posts of my own; I usually share other people's creative posts.)

Often you won't be aware of who the people are who are reading your published writing or know how it has touched them. Just keep being positive about your current writing project and trust God to work with you and bless your efforts. It doesn't matter what genre your project is: fiction or non-fiction, prose or poetry, technical or imaginative or something else. If you write it with His help, He can use it for good. You can be positive about that! So, are you wallowing or are you rising to meet a challenge?

With love in Jesus,

from Kathryn.

I love to hear from our readers! Email:
editor@nzchristianwriters.org



Notices

Our 40th Anniversary Writers Retreat is in 2023!

Visit www.nzchristianwriters.org/retreat to book your space. The accommodation is likely to fill quickly so be sure to secure your room today. We look forward to seeing you there!



Writers Group Leaders Wanted

Great news! Two more groups have started! If you are willing to host a group please get in touch. Email Justin at president@nzchristianwriters.org or Kathryn at editor@nzchristianwriters.org to find out more details. We'd love to hear from you!

Book Reviews Criteria

Members are welcome to request a book review of any of their published books, whether recently released or not. The main criteria is the book has to have some Christian relevancy. For more information on how to have your book reviewed in *The Christian Writer* please refer to page two.

Join the NZ Christian Writers Group on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters>

Submissions Wanted

Thank you for the great content we have been receiving! Keep it up because more content is needed for our magazines, *The Christian Writer* and *Young Christian Writer*. Send in your poetry, artwork, short stories, articles, cartoons, devotions or anything else you think may be suitable to share. It's great to have a variety of content from our readers. Send it by email to editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Tauranga Christian Writers Annual Retreat in the Country

by Ruth Linton and Jan Pendergrast

Rain and wind during our annual Writers Retreat this year kept all of us (fewer than usual) indoors—except intrepid Ruth and her dog, Rocky, who went walking anyway. Heather's husband, Brian, kept us happy and warm by replenishing the woodbox regularly when he wasn't out in the weather discussing Hiluxes, museums or shooting one rabbit with Hans! The male duo became a trio for one afternoon when Carol's husband, Graeme, joined them. Sadly, none of the male trio joined us in our writing discipline though!

With the meals pre-prepared by everyone and the fires cared for, we had no excuse but to write or discuss our plans and projects, and that we did. Our canine couple, Matty and Rocky, spent time renewing their friendship and finding ways to play without causing too much mayhem.

As is our custom, we participated in a church service together on Sunday morning where we worshipped and shared testimonies. Brian contributed with a meditation and beautiful singing.

Over the weekend Jan collated the various stories she had written about her childhood experiences and added a couple, shedding only a tear or two of gratitude for wonderful memories. Many of these stories will appear in the Pot Pourri 2 Anthology the group is working on. Other members tucked themselves away in quiet corners working on their personal projects and Ruth spent time collating a report on the value of *Local Writers Groups* which is to appear in the NZCW 40 Year celebration booklet in 2023.

We fed sumptuously as usual with grateful thanks to all those who contributed. Several remarked on the wonderful hospitality given by Jan and husband Hans. Jan herself declared how she enjoyed hosting great friends again and how much she appreciated all their different motivations to write. Roll on, July 2023.



QUEEN ELIZABETH II

1926-2022

Acrostic by Jean Crane during an exercise at Tauranga Writers

Queenly, Quick Witted, Quirky, Quiet

Understanding, Unruffled, Unique, Uniformed, Undeniably Royal

Elegant, Ethical, English, Encouraging, Elegantly Dressed

Empathic, England's Defender, Enduring, Entertaining, Energetic

Nice, Nomadic, Neutral Politically, Noble, Normal with her dogs

Equine Lover, Eloquent

Long living, Lively, Longitudinal, Loved, Likeable, Lawful

Interested, Impressive, Incredible, Intelligent

Zoologically Minded, Zealous, Zooming from place to place

Adored, Attentive, Appreciative, Amazing, Arduous, Adventurous

Beautiful, Bountiful, Beloved,
Believer in good and God

Everywhere, Exceptional,
Enchanting

Truth Sayer, Thoughtful, Travelled,
True to her word, Trustworthy

Horse Loving, Hating Unrest,
Humble, Happy, Her Royal
Highness



*Queen Elizabeth II liked to write in a journal.
Photo Brian Lawless*

Seek God's Love First

Fictional Short Story by Imelda Cruz-Wood

I stared at my father's ashen face and the many gadgets hooked to his body. Seeing him lying motionless on his sickbed at the ICU of Jose B Lingad Memorial Hospital prompted a lump in my throat and turned my tears into sobs. The thought of losing him was crushing my heart to pulp. Dad had been transferred to this provincial government hospital from a medical centre in Basilan province, 24 hours after he was hit by enemy bullets while responding to a call of duty.

He was a member of the 51st infantry brigade of the Philippine Marines – the elite force trained for combat and rescue operations. He was among the military troops tasked to stage a rescue of the kidnap victims who were two Americans (husband and wife), and a female Filipino nurse. The victims were being held hostage by a terrorist group in Zamboanga province.

As rescue operations are wont to be it was not without casualties on both sides. When the crossfire broke, the husband covered his wife with his body. When the smoke cleared, his body, riddled with bullets, was found sprawled on the ground and his wife survived. The Filipino nurse suffered the same fate as he did. On the bandits' side, several were killed. The remains were buried by their comrades within 24 hours. On the government's side, four soldiers were heavily wounded including my dad.

If only we'd had enough money, I would have asked the hospital to release him. We could have transferred him to a better equipped private hospital in the nearby city. Being the firstborn and 16 years old, I felt obliged to help my parents. More so, seeing my mother who seemed to have lost all faculties to make sound decisions. Too rattled to think of anything, she just kept crying, refusing to leave Dad's side since the first day he was confined. Under the circumstances, time was too precious to waste. I had to make a move and not just rely on her for any decisions. If I should sell my soul to keep Dad alive, I would do it.

My first move was at the doctor's office to plead for help. "Don't you worry, I'm doing everything I can. I administered the best medicines available. But please understand, there are limits to what a doctor can do, especially with the poor facilities we have in this hospital." My heart sank with the doctor's reply. I was more convinced than ever that Dad should be transferred to a better hospital.

Within the next hour I was knocking on Godfather Martin's door. He was a successful businessman who could help me transfer Dad to a better equipped private hospital by lending us some money. "How do I explain it to you? All my businesses have been suffering losses and on the verge of bankruptcy since those bandits began terrorizing Mindanao."

Huge disappointment dropped my jaws. Then my shoulders sagged heavily. I used to hear him say that Dad was like a brother to him. How could he just shrug his shoulder when his best friend was on the edge and might just expire in a hospital? I could not bear hearing his excuses. I ran past him to the door and did not look back.

Godfather Martin was a big disappointment, but I did not lose all hope. There was another powerful and more influential man that came to mind; Mayor Gonzaga. I was confident he'd be willing to help, because Dad was his campaign manager during the election period. Dad's popularity favoured his candidacy. After the election, the mayor offered Dad a position in his new office. But Dad refused, saying that he preferred to remain a soldier to serve fellow citizens and country with dignity. There was no doubt the mayor was the most powerful man in our town. He could do something to help Dad survive. I did not hesitate to proceed to his office.

"It's so depressing that it happened to him," Mayor replied to my request, putting his hand on my shoulder. I brushed the tears that suddenly welled up in the corners of my eyes. "But you must understand that our town is a third-class municipality, and we have a budget deficit. We cannot help everybody who comes seeking for financial assistance, especially now that the budget has really dried up."

My knees felt weak. Cold air seemed to suddenly envelop me. I shivered. What little hope I held tight to just crumbled with what the mayor said. Wasn't he the man who Dad shielded with his body when one avid follower of the rival candidate tried to stab him from behind? The mayor escaped death, but Dad sustained minor stab wounds.

I was in despair and exhausted. My head was light; I stared blankly. Too weak to walk, I forced my feet to take me home, dragging my footsteps. I plopped my legs up on the sofa. For quite a while I remained motionless.

"Oh, you're back home," I heard Grandma Nena's voice coming from the kitchen.

I stared blankly at my 70-year-old grandmother's frail frame. Her hands were shaking as she was putting down the steaming bowl of rice on the dinner table. She had taken over Mum's duties of tending the home and caring for us, her grandchildren, for the moment.

"How's your father doing?" she inquired.

I rose. Head bowed, I paced the living room, then slumped on the sofa. I stared at Grandma, then felt that lump in my throat before my eyes overflowed with tears. I heard myself sob; my shoulders shook before I was able to speak my heart out. "I have sought for the most powerful people I knew who I thought would help Dad survive – Doctor Salazar, Godfather Martin, and Mayor Gonzaga! But not one of them would help. Was it because we're so poor and don't have much money?"

Grandma hugged me tight. That was very comforting but did not do much to relieve the sadness I felt or erase my fear of eventually losing Dad. "Elena, what did you expect? You sought the help of men who you thought would extend their helping hands," Grandma said, her face bemused. "True, they are influential, they are powerful, they have lots of money in their hands, but everything they have is limited. They are mere humans just like you and me. I wonder, why it did not occur to you to seek God's mercy first, before seeking those men's help? Have I not told you before that God is more powerful than the most powerful men combined? Pray, child...nothing is more powerful than prayers. Nothing pleases God more than fervent pleas for mercy from His creatures. Trust God's heart, He does not deny anyone who turns to Him."

My face lit up with her words. I realised that in grieving, I had almost forgotten about God! Without as much as saying goodbye to Grandma, I headed out the door and rushed to church. I genuflected towards the tabernacle, then lay prostrate inside the Perpetual Adoration Chapel. I prayed hard like I'd never prayed before; begged God to wake Dad up and give him more years of life, to be able to see us, his children, through our adult lives.

Lying prostrate, I felt a kind of tranquillity I had never experienced before. It was such a serene feeling. I remained motionless until soft wind blew my hair up and goosebumps popped up all over me. My tears flowed and my lips mumbled a never ending, "Thank you, Father God Almighty, thank you Jesus, thank you Holy Spirit, for your divine love and mercy! Amen...amen...amen!"

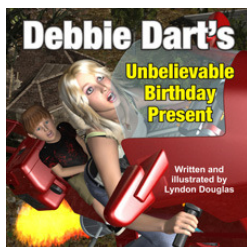
"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Isaiah 41:10



Young Christian Writer magazine is out now! Sign up for a **FREE** digital subscription today! (Note this special offer doesn't include *The Christian Writer*.) Click here to sign up to *Young Christian Writer*: <http://eepurl.com/hSQOhX>





Debbie Dart Series

By Lyndon Douglas

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Castle Publishing

What started out as a one-off futuristic story for young people has developed into an ongoing series of ten books, written and illustrated by a talented graphic artist.

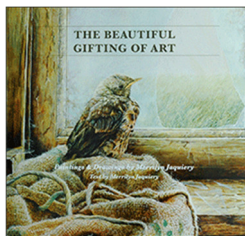
The heroine of the stories is a young New Zealand woman named Debbie Dart. She rides an extraordinary HoverBike, invented by her father, that is capable of performing outlandish feats such as rescuing people from impossible situations and places in the world.

The HoverBike and other gadgets have the ability to fly through the mysterious Cosmic Curtain and take Debbie and her colleague Pearl instantly to destinations beyond – to the Moon, Mars, and other Planets and Galaxies.

Each page of narrative is accompanied by a colourful illustration showcasing Lyndon's imagination and artistic flair.

Having read three books in the series, I feel confident in recommending these books as suitable for teenagers who may be reluctant readers but enjoy action-packed adventures and adrenaline-pumping scenarios. The attractive young heroes and heroines, dressed in trendy space-age garb, will appeal to young people who love sci-fi and spend their time playing electronic games.

Unlike worldly material of this kind, these books acknowledge God and have strong Christian themes and morals. Lyndon is to be congratulated for creating alternative reading material of this nature and I wish him success with any future endeavours.



The Beautiful Gifting of Art

By Merrilyn Jaquiere

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Heritage Arts Limited 2013

This beautiful prize-winning book is unlike any others I've reviewed as it contains the drawings and paintings of a New Zealand artist who is internationally recognized as being among the top wildlife artists in the world. Her originals are keenly sought after and she receives commissions from leading art collectors around the world.

From a background of family artists, Merrilyn Jaquiere grew up fascinated by the diversity and beauty of God's creation and with a concern for animal conservation.

For many years she painted for the New Zealand Wildlife Fund and in 1981 she was commissioned to paint the endangered kakapo parrot for the Duke of Edinburgh.

In 1985 Merrilyn was appointed the first honorary Life Member of World Wildlife Fund NZ for her outstanding contribution and support of conservation.

Her book not only showcases many of her superb art works, especially of birds, but the accompanying narrative pages cover her wildlife art career, her overseas travelling experiences, her Christian faith, and the encounters and people who have influenced her talent over the years.

After a divine encounter with Jesus Christ, Merrilyn was inspired to illustrate prophetic visions from the books of Isaiah and Revelation which she refers to as the 'Millenium Commission' 2000 – 2004.

I have no doubt this book will delight art lovers everywhere along with anyone who appreciates talent and the beauty of God's creation.

Book Review



New Zealand 2050

By George Bryant

Review by Julia Martin

Published by DayStar Books Ltd 2022

George Bryant has just launched his 24th book in Tauranga recently.

From a lifetime of observation, research and experience in a wide range of endeavours, he has written this book for all New Zealanders.

From a secular point of view he examines many aspects of New Zealand life and asks relevant questions such as:

- What has life been like in New Zealand in the past?
- What is it like nowadays?
- How has life changed?
- What might our country be like in 2050?
- Can we do anything to influence the future for the next generation?

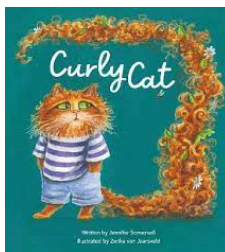
George's book is easy to read, is thought-provoking, right up to date, well-researched and documented. I recommend it to any Kiwi who cares about our country and where it might be going in the future.

BOOK ILLUSTRATOR

Travis Orams is an experienced children's book illustrator. He recently illustrated *The Rose Princess and the Special Gift* by Pastor Mike de Vetter, and *Brooklyn Builds a Bridge* by Stacey Mareroa-Roberts. If you have wonderful worlds and characters you want illustrated, Travis would love to hear from you. Visit www.travisorams.art



Book Review



Curly Cat

By Jennifer Somervell

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Landing Lights Press 2021

Many people dislike being different – especially if it leads to ridicule or bullying.

This delightful children's book is about a cat named Curly Cat who possesses a very long curly tail that sets him apart from all the other cats in Pawsville and causes them to be mean to him.

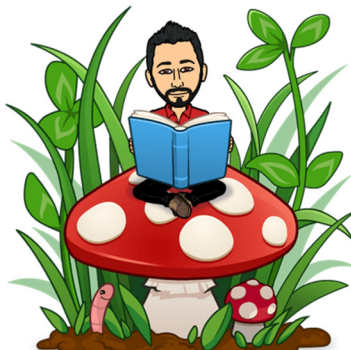
Curly Cat doesn't want to be different and tries many ways of overcoming his tail problem. Finally, he visits the Barber Cat's Salon and asks the barber to 'make it short, make it sleek, make it ORDINARY.'

The barber refuses but persuades Curly Cat to enter The Best Tail Competition in Pawsville. After a thorough coiffure, Curly Cat wins the competition and all the cats then desire to have a tail like his and be his friend.

'Being kind feels good, but it does take effort,' he concludes.

The final pages of the book cover interesting facts about cats and advice about bullying.

The book is beautifully illustrated by Zerika van Jaarsveld and I'm sure will be a favourite with children everywhere.



Happy 344th Birthday Pilgrim!

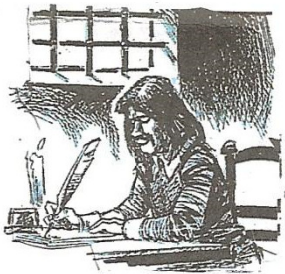
by Frederick Swallow

John Bunyan, born 1628, spent 12 long years in Bedford prison from 1660 to 1672. The crime he was charged with was refusing to stop preaching the Gospel. There in prison he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* about a character called Christian who is a pilgrim journeying to the heavenly city. Christian's early life was marked with bad language and deceit.



In John Bunyan's later years after his release from prison he joined a small Bedford church to serve as a Pastor.

First published in 1678 *The Pilgrim's Progress* has ranked high in multiple editions in over 200 languages. Today's copies include modern English, pictorial, children's, Braille, electronic, games and Te Reo Maori.



Grandpa and Grandma

by Tishani Vanniasingham

Your love wasn't tough
And it was always more than enough.
Your wife may have had a heart of gold
And that may have been the truth when told.
But it was your gentleness that I remember,
The way you would smile every December
When we came to visit you and Grandma.

I know it has been a while now
And I did ask Grandma the same question,
But when you first met our Saviour most respected
was He everything that you expected?

19 Wingate Avenue, a home of many memories.
Tami and I would hide under your desk
Where you would pretend to never see.
But of course you couldn't resist
To peep under and call to us with glee.
We would laugh and scream
Now it all seems like a dream
I forget sometimes you are gone.

Tell me what was it like,
When Grandma finally returned to you?
Were you waiting? Did you reminisce?
Did your love for her persist?
I suppose it doesn't matter
Brother and sister in Christ Jesus



While you celebrate with the angels above
Please don't forget to send us your love.
But no need to worry,
And don't be sorry,
Because you taught us that the Lord is our might.

You would have loved my theory
Of how I believe that the Lord is light.
Literally.
How we travel at the speed of light
So that time stops.
So that we co-exist
In separate realms
But I guess only you have seen the sight.

For I know the plans I have for you declares
The Lord. Part of the plan is to see you again.
As I told Grandma, this is not the end of the story,
To join you and her one day
In everlasting glory.

Daring to be Me

Poem by Odetta A Fraser

I am female; woman they call me. Or more appropriately, wombman. You know, just like *you* man, except I have a womb, thus I am entrusted with “feels” and feelings!

I was one amongst three, but truly, I was one. I AM one.

And I guess, I am daring again, as my story must enunciate three: The father, the son and me.

My dad, my brother, and me. We three made up the crux of my family. I was one with them. I knew no separation. Our sadness was one and intertwined. We were a tree of limbs wound, and the silent understanding of love’s patient overlooking of misgivings, and of an everlasting consciousness of peace.

We honoured love daily by doing our part, loving ourselves and loving each other in silence’s grappling pain. Pain was softened away. Death was honoured with a zeal for life. Mercy was shown in the face of strife.

Being the youngest, I knew my rite: give them way!

It was expected, and I offered it. Youth was powerful, in that I knew my ritual, and I abided by its behest.

In the face of sudden adulthood, I subsumed their requests.

I arose, and I lifted my breasts above their behest and it brought forth changes.

College graduation brought fear, and me, not one to show my inner tears, I withdrew into womanhood with an angry zeal that saw them shudder with the shifting gears.

Why did they not lead me? **Why** should *I* kowtow when I am now mine own?

I held onto my light, and then in my expressive might, I was suddenly struck by death’s sure blow.

But you know, it was just a changing of the guard, as we always rightly bestow God’s sure order.

My brother’s honour never faltered. My father’s name shall never cease.

And *Me*, well, I shall remain as a woman, whose godliness will always try those who strive with unreasonableness and cunning eyes.

Maybe you shall hear my cries.

To My Father God

by Gloria Hettige

God who stood by, even when I was falling on the wayside.
Created me and saw that I was delivered without a blemish.
O I thank You Jesus.
Times my earthly parents were unsure to keep or give away for adoption.
Only because you dared to create me a baby girl.
Surely wanted by you for a divine purpose.
But my earthly parents didn't fully understand.
Forgive them O Lord.
Was told by my beloved mother that she took pity on me and nurtured me close to her heart.
O Thank You Lord.
My growing up was full of challenges.
Maybe my colour was not right.
Subjected to bullying and name calling.
But you were always there surrounding me with your golden shawl and with lots of kisses and love.
Thank You, Lord.
What an encounter as a teenager, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.
The speck fell off my eye and I could see my real Father.
There you were, Lord Jesus standing by me always.
I may be rejected by man but you gave me a sense to live and break through the earthly barriers.
I remember, one day sitting on the hallway that had little wire meshed windows, a child with piercing eyes wondering with hopelessness.
Again, you appeared with gentle hands around me and whispered, 'I am here, do not be afraid'.
I have walked through the rocky thorny roads but you were standing always end of it all to carry me forward.
Thank You, Father.
Remember as a teenager, lack of self-esteem.
But You never stopped pouring out Your lavish success and blessings.
You always stood there silently gazing at me, holding an overflowing cup of fragrant incense of love, joy, indescribable peace beyond words and claiming, 'You are my most beautiful daughter and your beauty is endless, I hold to you always.'
Thy words keep me dancing midst all trials of life till I see You face to face one day.
Thank You, Father.

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A WORD ABOUT EDITING

I am a freelance editor having received a Diploma of Proofreading and Editing from NZIBS in 2012. I have edited a large range of documents including novels, biographies, magazine articles, websites, and university assignments.

In August 1968, while beginning teacher training, Jesus Christ changed my heart and the whole direction of my life. I am passionate about working with Christian writers, helping them polish their work until it shines.

I endeavour to read the writer's intentions, not just their words, helping them shape their writing into a more accurate, natural and pleasing form.

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CHRISTIAN EDITING

My name is Lola Goulton and I run Christian Editing Services.

I hold a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in marketing and have over twenty years' experience in human resources, including writing and editing a company newsletter, developing a government website, contributing to a textbook, and writing and proofreading more client reports than I can count.

I specialise in editing Christian fiction and advising pre-published and self-published authors on the business side of writing, publishing and marketing. Find out more at <https://christianediting.co.nz/resources/> or <https://christianediting.co.nz/blog/> and sign up for a free two-week course on revising and self-editing your novel.

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WRITING ANSWERS

I have over 20 years of experience as a copy editor and proof reader. I work on non-fiction books/articles/memoirs and also academic editing/proof reading.

I work with authors to prepare their work for self-publishing. I make sure their documents are print ready and, for example, I tell them that they do need to use mirror margins on their documents and no, the printer won't do that for you.

I have qualifications in technical and professional communication, editing and proof reading, science and laboratory technology.

I am in my happy place when editing and thoroughly enjoy turning people's prose into award winning documents.

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Hope and Restoration

A Devotion from Wellington Christian Writers

by Shirley Jamieson

In the Bible God often uses word pictures to teach and encourage us. Sometimes he uses plants, seeds, flowers or animals. We will look at three Biblical creatures.

The first is a deer. In Psalm 18:33 it says, 'He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to stand on the heights.' Often people attribute mountain experiences as highlights, but this verse doesn't show that. Mountains have rocky outcrops and precipices. Storms are often more violent in the heights. All of us have had, or will have rocky times in our lives. It is comforting to know God is there to steady us with hope as we trust him. David, who wrote the Psalm, had plenty of experience of the Judean hills which was one of the fallow deer's natural habitats.

In 1948, Israel was restored as a nation. The Jews were coming home, but there were no fallow deer. By the beginning of last century, they had been hunted to extinction in all of the Middle East. Or zoologists thought they had. But in 1956, a small herd was spotted in Iran. In 1975 the Iranian Prince promised some to Israel, but after many delays, Israelis had to sneak out some deer in a tricky operation on the eve of the Iranian revolution in 1978. (*Photo by Eyal Bartov - <http://www.treknature.com>*)



At times when our hope seems extinct, we are encouraged by God's Word. One day Jesus will return. 'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.' Hebrews 10:23

The second creature is the sheep. The sheep in Psalm 23 represent people who rely on God their Shepherd. Sometimes he leads us through peaceful valleys where he restores our soul, but other times it's in the shadowed valley.

Jesus said, 'My sheep listen to my voice, I know them and they follow me.' John 10:27. Reading the Bible is listening to his voice, and getting to know him.

Remember the story in Genesis about Jacob bringing his flock of spotted and speckled sheep to Canaan? Those long-horned Jacob's Sheep became natives of Israel, but 2,000 years ago there were none left. There were some in Syria, and Moorish traders brought them to Spain. From there they arrived in England, then Canada.

A Jewish couple in Canada immigrated to Israel and brought a flock of Jacob's Sheep with them in 2016. Aliyah is the Hebrew word for Jews returning to Israel. But on this journey, they called it Baaaliah.

In Jeremiah 23:3 God calls Israel his flock which he will bring back to their pasture. It is also mentioned in Ezekiel 34. God doesn't forget the people of Israel, and he won't forget us. He knows where we are, and will never leave or forsake us.

The third creature is the eagle. In Isaiah 40:31 it says, 'But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles.'

So here are some facts about eagles: they can see 3km ahead, fly up to 4,572m, speed to 160kmh, fly into storms when other birds seek shelter, are faithful for life and use thermal currents for effortless flight. We can't do any of these things. It teaches us we need God's strength to live the way he wants us to.



In Exodus 19:4, God says, 'You, yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself.' Salvation is a gift from God; we can't work for it. He sees what is in the future and is always faithful.

*Eagle migration to Israel.
(Photo credit: Amir Ben Dov)*

So, God shows us through the deer, sheep and eagle that we can trust him in the rocky places, the peaceful valleys, the dark times, storms and the uplifting times. And after Jesus comes back, God will restore the heavens and the earth. That is something amazing to look forward to.

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How to Plan a Book Launch

by Kathryn Paul

Here are some tips to think about when planning your next book launch. Your basic plan will depend on who you are inviting and who your reader audience is. You will want to think about what will serve your guests best and draw them in. Once you've decided on who you are inviting, most of your plan will naturally form from there. The finer details are up to your own preferences and what works best for you.

You will need to decide on a suitable venue, date and time and whether you will provide food and refreshments. How you cater is your choice just as it would be for hosting any kind of get-together. If you wish you can have fun aligning the catering with the theme of the book.

It's good when choosing the venue to be mindful of who your reader audience is. So if your audience is likely to be Christians, you could consider holding it at a church building. If you are wanting to attract parents of young children for a children's story, you could consider holding it at a school. If you want to reach both Christians and those who aren't as comfortable entering a church building, it would be best to decide on a venue that is more neutral. If your book is going to be for sale through a specific bookstore, you could ask the store if they would be happy to be used as a venue for the book launch. Your choices will also depend on your budget – so it could be a local hall, or conference centre. I held my book launch for my children's novel *Dog Tucker* at Alexandra Park on race night due to the story being about harness racing

The length of time you allow for the launch will depend on where and when you decide to have it and who will be attending. You will be meeting and greeting people and you might like to share a bit about your writing journey. If you have printed copies available for sale you can offer book signing. When organising your supply of books for sale at the event it's a good idea to think about setting up a creative display and celebration decorations.

The event can be as formal or informal as you would like. Again, thinking about the needs of your attendees will help you decide. For example, I attended a book launch hosted by an author whose book was about eating healthy foods. She held it on an evening of a weekday at a local library. She catered by providing samples of the healthy foods mentioned in her book. She spoke about the book and so did a couple of guests. After that the book was available for sale and signing. Adults attended without children and the event went for 2-3 hours.

To advertise your book launch you can create flyers and posters both digitally and printed. Think about how to reach your target audience and draw their attention to your event. Once you have produced a flyer/poster/email invitation to share you can pass it on to your friends, family, church, writers group and anyone else you wish to invite. It's helpful to ask people to RSVP if you are providing food.

There are many ways to have a book launch and I encourage you to be creative and have fun. It's wise not to put too much money into a launch to ensure you have kept enough funds to help with the ongoing marketing of the book. The launch event only happens once but marketing and advertising the book will be ongoing.

Writing Competitions Points Board

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Taylor Foster	24	Kathryn Paul	27	Jean Crane	42
Rachel Jessop	15	Clive McKegg	15	Pat Kerr	36
Lijlanie Stander	12	Pam Driver	15	Pauline Marshall	27
Stephen Douglas	12	Sue Shelton	12	Ruth Jamieson	21
Fiona Murray	9	Jill Clarke	9	Jean Shewan	18
		Susan Flanagan	9	Ella Hamlin	18
				Lois Farrow	15
				Heather Vincent	12
				Janet Fleming	9

Competition entrants are doing well collecting points on the writing competitions points board.

In each magazine, place getters receive points: 15 points for first, 12 points for second and 9 points for third. At the end of November, those with the highest points in Levels One, Two and Three will be awarded monetary prizes for first, second and third.

Prizes up for grabs are: **\$60 for First Place**, **\$50 for Second Place**, **\$40 for Third place**. These are awarded as Manna Christian Store e-vouchers via email. Our next prize-winners will be published in the Dec 2022-Jan 2023 magazine edition.

All new members begin entering in Level One. To be promoted to Level Two or Three, contestants need to receive points at least three times on their current level. Our judges also require regular entries and improved writing. Entrants receive helpful constructive feedback via email from the judges.

Reward

By Dennis McLeod

Once I was much bound to sin
 Didn't expect anything from Him
 Jesus came and opened the grave
 Now I am no longer that slave.

Jesus caused my heart to dance
 His actions gave me another chance
 Now all the days will have a
 tomorrow
 When we enter the place of no
 sorrows.

The trail may have seemed cold and
 long
 When it's over we will rejoice in song
 As we reach for the prize of the race
 The reward will be to look on His
 face.

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Using the King James Bible as your point of reference, rewrite Psalm 46 in contemporary language a teenager would be able to understand. (250 words maximum)

General Comments

I was thrilled to receive twelve good entries to this competition and congratulate all entrants for making such a great effort in rewriting Psalm 46 for a teenage audience.

Writing for teenagers is not as easy as it sounds. Although teens are in the process of becoming adult, the reality is that they do not act, think or speak like an adult because they are not yet living an adult life. This assignment therefore required having or gaining a basic understanding of how today's teenagers communicate and then rewriting Psalm 46 in their sort of language while remaining true to not only the theme of the original psalm, but also to its content regarding earthquakes etc. While most contestants covered both of these aspects, a couple of entries were more of an inspiring message than a true rewrite of the psalm itself.

Some of today's most popular methods of communication between modern teens include social media platforms (such as Facebook) and using mobile phone apps to send short text messages. The latter in particular has resulted in the development of textspeak language that contains shortened forms of words, such as '4walls', 'fam', 'YOLO' etc. A few of the entrants effectively used textspeak in their rendition of Psalm 46. This is acceptable in the context of the topic.

Apart from using appropriate language, it was also important to enhance readability for the targeted teenage audience by using a modern layout for the psalm. While most entrants did this, a few chose to stick to the traditional verse numbering used by the King James Version of the Bible. As a point of interest, chapters and verses were only added to the biblical narrative in the 14th and 16th centuries respectively, so excluding verse numbers in this rewrite is acceptable.

I awarded first, second and third places to those who met all the above requirements with excellence. Unfortunately, some entrants missed out on being placed due to wordcount issues which I have discussed in my feedback to them.

First Place



Rachel
Jessop
of Stirling

Psalm 46

God is our safe place
and our muscle;
he is a helping hand when we are in it up to our neck.

So we won't stress,
though the earth wipe out,
and the mountains launch into the ocean.
Even if the seas were to scream and churn,
and the mountains freak out completely.
(Picture that!)

There's this river,
its beautiful streams bring joy to those who are in God's zone,
in his city.
His city is where God hangs out, it is pure;
it has God at its core, its heart.
It won't go off course or lose its way,
'cos God is there,
and he's got it in hand.
He's onto it.

The earth might go berserk
but no worries, God's got it sorted.
One word from him and it's all over.
History.

God is boss, & he's here, right in our space with us;
this God of ages past, he is our safe place.
(Legend!)

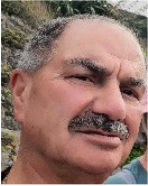
Come and see what God's been up to –
he's been stirring things up on the earth.

He ends wars and wrecks their weapons,
he smashes guns, annihilates missiles, burns the tanks.

Stop; and be very aware of God.
His awesomeness will be known around the world...
it'll go viral.

God is *so good*,
and he's here, by our side.
God, who is woven through our history,
whether we know it or not,
he is our safe place.
(Ponder that...)

Second Place



Stephen
Douglas
of Lower Hutt

Psalm 46 – For the Youth Group. A Song of Praise, God is our Daddy

We have our hang-out place, where we go for help, when salty
When troubles come and fam questions make us cringe.
We go there, to be with our Daddy.
Let the squad shake in rage, thunder light the sky
Or the ocean waves beat upon the shore
Our confidence is with Daddy – pause and wait.

A crib with internet; live stream chat, is v blessed
So too the crib where Daddy lives. – Like my 4walls
Knowing we are safe – because Daddy is honoured here.
When da bombs come and pain lurks out-doors,
His help is like a new day's dawn - pause and wait.

Daddy is so powerful, his voice can shake the earth,
When He speaks our enemies flee,
Their bullying taunts don't hurt us,
We are not fearful 'cause Daddy's love is for Israel.
His love is like a security guard patrolling our emotions,
He is not far from us and comes when we call his name,
So we need not be confused – periodt.

Our trust is with the Daddy of our ancestors, they tell us,
'He will not let you down'. He's the GOAT the best!
Our hang-out place; is where we go to pray, vibing,

When in a mood, His Holy Spirit lifts us; Be still – and wait.
My phone pings, I hear his voice; we chat, his words assure me.
I am comforted, anxiety goes, His peace is mine!
YOLO so make the most of your life, rather than kill time!

Textspeak Terminologies:

fam – circle of close friends, and squad
crib – house, apartment
v – very
4walls – my room

GOAT – Greatest Of All Times
vibing – enjoy oneself by listening to or
dancing to music
YOLO – You Only Live Once

Third Place



Taylor
Foster
of Tauranga

Psalm 46 in Contemporary Language

God is our shelter and safe place, always ready to help in difficult times.

This means we don't need to fear when earthquakes happen or natural disasters rock our world.

Even when tsunamis roar or climate change feels so scary, we don't need to be afraid.

In God's City, wonderful Heaven, joy and peace flow like a river. It flows into His Kingdom, making it an eternal place of laughter, peace and calm.

Right at the centre of this Kingdom, God is found. He protects it, watches over it and will always keep it safe.

Even though here on earth countries fight, wars rage and so many bad things seem to be happening, God's voice is powerful and holds all authority.

He is always with us, never leaving our side. The God who has been with people for generations is with us even now!

Look! See the amazing things he has done. He created wonderful nature all around us – the birds, the fish and the trees.

He will end all wars and destroy the weapons used with His own mighty hands.

Stop. Slow down. Be quiet for a while and notice Him. Remember that He is above all world leaders, all politics and all problems. Stop and know in your heart that He is the only God.

Our loving God is always with us; He will be our safe place forever.

Level Two

Judge: Lesley Edgeler

Requirement: Choose a character from the Bible and write a monologue for him/her to deliver to another Biblical character. No more than 400 words including stage directions.

General Comments

The word monologue derives from the Greek monotos meaning speaking alone. Monologues were very popular in the 1800s with a marked incline into the 1950s but suffered a sharp decline by the year 2019. They can be located in various works of Shakespeare especially Hamlet's utterance "To Be or Not to Be." Monologues can also play an important part in constitutional amendments, obituaries and legal contracts as well as plays.

I received seven well-thought-out entries for this topic. Each varied in dynamics, presentation and choice of characters.

Pam Driver's Dark Shadow's gripping verbal harassment towards the Angel Gabriel stood out due to her use of descriptive comparisons. I awarded her First Place.

Kathryn Paul enlightens the reader about how Job would have admonished his wife to look for a positive outcome, gaining her a second placing.

Susan Flanagan's depiction of Martha's heartfelt inner conflicts was written in play form. Her stage directions are excellent. Yet, with all the movements and emotions depicted, her presentation gained her third place.

It is important to note that if two people have a conversation it becomes a dialogue so for this competition the speaker required no replies from the character to whom he/she was speaking. Avoid boring your audience by paying attention to the pacing of your speech. Does it vary or is it a monotonous headache? Sometimes monologues can be tedious, boring, overlong and lacking in depth and meaning.

The purpose of a monologue is to prevent another person from partaking in a conversation. One necessity is to know your character's voice. Once their speech has been written, it is essential to read it aloud to an audience—your family or a friend.

Ask yourself the five important 'W' questions. The speaker must have a passionate point of view, a gripping opening line, develop a storyline and finish with parting words to leave the reader/listener wondering what will happen next.

I looked for the following factors:

- a) Evidence of emotion and drama*
- b) Use of the first person singular*
- c) Mention of the Biblical character to whom the words are spoken*
- d) Recognition of the character doing the speaking*

- e) A climax or twist
- f) Answers to the five W questions: Why? What? When? Where? and Who?
- g) Rhythm and flow of speech
- h) A convincing title

My research revealed a word count of 150 words to the minute. Thus 400 words, allowing for some stage directions would give you about two and a half minutes for this speech. There are some short videos on the internet to give you more writing tools for a monologue.

First Place



Pam
Driver
of Auckland
South

Angels

(It is night. Three figures in a small, gloomy room. A young woman asleep. A dark hooded shadow stands beside her and a veiled light emanates from a third figure who stands away from the other two. The dark shadow speaks.)

It comes to this. Did you think I would be vexed? How little you know me! I relish this with my entire magnificent being. The celestial chessboard is set. Do you hear and see, you burnished musclebound clown? Your Master is doomed. This is my world, my terms. As tiny as the width of a hair, the Son of God a zygote cell, within the feeble flesh of an inconsequential human cockroach. She isn't even aware of it yet! How easy to crush the life from them both.

(The veiled light takes a step forward.)

But that would be too simple, too painless, would it not Gabriel? For millennia I have studied the human vermin. I know every weakness, every fissure in human nature. Adam could not withstand me. Nor Noah, Moses, Daniel, Job. Name for me one person, just one, who resisted me?

You remain silent ... and well you do. He comes as a frail human *(the shadow sniggers quietly)* ... who would have thought. He too ... will fail. Who then will rescue mankind from me! My prey. My legitimate reward. They will be mine forever. O the plans I have. No longer cloaked in shadow, I will burst forth in splendour as almighty god. The best of my past protégés will be as saints when I am unhindered. Your Master will walk the path first. His every breath baptised in temptation, betrayal, hatred, lies, pain. My glory ... human suffering ... their stupidity. In His I will glory the most. And when He fails ... O the bliss of the thought ... He too ... will be mine!

(The shadow's outline quivers as it releases an ecstatic groan)

Have you no imagination Gabriel? Watch and see what I inflict upon your Master. Stand and brace yourself, for you cannot touch me, you are forbidden. He must tread the human pathway fully as a human, not as a god. This I know ... for am I not the god of this world! Tremble Gabriel. Tear your ethereal robes in despair. Your Master says He comes to save the human race ... but who will save Him!

Second Place



Kathryn
Paul

of Northland

Relentless Optimism

Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still cling to your integrity [and your faith and trust in God, without blaming Him]? Curse God and die!” (Amplified).

Spotlight on stage shows a man lying unwell. A woman is sitting beside him appearing distressed with her head in her hands.

Job speaks:

“My dear wife, I understand you have experienced – we have experienced – an awful shock. Our grief at the sudden loss of our children is immense. Now for you to see me suffering in my body – I don’t blame you for feeling as you do. But remember who you are! You are not a foolish, unspiritual woman. We personally know the Living God. We accepted the good He gave us with acknowledgement and gratitude. Do we not also owe Him the respect of accepting a disaster? Sometimes bad things happen to good people. We have to trust Him to carry us through.

I can still find things to be grateful for. I’m grateful it’s me who is suffering in my body and not you! If we reject the only One who can help us – where will that leave us? With no hope at all! The most precious thing we have in this life is our relationship with God. We mustn’t let go of it – no matter what trial we are suffering.

Think about it, Dear. Nothing had changed in our lives during the moments before these disasters hit us. Therefore, I know this sad state we are in is *not* because God isn’t pleased with us. He was blessing us abundantly and we were doing our best. Logically then it isn’t a punishment, it must be a test from Satan – our enemy. We need to pray and trust God. Evil cannot rob us of the love of the Living God. This horrible test is not a reflection of God’s love – it’s an indication we live in a fallen world where Satan has opportunity to try and rob and defeat us. Satan’s greatest desire is for us to reject God. Shall we allow our enemy to win? Surely not!

No, my Love, be strong. For better or worse – why should we expect to know to what degree our ‘worse’ will look like? Even if God takes my life I know my spirit will pass into His trustworthy hands. Don’t give up on Him, Darling.”

Third Place



Susan
Flanagan
of Northland

Mary and Martha

MARY finds MARTHA sitting on a log in the shade of an olive tree, looking troubled. Before MARY can say a word, MARTHA starts talking.

MARTHA

Will I never learn, Mary? Will I never get it right? First, I scold Jesus for not telling you to help me in the house, instead of sitting at his feet while I prepare all the food and do all the serving! Then I chastise him for not coming to us straight away, after he got the news that our brother had died! Why can't I ever say or do the right thing?!

MARTHA sighs, and MARY moves to put her arm around MARTHA'S shoulders.

MARTHA

I have always found it hard to sit still and to keep my thoughts to myself. I know what I ought to do, but I can't seem to control my tongue. But when I look into Jesus' eyes, I see the love he has for me, and it makes me want to weep! He makes me *want* to be a better person. Why couldn't our Father in heaven make me more like you, Mary? You do the right things and hold your tongue.

MARY moves as if to speak, but MARTHA shrugs off MARY's arm and cuts her off.

MARTHA

No! Don't try to deny it. Sure, you gave him a bit of a hard time about Lazarus, but I put my foot in it a lot more than you. You are such a good listener. If I sat by his feet, I would probably just interrupt and correct him all the time.

MARTHA and MARY sit in silence, before MARTHA starts to speak again.

MARTHA

(in awe)

Yahweh made me the way I am, didn't He? And the Scriptures tell us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

A look of amazement comes over MARTHA'S face, the worry lines leave her brow, and her eyes fill with tears.

MARTHA

(excitedly)

He made me, Mary! He loves me! Just the way I am! Sure, I have lessons to learn, but I am assured of His love for me. Always! I feel so light! Let's go and find Lazarus and enjoy a meal together. I will even let you prepare the bread!

MARY and MARTHA stand and hug, before making their way down the hill toward home, laughing together as they go.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Write a Christian tract entitled 'Finding God' that is suitable to share with non-believers. Bible verses may be included but avoid preaching and theological jargon. (500 words maximum)

General Comments

The written word has always been an effective means of reaching people far and wide with the good news of Jesus Christ. A good example of this is the little booklet entitled 'The reason Why' written in 1914 by Auckland businessman Robert Laidlaw who founded the Farmers Trading Company. He wanted to share his Christian faith with his employees, but the impact of his little booklet over the years has been immense. It has been translated into over 30 languages and more than 50 million copies have been printed and distributed worldwide. God only knows how many people have responded to the message of this booklet.

In our modern age there may be more up-to-date ways of reaching people with the gospel, but I believe there is still a place for the written word to be handed on or placed in strategic places for God to use as he wills. Browsing in Christian bookstores lately, I discovered a dearth of contemporary, eye-catching Christian tracts for adults or children. Perhaps entrants in this competition might consider printing out their statements in an attractive format to be passed on.

As this assignment required a tract suitable for non-believers, it was essential to keep the language clear and simple and to avoid 'christianese' terms which are not understood in our post-Christian era. An alluring beginning is necessary to capture the reader's attention. Bible verses in a modern translation can be effective as the Word of God is living and active, but avoid preaching.

I received six well-written and varied entries. Some contained a personal testimony which is always powerful as no one can refute someone's own story.

I awarded first place to Lois Farrow because I liked the way she set out her statements. She assumes the reader knows little if anything about God and she explains it all in simple, clear language with a powerful challenge for the reader at the end.

Second place goes to Ruth Jamieson for her clear explanation of God's redemptive story including the effective use of scripture.

I awarded Pat Kerr and Ella Hamlin third place equal. My thanks to the other entrants for their participation and I hope they get to share their messages with someone.

First Place



Lois
Farrow
of Rangiora

Finding God

God is everywhere and is very much part of our lives, whether we know it or not.

Who is God? He is the creator of the universe, the one who made everything, who is everywhere at once, who knows everything, and is in control of everything.

At times it may not seem as though anyone is in charge, with all the grief and disasters in the world. But God tells us he is in control and will sort it all out in the end. When he comes, we will stand before him to give account of our lives. So, where is he, and how do we find him?

The Beginning:

In the beginning, God made the world, and he made it perfect. But God's enemy, Satan, came to make men and women disobey God. Satan brought evil and hate into the world, and ever since then, people have done evil things. They have also doubted that God exists, doubted that his word (the Bible) is true, doubted that God is good.

The Middle:

A Saviour came to rescue us – his name is JESUS. He is God's son, and our Middle-man. Jesus came to die for us, to forgive us and make us friends with God himself. Jesus is our go-between, the one who brings us back to God, and makes us part of his family.

The End:

One day Jesus will come back to make everything right. He will restore the earth to how it was when he first made it, all the wrongs will be sorted out, and if we belong in his family, we will live with him forever in a perfect world.

So, where do we find God?

1. **Well, look at the world around you.** It is full of evidence of how God created an amazing world and made animals and people to enjoy the world he made.
2. **God is visible in other people.** When we see love and forgiveness, we see a reflection of God. When we see hate and envy we see the opposite – proof that God’s word is true and Satan is actively stirring up trouble.
3. **We see God within ourselves.** When your conscience speaks to you about what is right, you know it is God talking. He wants his character to show in you.
4. **We also learn about God in the Bible.** The best-selling book of all time, it is the story of God’s love for us, and is such an exciting book to read.

How about you? Do you want to find God? He **WANTS** to be found by you, so search for him, call out to him, talk to others who know him, and tell him you are sorry for all the wrong things you have done.

You will find forgiveness, the most wonderful friend you could ever know, and life with him forever.

Second Place



Ruth
Jamieson
of Whakatane

Finding God

‘Hide and Seek’—a great indoor game for children on a wet day. I’m guessing you, my reader, are familiar with this game, whether as the seeker or the person hiding. As the latter, you would want to found, eventually, and hope the seeker does not give up his search.

Does God hide from us that we must find Him? A promise is given in the Bible, in Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 29, that if you seek the Lord God with all your heart and all your soul, you **will** find Him.

The Bible is the best place to begin your search. In Genesis, the first book, you will meet God as creator of all things; of Adam and Eve, the first two humans and the perfect world He created for them to live in. They had an unbroken relationship with their creator God.

So, what happened to this perfect world? Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed the one command that God had given them, believing instead the lies of God's enemy, Satan. From that moment on, the Bible tells us sin entered our world so that now, we are all born with a 'sin-nature'—a selfish desire to do things our way without regard for God or His laws.

Perfection was lost. Their relationship with God was severed. No longer could mankind be in the presence of a holy God, but God did not stop loving us, His creation.

Our sin has separated us from God, in this life and in the life to come. The result of our sin is death—physical and spiritual. That's the bad news, but the good news is that God has provided a way back to Himself.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they could have a relationship with Him provided the blood of an animal was shed. The animal was to die in their place showing them the seriousness of disobeying His laws.


This was the requirement of those who sought a relationship with God, until Jesus Christ entered our world as a baby with the sole purpose to be the perfect, sinless sacrifice.

God the Father loved us so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, as the perfect sacrifice, that whoever believes in Him, shall not die, but have eternal life. (Paraphrase of John 3:16.)

You find God through Jesus. His birth, life, death and resurrection are recorded in the first four books of the New Testament. In John 14:6, Jesus said "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

To have a relationship with God you come through Jesus, believing He died in your place and being sincerely sorry for your sin. Through prayer, that is talking to Him, acknowledge this and surrender your life to Him as your Saviour and Lord.

For further help you can email me at.....



*Everlasting life in heaven is a free gift given by God.
We don't work for it, we can't earn it.
All we do is accept it by believing in Jesus Christ.*

Courtesy of www.freechristianillustrations.com

Third Place Equal



Ella
Hamlin
of Napier

Finding God, Finding Love, Finding Self

Maybe you have this tract in your hand because you identify with anxiety, doubt, despair, or depression. Maybe you have been deeply wounded and are experiencing chronic emotional pain. Here is the opportunity to accept healing. Because whatever aspect of life you have lost, God has made provision for its return.

Twenty-five years ago, I decided, *Life either has transcendental meaning or it is a death sentence*. There had to be something beyond everything else that this world offered as relief or panacea. I suspected my mind needed to be changed, if I was to avoid medication, institutions, substance abuse, and a pile of broken relationships. In my distorted world I was worn out from the fight against my own soul. Yet I had tried numerous life consuming alternatives. None proved successful, only adding to the confusion and distress. And no amount of self-determination, on a good day, or help from friends or professionals, on bad days, helped because it all depended on me. And I was doubtful. I wasn't shunning the responsibility to change. I was trying hard. But in my limited ability I was responding to the wrong things in the wrong way. Failure formed the vicious cycle, which led to higher levels of anxiety and lower levels of despair.

Until I journeyed into the unknown.

There is a journey awaiting you too, which comes from Truth and promises freedom. This precious but often painful passage is the journey to the self you do not know yet but was created before all time. You will travel to places never visited, where unspoken fears and unearthed truths are met. You will climb high and perilous mountains. You will explore unseen waters held deep within the sea of your soul. You will be stranded in the wilderness but will find a way through pathless lands. You will be lost before you are found. You will be empty before you are full. You will cry the sorrowful sobs of the earth, yet those tears of rain will cleanse the house around your heart.

In time . . . because life, like birth and death, knows its own time . . . your fears and struggles and unknowing will be changed. You will become a mountain place where eagles soar. You will become a reflecting pool that sees into the mysteries of life. Your heart will be light like the first light of dawn, as you follow the flow of its God given desires. The wonder of all creation will be yours when you find the secrets of what brings peace to your daily life. Most of all, you will become who you are truly meant to be. Your life will hold Truth . . . Promise . . . Meaning. And the heart of the heavens will hold your heart.

May GRACE, and spiritual peace [which means peace with God and harmony, unity, and an undisturbedness] be yours from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:2).

Amen.

Third Place Equal



Pat
Kerr

of Roxburgh

Finding God

I'm lost!

I tried a shortcut to the bus, too impatient to wait for the others. Now I was lost in a forest with no compass bearings, no sound of people or traffic, no footprints to retrace my steps. A foreign country, a rendezvous deadline and panic setting in...darkness fell fast here, there were wild critters in these parts, maybe escaped felons! My imagination was no help.

I simply prayed, "Lord, I am lost here. I have the tourist bus to board in a few minutes. No one knows where I am because, impatiently, I wandered off on a shortcut. Please help me."

I *knew* he could help me, but *would* he? Oh the doubts...

He *knew* where I was. He's God, omnipresent and omniscient. He's everywhere and knows everything. How wonderful to know I am never lost from his sight. He doesn't *have* to find me.

A small, nearly silent, Jeep-like vehicle appeared beside me. On board were three beautiful blonde girls dressed in maintenance workers' uniforms. They were laughing until they saw me.

They expressed shock at seeing me.

“No one comes here! How did *you* get here?”

They took me through winding trails to my bus, on time, no drama.

Thank you girls and thank you God.

I was never lost to God.

He made me. He's always known me but I didn't *know* him until I found him for myself. It's the same for everyone. We are his children, never grandchildren. Our relationship is personal, never secondhand. We each have to seek him out and find him. Have you found him yet?

I found God without purposefully looking.

Mum took us to an Anglican Church. There was a ritual and mystery to a child.

I spent a year abroad with a Methodist family. There was choral singing and warm fellowship.

At University I met Salvation Army folk who through their witness, and some inspired preaching, led me to making a life-changing decision. They introduced me to a living God who loved me enough to send his son Jesus to earth to die for my sins, past, present and future. This God wanted a personal relationship with me moment by moment, now and forever, beyond my physical death.

Forever.

Me.

The God who made and sustains the world loves me that much.

I didn't know I was lost until I found God.

Once my spiritual eyes and ears were opened my life changed. I was no longer a lost soul searching for something. I realized I had been lost. I found God, his Word and was baptized.

How about you?

Nothing in your life is unknown to him. He is waiting for you, like another person in a game of hide and seek. *Come and find me*, he invites. This is not a game. It's a promise. I was lost in the forest but not from him. He hears all our prayers.

I sought him and found him. Is it your turn?

Find him!

Competitions for December 2022

Due by November 1st 2022

EMAIL ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT, COMPLETE WITH WORD COUNT AND YOUR NAME.

Font: Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold Title Case, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

Spacing between Paragraphs: 6 pt **Paragraph Indentation:** None

Alignment: Justified. **Send a photo** of yourself for publishing purposes.

NB: If you are not sure which level you're on, email Debbie McDermott at: level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Entries are judged on: Entering, format and layout 15%, Topic requirements 25%, Creativity, flow and impact 25%, Grammar and punctuation 25%, Spelling 10%.

Level One—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Imagine you are either Joseph or Mary (Jesus' earthly parents) and rewrite the Christmas story as you think they would have experienced it. Ensure you use the first person point of view (i.e. I, my, we, our). (500 words)



Debbie

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Author, Charles Martin, wrote: 'Music washes us from the inside out. It heals what nothing else can.' How would you respond to this statement? Name a favourite song or hymn which you believe has this effect on you and say why. (350 words)



Lesley

Email entry to Lesley Edgeler at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a story for children aged 8-12 years old about an event that had a deep impact on your life. Explain how and why and make sure your style and language are appropriate for this age group. (300 words)



Julia

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org



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NZ Christian Writers' vision is to cultivate a vibrant community of Christian writers by connecting them to other like-minded writers in New Zealand. We welcome both beginner and experienced writers.

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