

1983 - 2023

THE CHRISTIAN writer



Special Edition 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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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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Our 40th Anniversary!

NZ Christian Writers: Our 40th Anniversary

2023

Special magazine edition published by NZ Christian Writers

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For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:10, New King James Version

Thank you to the amazing members and faithful contributors to NZ Christian Writers over the last four decades. We have been blessed by brilliantly diligent individuals who recognised that they could give from their talents to help guide and shape the journey of our collective. We want to thank our Presidents, Bill Haythornthwaite, Sue Hungerford, Julie Belding, Janet Fleming, and Justin St. Vincent.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to committee and board members over the years. We want to recognise the remarkable work that founding member, Beth Walker did in keeping meticulous archives of our history. These have been instrumental in preparing this legacy magazine you now have here. Also thank you to Jan Pendergrast who had the original vision to prepare a special edition magazine that shares the journey of NZ Christian Writers throughout the years.

The Christian Writer

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Website: Our user-friendly website is full of helpful information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It gives each member an online presence. Feel free to share our website link with other Christian writers so they can join us. Our members are the best advocates for growing our collective of NZ Christian Writers.

www.nzchristianwriters.org

INTRODUCTION

About 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.

NZ CHRISTIAN WRITERS is a nationwide collective of over 330 authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers throughout New Zealand. Along with our bimonthly magazines and competitions we offer inspiring seminars and writers retreats to encourage, inspire and upskill people in their writing. 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.

For over 40 years, NZ Christian Writers (previously known as The New Zealand Christian Writers Guild and founded in 1983) has linked Christian writers and provided them with fellowship and teaching.

The main aims and purposes of NZ Christian Writers are:

- To promote writing and communication, which is in harmony with God's Spirit and the teaching and life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage Christian writers to express their faith in both the religious and secular media.
- To uphold Christian ethics while maintaining a non-denominational and evangelical stance.
- To provide training for writers by means of seminars and educational materials.
- To encourage and support local groups of Christian writers and to provide standards for their establishment and organisation.
- To provide a voice for Christian writers, and encouragement for those who write in isolation.

These are the personal values we see as the heartbeat of our collective:

Christian faith = Jesus Christ is Lord, the living Word, who became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, His Body, which includes all people who have been joined to Him through a saving faith.

God's Word = The Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant and authoritative written Word of God.

Professionalism = Producing publications with a high value of professionalism.

Quality = Raising the quality of Christian publications throughout New Zealand.

Social outreach = Writing about our Christian faith and values as a social outreach to readers throughout New Zealand and around the world.

How Christian Writers Began – The School of Writing

by Beth Walker

“You’re interested in writing – here, read this.”

Beth Walker’s friends handed her a copy of the *Challenge Weekly* newspaper one Friday evening.

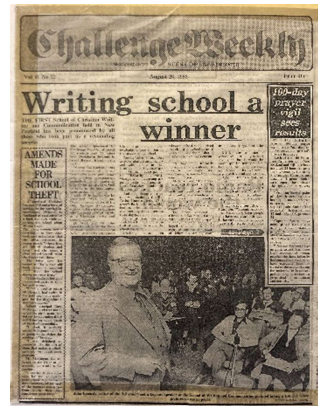
“School of Christian Writing and Communication ... begins in Auckland on Tuesday morning!” she said excitedly. *Challenge*’s editor John Massam lived nearby, so someone from his home hurried the details to Beth.



Beth Walker. 1999

The School

The first School of Christian Writing and Communication in New Zealand was held in the Grafton Hall of Residence in central Auckland, from Tuesday to Thursday, 16-18 August 1983. The live-in school attracted about 90 students and 21 tutors, from Dunedin to Great Barrier Island. John Massam, who had conceived the idea eleven years earlier, was considered the school’s father. *Challenge Weekly* declared it a winner.



Dr Shirwood Wirt from San Diego was dean of the intensive three-day event. This well-known minister, editor and writer of many books had spent most of his life as a Christian writer and communicator. Each day began with a devotion by Rev Arthur Gunn.

Tutors were from various backgrounds, each a specialist in his own field, and included three Kiwi TV and radio personalities. Most topics were presented as electives. This posed a problem – how to choose between so many interesting subjects? However, they were taped.

Tom Bradley’s elective on using music, drama and dance in communicating the gospel competed with public relations and the local church, taken by advertising and PR specialist Bill Haythornthwaite. Later Tom spoke on interviewing for radio and television.

Fortunately, most of Dr Wirt’s lectures weren’t electives. His subjects ranged from four keys to successful writing to world markets and the business side of writing.

John Kennedy, editor of *The Tablet* (a former Catholic newspaper) gave an evening lecture on the role of the Christian press. He began with a startling statement for those days, 'The mass media...are now exercising an influence comparable to that once exercised by the churches.'

Ian Grant dealt with communicating for youth radio and television. Artist Graham Braddock spoke on the fine arts and 'What can a canvas say?'

'Writing the songs' was Derek Lind's subject, and Garth George talked about news reporting. John Hawkesby covered Christian programming and commercial radio.

Other tutors handled an impressive variety of topics such as trends in communication, sub-editing, layout and design, and media trends.

Fellowship with like-minded people played a large part in the school's success. Comments included "great lectures," and "the fellowship of kindred minds." One participant said the two sessions on interviewing were excellent.

Fewer than half of the attendees were women. (By contrast, the audiences at later seminars were almost all women.)

Beulah Wood (now Dr Wood) had recently returned to New Zealand with her four daughters after her husband's death in Nepal. She said the school had been 'stimulating to meet others of like mind – a great impetus to feel you're not on your own in your writing ministry'.



Beulah Wood

Another woman said, 'As a writer, I have a new vision – a clearer understanding of the power of the written word, and of my responsibility to perfect the gift which God has given me.'

"Neither John Kennedy nor myself had any idea so many people were interested in Christian writing and communication," John Massam commented. He added that another school would probably be held the following year in a different format.

No wonder students agreed the school had been thoroughly worthwhile and a resounding success.

How CWG Came to Be

We need a group or something so we don't lose this momentum, Beth thought during the final luncheon. About 35 others felt the same and decided unanimously to form the New Zealand Christian Writers Guild (its name until recent years).

That woman looks as though she knows what she's doing, Beth felt. 'That woman' was Sue Hungerford who was made vice-president, while media expert Bill Haythornthwaite became president.

The Early Years

Bill promptly produced a monthly A4 newsletter which helped the momentum to continue. So did a local group which began meeting in Central Auckland.

After about a year Bill resigned due to ill health. "Most members are women, so CWG should have a woman president. It needs a female touch," he said.



Bill and Julie cut the Christian Writers Guild's 25th birthday cake, January 2008.

Sue took over and made changes. "We need a magazine rather than a newsletter, and competitions to improve members' writing," she observed. "They're making basic mistakes and not being stretched."

When the first entries arrived, Sue wondered what she could do with them. But before long she commented that those who entered and took notice of their evaluations were 'zooming ahead'. Some improved so fast that Sue created a second level.

Under Sue's leadership the committee held annual weekend retreats/planning times, mostly on Auckland's North Shore. To help get to know one another better, members often spent Friday evening sharing their testimonies.

Soon after CW began, workshops (recently called seminars) were held at various sites in central Auckland, usually twice a year. Then Valley Road Church in Mount Eden hosted several, until Mount Albert Baptist Church became CW's venue of choice in the 1990s.

CW's Success

CW's success over the years can be attributed to five main areas, Beth believes. These are (not in any particular order) dedicated, talented presidents and committees, the magazine, local groups, seminars, and retreats.

Other features have included writing courses and a postal lending library of books on writing.

Information for this article came from *Challenge Weekly*, *The Christian Writer* magazine and from Beth Walker's personal recollections.



Above: Three presidents; Sue, Bill and Julie. Below: Janet and Justin.



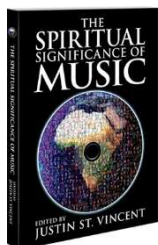
PRESIDENTS' TIMELINE

Bill Haythornthwaite	1983 – 1984
Sue Hungerford	1984 – 1992
Julie Belding	1992 – 2003
Janet Fleming	2003 – 2016
Justin St. Vincent	2016 – current

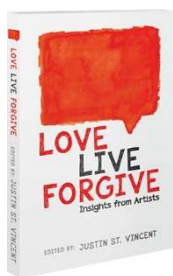
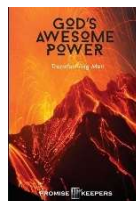
President's Backstory



Justin St. Vincent first heard about the New Zealand Christian Writers Guild (NZCWG), as it was then known, by meeting Janet Pointon at George Bryant's book launch for *Millennium 3: Unresolved Issues Of Our Time* published by DayStar Books, at Birkenhead Library in Auckland on 1 October 2013. Justin enquired about membership with then Treasurer, Jan Pendergrast, joined NZCWG on 4 October 2013, and was booked to speak at the Autumn Workshop on 22 March 2014 at Rossgrove Chapel, Auckland. Justin presented two one-hour seminars, 'Publishing eBooks and Book Series', and 'Launching your Book with Marketing and Publicity'. He enjoyed his time with NZCWG and stuck around for the afternoon speaker, Julia Martin, who shared on 'Tips for Better Writing' and he continued to learn a lot.



By this point Justin had already self-published a worldwide trilogy exploring *The Spiritual Significance of Music* (Xtreme Music, 2009-2012), combining his love of faith, ministry and music. This project was inspired by his missional time in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii serving at the University of the Nations with Youth With a Mission (YWAM) Discipleship Training School: (DTS China Focus 2005-2006). He later became a publication writer preparing devotionals for Promise Keepers Study Guides, *God's Awesome Power*, and *Your Influence*.



Justin was delighted when his fourth book, *Love Live Forgive: Insights from Artists* (Xtreme Music, 2014) was featured on the front cover of *The Christian Writer* magazine, August-September 2014. Justin could see the massive potential for NZCWG to become a nationwide collective of authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers throughout New Zealand. He was also greatly motivated by the bimonthly magazines, inspiring seminars and writers retreats whose main purpose was to encourage, inspire and upskill people in their writing.

Justin was then invited to join the New Zealand Christian Writers Guild Committee, attending his first meeting with the organisational team on 29 November 2014 at Fred Swallow's home. It was there that he shared a growth strategy for 'Each One, Reach One' by invitation from an existing member. This would be a tangible goal to achieve 100% growth by the end of 2015. The power of personal invitation would be the best way to implement this growth strategy. This simply began by encouraging each member to ask at least one writer they knew to join the growing group.



Together with Debbie McDermott, Justin also recommended a rebrand to draw more members towards NZCW. It was suggested that the word 'Guild' was archaic and to think about rebranding. The logo also needed a facelift to make it look more modern. This proposal met with agreement from all Committee members and it was decided to drop the word Guild with immediate effect.



Justin St. Vincent was then booked to speak at NZCW's Retreat 2015 at Narrows Park Christian Camp from 5-8 February 2015. He shared the refreshed update of the current logo and brand new website which were more visually engaging. The new logo included a more prominent cross in the 't', to reference the centrality of Christ (Colossians 1:15-17). The new website would provide opportunities for current Members to share a Writer Profile plus Book Features to help amplify the online visibility of their published works. It also shared social media and email links so book buyers could connect directly with published writers. The new website also included an About page, Join page for easy membership, plus dedicated pages for Competitions, Events, Library, Magazine, and Contact. His refreshed mission for NZCW honoured the legacy of the Guild and looked towards the future of the collective: 'Connecting Christian Writers in New Zealand'. The updated vision was presented as: To encourage and inspire Christian writers throughout New Zealand. The collective's values were published as: Christian faith, God's Word, professionalism, quality and social outreach.

Jan Pendergrast nominated Justin St Vincent for Vice President, and was seconded by Debbie McDermott at the 32nd Annual General Meeting for NZCW on 19 September 2015 at Rossgrove Chapel, Auckland. Justin St. Vincent was appointed as President of NZ Christian Writers at the 33rd AGM for NZCW on 3 September 2016 at Rossgrove Chapel, Auckland. Janet Fleming nominated him for President, seconded by Debbie McDermott, whereby Janet Fleming became Vice President, nominated by Justin St. Vincent, and seconded by Beth Walker.

Since February 2015, NZ Christian Writers has grown from a Membership of 75 people to over 330 regular Members. Justin is passionate about collaborating and co-creating, bringing a fresh perspective to challenges through developing effective solutions. Together with Magazine Editor, Kathryn Paul, and the NZCW Board, the need was recognised for a tailor-made magazine that would be a social outreach to the next generation of Christian writers. In February 2020, the very first edition of *Young Christian Writer* magazine was published by NZ Christian Writers. Justin is motivated by a strong faith in God and gains immense satisfaction from empowering others to grow in their faith and to become their best selves. NZ Christian Writers has combined Justin's love of publishing, ministry and writing. In journeying with the Board of NZ Christian Writers, Justin's leadership has taken NZ Christian Writers to the next level. He anticipates leading NZ Christian Writers for a total of 10 years, September 2016 to August 2026, and continues to be excited about what God will do in the years ahead. With NZCW, Justin is encouraging a whole new generation of writers to pursue their passions for the greater glory of God's Kingdom.

Janet Fleming's Journey with NZ Christian Writers



As a child Janet loved writing poetry, due possibly to the fact that her mother had often read to her and her siblings from Christopher Robin. Her mother also had a beautiful voice and would sit playing the piano and singing hymns.

Initially Janet would write poems for friends' birthdays or other celebrations. She also lived in a beautiful situation on Whangaroa Harbour and saw so many lovely things in nature that impacted her work. Later she began writing letters to newspapers, music, children's stories and then devotions.

In 1989 when Sherwood Wirt visited New Zealand, she attended a meeting which was held in Whangarei and soon became involved in the Northland Christian Writers Group and also the parent body, The New Zealand Christian Writers Guild. She attended Workshops in Auckland and after a time was elected to join the Committee of the Christian Writers Guild.

Later she became Vice President and then in 2003 she took over as President when Julie Belding resigned her position. Janet had also been Chairperson for the Northland Group, but at that point, due to pressure of work, Janice Gillgren took over the organisation of this group. At times this group also held writers' camps and one that stands out was held at Coopers Beach when close to one hundred people attended.

She has appreciated the support of many others in the position she had with the Northland group and as President of the Guild. She also acknowledges the great support her husband Mike has been through the years, in driving her to meetings and encouraging her in her writing.

Janet continued as President until 2016 when Justin St.Vincent was appointed as President for NZ Christian Writers. She has continued serving on the board as Vice President and still attends the Northland Christian Writers group.

Julie Belding: Past President of NZ Christian Writers

Julie Belding has always been a wordie. At nine she was writing stories and poems for the Pixie Pages of the *Woman's Weekly*. An only child, she spent many hours exercising her imagination on a portable typewriter.



Past presidents; Bill and Julie.

After marrying in the late 1960s, Julie and Russell lived from 1970 to 1986 in the USA, where their son and daughter were born. The young mother still wrote poems for fun, along with the occasional article for a state Baptist newspaper. In 1986 the family returned to New Zealand to live, and within weeks Julie happened to see an advert in *Challenge Weekly* for the *NZ Christian Writers Guild*. This had started four years earlier and was promoting a writers' workshop in Auckland. It looked like her kind of outfit.

The president in those days was Sue Hungerford from Tauranga, who edited the bimonthly Guild newsletter, producing it on a typewriter.

So Julie signed up. She entered all the competitions and won a few. Within a year she was serving on the CWG committee. By this time the Guild was putting out a bimonthly magazine, typed by hand, and Julie offered to help Sue produce it. In those days word processors and dial-up modems were in their infancy and painfully slow, but Sue and Julie learned how to send data to each other over the phone line. The mag was on its way to becoming a more professional looking publication.

In 1993 Julie was elected president of the Guild and stayed in this role for nine busy years. She says any writing expertise she has today she owes to the Guild and its semi-annual workshops. The guest speakers were all experienced writers, and Julie reckons it would have been hard to chair these workshops for a decade and not pick up a few tips. Her favourite writing (and editing) principles: 'You cannot write too simply or too clearly,' and 'Never use a long word where a shorter one would do.'

In 1993 Julie also became editor of the *New Zealand Baptist*, a monthly newspaper. Editing was a new experience and she thrived on it.

When her contract with the *Baptist* ended in 2001, Julie became the founding editor of *DayStar*, a transdenominational Christian monthly. With George Bryant, chairman of the board, *DayStar* also began to publish books which meant more editing. *DayStar* magazine closed in 2009 but the books rolled on. After publishing more than fifty of them, the company folded at the end of March 2023 when Julie and George retired.

There have been other irons in the fire too, including vice-presidency of the Australasian Religious Press Association, a network of Christian publications. In 2012, ARPA presented Julie with the Gutenberg Award for her services to journalism. After nine years she retired from its executive.

The Beldings lived in Mairangi Bay, on Auckland's North Shore for 37 years. Recently, they moved into a nearby retirement village. Today they have five grandchildren, all of whom live in Auckland.

Now 75, Julie continues to work from home and is still a wordie. Today she teaches English Conversation online and loves conversing with English learners from all over the world. Life may be a bit slower these days, but what a ride it's been!



"Confessions of a Past President"

Beth Walker profiles Sue Hungerford

(Extractions from Beth's article in *The Christian Writer* magazine August 1998.)

In 1983 Sue Hungerford was at the Challenge Weekly School of Christian Writing and Communication, where Sherwood Wirt was dean. "I simply went to improve my writing," Sue said, "not knowing I was letting myself in for years of hard work – and immense satisfaction. The school was excellent and we were all fired up."

Sue was also at the Christian Writers Guild's inaugural meeting held straight after the School. *This woman looks as though she knows what she is doing*, Beth Walker thought, noticing Sue. Other people must have felt similarly. as Sue was voted on to the new Guild's committee.

Sue said, "I was very pleased, as Bill Hay-thornthwaite and I had been talking about forming a Guild. I felt it was a good move for Christian writers in New Zealand."

Bill became the Guild's first president. but his health declined and he had to give up the role. Sue had become vice-president halfway through the year and Bill proposed her as president at the first AGM.

"It was a big job," Sue admitted. "I was pretty much a one-man band till Julie Belding took over and co-opted people. It was a big job running the Guild from Tauranga. I had to drive to Auckland for every committee meeting, as most members lived there."

Sue wanted it to be seen not as an Auckland-only committee but as a group from throughout New Zealand. However. this didn't really work. As president Sue found her own writing was put aside. She produced little apart from the Guild newsletter or magazine.

"Does it matter if the world doesn't hear my wonderful words of wisdom?" she asked herself. "If my job is to multiply good Christian writers, that's more important."

Sue thought her own development as a writer would stop, and yet she learned from teaching others. "I really grew tremendously through running the Guild," she said.

Sue saw some amateurish writing during her early years as president. She disliked poor Christian writing in the media and felt Christians should write as well as, or better than, others. "I wanted to see Christian writers producing better material and the Guild has largely done that."

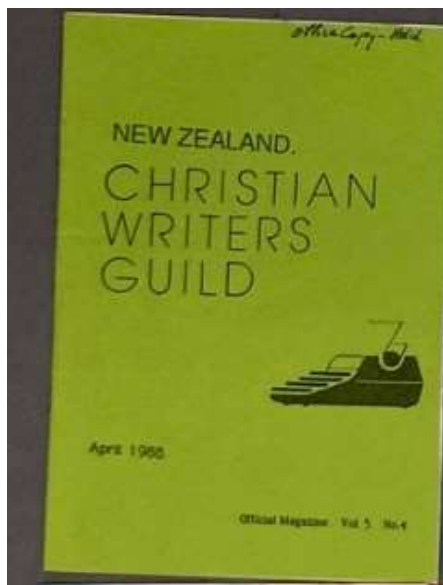
Sue believed Christian writers should be able to have their material accepted by secular newspapers, without aping the news media. Their writing should be clear, without compromise or Christian jargon, and not so spiritual that it is unreadable to ordinary people.



Sue started many of the features of CWG that we now take for granted, including the bimonthly magazine. "The thought of taking over the newsletter from Bill appalled me," she admitted. She continued it for a while but felt the Guild should have its own magazine. Indeed, without it the Guild might not have continued.

Beginning the competitions was perhaps a master stroke, Sue felt. "It was fairly daring. Who was I to judge them? But members weren't being stretched."

When entries for the first competition arrived, she wondered, *what can I do with these?* But she printed them, hoping others would take heart and do better. It worked and members' writing zoomed ahead. Writers were being assessed, trying again and improving.



April-May 1988 magazine

At first there was only one level, but some writers improved so fast that Sue added a second level. The competitions gave her much pleasure and work.

She also began local groups, leading a committed group in Tauranga and later putting out a *How-To* leaflet.

When Sherwood Wirt returned to New Zealand in 1989, Sue travelled around with him spreading news of the Guild, which had been centred largely in Auckland, and encouraging the formation of local groups. From this, Christchurch began a group as did Northland. Both continue today.

Sue cited a few other historic moments during her time as president. One was learning to desktop publish the magazine; another was putting on workshops. Sue wanted to spend more time with her husband Des during their retirement years and was pleased when Julie Belding agreed to take over as president in 1992. Julie was Sue's understudy for two years before feeling confident to take over the role.

Having retired from the committee, Sue worked seven or eight hours a week in her church's office. She had two married sons and grandchildren. Her hobbies included family research, business interests, a little gardening and walking.

She was grateful to have travelled over the years. For example in 1996 she spent three months in Ecuador. At the time Beth wrote this article Sue was writing the biography of missionary Joy Crombie from Kaitaia, who spent many years in Ethiopia and Liberia.

If Bill Haythornthwaite has been called the father of the Christian Writers Guild, Sue could definitely be called its mother.

The First Christian Writers Guild Newsletter published by original President, Bill Haythornthwaite:

CHRISTIAN
WRITERS
GUILD



POST OFFICE BOX 2926

NEWSLETTER

no 1).
Sept 83

SECOND FLOOR GRAND BUILDING 9-11 PRINCESS ST. AUCKLAND 1. NEW ZEALAND.



WOW! Has this been a tough few weeks!
The need to get this newsletter out has
been a constant pressure on my time, without
an active committee as yet, and NO SECRETARY.
But we have weathered it, and the result is
this our first newsletter.
Many things have happened since we met at
the Seminar and here they are in brief:

We need a SECRETARY, resident in central Auckland or the North
Shore, to share with me the mounting correspondence. Please could
we have a volunteer, otherwise we'll come to a screeching halt.
Since most of the contact with members will be by correspondence,
we need a minimum annual subscription of \$15.00. Would you
please forward a cheque or postal order to the Treasurer:
Carol-Anne Armitage 34 Staverton Cres. Mangere Auckland. Thanks!

Now for some good news

Annual Award: G.W. Moore Ltd. Publisher's agents for the major
evangelical publishers are donating an annual award for excellence
in Christian writing-more details later.

U.S. Christian Writers Guild. We are in touch with them with
regard to instructional material for beginning writers. As soon
as we have a reply we will give you details.

Publishers : We have now visited the major publishers reps.
in Auckland, including Hodder & Stoughton and Collins. They,
in turn, represent other major publishing houses. They all
are interested in the formation of CWG and promise their
support.

My Love Affair with NZ Christian Writers

by Beth Walker

The first School of Christian Writing and Communication in New Zealand was in August 1983. Its great success came partly from birthing the Christian Writers Guild (NZCW's name until recent years). Beth Walker believes her long love affair with CWG began then.

The Central Auckland group soon formed, which Beth attended. Then she moved to North Shore, joined that group and met Julie Belding.

'Somehow' Beth began running a sales table at workshops to boost funds. And 'somehow' she was voted on to CWG's committee in 1991 along with Erling Jensen.

Another surprise popped up at New Year 1995 while Beth holidayed in Christchurch. Dave Palmer and she went to meet three other women, and that day the Christchurch group began. Led by Dave for most of the years since, the group has continued strongly.

Two more shocks were in store back in Auckland.

"We've started a West Auckland group at Erling's place!" someone said. Helped greatly by Erling's writing expertise, 'somehow' Beth began to lead the meetings. The 'Westie' group published an anthology, *West Words*, and held nine retreats.

Also Beth enjoyed NZCWG retreats, especially those under Janet Fleming's leadership at Coopers Beach, Northland. Beth has attended many workshops (now called seminars) in Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch and Wanaka in 2001.

Several overflowing albums contained members' published work, photos of group activities, seminars and much more. As CWG's archivist for many years, Beth did these for the West Auckland and Christchurch groups and NZCWG.

While in Tauranga some years ago, she went to Ruth Linton's group and to a retreat at Jan Pendergrast's farm. About then Beth resigned from the committee, and Auckland workshops and the Westie group ended. So these days she is extra-grateful for our *Christian Writer* magazine, for instruction, encouragement and news of her many CW friends from Whangarei to Roxburgh.

"I've loved being part of CW," Beth says.



Beginner to Published Author to Editor

by Kathryn Paul



My writing journey began at school where I was encouraged by an English teacher who called me 'the writer'. Later while parenting I completed a comprehensive writing course with The Writing School. I had some publishing success including magazine articles and a short story. I joined the NZ Christian Writers Guild in 2004 and attended the West Auckland local writers group with Beth Walker. I received *The Christian Writer* magazine and didn't expect I might be the editor for it in the future!

I let my membership slip for a while but in the meantime my children's novel, *Dog Tucker* was published by Scholastic NZ. I connected with Justin St Vincent and rejoined NZ Christian Writers. By this time I was living on Auckland's North Shore. I prayed for an opportunity to learn magazine publishing with a priority of it being for God's Kingdom.

I moved to Northland and occasionally attended the Northland Christian Writers group. During 2019 I was living in the Hokianga area and noticed an advertisement in *The Christian Writer* magazine offering training for a new editor. At first I dismissed it thinking, 'Not me I could never do that', but I felt a gentle nudge from the Holy Spirit, 'Hang on, you have been wanting to learn magazine publishing and it's for God's Kingdom. It ticks all the boxes. Step out and see what happens.' To my surprise I was accepted for the position of magazine editor for *The Christian Writer* magazine. I sensed the Lord had updated the English teacher at school calling me in a worldly sense 'the writer'. I felt now the Lord was encouraging me by calling me 'the Christian writer'. I was blessed to receive training from then editor, Debbie McDermott, who has been a great encouragement as an editor, proofreader and competition judge.

I love to encourage writers of all ages and became enthusiastic to produce a magazine for young writers. In 2020 we launched *Young Christian Writer* magazine. I'm now the local group leader for Northland Christian Writers which used to be run by Janice Gillgren. The Lord blessed my writing journey again in 2022 when I won the Cecil Murphy Writers Scholarship with Christian Writers Institute in the USA.

God has been amazingly good in encouraging me in many ways throughout my writing journey. This includes that our Whitianga writers retreat dates happen to always fall on my birthday! What a treat for a Christian writer like me to be able to spend my birthday focusing on learning more about Christian writing and connecting with many other Christian friends! I'm very grateful to God that NZ Christian Writers connects me to so many wonderful people.

Preparing this 40th Anniversary Special Edition magazine has been a challenge and a privilege. I've enjoyed learning about NZCW's history and I know I'm blessed to have been called to help serve in this organization. I feel inspired by the work and efforts of those who have gone before. You've all done so well!

With love in Jesus, from Kathryn.

Davy Jones Coffee Lounge

Poem by Janet Fleming



Janet Fleming wrote this poem in 1989 after the dinner at Davy Jones Coffee Lounge in Whangarei when Sherwood Wirt of America was the speaker. It was at this point that Janet became involved with Christian Writers.

Davy Jones Coffee Lounge,
That's the place to go,
Learn to be a writer
What I've wanted so.
Sherwood Wirt is speaking,
Here's a tip or two
Folk to make contact with
Things that I must do.

Points made listened to,
Written down as well,
Editors, media,
Hints my work to sell.
Needed motivation,
Must have contacts too,
Add to that discipline
Plus a tool or two.

Start with motivation,
Think I got that right,
Hard to read my Bible
Late to bed last night.
Long to serve my Saviour
With a heart that's keen,
But it's hard to do it
If my diet's lean.

Number '2' was contacts,
Dining editors,
But I had a struggle
Knocking at his door.
All along the roadway
Leading to his gate
Stood a queue of writers
Guess I'd come too late!

How about the next point?
Not my strongest trait,
Discipline's a sore point
When you're always late.
Try to write a minute
Kids don't understand;
Pigs are in my garden,
Neighbours need a hand.

Will I make a writer?
With God's help I'll try.
Not a CS Lewis,
Shakespeare? No, not !!
But if I can help it,
This one thing I'll do,
I will write so others
Find my Saviour too.

Just before I've finished
Let me sign my name,
As the speaker said to
In this writing game.
Card states 'Freelance Writer'
As I'd like to be,
Signed by Janet Fleming,
Whom you'll guess is me.

Good Communication

the Writer's Indispensable Tool

By Debbie McDermott



If there's one thing a good writer cannot do without, it is this: **good communication**. Our grammar, punctuation, syntax and sentence structure may be outstanding, but unless our writing connects with and engages our reader, then we have missed the mark. As Christian writers, it is vitally important that what we have to say is understood. After all, we carry within our 'pen' the most remarkable message of all—the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So how do we connect with and engage our reader? By writing simply and avoiding using overly long sentences and complicated words that are seldom used in everyday speech. This reminds me of when I went to college too many years ago to count. The words used in our modules were so complex that I had to buy an exhaustive Collins English Dictionary in order to understand them! I doubt that slowing down my studies with incomprehensible textbooks was the intention of my tutors, but it sure worked.

One method of learning how to write simply is to practise writing how you speak and then reading it out to yourself—or have someone read it out to you. If you find this difficult or unappealing, then record and transcribe some conversations. Observing others and listening to how they interact is a great tutor in learning how to communicate in a manner that is easy to understand.

Clear and expressive communication (written and verbal) has the power to impact our audience in ways that little else can. It is therefore our responsibility as Christian writers to ensure our writing always includes an element of the Gospel or a biblical takeaway message to impart to the reader. This does not mean to say our writing should be 'soft'—there are too many wicked things happening in our world that we simply cannot ignore—but addressing these issues in our writing through the media and other channels should always be done with care and grace.

It is no coincidence that the word Gospel—which refers to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ—essentially means Good News. Jesus came proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God to a world that was as desperate for a Saviour as our world is today. It is also no coincidence that the prophets and apostles were inspired by God to put His Word into written form. It therefore stands to reason that He—the greatest Communicator of all—also wants us to use our writing skills to do the same. And when we seek His wisdom and insight as we write, so He will grant us the grace and wisdom to communicate as clearly and as powerfully as He has done.

Local Groups – Why Bother?

by Ruth Linton

Forty years is a significant time period. New Zealand Christian Writers (or NZ Christian Writers Guild as it was formerly known) has been benefiting writers for forty years and is continuing to do so. The history of local groups goes back many years as Jan Pendergrast's comments demonstrate:

Twenty-one years ago, I joined Sue Hungerford's newly reconvened Christian Writers group in Tauranga and have been a regular attendee ever since.

The wealth of knowledge I gained then, and have continued to glean since, has been of amazing value during my writing journey. A rule Sue 'drummed into us' in the early days was 'be sure the end ties with the beginning'; a never-forgotten instruction, especially when she was still with us.

A nationwide group has much to offer its members but on its own it can seem cold and distant. Geography can make it impossible for many to attend national activities such as its biennial retreat. To provide greater personal support local support groups have been established and are proving very encouraging to those able to attend one in their area. Lesley Edgeler's comments endorse this:

Sometimes I feel like Robinson Crusoe on a desert island re my writing. Every time the Christian Writer arrives, I peruse the new members list in the hope of someone from my town (Tokoroa) joining the collective.

I have tried to encourage a few people without success to join up. How frustrating!

However, several years ago I was thrown a life line. Tauranga Christian Writers invited me to be a member by email correspondence.

Encouraged by the assignments, critiques and a wealth of information re improving my writing I was kept from falling into the trap of thinking I was the odd one out.

I am forever grateful to be included. Over the years I've met a few Christian writers through attending retreats, but I can highly recommend the value of small groups.

Tauranga Christian Writers have been the ship that rescued me, took me away from the desert island and helped me to find a writing home.

Meetings are held monthly either in a group member's home or a suitable local facility. Depending on the needs of each area these meetings are held either during the day or at night. For most meetings practise writing activities are set. The writing that ensues is shared at the following meeting and is distributed among those attending to be critiqued—obvious errors addressed and positive suggestions for improvement are offered by all at the meeting. These suggestions not only bless and encourage the writer but also help others have a positive input as writers and friends.

Many members are also working on individual goals—writing a novel perhaps, or a submission to local or national authorities. Group members encourage these activities either at the group meetings or one-to-one in members homes or by phone or internet. Regular input is very valuable and local groups aim to provide it.

Guest speakers with specific expertise may be invited to talk at a meeting. At other times group members present information on different writing skills and aspects of grammar. Questions and hands-on practise activities are important parts of the programme.

From time-to-time local groups hold seminars to which other local groups and community groups are invited. This broadens the community awareness of the group and what it offers, as well as providing stimulation and resources to enrich community communication skills. Other groups (e.g. Tauranga) hold annual retreats with the primary aim of stimulating and facilitating individual projects and outreach. But these retreats are lots of fun and spiritual stimulation as well.

Part of the agenda for each meeting includes a devotional message. These are prepared by group members on a rostered basis and are written out as a form of writing practise. These devotions enrich the life of individual members and are greatly appreciated. Prayer is also highly valued and group members testify to the value of these in everyday life and for their families.

Members also have opportunity to chair the meeting, suggest topics for discussion and desired areas of input. A group convenor ensures the meetings are well-planned and run smoothly to benefit everyone. Morning tea/supper and even lunch/dinner are a part of the programme and enhance strong trust and commitment between members.

Between meetings members are encouraged to keep in contact not only to encourage others with their writing and help provide solutions to writing difficulties, but also to build each other up in God's grace and godly character. In many ways this is the most important function of the entire NZCW programme.

The following comments by members of the Tauranga Christian Writers Group endorse the value of being part of a Local Support Group.

Getting to know other Christian writers helps me not feel so alone as a writer. Although we all have our different projects, a sense of camaraderie develops. Networking in a group is a way to fast-track learning about writers and the writing culture in New Zealand. The fun exercises we do as a group and the little snippets of knowledge I gain, has improved my writing journey. (Gaynor Lincoln)

I have found our local group of Christian writers very supportive, helpful and encouraging. We have homework in various genres; e.g. creative writing, poetry, letters to the editor and more. We also bring our own work along for critiquing. Individuals in our group have different strengths so we help each other.

Ruth usually brings an exercise for us to do. This exercise may be a test for grammatical errors, punctuation, helpful writing tips, word studies etc. I have often been helped with sentence structure as well. Sometimes if we are struggling with a paragraph, members in our group offer suggestions which are very constructive and helpful.

We take it in turns to bring a devotion. It is also great to have prayer support when we need it and share the answers to those prayers when we next meet. Other times we have a lot of laughs, which is great for the soul. I would encourage anyone who is interested in writing or would like to improve their craft to join a supportive writers' group.
(Carol Oliver)

As a yet unpublished writer I have found the writers' group very stimulating. It has motivated me to start writing short stories which I have had stored in my head for many years. I also enjoy the conversation and the fact that we have a lot in common.

It is very useful to take some writing along and get the opinions of other members regarding improvements to be undertaken and errors to be corrected. We also have interesting speakers from within the group and from the wider community who help us learn more about the writing process. I really look forward to our monthly meetings.
(Elaine Dixon)

Join a Writers Group	Join a Writers Group
<p>AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE Sara McGuire sara.mcguire81@gmail.com</p> <p>AUCKLAND NORTH SHORE Ted Woudberg Mob: (021) 0270 3011 tedw.hbc@gmail.com</p> <p>AUCKLAND SOUTH David Moore Mob: (027) 481 9996 david@crossroadscounselling.co.nz</p> <p>CHRISTCHURCH Dave Palmer Mob: (027) 209 4864 davepalmer@xtra.co.nz</p> <p>HAWKES BAY Debbie McDermott Tel: (027) 769 2321 deborahmcdee@gmail.com</p> <p>NELSON Kay Peterson (027)-547-6777 kaypeterson4@xtra.co.nz</p>	<p>NORTHLAND Kathryn Paul editor@nzchristianwriters.org</p> <p>PALMERSTON NORTH Rodney Hickman Mob: (022) 676 3640 rodneyhickmanpoet@gmail.com</p> <p>TAURANGA Ruth Linton Mob: (021) 408 661 ruthlinton2015@gmail.com</p> <p>WAIKATO Colleen Kaluza colleen@wordwyze.nz</p> <p>WELLINGTON Paul Devereux Mob: (022) 053 3618 paulrdevereux@xtra.co.nz</p> <p>Join the NZ Christian Writers Group on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters</p>

Onward Christian Writers

by Julie Belding

'Onward Christian Writers' was written by Julie Belding (2003) to the tune of the 19th-century English hymn, 'Onward, Christian Soldiers', by Sabine Baring-Gould (1865), based on 2 Timothy 2:3.

Onward Christian Writers
Working for the Lord,
Serving Jesus gladly
Oft without reward!
We are willing wordsmiths
At our Lord's behest
Writing for the Master
Giving Him our best.

Onward Christian Writers
Work in one accord
Each communication
Done as to the Lord.

Onward through the dry times,
Known to every soul;
Let's keep persevering
Till we've reached our goal,
Never bowed by failure
All undaunted we
Never cease our efforts
To write with quality!

Onward Christian Writers
Choose our words with care
Each communication
Watered well with prayer.

Social Impact Statements

Answering the question: “What do you love about NZ Christian Writers?”



"NZ Christian Writers allows me to be among like-minded people who want to write for Jesus, sharing stories and experiences to be the "salt of the earth and light of the world." Budding writers learn and support each other through writing workshops, and the availability of publishers, editors, and other professionals. It also gives me the chance to enjoy other Christian writers' work."

Adeline Hill-Wu, Member



"As a book publishing professional who has worked in the industry for just over half the length of time that Christian Writers has been operating, I've long valued their contribution to fostering the potential of Christian writing in New Zealand and providing valuable support to Christian authors in their work. Congratulations on this milestone."

Andrew Killick, Publishing Manager, Castle Publishing



"At Beth Walker's initiative, five of us started the Christchurch group of NZ Christian Writers on 31 December 1994. We began as enthusiasts, assiduously writing, evaluating and participating in the competitions. We've had speakers, and run seminars and retreats. Now we encourage each other in writing books and doing fun exercises. God is so good!"

Dave Palmer, Christchurch Local Group Leader & Member



"When I joined NZ Christian Writers, I began a journey that transformed me from a mediocre writer into a twice published author, editor, proofreader and mentor of other writers. Over 15 years, NZCW has grown into a progressive and professional organisation that selflessly serves its members through traditional and digital platforms. I pray it will continue going from strength to strength."

Debbie McDermott, Member, Level One Competition Judge & Competitions Coordinator



"The value received as a member of NZ Christian Writers includes: encouragement from viewing the profiles of other writers, reading our magazine, the ability to have book reviews in the magazine, discovering the professional writing services available, the ability to advertise my own work, the existence of local writers groups, and the opportunity to learn from other writers."

Diane Taylor, Member



"I have hugely appreciated the constructive critiques received from the writing competition judges. Their feedback has been detailed and extremely helpful. They have encouraged me in my calling to write and how God has placed what to write on my heart. I admire the judges for all they do voluntarily. It's rewarding to read others' experiences, thoughts and writing styles."

Fiona Murray, Member



"I am pleased to be a member of NZ Christian Writers because it is firmly based on the inspired, infallible and inerrant Scriptures as in the original. I thank God to be linked with dedicated fellow Christians who share my views and write from the book that comes from eternity past and continues to eternity future."

Frederick Swallow, Member



"Writing a book didn't occur to me until I was in my eighties, when I was coerced by an elder to record God's dealings with me when a pastor. He said the 'exploits' my wife and I had in healing and wholeness would benefit future generations; Wholeness Unlimited came first, then Healthy Living. Joining NZ Christian Writers linked me with a new family, both a blessing and an encouragement."

Frank Rigg, Member



"I've met many of my friends through NZ Christian Writers. It's so nice to hang out at a café (or elsewhere), discuss our latest writing projects or brainstorm about a piece of writing that isn't quite working and needs ideas. NZ Christian Writers extends beyond formal meetings and into my life with people giving support and encouragement for my work."

Geraldine Craw, Member



"Becoming a member of NZ Christian Writers has been amazing. Before, I was struggling with the writers' block affliction due to lost memory. I have now realized that God has coaxed me to enhance the grace He granted – a flair to use words to express my thoughts and emotions and share my Christian values to glorify Him."

Imelda Cruz Wood, Member



"I attended my first NZ Christian Writers group meeting late in 1999 and am still a member. Through the group I have learnt so much about writing. I have also greatly appreciated the care and pastoral support I have received from members when going through times of hardship over the years."

Janette Busch, Board Member



"NZ Christian Writers present me with competitions to help me write in different genre. I don't feel threatened or judged by the critiques and comments. These assist me with presentation and grammar so I can learn from my mistakes. A whole new ministry has opened to me since joining."

Jill Clarke, Member



"I love NZ Christian Writers because it connects me with so many other Christian writers. I appreciate the encouragement I receive and the good experiences I gain. I love to encourage other writers and NZCW allows me to do that. It's a positive part of my life."

Kathryn Paul, Member, Magazine Editor & Local Groups Coordinator



"Membership of NZ Christian Writers has blown me away with all the new things I am learning as I progress. The retreats have proved very helpful and have given me the sense of belonging. Judging the Level Two competitions requires research and this helps me to grow my writing skills."

Lesley Edgeler, Member & Retreat Attendee



"It is a privilege to have my work critiqued in the competitions by experts wanting to help me improve my writing skills and communication. It also forces me to write outside my usual genre."

Liz Fitzmaurice, Member



"Sometimes it is easier to identify what doesn't draw me to NZ Christian Writers. It is not the composition of the articles, the thoughtful flow of language and the images they paint but, rather, the blessed themes that draw the us to focus on Christ and point us heavenward. Words, poorly chosen, can hurt, but NZ Christian Writers emphasises words that heal and uplift."

Max Carr, Photographer & Member



"I am inspired by like-minded people who want to write and use their talents to glorify God and encourage others. I love the opportunities to learn and grow, especially when attending retreats."

Neil Evans, Member & Retreat Attendee



"Joining NZ Christian Writers was one of the best decisions I made. NZCW have honed my writing skills and encouraged the gift I have known since childhood. The competition levels have been challenging and rewarding with constructive and encouraging critiques from the judges. I have learnt much, become a better writer and formed some great friendships."

Pamela Lowrey, Member



"What I love about NZ Christian Writers is getting alongside others as we journey to fulfil God's call and gifting in our lives. There're no hard words; instead, gentle words of encouragement or affirmation about how valuable our work has been to somebody. The regional groups are also valuable as the personal encounters are warm, friendly and meaningful."

Ray Burton, Member



"NZ Christian Writers provides support, encouragement and opportunities for New Zealand writers to share their work, writing thoughts and experiences; Christian fellowship, workshop opportunities and so much more. I have appreciated that support and encouragement, as well as the informative bimonthly magazine. Thank you!"

Robin Cox, Mentoring Matters & Writer



"Camaraderie. Encouragement. Support. Fellowship. Fun. Advice. Inspiration. That's just a few of the things that come from being connected to NZ Christian Writers. Being a writer is a calling of God. NZ Christian Writers affirms and endorses that calling."

Stephen Whitwell, Member



"NZ Christian Writers is where I write work that includes God so I feel safe to present my faith in everything I create. This blessing has inspired me to create work that includes Him (even for people who don't know Him). The encouragement, support and love from everyone, and the amazing magazines, make me feel I have found a community where I belong."

Taylor Foster, Member



"When I retired, God put on my heart to write books, so I started attending the Christchurch Christian Writers Group; they put me on the right track. At my book launch, my writers' group family were there sitting in the front row. They supported me again when signing books at the local Christian bookstore. I am now on my fifth book, having published one and completed three others."

Verna McFelin, MNZM, Member & Co-Founder of South Island Christian Authors Network

Memories from NZ Christian Writers Past Anniversaries and Events

Photos supplied by Janette Busch



NZCW Retreat Memories, Whitianga, 2017



NZCW Retreat Memories, Whitianga, 2019



NZCW Retreat Memories, Whitianga, 2021



The late Janice Gillgren, past Level Two judge and Northland Christian Writers Group Leader.

A short biography and piece of her writing, about writing.

Contributed by Christel Jeffs

Janice Gillgren was a writer, photographer and pro-life advocate, as well as a wife, mother and grandmother.

Born on 13 January 1959, she was subject to various health problems. It is by the grace of God and the intuition of her mother that she survived her first few years of life.

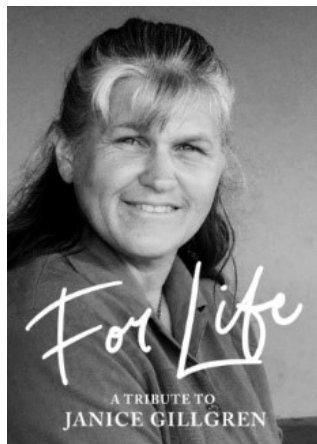
She trained as a nurse at the Whangarei Hospital, in one of the last hospital-trained nursing classes offered. It was this education that gave her a strong knowledge base on health-related matters which turned out to be invaluable both for her sake and for that of her family. It also gave her a greater understanding of people.

She worked for a number of years in a variety of nursing positions before marrying Mark Gillgren in 1985. They had three children (despite doctors' concerns that pregnancy was not possible) and Janice homeschooled them during their early years while Mark worked as a sheep shearer.

When her youngest was a toddler and the older children were at school, Janice decided to do an at-home writing course. This she thoroughly enjoyed and she went on to complete a Freelance Writing Course. Since then, she has written over 200 articles published in over 30 different magazines, mostly in New Zealand but also in Australia and the USA.

After her family left home, Mark began getting shearing work in Australia, as well as New Caledonia. Janice travelled with him and considered these to be working holidays – also good opportunities for her to write.

She has been a part of the New Zealand Christian Writers for many years and led the Northland group for nearly two decades. She owned her own website called Words and Scenes, where she published blogs about writing as well as her photography.



Janice was an advocate for life and wrote numerous letters to the editor on issues such as abortion and euthanasia. She was the president of Voice of Life New Zealand's Whangarei branch and was actively involved in promoting the pro-life movement, as well as saving many precious lives.

*Janice truly was a voice for life, and we thank God for the pleasure of standing alongside her in the fight for Life for many years. – **Voice for Life NZ***

She was such a help to me when I was trying to get my writing into focus...

'I talked with her for hours in the back of your van on the retreat trip. What a lovely, strong woman...'

*'Janice always seemed so vital and had so much passion for her writing...' – **Members of NZCW***

*Although it's with sadness that we adjust to her going, we can look forward with joy to being where she is. Throughout her lifetime, Janice encouraged many people with their writing. She was a journalist, mentor and writers group leader. Her life of contribution will continue to have an impact on the world. Let's ensure we take as many people with us as we possibly can to where she is now, by demonstrating and communicating love. – **Kathryn Paul, magazine editor for NZCW***

Publication: Is it the Only Goal?

by Janice Gillgren
for Omega Writers Inc, April 2014

Does publication validate the writer? Are you somehow less of a writer if you don't seek publication through printed or online media?

Not necessarily.

There are two main reasons why you might not be seeking publication:

- Your writing is intended for a specific reader or group of readers outside of these usual media.
- You're simply not at that level of confidence and ability yet.

I wrote a book review once on a simple, self-published autobiography. The author was, I think, in her late seventies at the time she wrote it. In the book she recounted how she'd found an unusual use for her writing skills that didn't involve publication in the usual sense of the word. She'd written letters. Lots of them.



Many years earlier she and her husband had been missionaries in Papua New Guinea. Being the only white woman, separated by many miles (and no email!) from friends and family back in New Zealand, she'd been very lonely. In those days, the occasional letter had meant a great deal to her. So, she decided to return the favour.

She began writing letters to missionaries, particularly the women, encouraging them and taking an interest in their lives. She adorned her caring letters with delightful drawings of creatures and plants. Those letters must have made an incredible difference to their recipients – and she formed some wonderful friendships as a result.

She wasn't writing for publication. She was using her God-given and inspired talent to be a blessing in another way. You may feel led to express your talents unconventionally too, and that's great if you do.

Love letters have started or become part of books. I think of the 'Chicken Soup for the Soul' series, which often includes personal letters that have made a radical difference to the receiver.

Love letters are not only between men and women of course. They can be between friends, or parents and children. Some of the most touching letters I've ever heard or read have been from fathers to their sons.

Poems often appear on gift cards. Most people will have read at least one Helen Steiner Rice poem on a card at some time in their life. Personal writing, which helps you find release from some trial in your life, may later become part of a biography, but it doesn't have to.

The second reason you might not be writing for publication is because you haven't 'got there' yet, and that is also fine. You have to start somewhere. You don't have to feel as if you're not a bona fide writer because you're not actively seeking publication yet. You can keep publication as a goal for the future.

However, if you have absolutely no desire to ever have any of your work published in any way at all (except for your personal enjoyment) it may be time to honestly consider whether or not writing is for you. Perhaps your creative inclinations could find better expression in other pursuits.

If a severe lack of confidence is besetting you, try and get this matter addressed. A writer's support group should help. Or prayer and counselling may be appropriate if this lack of confidence affects your life generally.

Regardless of whether your work is released through a medium other than conventional publishing, or whether you are not yet ready to seek publication, the main thing to do is this: just keep writing!

Make Me A Blessing

A Lesson from Technology

Devotion by Janet Fleming

Originally written on 14 August 1998.

John 21:25, NKJV:

25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

John 20:31, NKJV:

31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

1 John 5:13, NKJV:

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Ever since the night 'A lesson from Technology' was agreed on as a 'suitable' topic for an assignment I have shuddered. To a person who is happy to drive a car if it goes readily, who can read the time but knows nothing of the mechanics of a watch, this topic seemed crazy and I didn't know where to begin. Besides, what is technology?

I looked in the dictionary which gave for its definition 'practical or industrial arts, ethnological study of development of such parts; application of science? I was no further ahead. Whatever does ethnological mean?

Finally, still unsure as to whether it qualified, nor even, in its simplicity understanding its mechanism, I chose the pen.

A pen is only little but what an impact it has made through the centuries. As with a person it can make a great impact for good or evil. Think of those words of encouragement written to a friend in need, words that have averted a wrong decision in another's life and God's own Word written initially by those God inspired and more recently passed on by scribes through many centuries.

On the other hand consider what harm it can do. Take a malicious letter, certain newspaper articles, the pen of Darwin and the hurt of a broken romance.

A pen is used to sign an agreement and for myself I have to acknowledge that one of my life's greatest blessings began the day I signed our marriage certificate. I'm not sure that a prisoner on death row would have the same appreciation of the pen when a signature has confirmed his execution.

I know for sure that a pen, as with my life, is useless unless used and that if a pen is laid aside long enough its ink will run dry.

As my husband stated, 'A pen is only useful as it is guided in the direction of the hand that holds it.' How thankful I am that I am held in God's hand. May I be used by Him today.

As writers let us take up our pens and point this nation and the world to the One who can bring peace and guidance to troubled hearts.

What will I leave behind me?

Poem by Janet Fleming

What will I leave behind me
When my earthly life is gone?
A cross by a lonely roadside,
Or a stone that my name is on?
If I start today, I can use my pen,
To bring hope and cheer to the hearts of men.

What can I leave the hurting
That will lift them above their pain?
I will tell of the love of my Saviour
So they learn to trust again.
I will start today so my voice is heard,
And another's heart will be changed and stirred.

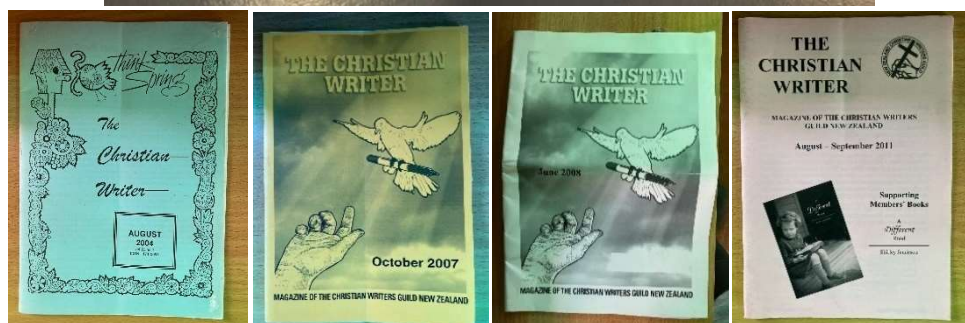
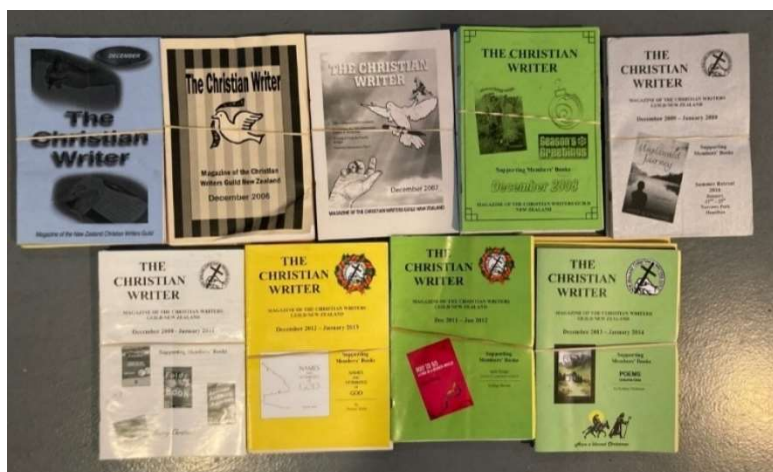
What will it mean in heaven
If I find through my written word,
That some other souls have joined me
Through the message that they have heard?
I will thank my God in that land of light,
That I took the time and I chose to write.

History of *The Christian Writer* magazine

We wish to acknowledge all past editors of *The Christian Writer* magazine and all competition judges – thank you for the contribution of your time and effort over the past 40 years! We celebrate you as we offer below this:

Visual Issues Memoir of *The Christian Writer* magazine





Honorary Members

Honorary members have each made exceptional contribution to us as the collective of NZ Christian Writers. They are awarded with the special title of Honorary Member to recognise their significance within our collective. They are no longer required to pay for annual membership indefinitely.

Our honorary members are:

Julie Belding

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Keitha Smith

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Thank you!

We wish to thank all who have contributed to this 40th
Anniversary Special Edition of *The Christian Writer* magazine.





NZ CHRISTIAN WRITERS is a nationwide collective of authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers throughout New Zealand. Along with our bi-monthly magazines and competitions we offer inspiring seminars and writers retreats to encourage, inspire and upskill people in their writing.

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