

APRIL - MAY 2023

THE CHRISTIAN writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Articles:

What is Poetry? (Part Three)
by Ruth Linton

Tips From an Editor
by Janette Busch

Poetry by:

Stephen Douglas

Greg Maynard

Kay Peterson

Carol Duffy

Jill Brookes

Alan Crosby

Book Reviews:

25 to Life by Justine Orme

Writing Competitions and more. . .

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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Editor and Membership Secretary: Kathryn Paul: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

For magazine contributions, address changes, membership queries.

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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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Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: Wonderful Fragrances – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	What is Poetry? (Part Three) – Ruth Linton
Page 8	Photo – North Shore Writers Group
Page 9	Mini Biography Introducing Lesley Edgeler
Page 10	My Twelfth Psalm – Lesley Edgeler
Page 11	Book Review: <i>25 to Life</i> by Justine Orme – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 11	I Don't Know – poem by Stephen Douglas
Page 12	What's Your Name? – Jill Brookes
Page 13	Omega Writers Caleb Award
Page 14	Who Killed Jesus? – Lois Farrow
Page 15	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 17	The Thrush – poem by Greg Maynard
Page 17	Kina Beach – poem by Kay Peterson
Page 17	Book Fair and Launch, <i>David Warrior</i> by John Fergusson
Page 18	Determined – poem by Carol Duffy
Page 18	The Greatest Ever Love Story – poem by Jill Brookes
Page 19	At the Beautiful Gate – poem by Alan Crosby
Page 20	Tips From an Editor – Janette Busch
Page 21	Find a Local Writers Group / Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 22	Writing Competitions Points Board

CW Competitions

Page 23	Level One Results	Page 35	Level Three Results
Page 28	Level Two Results	Page 39	Competitions for June 2023

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

President's Report



Recently, Kathryn Paul and I have been collaborating and co-creating with several of our contributing members to develop the content for our upcoming 40th Anniversary Special Edition Magazine. I must admit that it has been so rewarding to discover and explore the incredible history and legacy of NZ Christian Writers. I've been diving deep into the NZCW Archives, diligently and meticulously curated by founding member, Beth Walker. There's been a treasure trove of articles, contributions, newspaper clippings, photographs, poems, scriptures and writings to read and review.

Naturally, with this special magazine project we've had a wealth of content and the real challenge has been to decide what to and what not to include. My heartfelt thanks to our Magazine Editor, Kathryn, plus our various contributors who have shared so much towards our upcoming magazine: Janet Fleming, Julie

Belding, Beth Walker, Jan Pendergrast, George Bryant, Debbie McDermott, Christel Jeffs, Ruth Linton, Janette Busch, plus many more members. We've created a Special Edition Magazine that celebrates the enduring heritage of NZ Christian Writers, documenting its life and legacy, with a view to a fulfilling and purposeful future for our member writers. We'll be launching our 40th Anniversary Magazine at our Retreat 2023 and will share complimentary printed copies with anyone who would like one. If you'd like your own printed copy, feel free to email me: president@nzchristianwriters.org



As I write this, our 40th Anniversary Retreat at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga is now fully booked! We're excited to be celebrating this significant milestone with 50 writers, featuring inspiring seminar and workshop speakers: Anya McKee, Rosie Boom, Staci McLean, and Stephen Whitwell. We'll also be hosting our AGM 2023 on Sunday 30 April 2023 where we will be re-appointing our current board members as officers for guiding the future direction of NZ Christian Writers. Expressions of interest are welcome from anyone who would like to be considered for the board. Our AGM 2023 will also include a Financial Report for our members and President's Report to mark this special occasion together. We'll be publishing our AGM 2023 meeting minutes in our June-July 2023 magazine for all members.

Also congratulations to this magazine's featured photographer, Max Carr, for his brilliant photo capturing the season of Autumn. Once again, thank you for sharing your talent in photography with our members.

Kia Manaakitia – be blessed.

Justin St Vincent

Editorial: Wonderful Fragrances

by Kathryn Paul



As Justin has also mentioned in his president's report for this magazine issue, we have been producing the 40th Anniversary Special Edition magazine. It's an extra magazine separate from the normal six we produce each year.

It has been quite a commitment to squeeze it in between everything else we do. But I have enjoyed learning more of the history of NZ Christian Writers while doing it.

The journey of NZ Christian Writers reminds me of a flower opening its petals. Over the years many have contributed to the growth of the organisation and caused this flower to bloom. The organisation's membership reminds me of a garden in which the writers are also flowers of different kinds, sizes, shapes and colours, each blooming alongside one another, creating a beautiful, colourful display.



Then there's the many articles, poems, stories, books, songs and more that have been written over the years by Christian writers. Each of these are wonderful fragrances wafting from the flower bed, reaching all who chance to connect with them. They contain seeds of hope, planted in the readers' minds, sowing the love of Jesus Christ.



What a wonderful organisation to be a part of and I'm grateful to all who have gone before us, creating this life connection and inspirational group. Let's continue to grow together, bloom and spread the love and hope of the message of Jesus Christ.

I'm grateful to all of you who have been in a previous season or who are currently a part of this season with the organisation and I encourage you to keep writing. You never know just how far your personal writing fragrance and seeds of hope will go.

With love in Jesus,
from Kathryn.

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

Notices

Our 40th Anniversary Retreat!!



Bookings are now full for our 40th Anniversary Writers Retreat 2023!

Local Writers Group Leaders Wanted

If you are willing to host a writers group in your area please get in touch. To find out more details email Justin at president@nzchristianwriters.org or Kathryn at editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Book Reviews Criteria

Members are welcome to request a book review of any of their published books, whether recently released or not. The main criterion 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

More content is always needed for our magazines, *The Christian Writer* and *Young Christian Writer*. Send in your contributions by email to editor@nzchristianwriters.org

South Island Christian Book Authors Network

The next meeting will be Saturday 27 May 2023, 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Tenants Lounge, Maurice Carter Courts, 16 Dundee Place, Spreydon, Christchurch 8024. Meetings are quarterly and are specifically offered for those interested in writing a book or who have published a book. Facilitators are Verna McFelin verna.mcfelin@gmail.com and Christine Nathan chris@teamnathan.co

What is Poetry? (Part Three)

by Ruth Linton

B. IDENTIFYING RHYTHM

Rhythm is the pattern of accented and non-accented **syllables** (not words) in a poem. The measurement of rhythm is called a foot or feet for plural. (It is important to note it should be a regular rhythm. Music and song are closely linked to poetry rhythm but extra syllables can be fitted into the song melody by using faster notes such as two quavers in place of one crotchet. This is not possible with good poetry.)

The best way to check your rhythm is to read your work out loud and clap the rhythm as you read. Your listener may pick up inconsistencies better than you do as we tend to read how we want it read, how it sounds in our head!)

The most common rhythm pattern seems to be **iambic** (-/-/-/-/-) , usually with five feet in a line. (This pattern is very common in Shakespeare's work.) The pattern is *de DUM de DUM* ... where *DUM* is the accented syllable or beat.

A practical way to mark the rhythm of your poem is by placing a forward slash (/) over accented beats and a hyphen (-) over softer syllables. This shows the pattern very clearly and is a good way of evaluating your whole poem for consistency.

Other rhyming patterns include:

Trochee	/-/-/-/-
Anapest	- -/- -/- -/- -/
Dactylic	/- -/- -/- -/- -
Spondee	/ / / / /
Pyrrhus	- - - - -

One final warning. Words that are spelled the same may be said differently giving them a totally different meaning. e.g. invalid (someone who is unwell) and invalid (something that doesn't make sense or apply to a particular situation).

C. LANGUAGE DEVICES/FIGURES OF SPEECH

Choosing the right word is important in whatever we are writing. Legal documents and scientific reports require clear, unambiguous words that give accurate information rather than people's attitudes and feelings toward a topic.

In prose and poetry, however, selecting the right word to convey the atmosphere, character traits and so on is especially important. Language devices/figures of speech are often used to enrich our writing. Here are some common figures of speech and language devices:

1. **Simile:** Here one object is likened to another. Similes include the words '*like*' and '*as*'.

2. **Metaphor:** This is a stronger comparison of objects and ideas and does not include the words '*like*' or '*as*' but says the objects are what they are compared to.
3. **Alliteration:** Several words, in close proximity, starting with the same letter.
4. **Repetition:** Repeated use of the same word or phrase to create a strong effect. Often used as a chorus or refrain.
5. **Onomatopoeia:** Words that produce a sense of sound. eg. cuckoo, sizzle, splat
6. **Assonance:** Repetition of the internal sounds of words. eg. *killed, cold, culled* or *sonnet, porridge*.
7. **Personification:** Ascribing to an object, animal, etc, a characteristic that should only apply to a person; e.g. men often refer to their boat or car as '*she*'.

One of the hallmarks of poetry is the use of appropriate, atmosphere-producing and descriptive speech, including the use of language devices. At times it seems like words are left out or thoughts not fully explained, almost cryptic and left for the reader to decipher. Punctuation may or may not be used, adding to the richness of the meaning being portrayed. Even free verse and blank verse can be recognised by the type of language used. It is not just a story split into lines!

Good poetry seldom occurs spontaneously. Such casual rhyme, usually of a current event, is called doggerel: fun at the time but of little long-term value. Writing good poetry is an art. Hone your skills!



New! Auckland's North Shore Writers Group

Led by Ted Woudberg

See page 21 for Ted's contact details to join the writing fun!



Mini-Biography

Introducing Level Two Judge, Lesley Edgeler

Tea lady, cleaner, shelf-stacker, frozen vegetable sorter, potato picker, relieving teacher and librarian commenced my permanent residency in New Zealand.

Born in 1952, York, England. Emigrated to Melbourne, Australia, by sea at age five with my parents and younger brother, David, in 1958.

Grew up in Laverton near the Royal Australian Airforce base. Attended three Primary Schools, then Werribee High School until fifth form (Year 11) followed by Bayswater High for Matriculation (Year 12).

Did my teacher training at Frankston and Melbourne Teacher's Colleges. Qualified as Trained Primary Teacher Librarian. Completed my bond at Boronia Heights Primary School. Resigned to go overseas to reconnect with relatives.

Met my future husband, Kevin, on a camping tour of Great Britain. Got engaged in Looe. Moved to New Zealand on ANZAC Day, 1977. We married over Labour Weekend in Timaru.

We transferred with New Zealand Post to Upper Hutt where our son Daniel was born. (He's a chef at Carey Park Christian Camp). Then to Tokoroa where our younger son, Graeme was born. (He is a Barrister in Wellington.)

My interests are reading, writing and singing. Took part in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and various choirs; also, the stage musical: *The Sound of Music*.

I became a Christian in 1984 at the age of 31. Attended Tokoroa Baptist Church where friends encouraged me to join New Zealand Christian Writers.

My first writing retreat was at Willow Park Christian camp under Elizabeth and John Sherrill. Here I realised how much I needed to learn about the craft of writing. I entered the competitions and progressed through Levels One, Two and Open (now Three).

Worked as a Teacher's Aide at Tokoroa North Primary School for 30 years beginning in the school library, then with two students needing to be taught English, a child with Dyspraxia and finally had my own room for teaching ESOL, Remedial Maths and Phonics groups. I could be responsible for up to 65 children per week.

I wrote poetry to suit the different age groups for ESOL. I am a hobby writer. My fortes are: psalms, poetry, plays, prayers of praise, devotions, nonsense rhymes and short stories.

I am now retired, enjoy leading the singing each week at St Mark's Presbyterian Church, reading, doing code crackers, playing board games, writing and singing at various camp concerts.

My Twelfth Psalm

by Lesley Edgeler

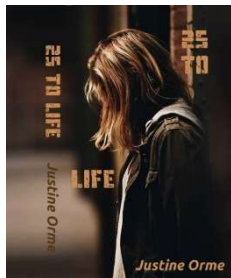
My Lord is the lover of my soul.
When I am in anguish,
He presides over proceedings
Offering love and compassion
As tears course silently
Down my cheeks.
I do not have to look to man
For my measure of worth.
Man only looks at things...
At wealth, education and status.
But God looks at the heart.

My confidence is in God's esteem for me;
I am his child.
And his love is more enduring
Than all the gold ever mined.
I do not need men to tell me who I am;
Instead, my Lord, the God of all things living,
The Creator of all creatures with breath,
He and he alone,
Shows me that in his sight I am precious,
A treasure being slowly discovered
As my soul's journey
Makes me more like him.
My Lord is as priceless as the waves of the ocean
Cascading over the waters
Only to start over when the spiral comes undone.
His love for me is endless.
He calls me by name.
And I respond to his loving embrace.

He does not cause me embarrassment
Like my fellow humans
He doesn't rub my mistakes in my face,
I can trust my Lord.
He loves me with a fearful love.
He is jealous for my well-being.
He never gives up on me.

I love the Lord
I lift his name on high.
For he is gracious to me.
Knowing him is sheer privilege;
One to be shared with reverence and awe.
He is my mediator and my peace.

I love him with an all-consuming passion.
O wondrous Lord of all!
His eminence is to be praised forever.



25 to Life

By Justine Orme

Review by Julia Martin

Published by YourBooks
2019

The sexual abuse of children is a heinous crime. It not only destroys the innocence of victims but may also cause a life sentence of emotional and psychological problems that can flow over into every aspect of life.

In this book the author tells her story, mixed with others, through a fictional character named Melissa. Married with a family, Melissa struggles with issues caused by sexual abuse in the past which eventually leads to her attempted suicide.

In an induced coma in hospital, she has a supernatural encounter with the Time Weaver (Jesus Christ). He befriends her and during the next 25 hours He transports her back in time to where sin entered the world and contaminated everything and everyone.

Jesus identifies with her suffering and then graphically shows her how He took the punishment for all the sins of mankind when he suffered and died on the cross.

When Melissa finally surrenders to Jesus and learns how to forgive, her healing and cleansing gradually bring the lasting freedom she's longed for. Justine writes: 'As we surrender our pain, our brokenness and our lives to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, I have every confidence that He will not abandon any of us. He will not ignore us.'

Despite her feelings of vulnerability, Justine writes with openness and sensitivity, and I recommend her book to all those who are victims of abuse and also to those who live with abuse-victims.

Justine claims there is victory over victimization, but it's found in Christ alone.

I Don't Know

by Stephen Douglas

I read Wislawa's* Nobel Prize Lecture this morning and the poet's phrase: "***I don't know***" got me!

An inspiration for living;
for writing,
for working etc,
should come from this tiny phrase "***I don't know.***"

Today is a new day so, "***I don't know***"
should be the impulse
to explore,
to ask questions,
to consider my being here.

We may know much
but not everything, so "***I don't know***" is
appropriate to admit.

The phrase can invite conversation,
an exchange of ideas,
even a challenge to one's own belief.

It's not defeatism to admit: "***I don't know.***"
It's an approach to reality.

We can hold many theories,
have an inkling of realism.
But let's start living with a dose of honesty
and begin each day with the tiny phrase:
"***I don't know.***"

This puts us in the position
of expectancy,
of faith,
of trust,
of hope,
of humility. "***I don't know!***"

Though I may have all knowledge but lack
love, then it's all "noise".

*Based upon -

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1996/szymborska/lecture/> - cited 18/02/23

What's Your Name?

(An allegory)

By Jill Brookes

It was Census Day. The heat was oppressive. It was strangely quiet in the centre of the marketplace where the huge open tent was filled with dozens of sweaty, uncomfortable men, all wanting to get on with it and get out of there. All had come to register their details as Caesar had decreed.

At one end there were seven census officers seated at a table that stretched the width of the tent. Behind each of the officers were two Roman soldiers in light armour, each with a menacing seven-foot spear in his hand. Hanging at their side, at the ready, was a sword. The soldiers looked intimidating, as intended.

In front of each of the census officers, awaiting their turn to register, was a queue of men. The officer in the centre was older than the rest. A short, thickset man, loud and mean. He was obviously the one in charge and he didn't hold back in letting it be known. He hated his job; he hated these people. Jews. No doubt they would all like to rush the desk and kill him and his colleagues. That's why the soldiers were there. They'd stick it to 'em in a moment at his say so. There were plenty more on duty in the marketplace too, just in case.

Everyone was irritated at his brashness and loud voice, even his fellow census officers. But he was the boss, so no one said a word.

Though the front of the queue was no more than three feet away from him, he yelled, "NEXT!"

A young man stepped forward.

"Where are you from then?" the officer bellowed at him, his eyes on the papers on the desk.

"Nazareth," the young man quietly replied.

"Naz-a-reth!" the officer bellowed derisively, looking around him at the other officers. "Nothing good can come out of Nazareth, can it?" He laughed raucously at his own joke. A nervous, quiet chuckle rippled from his colleagues.

Looking up at the young man the officer again bellowed, "What's your name then, son. Come on, let's be havin' it. I haven't got all day for the likes of you."

The young man looked into the officer's eyes. It unnerved the officer. He didn't know why, there was just... something inexplicable.

"Your name, what's your name!" he commanded.

"I AM," the young man responded. In that moment the chief census officer, all his colleagues, and the soldiers, flew backwards as if a massive wind had come from nowhere and caught them up. They fell to the ground in a heap. A small dust cloud rose from among them. The crowd was astounded, suddenly more fearful but unable to move. They began asking each other, "What on earth was that?"

In the chaos the young man leant forward and signed his census paper then moved through the crowd, out of the tent, and into the marketplace.

The officers and soldiers picked themselves up and dusted themselves off. The soldiers quickly grabbed their spears, which had been knocked from their sweaty hands, and prepared to defend the officers – and themselves.

Suddenly, all went quiet again. The officer looked down at the papers on his desk. His was the only pile of papers not blown off the table. All the other officers were scrambling to again make order of theirs.

There was a small round, flat stone on the top of the head officer's papers. He picked up the stone in one hand and the paper on the top of the pile in the other. Again he laughed derisively. Holding the paper above his head he loudly proclaimed, "Not only does he not 'ave a name, 'e couldn't have spelt it if 'e did. He's signed e's paper with a cross!"

The two soldiers behind him, pre-empting an order, simultaneously made a move to pursue the man who had humiliated the officers and themselves.

"No lads. It's alright. Let 'im go. We haven't got time for the likes of 'im now. But we know where 'e's from. Mark my words, we'll get 'im."

Sitting back at the table the chief officer again yelled, "NEXT!"

The next man stepped forward.

"What's your name then? And don't even think about being smart," the officer snarled. "So come on then, what's *your* name?"

"It's Judas. Judas Iscariot."

Omega Writers Caleb Award

Omega Writers sponsors the **CALEB award**. This is an opportunity for Australasian Christian Authors to lift up each other's books. Last year's contest focused on published books and we celebrated the results at the in-person conference in Kingscliff. This year's contest is for people with an unpublished (completed) manuscript to enter in categories including adult fiction, young adult fiction, and nonfiction. For details visit:

www.omegawriters.org.au Entries open 1 April 2023.

Who Killed Jesus?

By Lois Farrow

Easter comes again, the season when we remember the death and resurrection of Jesus.

A few years ago Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of The Christ*, raised the question of who killed Jesus. The movie is about life and death, who did the deed and why, and what does that have to do with us.

People feared it would give rise to a wave of anti-Semitism, but the film is not anti-Semitic. It shows mankind's inhumanity to man, regardless of race and creed showing that Jesus did die, and by crucifixion, and it was horrible.

TVNZ screened a documentary by Bryan Bruce—*Jesus: The cold Case*—which considered the question of who killed Jesus. Bruce examined why the popular belief that the Jews were responsible has given rise to dreadful and ongoing anti-Semitism throughout the last two centuries.

So, who did kill him, and why?

Was it the Jews? The religious leaders hated him and wanted to get rid of him to ease their own consciences. They were the ones who handed him over to the Romans.

Was it Pilate? Pilate gave the order for his death and then tried to wash his hands of the affair.

The Romans of course actually crucified him. Crucifixion was their method; they were the ruling authority and they did the dreadful deed.

What about Satan? He thought he could defeat God's plans by having Jesus put to death.

Was it not God the Father, who in the first place sent Jesus to earth for this purpose?

But none of the above actually killed Jesus, although they all had their role. Jesus, the holy Son of God, went voluntarily to the cross and had said time and again, 'No-one takes my life from me; I give it up of myself'. To Pilate he said 'You could have no power at all against me, except it were given to you from above'. He had already died before the soldiers came to break his legs to hasten death.

Which brings us back to the 'Why'.

And this brings it back to me. Because of MY sin, and the sin of the whole human race, Jesus had to die for me to be restored to communion with God again and have everlasting life.

So therefore, I am responsible. I caused Jesus to die. I can't lay the blame on anyone else, or use it as an excuse to hate anyone.

So why is there so much hate, death, darkness and war in the world, especially in the name of religion? Is it perhaps because we have rejected Jesus, the one who rose from the dead and was called the 'Light of the World' and the 'Prince of Peace'?

Let us bow afresh this Easter before God our Father and His holy son Jesus in gratefulness for his sacrifice, love and forgiveness. May we be his 'light' and 'peace' in our world today.

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ASTUTE EDITING

Candice Hume

E: info@astuteediting.co.nz

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.

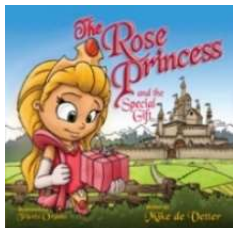
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BOOK ILLUSTRATOR

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.

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CHRISTIAN EDITING

My name is Iola 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.

Iola Goulton

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WILD SIDE PUBLISHING

Demystifying the self-publishing process

Writing a book is hard enough without all the annoying and persistent questions about the next stages of the process (and the costs) buzzing your brain! We get it! Wild Side Publishing can help. Here's all you need to understand the process and costs:

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Visit www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish or [print](http://www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#print) and download the free guide to self-publishing.

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WRITING ANSWERS

I have over 20 years of experience as a copy editor and proofreader. 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 proofreading, science and laboratory technology. I am in my happy place when editing and thoroughly enjoy turning people's prose into award winning documents.

Janette Busch

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or Janette.Busch@gmail.com

FEATHERSTON BOOKTOWN FESTIVAL MAY 10-14 2023

Attention authors who are interested in attending the NZ Booktown festival and sharing a stall with NZ Christian Writers.

This is a marketing opportunity to create exposure for your published work and to promote Christian writing.

Please contact Kathryn for more details:

editor@nzchristianwriters.org

The Thrush

by Greg Maynard

There once was a thrush that I painted
with my brush,
I didn't want to rush or I would blush.
There was a hush as I painted and
painted,
silence was golden as my brush rolled in
the paint, I felt a bit faint.
By now I felt a bit like a saint as time grew
late into the day, still painting away.
If the thrush could walk or talk off the
canvas, what would she say?
Hooray! What a good job you have made
today.
Don't hurry take your time, your work is
sublime.
Someone will appreciate your work and
your time,
Never give up as it's all not in vain, that's
making it plain.
Painting helps one stay sane as no
painting is the same.
Keep trying whether you are sailing or
flying ,
even if you are dying you are loved like a
dove gliding far and high in the deep blue
sky.



Photo by Max Carr

Kina Beach

by Kay Peterson

The mighty ocean on one side
Towering cliffs on the other.
Waves crashing powerfully
on my left
Silent, solid wall on my right,
And I am in between
With stones and shells
on the sand at my feet.
I invite God to join me.
Yes, I know
He is always with me
But today I invite him
To join me at Kina.
Him and me,
Just the two of us
Alone on Kina Beach
With his power and beauty
displayed
All around us.

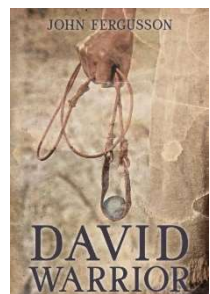
Local Authors Book Fair and Launch

Saturday 13 May, 10:00am – 3:00pm

Franklin Bridge Club, 20 Edinburgh St,
Pukekohe

Book stalls, readings, catering, & launch
of *David Warrior*

by John
Fergusson.



Determined

by Carol Duffy

Determined

You went to Jerusalem.

“Don’t go!” friends begged

“They’ll kill you!”

Determined

You went

Not quietly but on a donkey,
crowds shouting, waving palms.

Determined

You cleansed the temple

“Out with the money changers!

My Father’s house is a house of prayer!”

Determined

You ate Passover with friends

Led them to the garden

Prayed “not my will, but Yours”

Determined

You stood silent

Before your accusers

Didn’t answer or call for help.

Determined

You let them beat you, mock you

Kill you.

But this was your time.

You determined

to do the Father’s will.

Determined

To die

...for me.



Picture courtesy of
freechristianillustrations.com

The Greatest Ever Love Story

(A love story in 100 words)

by Jill Brookes

He saw her, His bride, from afar.

He heard her when she cried, Selah.

From eternities past to eternities ahead

He vowed to raise her up from the dead.

He would bring her through the Refiner’s fire

She alone His passion, His heart’s desire.

He would bring her to that peaceful place

So that if ever the world looked in her face

Reflected back would be His love, and His Grace

He would wash away the stain of sin

Transforming her from deep within.

Taking away the pain and dross

And He would do it all

On Calvary’s Cross.

Jesus!

PENCON, a division of **Christian Editors Association**, is an *interactive virtual conference* designed to connect Christian editors and proofreaders with one another and with other industry professionals. This year it will be held **May 3–5**. PENCON’s twenty-three workshops cover genre specific topics such as editing speculative fiction, fantasy, memoir, and devotionals as well as broader topics such as coaching writers, contract essentials, and social media. Also on the schedule are workshops that focus on the challenges of working from home and the importance of physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Attendees will learn from editors who work for Baker, Kregel, Our Daily Bread Ministries, Elk Lake, Redemption Press, and Proverbs31.org. Several seasoned freelance editing business owners will also share their tips, tricks, and insights.

Writers can gain valuable self-editing skills and insights into the publishing industry at PENCON, which may improve their chances of landing a book contract. We offer you 10% off the \$249 registration fee. Use discount code WGM at the bottom of the [registration](#) page.

Please visit PENCONeditors.com for more information, and contact Denise Look at director@penconeditors.com if you have questions about the conference.

At The Beautiful Gate

By Alan Crosby

Distant thunder rattles morning,
As friends bring these dead limbs,
This bony torso up towards the sacred wall.
I slump back against its chiselled stone,
And ask for charity in a practiced tone.
My cup dangling, baiting something silver,
something, at least, of value.

The haughty singers stand nearby,
While merchants in the courtyard tend their stalls.
The noise of trade picks up like morning's heat,
Seems to swirl about the solemn vocals.
(But my ears are too acute,
my eyes too sharp),
I see behind the sun approaching dark.
The sky is gold and black and blue.

These seekers after mercy, most give no coin.
Clutching turtledoves,
Pulling belligerent goats sensing eternity.
Perhaps my sin was placed upon my legs,
As sometimes in the dust I sense love's comfort.
They leave humbled, but unsure.
I do not think this is the gateway to heaven anymore,
but an elaborate clue.

Yet among the penitent there is money to be had.
Why not take advantage?
In a broken world such brokenness can pay,
And tricks no one.
Can even end the search for some
whose sin has scattered pieces of them everywhere.
I smell the stench of animal fat rising in the air.
The storm comes into view.

On darker days allowing doubt keeps me sane.
I listen to the lyre, lone and tender,
played by young, milky hands.
And let go my rage, like a wound, bleed.
There has been talk of healing.
Once I dreamt that two men came.
One filled my cup with golden seed
that blossomed into something strange and new.
The rain sweeps by, my friends return,
The lanterns and the fires are lit.
I have spoken with the world,
Made observations through the day,
And saw a dove escape,
for a brief while linger foolishly by the gateway.
Then flapped its wings,
Away it flew.

Tips From an Editor

How to Format NZCW Competition Entries

by Janette Busch

In this article I will help you format your competition entries following the instructions provided in each magazine so you will avoid losing marks.

Word processing programs (WORD or Open Office) come with default settings that need to be changed to those specified in the Formatting and Entry Guidelines and Criteria for competition entries.

Page size: Under Layout > Page Setup > Size > A5

Margins: Under Home > Page Setup > Margins. In the dropdown box under > Custom Margins > set the Top, Bottom, Right and Left margins to 1 cm.

Font: Under Home > Font > click on the arrow at the right-hand side of the first box > set to Arial. Click on the down arrow in the second box and change the font size to 10 pt (points). By the way, you can manually insert a number (e.g. 13 point) if the font size you want is not on the default list.

Heading: Use the mouse to highlight the words in the heading > click on B (bold) under Font to change the font style to bold.

In title case all major words are capitalised and all minor words are in lower case. Yes, I know Word wants you to put a capital letter on all words but this is incorrect according to all the popular style guides used worldwide. Note: Major words are nouns, verbs (including linking verbs), adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and all words of four letters or more. Minor words are short (i.e. three letters or fewer) conjunctions, short prepositions, and all articles (the, a and an).

Line spacing: Under Paragraph > Line Spacing in the dropdown box); change to Multiple in the first space and 1.2 in the second space.

Paragraph spacing: Under Paragraph > Spacing > click After > change to 6 pt (points). This paragraph style does not have blank lines between paragraphs.

Indentation: Under Paragraph > change all settings to zero or none

Alignment: There are three choices for Paragraph Alignment in the dropdown box: Left, Centred, Right and Justified. For competition entries use Justified but for any other documents use Left Justified (this stops large gaps appearing between words with larger page sizes).

Spelling: All computers have US English spelling set as the default language so you need to change the default language to New Zealand English. Under Review > Language > Set proofing language. Move the cursor down to English (New Zealand). Click on Set As Default and then OK.

Once you have done this, all new files will be in NZ English but the files already on the computer will not change. To change an 'old' file click on Control + A to highlight all the file. Then repeat the instructions above, beginning at Review, to change to NZ English when saving the file.

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Maungaturoto

Olive Lawson
Christchurch

Peter Anderson
Auckland

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Shelley Frost
Pegasus

Stella Furniss
Snells Beach

Vicki Millar
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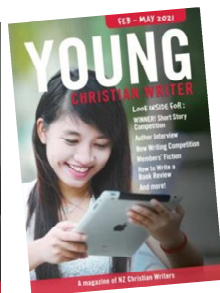
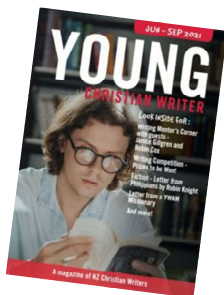
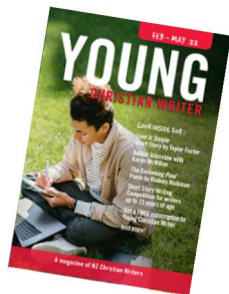
Zita Cameron
Tauranga

All NZCW members are invited to share a Writer Profile and Book Feature(s) on our website.

For details email our NZCW president, Justin St Vincent here:

president@nzchristianwriters.org

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Writing Competitions Points Board

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Rachel Larkin	24	Taylor Foster	24	Ruth Jamieson	15
Chantel Strooh	18	Fiona Murray	24	Jean Crane	15
Robyn Wylie	15	Jill Clarke	24	Lois Farrow	12
Debbie Bennett	15	Felicity Logan	9	Clive McKegg	12
Shelley Frost	12	Sue Shelton	9	Pam Driver	9
				Kathryn Paul	9
				Keith Willis	9

A reminder that Level Three competition prizes are now awarded two times per year.

In each magazine, place getters receive points: 15 points for first, 12 points for second and 9 points for third. At the end of May and 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 Jun-Jul 2023 magazine edition.

All new members begin by 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. All entrants receive helpful constructive feedback via email from the judges.

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: When Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13 NLT), He was not just referring to His crucifixion, He was also reminding His disciples to “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34 NLT). Based on these verses, write a true account of how someone has ‘laid down their life’ for you or another person in some way; i.e. not necessarily physical death. (400 words)

General Comments

I was thrilled to receive 15 noteworthy and well-written entries—even though this made my task of deciding on who should be awarded one of the top three winning places in the competition more difficult than usual. After much reading, re-reading and careful marking, I finally decided to award:

- *First Place to Debbie Bennett for the beautifully told account of how her seven-year-old sister was willing to die for her.*
- *Second Place Equal to Rachel Larkin for her honest account of how her mother gave up so much to help her through a season of ill health.*
- *Second Place Equal to Shelley Frost for sharing about how her father modelled God’s sacrificial love.*
- *Third Place to Chantel Strooh for her nicely-written story of how her husband risked his own life to save that of an unruly child.*

Most of the entrants successfully met all the key requirements of the competition. Loss of marks was generally incurred by making mistakes with grammar and punctuation. However, a couple of entrants lost further marks for deviating from the topic of writing about an event or instance of sacrificial love to writing a devotion or reflective piece, while a couple of others lost marks for exceeding the wordcount leeway of 5% above or below the competition’s stipulated wordcount of 400.

I want to particularly congratulate those entrants who shared at a deeply personal level. I found your testimonies of sacrificial love engaging, touching and easy to relate to because of the credible manner in which you have written them. Establishing credibility with your reader is such an important step to being believed and I hope you will have many opportunities to share your testimonies with others.

First Place



Debbie
Bennett
of
Auckland

When She Gave Up Her Life

I only heard this story 20 years after it happened. I can't believe that someone would willingly die—for me. To die for another is the greatest way to show love for friends, as the Bible says in John 15:13. Family are friends too.

I'm so glad I got to hear what happened from the best storyteller in the family. Dad!

It was the year 2003. I was 14. I needed a bone marrow transplant. My parents worried there'd be trouble finding a close blood match for the transplant, since mum is Singaporean and Dad is Kiwi.

All my immediate family, one by one, had blood tests to determine the possibility of a blood match from blood tests. The trouble is, Dad has a needle phobia. Secondly, my older sister Merran can't stand the sight of blood. They still did the tests. Therefore, I love how they lived out Jesus' final command before he died: "You must love each other, just as I have loved you," (John 13:34b CEV).

The family's blood test results came back 48 hours later. Mum's result was unsuccessful. Dad's result was unsuccessful. My 16 year old sister Merran's result was unsuccessful – she even fainted in the chair. My younger sister Giselle's result: perfect match. She was seven years old!

For blood tests Giselle would hold out her arm straight and strong. When did Miss Bubbly get to be so brave?

Now here's the story from Dad: someone had to tell Giselle what she'd go through for her bone marrow harvest. Mum told Dad "It's your turn."

I picture Dad saying to Giselle, "To save Debbie's life, the doctors will do something called a bone marrow transplant. ... The doctors will need bone marrow, the blood-making factory that's inside your hip bone. There's a needle to get the bone marrow out, but don't worry it doesn't hurt. That's because a doctor will give you anaesthetic. That means *they'll put you to sleep...*"

I see Giselle's narrow chin bobbing up and down, doing her 'yes I'll do it' nod. She fell silent for the next two weeks. Dad was the only one that noticed. He finally asked her, "Honey-girl, you've gone quiet lately. Is something wrong?"

Dad and Giselle talked about the bone marrow procedure. Giselle said, “I’d do this for Debbie, even if I don’t wake up.”

Dad suddenly remembered his words, “they’ll put you to sleep.” It was the explanation for Woofy our dog having to be buried.

That someone would die for you.

Second Place Equal



Rachel
Larkin
of Auckland

In That Moment

A True Account of Suffering and Sacrifice

I knew as soon as the Lego left my hand and flew across the room that I needed help. My toddler let out a shriek with a shocked look on his face. A tiny bump appeared on his forehead as the crying escalated. I didn’t mean to do it, but a roaring rage of despair had seeped out.

I was in a season of survival having given birth to three boys in four years. Yes, you are right, that amounts to piles of nappies, constant feeding and sleepless nights. I love my sons dearly but, in that moment, I wanted to leave this planet for a while. I knew I was in trouble. I was just too tired to function.

I had a dream of a perfect home with perfect children and being the perfect mum. I had placed expectation upon expectation until my stack of expectations resembled the Leaning Tower of Pisa and today was the day the tower leaned a bit too far. I was physically and mentally sick.

An intervention was called and off we went to the doctor. Mental illness was never discussed in my church community. We were taught to put on a brave face and banish all negativity as if it was from the devil. There was no mention of medicating mental illness in the same way we do with physical ailments. Meditating on Bible verses was the prescription. But thank God for Doctor Hanne who explained to me about neurotransmitters. Those little pathways in my brain were overworked and damaged. I wasn’t going crazy, I just needed space to heal.

In that moment, a heroine stepped forward. She was fifty-two years old, working full-time in the banking industry and building her retirement nest egg. She was my mother. Her idea to take leave without pay to help me was a godsend. She sent in the leave request, and we waited. And we waited. I needed help now!

The answer finally came, and it was a no! How could they refuse? Parental leave and looking after whanau were not considered in workplaces in 2001. My mother regarded her mokopuna as precious and worth more than building a retirement fund. She decided to sacrificially lay down her career creating space for me to heal. She came alongside me daily to help during this difficult mothering season. Authentic, practical, and sacrificial love. A gift that I have treasured for decades.

Second Place Equal



Shelley
Frost
of Pegasus

A Legacy

I stood with an arm clasped across my body, holding myself together, and chewed a nail as the paramedics lifted Dad to a stretcher. They couldn't get the foot guard up, making the pain in my chest twist tighter. Should I try to help? I was always an awkward teen and despite turning twenty that uncertainty remained.

"It's okay," Dad said to everyone. "I'm actually pretty tall when you stand me up."

A gulping laugh escaped me because no one got to see Dad upright anymore. He'd been fighting a one-month-to-live diagnosis of cancer for seven months and hadn't been able to walk for a while. The paramedics laughed too, and relaxed, and got the metal bracket in place.

Dad held my hand in the ambulance. I probably should have been holding his, but it felt like the other way around.

"Don't worry," he said. "I'll be fine, but your mum ... you need to take care of her. Make sure she gets home safe after visiting hours. Promise."

"Of course."

A smile lifted the thin skin that clung to his cheekbones. "Take care of yourself too. Go out tonight. Have fun. This is just a simple procedure. I'm an old hand now."

I was out—having fun—the night my father died. I wasn't at the hospital. There were no cell phones then, so I didn't know. Not for hours. And I didn't feel him go. That was wrong somehow. I should have felt that loss. Should have been there. Should have got Mum home.

It's hard to get death right. Too many bad things said and done. Too many good things unsaid and undone ... but Dad broke the mould. He laid down his life long before he lost it. He laid it down for us.

He was brave and cherry and made the nurses laugh so hard the doctor warned us we had to make him understand—he had to realise how serious this was. But Dad always knew he was fighting for his life. He simply protected us from that fight until his last breath.

Grief and guilt. They went hand in hand with me, forming a fresh tangle in my heart, until I saw what was carved on his tombstone.

God is love.

My father modelled that love for us and I'll be forever grateful.

Third Place



Chantel
Strooh
of
Auckland

The Hero

'Three things will last forever - faith, hope and love - and the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13 NLT). Love is an interesting thing. To love is both the easiest and the hardest thing to do.

Loving your spouse on your wedding day, when the air is filled with hope for a lifetime together, is easy. Loving your child when their love for you radiates from every little thing they do, is easy. Loving your best friend who has stood by you through good times and bad, is easy. Loving a stranger and risking your life for them, is hard. This story is about that type of love. The love that truly a selfless person can have. The love that was shown to us by Jesus Christ.

The soft, golden sand of Towers Bay sparkled in the sunshine like a million diamonds. Across the beach were many people basking in the warm December sun, including our family. This was our first trip to Split Apple Rock and we loved it. We were building sandcastles and splashing in the waves, creating memories of a perfect Kiwi Christmas.

Close to us was another group enjoying their day on the beach. They had loud music and unruly kids, screaming at each other from opposite ends of the beach. The large group had a presence that made them difficult to ignore, and easy to get annoyed at. They were receiving glances from most people around the beach with some groups deliberately moving further away.

Everyone's annoyance at them kept growing but came to a sudden stop when one of the women started screaming. Her child was in the water and was in trouble. His hands were helplessly thrown above his head, which bopped under the water occasionally. While everyone was still taking in what was happening, my husband darted across the beach. He dove in and swam into the deep water without a second thought. We stood on the shore, frozen in terror. The child disappeared under the water just before my husband reached him. My heart sank. We watched my husband dive a few times and I could feel myself holding my breath for the child and for my husband. After what felt like an hour, they broke the surface of the water. As my husband carried him out of the ocean, the mother's cries were filled with relief. Relief and gratitude for my hero husband.

Level Two

Judge: Lesley Edgeler

Requirement: Research an invention that people thought impossible at the time in history. Then based on the Scripture, 'With God all things are possible' (Mark 10:27), write about the invention and its inventor (250 words). Now share about something you have achieved for which you initially received opposition. (250 words).

General Comments

Arthur C Clarke's second law of prediction in science reads, 'The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.'(1)

When Marconi demonstrated his radio receiver and transmitter, most intellectuals of the day could see no use for it. (2)

Imagine what today's generation would be without personal computers.

Pointless inventions include the revolving ice cream cone and mini parasols for your feet!

When a Scripture is mentioned in the requirements, it is important to refer to the referenced words as you write. All five contestants did this well. Due to the limited word count for each section of the assignment, be careful to eliminate any unnecessary words. Try to keep your descriptions to the point. Make them clear and concise. Typing out your first draft, ask, 'Is this sentence too long? Will that phrase add to or take away from the impact I want to get across to the reader?'

Although unstated in the requirements, for your research a short bibliography is also necessary.

Personal achievements are always more rewarding when you've had some opposition. In 2004, laid up with my foot in plaster, I started a magazine which I titled, Living Water. One friend told me it would be a wasted effort –it wasn't. The funds raised went towards monthly church dinners for the poor and lonely in our community for over a year.

I received five well-written entries, all with appropriate titles. I placed Jill Clarke's entry first. Her personal application and experience held my attention.

One aspect I concentrated on was the aspect of conflict or opposition. Fiona Murray's description stood out—I awarded her second place.

Taylor Foster and Sue Shelton came third equal. Their entries flowed well due to undivided sections. Christine Platt also entered a noteworthy entry.

It is important to use New Zealand English. Examples used were: 'fulfill' instead of 'fulfil' and 'realized' instead of 'realised.' In New Zealand, we use 's' not 'z' in words such as 'recognise' and 'organise.'

Overall, the entries were well-thought-out and appropriate for this assignment.

- (1) <https://www.newscientist.com.>clarkes-three-laws>
- (2) <http://marconivan.org>artefacts>

First Place



Jill
Clarke
of Wanganui

Microwave Madness

"I quit! Radar could damage my health. It's a monstrosity. The food cooks too quickly and doesn't brown."

The cook, who used a version of the first microwave, expressed fear that is still a factor with some people today.

During World War 2, while researching radar for military purposes an engineer Percy Spencer paused in front of an electronic vacuum tube. This action caused a chocolate bar in his pocket to melt and moved Percy's mind further into invention mode. Trials with popcorn and egg placed in front of the magnetron proved food could be cooked at speed. Marketed in 1947 the monstrosity measuring about six feet tall and weighing 750 pounds was used exclusively in places where quick cooking was required. In 1967 the Japanese development of household microwaves eventuated.

Mark 10:27 says “With God all things are possible.” Here is an example of war weapons being transformed into something useful as expressed in Isaiah 2:4.

With a keen desire to learn Percy Spencer had very little education due to family circumstances. He used every opportunity to teach himself through interest, observation, and nighttime study. Gaining a position with Raytheon from 1925 making vacuum tubes (magnetrons) he found ways to increase the supply to help the war effort. He won a government contract to produce radar combat equipment, and the ‘Distinguished Public Service Award’ from the Navy.

The apparent accident while pausing in front of the magnetrons helped Percy Spencer invent the microwave.

Assumptions

“Have you heard Jill’s getting married?”

“Yes. I believe he’s some alcoholic she’s picked up. She has waited long enough but I wouldn’t wish that on anyone.”

David’s calls to my office were frequent and friendly. I met him when he called for some study material a friend had prepared for his upcoming position. Accepting an offer to dine made me excited and a little nervous. We dined at a restaurant overlooking the harbour. Conversation was pleasant and easy as we related our stories. David, a Christian, had remained sober for four years following treatment. Before leaving his car, he took my hand and prayed. I danced around my flat thanking the Lord for the connection.

Wedding plans were in hand when I received word David was in hospital having suffered a stroke. Specialists had advised against the marriage, giving David only 12 months to live.

The gossip continued.

“That’s it! Jill won’t marry now. She’ll continue working.”

“With God all things are possible” Mark 10:27. We walked up the aisle together holding hands, with David singing quietly to me, “Once you have found her never let her go”.

We prayed and grew through speech impediment, reading, writing and some mobility issues. There were frustrations and joy for each of us learning love our way. We enjoyed 10 ½ years of marriage.

After his heart surgery I was able to confidently allow David to go to be with Jesus our Lord.

“God moves in mysterious ways.”

Second Place



Fiona
Murray
of Lincoln,
Canterbury

Flying High

God is both transcendent and immanent. He is Lord of both the impossible and the possible. What our human minds cannot fathom, our boundless God breaks into the natural world, and we catch a glimpse of the plans he has for creation. The unobtainable becomes attainable. The inconceivable becomes conceivable.

Jesus said, “With man, this is impossible, but not with God. All things are possible with God.” The Wright brothers, Wilbur and Orville, faced what had never been done before. Their mission was to enable what seemed ridiculous at the time – giving people the ability to fly. What a ludicrous concept! But they showed ultimate determination in the face of adversity. There were setbacks and failures, rebuilds of models, smashes and crashes, yet they ploughed on, unphased by the numerous trials and errors.

On occasion, their hearts were discouraged and overwhelmed by the obstacles they faced. They were perplexed and puzzled by the science behind their attempts to fly. What wasn't working? What went wrong with what they had built? Wilbur became so disheartened that he thought they would never fulfill their dream.

They doubted their experiments would resume. Man would eventually fly, but not in their lifetime.

But with determination and great grit, the Wright brothers endured the hardships and finally emerged with the first powered flight. They had achieved the seemingly impossible. They had pushed hard and won the battle. The accomplishment of a new invention.

Thanks to Wilbur and Orville, I can celebrate one of my biggest accomplishments. My ultimate dream was to live in Asia for a period as a missionary. Without the achievement of the Wright brothers, my travel to those far-off lands would have been longer and far more challenging. I am thankful that almighty God entered their world and empowered the two brothers to fight for flight.

However, when my husband and I announced our plans to go, much doubt and fear were thrown our way. Worries and concerns about living in an unknown place began to tip our enthusiasm. People who meant well but did not understand our hearts dampened the initial excitement. They could not bring themselves to share in our calling. Those close to us simply didn't 'get' the dreams we had.

It was discouraging. The courage we had grown was slowly fading. Doubt and hesitation made a home in the depths of our spirits.

But we knew that God was much bigger than the opposition we faced. Our dream of living in Asia was, in the end, realized. We heard his voice above the many voices that had clamoured our attention for so long.

He is an all-powerful, all-knowing, almighty God. He is above and beyond all that exists, yet he chooses us to carry out his work so that all nations will bow at his feet. That's the kind of God he is. Awesome, yet with us. Impossible, yet making things possible.

I'm sure God was smiling when man first learnt to fly.

Third Place Equal



Taylor
Foster
of Tauranga

From the Ground Up

The invention of the powered aeroplane is arguably one of the greatest in history. Aeroplanes provide a way for people to see loved ones across the sea, explore God's amazing creation and offer aid quickly to those who need it. Most importantly, they allow God's message and missionaries to reach across the globe. Doors have been opened that not even the inventors Wilbur and Orville Wright would have thought possible. But as it says in Mark 10:27 (KJV), "With God all things are possible."

The first powered aeroplane took flight on December 17, 1903, in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. It was a 12-second flight, travelling a total of 32 metres. This may seem small but after the countless failures the Wright brothers faced, it was a miracle. Since 1899 they had tested numerous gliders with little success. In 1901 Orville reached the point where he believed that man would not fly "in a thousand years." However, only two years later, starting from the ground up, they succeeded in inventing the powered aeroplane.

The Wright brothers were not trained scientists but were school dropouts and bike shop owners. The man who invented the engine to power the plane, Charlie Taylor, was only a mechanic from the Wright Brothers' bike shop. However, no matter who they were, with God it was always going to be possible. God aided them through numerous failures to create the aeroplane, which, when used right, can spread his love and message around the world.

Opposition can come in many forms. For me, it looked like a giant change, negative memories and fear. In 2019, my family and I made the brave decision to remove me from a public school and place me in home-schooling or a correspondence school. My school experience had been up and down but had reached a crescendo of bad decisions and negative relationships. I was very lost and broken and had strayed too far off my Father's beloved path.

During the four years of home-schooling that followed, I was plagued by many painful memories and choices I had made. In the first years, I was afraid of being alone and my family was my rock. Every day was another that brought tears and doubt as more memories resurfaced. The opposition was big. Moving schools was not only a physical change but also the beginning of my healing journey with God. I was starting from the ground up in more ways than one.

Over time, God began to heal the broken places inside of me and refill my empty heart with his love. Though the opposition I faced during my school shift was great, it had to be faced. The negative memories had to be conquered by God and I together, for me to be well again. Now, at the end of my schooling, I have not only achieved all three levels of NCEA with high results, but through God and Jesus' love and power, I've achieved healing deep in my soul that has changed my life completely.

Third Place Equal



Sue
Shelton
of Hastings

The Persistence to Overcome

The inventor Thomas Edison was an extraordinary person. He attended formal education only for a few months. When a teacher described him as “addled” his mother furiously withdrew him from school and taught him herself¹.

Looking at his early school days, it would have been hard to predict how successful Edison was to become. Thankfully he was blessed with a devoted and loving mother. Not all of us are so fortunate but we all have a loving God who wants the best for us. In the gospel of Mark, in answer to the disciple's question *who then can be saved?* Jesus answers *all things are possible with God* (Mark 10:26,27). I like to think that Edison's mother, a devout Presbyterian, had this in mind when she was teaching her son. Edison became one of the most prolific inventors of all time with over 1000 patents to his name².

We read in Hebrews *let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us* (Hebrews 12:1). Edison certainly exhibited the quality of perseverance especially when working on the electric light bulb project. Other people had been working on this for years unable to overcome the problem of the bulb being consumed by the heat it produced. Edison was the first to create a commercially practical one using principles that are still in use today. His success with the light bulb came about after many unsuccessful attempts. He once said, "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time"³.

My own story of overcoming opposition relates to limitations I imposed upon myself. This did not relate to worldly success but to the struggles that took place in my inner life during periods of depression and anxiety. I had no idea, and did not believe, that these tendencies could be transformed. I supposed I had a depressive personality and was naturally prone to anxiety. It was this false belief that stood in direct opposition to fundamental changes that I needed. Rather than change I sought only to cope.

One of my coping strategies was to seek for deeper spiritual truths. Each time I found something new - yoga, transcendental meditation, gestalt therapy, the list goes on, there would be a period of excitement. I would think "this is it! I've found the key to true fulfilment" but each time it would crumble around me like a house of cards. Until finally a friend took me to her church. Walking in the door I was overwhelmed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Shortly after I gave my life into the hands of the Lord Jesus.

My journey with Christ has led me to realise that I needed to overcome the false belief that I was somehow flawed. I am so grateful that with God all things really are possible, that he can reveal false beliefs for what they are and replace them with the wonderful truth that I am a child of God, made in His image, destined to do the things that He has prepared in advance for me to do.

Bibliography

1. Britannica, accessed February 2023, <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Edison>>
2. Martin V. Melosi, *Thomas A. Edison and the Modernization of America*, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown Higher Education, 1990)
3. *Library of Congress*. "Inventing Entertainment: The Early Motion Pictures and Sound Recordings of the Edison Companies." Accessed 1 December 2016.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Choose a character involved in the Easter story as recorded in the gospels. From their point of view, explain their involvement, what they experienced, and how it impacted their life. (350 words maximum)

General Comments

While the Easter story is most likely familiar to us all, we need to remember that the implications of this stupendous event are crucial to the Christian faith and separate it from all other religions of the world.

There are many major and minor characters involved in this historical event as recorded in the four gospels. This assignment involved choosing one of these characters and recounting the experience from his or her point of view. Biblical accuracy was essential, but it was still possible to use one's imagination and creativity to embellish the story with the character's own experience and emotions.

The chosen protagonist (main character) is in the centre of the conflict and is the focus of the reader's attention. Effective writing 'shows' rather than 'tells'. In this case the writer need not announce who the chosen character is, but it should become obvious as the story progresses as their identity is revealed by their thoughts, dialogue or actions.

This topic obviously had wide appeal as I received eleven excellent entries, including one from a member recently promoted to level three. I was also delighted to receive entries from three male members. Needless to say, judging was difficult.

The standard of writing overall was good. Almost all kept to the required word allowance and followed the correct format. I sincerely hope some of the entrants get the opportunity to share their pieces during the Easter season.

I awarded first place to Jean Crane for her portrayal of Pontius Pilate's unnamed wife. Based on just one verse of scripture, Jean writes a fast-paced, emotional account of a desperate wife trying to convince her husband to release an innocent prisoner – sadly, to no avail.

Second place goes to Clive McKegg for his powerful portrayal of Pontius Pilate's reasoning as he dealt with the enigmatic prisoner on trial before him.

Keith Willis was awarded third place for his entry revealing the extraordinary experience of one of the soldiers involved in guarding the garden tomb.

First Place



Jean
Crane
of Tauranga

Pontius Pilate's Wife

The early morning dream was terrifying. I awoke from this nightmare, drenched in sweat, shocked and horrified. Shadowy images flashed before my eyes of a righteous person about to die at my husband Pilate's hand. I knew I had no option but to interrupt him as he sat in judgement against Jesus of Nazareth. It would be a crime if my husband condemned this blameless person to death. In my agitated state, I sent an urgent message to Pontius Pilate imploring him not to have anything to do with this innocent man, as I had suffered greatly in a dream about him.

It was my husband's role as the Roman Governor of Judea, to keep law and order and to preside over legal proceedings, especially during the time of the Jewish Passover in Jerusalem. I could have stayed in Caesarea, in my comfortable home, but preferred to travel with Pilate whenever I could.

From my position on the terrace, I heard the Chief Priests yelling for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. When Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed the crowd shouted, 'crucify him.' After reading my message, Pontius Pilate called for a basin of water, washed his hands and announced that he was innocent of this man's blood. I was overjoyed to hear he had taken my message seriously, but as I turned away I heard him command Jesus to be flogged, and handed over to the Jewish Leaders for crucifixion.

"Oh my husband, I begged you to have nothing to do with this blameless person and for my sake to leave him alone, but you chose to ignore my warning, condemning an innocent man to death. Were you afraid of losing your lucrative position of Governor if the Jews complained to Tiberius the Roman Emperor, or of the rowdy mob who were calling for Jesus of Nazareth to be killed?"

Whatever your reason, it was wrong, because I know it was God who gave me that terrifying dream message and deep in my heart, I believe Jesus to be truly innocent.

Second Place



Clive
McKegg
of Whangarei

Pilate's Regret

I liked him. I really did. It's a pity they demanded his death. I asked him if he really was King of the Jews as charged. He more or less admitted it, which surprised me. He explained that he was not an earthly king. His followers wouldn't be taking up arms. I could see the possibilities immediately. A nice non-violent king who would settle this rabble with his sweet words and soothing stories would suit me. I'd get recognition from Rome, promotion, and a nice retirement bonus! But it wasn't to be.

He certainly had a kingly bearing. He didn't seem to show any fear of me even with all my great pomp and splendour. He appeared unimpressed and even seemed a bit sorry for me. Then he started to talk about truth – certainly not the topic of conversation of any ruler I know! I left all that behind many years ago.

As I said, I liked him. In another, more innocent age, I could have served a king like that. But that's not how the real world is. Power is my truth.

I did my best. As you know I release a prisoner each year at their feast. It makes me seem generous. And it would have pleased my wife to let Jesus go. By this point it had begun to feel like I was the guilty criminal and he was the innocent one. I thought that if I chose the most evil prisoner – who frightens even them – and put him alongside Jesus, they would see sense and ask for the good man. But no, they chose that murdering scum Barabbas! Whipped up by their pious cold-blooded priests no doubt. So what could I do? I gave the order to crucify him. It felt like some great staged Greek tragedy where we were all unwittingly playing our parts.

I don't know why I'm telling you all this – Joseph of Arimathea was it? So, yes, you may take his body. The captain assures me that he is well and truly dead. We won't be hearing from him again.

Third Place



Keith Willis
of Kaukapakapa

Just an Ordinary Soldier

I am fortunate that I wasn't executed. Not that I did anything to deserve execution. On the contrary, I have always tried to do my duty conscientiously. However I did have to lie about what happened that night, in order to save my life.

As a member of the Temple guard, I was assigned the task, along with several colleagues, to guard a tomb. It seemed like a straight forward job, but it was regarded as very important because the body in the tomb was someone who had claimed to be 'The King of the Jews'. The Jewish religious leaders were worried that the body might be stolen by some of his followers.

I felt flattered that I should be selected to be part of what was considered to be such an important assignment. We were confident that no intruders could possibly get past us to the sealed entrance to the tomb which was clearly visible in the moonlight.

Therefore what possible excuse or explanation could we offer next morning, when we found the stone rolled back and the body missing? I didn't need my captain to remind me that dereliction of duty was a capital offence. I was terrified. I was also utterly bewildered. What had happened? We were experienced guards. Obviously we wouldn't sleep on duty. We all knew the consequences. Had a miracle occurred? Certainly it would take another miracle to save us.

We were summoned to an emergency meeting called by the chief priests. We fearfully attended expecting to be condemned but instead, for their own strange reasons, they proposed to pay us! Yes. They would actually give us money and protection, if we agreed to spread the story that we had all fallen asleep and that the followers of the 'King' had stolen his body.

I live with the guilt of accepting a bribe and of telling a lie. But I also live in wonder that I, a simple soldier, should have had the privilege of being present at, what I subsequently learned to have been, the most wonderful event in the history of mankind.

Competitions for June 2023

Due by 1 May 2023

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%. Stipulated wordcounts have a 5% leeway under or above the required amount. A maximum wordcount has a 5% leeway under the amount.

Level One—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: You have reunited with a friend you haven't seen for a very long time, so you have lots to say to each other. Recreate the scene with plenty of dialogue between you both. (350 words)



Debbie

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Imagine finishing a non-fiction 'How-to' book in your chosen genre. Write a blurb that you intend to appear on the back cover of your book to convince readers to buy it. (200 words)



Cindy

Email entry to Cindy David at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: 'For evil to flourish, it only takes good men and women to do nothing.' Using this statement as a title, write an opinion piece from a Christian point of view for a secular newspaper. (400 words maximum)



Julia

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org



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.