

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2023

THE CHRISTIAN Writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Articles:

Warning! Don't be too Independent
by Christine Dillon

Choose Your Basin by Max Carr

Christian Calling by Adeline Hill-Wu

My Publishing Road by Debbie Watkins

AI Gets Creative by John Lindsay

Tips From an Editor by Janette Busch

Why are People Different?
by Fiona Murray

Book Reviews:

Just a Thought by Alan Davey

Grace's Rescue by Debbie Watkins

Is Jesus Christ for Real?

By George Bryant

Heart to Heart with Rosie Boom
by Rosie Boom

Writing Competitions and
much 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.*

President: Justin St Vincent: president@nzchristianwriters.org

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

For magazine contributions, address changes and membership queries.

Treasurer: For subscriptions, donations: treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org

Join Us! Annual Subscriptions—2 options:

1) Digital magazine: Full membership \$40/Student membership (up to 25yr) \$20

2) Printed magazine: Full membership \$55/Student membership (up to 25yr) \$35

Join us through our website: www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/

Credit/Debit card payment is available online or pay by bank deposit, phone or Internet banking to: NZ Christian Writers, a/c 12 3040 0547346 00, Reference: [Your name]

Book Review Requests: (current members only)

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

286 Karapiro Road, RD 4, 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.

© Copyright 2023

This issue printed locally by

BookPrint.
Making Bookshop Quality Easy

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

The Christian Writer

Aug – Sep 2023

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 40. No 4

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: Worth the Fight – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	WARNING! Don't be too Independent – Christine Dillon
Page 10	Choose your Basin – Max Carr
Page 12	Christian Calling – Adeline Hill-Wu
Page 14	My Publishing Road – Debbie Watkins
Page 15	Book Review: <i>Just a Thought</i> by Alan Davey – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 15	Book Review: <i>Grace's Rescue</i> by Debbie Watkins – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 16	Book Review: <i>Is Jesus Christ for Real?</i> by George Bryant – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 16	Book Review: <i>Heart to Heart with Rosie Boom</i> by Rosie Boom – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 17	Dear Christian Writers – letter by George Bryant
Page 18	AI Gets Creative – John Lindsay
Page 19	My Granddaughter's Fingers – Deborah Bennett
Page 20	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 22	Because He Wants You – Tishani Vann
Page 24	Mini Biography Introducing Level Three Judge, Julia Martin
Page 25	Find a Local Writers Group
Page 26	Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 26	Isaac's Sacrifice – Rachel Jessop
Page 28	Tips from an Editor – Janette Busch
Page 29	Set Apart – Valmai Redhead
Page 29	Why are People Different? – Fiona Murray
Page 30	Writing Competitions Points Board

CW Competitions

Page 31	Level One Results	Page 40	Level Three Results
Page 37	Level Two Results	Page 47	Competitions for October 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



As we step into spring, I'm reminded of the Biblical principle of having a renewed mind. As Romans 12:2 NKJV says: ... *do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* This is the power of having a refreshed mindset. It empowers, encourages and equips us for the challenges and opportunities of life. This passage of

scripture is a reminder that we can all interpret life through the lens of God's Word and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I believe this is particularly powerful when it comes to our writing. Whether we write through the lens of our experience, wounds, trauma or preferences, we can fully rely on God to show us: *'what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'*

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Andrew Stirling as our new Treasurer and Board Member for NZ Christian Writers. In addition, we welcome our new Board Member, Christel Jeffs, editor from Jeffs Editing Services, having formerly edited for DayStar Books Ltd. Our board is excited by these new appointments as they bring fresh expertise and talents to help guide and serve the future direction of NZ Christian Writers.

We also thank Caroline Cook for her diligence and excellence in serving as our Treasurer for the past few years. Caroline and I both endorse Andrew's accountancy acumen and experience with Xero. This will be beneficial to our members as we enter into a new season of growth for NZ Christian Writers. We also farewell the incredible Ruth Linton who will be retiring as a Local Group Leader for Tauranga and her proofreading duties with NZCW from 1 August 2023. Thank you, Ruth for the significant service you've granted to NZ Christian Writers over the years—a true blessing.

Thank you again to our amazing operational team members, including Magazine Editor, Kathryn Paul, Competitions Coordinator, Debbie McDermott, plus our Competition Judges, Lesley Edgeler, Cindy David, and Julia Martin, who all play a remarkable role in helping serve our members by encouraging critiques and support with their competition entries to help improve their writing.

Details about our upcoming competitions are available in this magazine plus our website: www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/

Congratulations again to NZCW member and photographer, Max Carr, who has contributed our front cover photo for this AUG-SEP 2023 issue of *The Christian Writer* magazine. Max noted for us that this is one of the 'three sisters' rocks on the Tongaporutu Beach, north of New Plymouth. Thanks again Max for sharing this photo.

Kia Manaakitia – be blessed and write on.

Justin St Vincent

Editorial: Worth the Fight

by Kathryn Paul



After reading my previous editorial you may be wondering how I've been getting along as the new caretaker of the Redhill Camp. I was blessed to have a YWAM team of thirteen people from Marine Reach in Tauranga visit the camp. These young men and women from various countries were enthusiastic about doing some community help at the camp. They helped by cleaning the men's accommodation, the women's bathroom area and the kitchen. One of the team, a young man named Benjamin, repainted the faded sign that was on the side of the building and did a fantastic job.



Last week my neighbours hosted an afternoon tea here at the Redhill camp for the locals and many of the local farming community attended. It was great meeting them all.

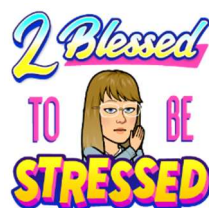
One of the takeaways I've been processing from our NZCW Whitianga Retreat was from Staci McLean's workshop on eliminating excuses. Staci talked about identifying the difference between an excuse and a legitimate reason for not doing something. I realised because of my multiple commitments I have legitimate reasons for why I'm not making as much progress in my writing projects as I would like. The challenge for me is to change my circumstances, otherwise my 'reasons' will always be preventing me from achieving what I would like to do. Little by little I'm making changes with the goal of releasing myself into an improved writing schedule. Expanding our editing team and NZCW volunteer team is part of the solution. If we can spread the load we will all benefit. Please look out for our volunteer requests in case there's a project you are keen to help with.

I encourage our magazine readers to also discern whether your progress is being blocked by excuses or legitimate reasons. Either way, the key is to do something about those obstacles. There may never be the 'perfect' time to write and it may always be an uphill battle – but it will be worth the fight.

With love in Jesus,

from Kathryn

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



Notices

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 by the tenth of the month prior to the publication date.

South Island Christian Book Authors Network

The next meeting is scheduled for 2 September 2023. Meetings are quarterly from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Tenants Lounge, Maurice Carter Courts, 16 Dundee Place, Spreydon, Christchurch 8024. These are specifically offered for those interested in writing a book or who have published a book. For meeting details contact facilitators: Verna McFelin verna.mcfelin@gmail.com and Christine Nathan chris@teamnathan.co

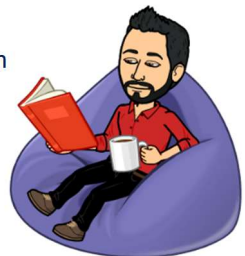
Volunteers Wanted for NZCW Projects

Are you available to help serve NZ Christian Writers? Due to the growth of our membership we need to enlarge our pool of volunteers. One example of a project is our annual book catalogue. This involves data entry, inserting book cover images with their prices and requires good attention to detail. To find out more about this project and other available tasks please contact Kathryn at editor@nzchristianwriters.org.

Warning! Scammer Alert!

The scammers have been at it again. Please remember no one from NZ Christian Writers is authorised to email members asking for money or other forms of help. Check for fake email addresses as the scammers like to pretend to be one of us. Do not reply to the scammer emails; simply ignore them.

Remember Justin will not ask you for help and does not want you to purchase him anything. (Except maybe birthday presents, but he wouldn't ask you for those. Justin when is your birthday anyway?) 😊



WARNING! Don't be too Independent

by Christine Dillon



I have just had another phone call with yet another innocent wanna-be author; another person launching into a new business but being too independent.

Jane* (pseudonym) has written a book and wants to get it published but, like many first-timers, her expectations of having a book published are way out of date. She has romantic notions of a publisher just waiting for her manuscript to drop across their desk.

The publishing world has changed

Most first-timers do expect that the process will be a bit like applying for jobs. You might not find a publisher the first time but eventually someone will greet the manuscript with delight.

The first rude shock is that most traditional publishers no longer accept 'unsolicited manuscripts'. Instead, there is now a middle-person called an 'agent'. They might start applying to agents in the hope that they'll be accepted and the agent will find them a publisher.

I went this route initially but I applied to agents way too early. I should have waited until my book was professionally edited and ready to go. Of the six agents I applied to, four didn't even bother to reply, one rejected my book immediately ("only romance sells") and one gave me a Skype call, but later turned me down.

One of the main reasons that authors want to go the traditional publishing route is they hope that they can just write and the publisher will do everything else for them. This is no longer the case, even with traditional publishers.

Like many first-timers, my friend found the way to traditional publishers blocked as most publishers are busy publishing established authors or they have found big name speakers/public figures and asked them to write a book.

Eventually, Jane thought, "That's okay, I'll just self-publish." This all sounds so simple but most people who say this have no idea what the term really means or that the sharks are out there circling, waiting for just such an innocent to wander into their space.

Too independent

Jane decided to use Google to do her research (at least she realised some research was a good idea). The problem was that she Googled 'indie publishers'. It led her straight into the arms of vanity publishers because she didn't know any better.

The vanity publishers were waiting and willing to swallow my innocent friend and they did. They promised the earth (and probably added lots of sweet flattery), they charged her up front for a package deal, which included editing, cover design, uploading her book to Amazon ... and marketing help.

Some time later in the relationship with the so-called publisher, Jane began to get suspicious and eventually asked two friends for help, including me. One friend told her that she didn't think the editor was doing a good job and I explained that she'd been caught by a vanity publisher and suggested she withdraw from the contract. At the time, she didn't listen to my advice because, like most normal people, she'd been taught not to break a contract for that would be 'going back on her word'. This is something that vanity publishers count on and may be one reason that Christians are particularly vulnerable. Plus, who wants to admit they've been tricked and have made a big (and usually costly) mistake? Eventually, Jane escaped from the contract and only lost the money that she owed for editing. Now she is much more wary but has also had to deal with much discouragement and extra self-doubt along the way.

Mistakes caused by being too independent

1. Jane did not ask for help from more experienced authors. Rather, she thought that she was doing the right thing by not bothering anyone else.
2. She assumed that paying up front was 'how these things are done'. Most experienced authors – especially independently published authors would have told her to run a mile on the first approach of the smiling sharks circling her.
3. When she found one of these publishers who she believed to be legitimate, she did not check with anyone else but used her own judgement and signed a contract.

What should Jane have done?

So many of the mistakes were made because Jane did not ask people who had already self-published. Her reasons for doing this were good, but I know I prefer to give you some advice early on, than see another person fall into the clutches of vanity presses. It distresses me to see how painful the whole experience has been and how much money they've lost.

Jane didn't understand that an 'indie publisher' is the author themselves. That is, there is no concrete publishing house but rather the author project-manages their book from first draft via edits, cover design ... all the way to launch and beyond.

Another thing that would have helped Jane was to do some research on different models of publishing. Even a two minute search would have led her to warnings about vanity presses. There are up-to-date lists of vanity presses.

Jane's research should have included a search for 'reviews' of publishers/agents including looking to see if there have been any complaints about them. More research would have shown Jane that her 'publisher' was charging her for things that she could do for free – like uploading her book to Amazon.

Tips for avoiding being too independent

New authors need to find more experienced authors as soon as possible. You can find them by joining a writing organisation, attending conferences or finding online groups.

1. Join author Facebook groups

One of the strengths of Facebook is being able to join groups. I would suggest that you think about joining different kinds of groups for different purposes. Authors need to understand both the international and their local writing contexts. They might also be lucky to find other authors who write in their genre.

I belong to an international group – [Christian Indie Authors](#) and have found them extremely helpful. Their group is easy to search for past topics. There is always someone to help with any questions about marketing, publishing, writing, certain publishers ... We are also constantly telling people about vanity publishers and to run away from certain 'offers' they've received.

Another group I've heard good things about is [Clean Indie Reads](#).

I belong to two groups that are more local for my context – Australia/NZ writers – as I want to know my local Christian writers ([Australasian Christian Writers](#) and [Christian Writers Downunder](#)).

NB Many authors also belong to readers' groups. Understanding what readers want and expect is also helpful.

2. Consider joining an organisation

Many of the paid memberships include online classes, critique groups.

*[American Christian Fiction Writers](#). The membership gains you access to online classes, advice, and reduced competition and conference fees *Genre specific memberships. Many romance writers belong to Romance Writers of America or similar organisations. *[Omega Christian Writers](#) – This Australian based organisation is much smaller than ACFW but there are some advantages in the small size. They run a conference and are generous with their help and advice.

3. Writers' support group

I also belong to a small group with three other writers. We write in different genres and are at different stages of our author journeys but this group is a prayer support, advice, calming down ... group. The group makes each of us feel less alone. It also allows us to try out ideas and both commiserate and rejoice with each other at the appropriate times.

A writers' group usually develops after you've been networking.

Christine Dillon is a storyteller of Bible stories and writer of Australian contemporary fiction (Mount Taranaki, Stratford and New Plymouth feature in the 6th novel), Biblical-era novels, and Christian non-fiction. To find out more about Christine and read more helpful articles visit: www.storytellerchristine.com

This article first appeared on the International Christian Fiction Writers blog on [18 June 2020](#).



Choose Your Basin

by Max Carr

It was about three years ago that a carpenter from the village of Nazareth, while strolling along the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee, called four young men to leave their boats, their father and their vocation and simply follow him. During those three years they had witnessed many amazing instances of grace, such as water becoming exquisite wine, blindness giving way to sight, a hungry crowd being fed from a meagre supply of bread and fish, and much more. They knew without a doubt that Jesus was Messiah and that he would yet establish his Kingdom on earth. But deep within, the question lingered *“Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”* (Matthew 18:1). The issue of rankings was now evident in their thinking and Jesus responded saying *“...unless you change...”* (Matthew 18:3) *you will not even enter the kingdom.*

This issue of rankings spilled over again when Jesus called aside his twelve disciples and reiterated to them for the third time that his death was imminent. It was in this context that two brothers, James and John, asked Jesus if they could be seated either side of Him in the coming kingdom. This request infuriated the other 10 disciples and in Mark 10:41 we read that *“When the ten heard about this they became indignant.”* The next chapter in Mark’s Gospel (Mark 11) starts the ‘countdown to Calvary’ events including Jesus’ instruction to John and Peter to go on ahead and prepare a room where they could all celebrate Passover together.

How then did Peter and John ‘go on ahead together?’ Remember, one of them was ‘indignant’ and the other, no doubt, embarrassed to some extent. Did they chat about the price of fish in the local market, or was there a belligerent silence between them? Jesus had told them, *As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there* (Luke 22:12-14). Note the words *‘all furnished’* so, in that context, what did Peter and John have to do? It would have included the preparation of the simple Passover food, the laying out of the cushions around the central table and making sure a bowl of water, a towel, and a servant of the household were available to wash the feet of the invited guests. The one thing they overlooked was that very task. We can only speculate, but I wonder whether Peter gave thought to the idea that John should undertake that role himself and bring him down a peg or two.

Jesus and the remaining ten disciples arrived, climbed the outside stairs and entered the upper room. John assigned himself a place at the feet of Jesus and Peter, no doubt, noted that. As the meal progressed, Judas submitted to the promptings of Satan and resolved to betray Jesus and Jesus himself, knowing he was about to endure the agonies of Gethsemane, Gabatha and Golgotha, and then ascend back to the Father, undertook a studied series of events.

He: (1) got up from the meal, (2) took off his outer garments, (3) wrapped a towel around his waist, (4) poured water into a basin, (5) washed the grimy, calloused, gnarled feet of his closest friends (including those of Judas) and (6) dried their feet with a towel. These were the calculated, deliberate steps of a servant. And yet these were also the humbling, meaningful steps of the Son of God, the creator of the heavens and earth. – HE CHOSE THE BASIN OF SERVICE.

Paul expresses it in these terms: “...rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Philippians 2:7).

The supper together concluded, Judas rose and went out into the night. The remaining eleven disciples and Jesus sang a hymn and went out into that same night, crossed the Kidron Valley and on into the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus agonised in prayer but was interrupted by the approaching lanterns of the ‘huntsmen of the Synagogue’. Judas came forward, betrayed the Master and Jesus was then arrested. His disciples fled but Jesus was arrayed before Caiaphas who posed the religious question, “Are you the Son of God?” When Jesus confirmed he was, the High Priest tore his clothes and Jesus was now irreversibly condemned in the eyes of the Sanhedrin. They then arrayed him before Pilate who posed the political question “Are you the King of the Jews?” but, finding no basis for arrest, sought to release him. The Governor’s finding infuriated the hornet’s nest of Priests, and the Apostle John records their reactions thus: “...From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, ‘If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar’” (John 19:12).

Pilate immediately knew he was in the jaws of a trap. If he released Jesus, the news would filter through to Rome within days and Pilate had no doubt he would be tarred as supporting an insurrection in the far flung reaches of the Roman Empire. He surmised he would be summoned to Rome, questioned before the lower Court of Rome and then elevated to appear before Caesar himself. There would then be arrayed against him the compelling ‘evidence’ of the seventy-one members of the Jewish Sanhedrin. They would be a formidable power bloc if he ever got to appear before Caesar. Pilate knew he would be doomed; death within the Colosseum was a frightful possibility.

He realised that day that the consequences of his judgement concerning the alleged ‘crimes’ of this man Jesus would not only determine whether the prisoner would live or die, but would determine his own fate. Acquiescence to the cries that rose from the throats of the rabid mob was clearly the better option, so he called for a basin, washed his hands, pronounced himself innocent and signed the death warrant of that Carpenter of Nazareth – HE CHOSE THE BASIN OF CONVENIENCE.

But now the choice is mine. There is no doubt that numerous choices confront us every day; some reasonably inconsequential, others determinative of the future flow of my life. Do I choose that which is convenient rather than that which is costly? Do I choose a life of service rather than that which will safeguard my own interests?

Joshua had led the people into their land of promise and to a large extent the land was now settled by the tribes of Israel. But in the closing days of his life he assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem and laid out the challenge “...*Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness... But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD*” (Joshua 24:14-15).

SO, CHOOSE YOUR BASIN: that of a life of service, or one of convenience.



“Choose you
this day who
you will
serve, ...but
as for me
and my house
we will serve
the LORD..”
(Joshua
24:15)

Photo by Max Carr

Christian Calling

by Adeline Hill-Wu

This year my husband and I had the wonderful experience of a holiday in Spain and Portugal. Every place we visited has its impressive history and highlights. However, the two God-moment highlights for me were experienced at the stunning Sagrada Familia in Barcelona and the splendid Order of Solomon’s Temple in Portugal.

What struck me was not just the architecture, but that Jesus’s life, ministry and work were painstakingly and artistically illustrated in these buildings, making them come alive — showing and telling the Bible to millions of visitors.



The famous architect, Antonio Gaudi's work in the Sagrada Familia points to his faith and relationship with Yahweh— through the external facades and fascinating interior of this world-renowned basilica. As the crowd moved through this grand basilica, a lady asked, "Why was the curtain torn?" My opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with her popped up — just like that!

In Portugal, the tour guide explained the historical account so enthusiastically. I asked her, "Are you a Catholic, Christian or none?"

She replied sincerely, "I would really like to be one but I am not a believer."

I took the opportunity to share with her that the truth about a loving God is found in the Bible. I encouraged her to read this precious Book and prayed for her, right there! She was touched and speechless. "I certainly will do so," she responded and shook my hand vigorously.

Get the idea? Have a pen? Write for Him. Inspired by a music piece? Praise Him. Bubbling with a creative idea or a testimony? Glorify Him. The list of things we can do for Him continues.

I reflected and wondered, "What is God's calling?"

Jesus tells us: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you."¹ The most important call to us is a call to worship God and to be in fellowship with Him.² Jesus told Satan: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."³ Hence, our first and foremost calling is to worship God — to know Him intimately, to remember who we are and whose we are. Born of this relationship, we are called to partner with God in His work. The Greek word translated "partnership" is *koinonia* — the word normally translated as "fellowship".

We get to tell of His wondrous work in our lives. The whole of Psalm 105:1-25 exhorts us to do that: proclaim His deeds among the peoples (v.1), tell of all His wondrous works (v.2), remember the wonderful works He has done, His wonders, and the judgements He has pronounced (v.5). We are Christ's ambassadors on this side of Heaven.⁴ Our citizenship is in Heaven.⁵ Our job as Christ's ambassador is to tell about our Lord God and His kingdom. It is a privilege, a responsibility, and a high calling.⁶ Jesus said He sent us into the world to be His witnesses: "You are the witnesses of these things."⁷ John tells us: "What we have seen and heard we also declare to you."⁸

Take each opportunity you are given to tell others about our Yahweh and His heart for them. Many people may not know who God is because they have neither read the Bible nor stepped into a church. Others may have a wrong understanding of God.

The account of God's calling to the prophet Jeremiah⁹ emphasises that it is God who calls and equips. Paul described God calling him to his work before he was born.¹⁰ We cannot do this on our own. We need the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit.¹¹

Before Jesus ascended to Heaven, He told His disciples: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."¹² Christians are called to continue Jesus's legacy.

1 John 15:16a, also see Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9 for God's calling.

2: Deuteronomy 6:13, Luke 4:8

3: Luke 4:8

4: 2 Corinthians 5:20.

5: Philippians 3:20a.

6: Philippians 3:14.

7: John 17:18, Luke 24:48.

8: 1 John 1:3a,

9: Jeremiah 1:4-10

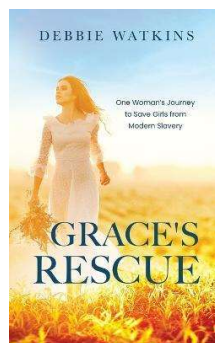
10: Galatians 1:15.

11: Luke 24: 48-49, Acts 1:4.

12: Acts 1:8

My Publishing Road

by Debbie Watkins



My name is Debbie Watkins. I am an English Specialist and Special Needs teacher who has worked with children for many years helping them reach their potential. I have always loved writing and have a special interest in not only putting a face to human trauma but also sharing the love, redemption and deliverance of Christ in the midst of suffering.

I am also a cult child survivor. After discovering in my later years that cult control shares similar vices with human trafficking and, as the result of my own healing, I decided to do some extensive research on the subject. My journey led me to penning, 'Grace's Rescue', which, although a fictional tale, resonates with the many stories of women and girls across the globe who have not only suffered at the hands of brutal traffickers but have also through the cross of Christ overcome a life destined for misery.

I first took to the publishing road by self-publishing my book and only after five years of continuously knocking on the doors of publishers did a door finally open for me. In April of this year my book was published by a traditional publisher, Kingsley Publishers. The novel has just made their bestsellers list. I was also recently interviewed by Rhema Christian Radio and my audience base on Facebook and Instagram is subsequently growing. I am grateful to God for his faithfulness. He has taught me that writing is a journey of much faith and determination and that He will make a way for the message of the gospel to go out and the hope it brings to a broken world through this wonderful medium.

Book Review



Just a Thought

We are what we think.

By Alan Davey

Review by Julia Martin

Self Published with assistance from WordWyz Publishing Ltd 2023

Available from
alandavey@xtra.co.nz

Alan Davey didn't start out as your typical writer. He admits his schooling was unsuccessful and for the next 18 years he worked as a dairy farmer, followed by a career as an employment agent. Later he became an assistant church pastor and since 2017 he has been running a private counselling practice in Morrinsville.

In 2016, Alan wrote a Christian article for Easter in his local newspaper. Seven years later, he has completed 79 such articles.

The aim of his short columns has been to write something for the ordinary person which is worthy of reading and thinking about.

Alan's book is the compilation of these articles containing the practical wisdom and reflections that he has gained from life experience with its successes and failures. The articles are thought-provoking and challenging, and at times Alan shares spiritual insights and truths based on his Christian faith.

His columns are easy to read, often humorous, and he doesn't shy away from difficult subjects.

A sample of his quotes:

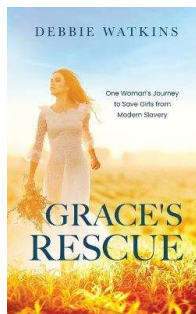
'Our behaviour comes from our beliefs. Changing our beliefs changes lives. Your greatest limitation is the beliefs you have about yourself.'

'A satisfying and fulfilling life doesn't come from what we have but from the attitude we choose to have regardless of what we have.'

'A life of peace is not found in the absence of trouble but in the presence of God.'

As light reading, Alan's collection has the potential, I believe, to educate, entertain and enlighten readers from all walks of life.

Book Review



Grace's Rescue

By Debbie Watkins

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Kingsley Publishers in South Africa 2023

Human trafficking and slavery are not just scourges in the past, because every year millions throughout the world are sold into some form of slavery with little hope of freedom or a decent existence.

In her first Christian novel, Debbie takes us to dangerous places in the world – Colombia, Somalia and India where young people are sold or kidnapped and forced to work as slaves in bonded labour, illegal armies or the sex trade.

Her stated goal is 'to not only expose the causes of pain and trauma in the world, but to also speak of the deliverance and redemption that is found through Christ.'

Grace, the main character, is caught up in a dangerous Colombian drug cartel and is kidnapped by guerilla warlords. She is miraculously rescued and taken to a Christian orphanage where she recovers and finds Christ.

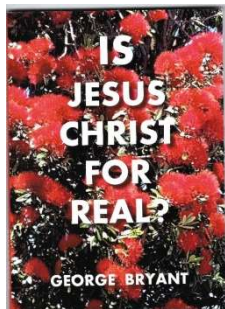
Grace moves to India as a teacher and eventually takes charge of the House of Joy – a shelter for young women rescued from the streets of the Red-Light district of Mumbai.

There she meets Alisha and Esta, both kidnapped and sold into prostitution.

In Somalia, a local girl is kidnapped by a warlord and is forced to join his army.

Aayana is rescued by a Christian aid worker and also ends up working at the House of Joy in Mumbai as a follower of Jesus Christ.

The author's depiction of the grim places and circumstances these characters find themselves in is masterful. Woven throughout the stories is the power of the gospel that dispels darkness and brings hope and joy to those who are oppressed.



Is Jesus Christ for Real?

By George Bryant

Review by Julia Martin

Self Published 2023

Available from
bryantgw@xtra.co.nz

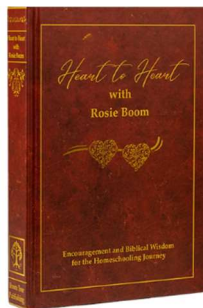
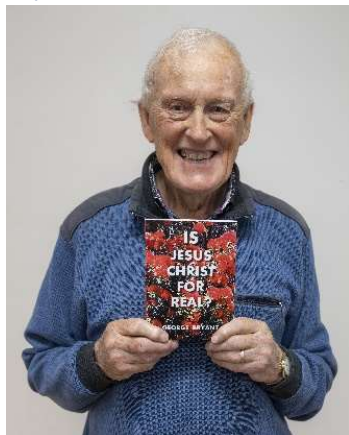
\$10 each.

Well-known and qualified author, George Bryant, has just written his 45th book/booklet and the launch was held in Tauranga in June with 50 supporters present.

George is a passionate follower of Jesus Christ and has dedicated his small book 'To all those people who have difficulty believing in the importance and value of the Christian faith, which is based on the life and deeds of a real, unique person – Jesus Christ.'

George claims Jesus Christ has had a greater impact on human civilisation than anyone else in history, and in his non-confrontational manner, he presents indisputable facts to support his case. He then invites readers to draw their own conclusions as to whether Jesus Christ is for real and if He has any relevance or place in our lives today.

The book is easy to read and George encourages Christians to buy copies to pass on to friends and acquaintances who may not be aware who Jesus Christ really is.



Heart to Heart with Rosie Boom

By Rosie Boom

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Boom Tree
 Publishing 2023

After 23 years, Rosie Boom has finally completed the homeschooling of her six children. Well-known as a speaker, singer, song writer and author of several prizewinning books, Rosie is also a passionate educator.

For many years she has been a guest speaker at H.E.A.R.T conferences (Home Educators' Annual Retreat) in New Zealand where she has enthusiastically promoted homeschooling.

This book comes from her desire to share her wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom to assist parents who are considering homeschooling, and also for parents who have been on the journey – or 'pilgrimage' – for many years.

She writes: 'My goals were to teach my children to love the Lord with all their hearts and minds and souls; develop their characters and help them grow into kind, godly adults; equip them with everything they need to fulfil the plans God had for their lives; and to enjoy my children.'

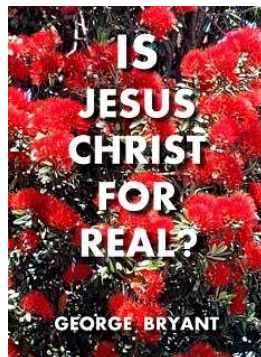
Rosie claims homeschooling is a journey and not a destination. While she passionately promotes homeschooling, she also spells out the downsides – exhaustion, fear of failure, boredom, financial restraints, and the challenge of daily motivating children with no guarantee they will turn out the way we desire.

I regard Rosie's book as a masterpiece for all parents who desire to raise a loving, harmonious Christian family. Her book is a treasure trove of wisdom, sound advice and practical tips drawn from scripture along with anecdotes and stories that teach and enrich learning in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment.

In retrospect Rosie concludes: 'Homeschooling my children has been my magnum opus, my life's greatest work.'

Dear Christian Writers...

I need your help. I would like you to buy several copies of this newly-published book and give one to members of your family and friends who doubt the Christian faith, who think anything to do with Jesus is nonsense.



It's not. I've proved it. I was challenged by an atheist to prove that Jesus was an actual historical figure and that he is still real today. So, I did the research (there's plenty of evidence), wrote it in a language he would understand, free of Christian jargon, kept the size and chapters small so he could put it in his pocket (only 62 pages) and be able to absorb it easily.

Use the book as a tool to reach out to those don't know who Jesus is or are on the fringes of Christianity – much easier than trying to talk them into belief. Be an evangelist!

Who is Jesus? Who did he think he was? How do we know he's real? Was his resurrection real? What influence has he had on humanity? Is he real today? If so, what?

And another thing. It's only \$10 (retail \$11.95). I'm so keen to spread the truth about Jesus I won't even charge postage – my contribution to a better world!

Just send me an email (bryantgw@xtra.co.nz), or message me on 0273146690 or on Facebook. I'll let you know my bank number.

The book was released on June 17 and 150 have already gone. Several people have bought 10 copies, so I gave them an extra one!

Help me – to inform people about the real Jesus.

Love,

George

AI Gets Creative

by John Lindsay

Could AI (Artificial Intelligence) write a novel? A short story? A poem? How would you get it started?

These were the questions the Christchurch group tackled in June when our leader, Dave Palmer, set the exercise: *write a short story (or at least have a go) using ChatGPT or some other AI source.*

Four members tried AI and came to the meeting with the results, including a review of scientific research, short stories and poems.

I was hesitant to get involved with AI because of concerns about the security of the software. In the end I signed in to ChatGPT using my Google account and there were no problems.

My first chat set the task: *Trevor is racing downhill on his bicycle, almost losing control. Write a short story telling how Trevor came to be in this dangerous situation and how he escapes being injured. Less than 400 words.*

Within 30 seconds the software responded with a 450-word story. This result, confirmed on later trials, showed AI is not good at counting words. When I asked for an edited version of 300 words it gave me only 200.

I also discovered that the software picked up the word *racing* in the chat and put Trevor in a cycle race, although that was not what I had intended.

Next, I changed *racing downhill* to *careering downhill*.

Once again the result was too long, more than 480 words, but there was no reference to racing or spectators.

Finally I proposed: *Trevor was a cautious cyclist, but suddenly he found himself facing a perilous downhill mountain path. Write a 300 word short story describing Trevor's escape from disaster.*

This produced another overlong story, more than 440 words, but it created a good sense of fear as this cautious cyclist found himself in a dangerous situation.

The free version of ChatGPT I used is not the latest, so there may be improvements I do not know about. The stories seemed rather stiff in places, the seasons followed a northern hemisphere calendar and words followed US spelling, although it converted to UK English when asked.

Despite my initial hesitation, I enjoyed this exercise and went on to explore a few other ideas beyond the scope of the original task.

My Granddaughter's Fingers

by Deborah Bennett

Maria, my favourite grandchild
Would sit by me
And she'd bounce on her bottom
On my marshmallow sofa.

'Nana,' she said –
'When I'm old, I want to be like you.'
She pointed to my straw basket
Of half-made jerseys,
And messy noodles of wool.
'Look at my hands Maria'
I said,
'And spread out your fingers like a starfish'.
Lifting my left hand to hers
She sat still,
Peering over my knobbly fingers
That would not spread out like hers.
'It is too painful dear Maria, to do starfish
Hands
Or move it
Too much.'

The grandfather clock swung his pendulum
Two measured times.
I told her,
'I just do a wee bit of knitting at a time.
With your strong fingers,
You play that piano so well
You knead dough like your mummy
You make the *best* playdoh flowers!'

'I do what I can now,
My dear Maria, do all you can with your strong hands,
Before you get knobbly old fingers
Like Nana.'
She giggled.



Professional Writing Services

Are you a member who can offer a professional service related to writing or publishing? If so, you are welcome to advertise here for free! Send your advertisement of 100 words maximum to: editor@nzchristianwriters.org

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.

Graham Pedersen: 027 440 5851

E: gpetersen@hotmail.co.nz

CASTLE PUBLISHING

Christian and Family publishing services in New Zealand.

<http://www.castlepublishing.co.nz/>

CAVIT ENTERPRISES

Proofreading and Copyediting Services

I offer assistance to enable your manuscript to be free of annoying mistakes, repetitions, wordiness, etc, so that it can be sent to a publisher as a 'clean' document.

Most genres considered.

Fees to fit your budget.

Brian Cavit Dip Edit

E: cavitent@gmail.com

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

E: igoulton@christianediting.co.nz

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

E: WritingAnswers1@gmail.com

or Janette.Busch@gmail.com

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:

- Submitting your manuscript.
- Proofreading and editing.
- Cover design and text layout.
- Printing quotes for NZ stock.
- Worldwide listing for print-on-demand paperback and eBook.
- Distribution to NZ stores and libraries.
- MailChimp and Facebook targeted marketing.

Visit www.wildsidepublishing.com/get-published/#publish or print and download the free guide to self-publishing.

Ray Curle: 09 439 5717

E: ray@thewildside.net

WORDWYZE PUBLISHING

Assisting Authors to Self-Publish

Services Offered:

- Professional Proofreading & Copy Editing
- Interior Layout and Design
- Cover Design
- E-book Conversion
- Upload to POD services for Global Distribution
- Local Print Preparation
- Photography and old photo retouching

Colleen Kaluza:

E: colleen@wordwyze.nz

Visit <http://wordwyze.nz>

Redhill Camp

Would you like a place to 'get away from it all' so you can write that project you have in mind? Come and write at the Redhill Methodist Camp rugged retreat.



Redhill Camp is quiet and rural, with a 2km beach access to the west coast. It's pet friendly with Wifi available. Suitable for a single writer, couple or small and large Retreat groups.



Contact Kathryn for more information and to book your stay:
editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Check out this Star radio interview!

Follow the link below to a new Radio Interview that was broadcast nationwide at 10:30am on 13 July 2023 with host Lizzie Oakes of Star Radio. This interview was with our NZCW president, Justin St. Vincent who shared the heart of NZ Christian Writers.

<https://www.nzchristianwriters.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Radio-Interview-With-Lizzie-Oakes-Star-Nationwide-230713.mp3>

Because He Wants You

by Tishani Vann

So, today a little girl came up to me, tugged on my sleeve, looked up at me with the sweetest face and asked, “Do you know who God is?”

I was taken aback. Where did that come from?

I had no answer, so I just replied what I had heard.

“God is the good we see in our daily lives. He is seen in our good deeds, kind hearts, and clever minds.”

She had the most puzzled look on her face as if everything I said was complete rubbish.

Perhaps it was.

“But God is a person.”

“Is he?”

Here we go, I thought.

Another one filled with Christian mythology from their parents. But I supposed I couldn't be rude.

“Do you know who God is?” I asked.

She grinned and shook her head softly, the look on her face one of knowing.

She nodded.

So I continued.

“What do you like most about him?”

“His hands.”

She reached out, giving me a demonstration.

Now I was intrigued. What did she mean?

“God has hands?”

She giggled as if I did not understand a basic truth, common knowledge.

“Of course!” she beamed. “How else would he hug me?”

Something came over me that I will never be able to explain in full. It wasn't a feeling nor a reaction.

This was not from me, and I basked in the glory of it. I was smothered by it. And I didn't want the sensation to leave.

I was loved. I just knew it at that moment. It was the only thing that mattered.

My creator loves me.

“He hugs you?”

“Yes!” she squealed, “When I’m sad, he holds me. He makes me feel better. When I’m alone, he talks to me. When I cry, he comforts me.”

A tear rolled down my cheek.

Her statement rang true.

I knelt down to the little girl so that our eyes were level. I took her hands in mine, pleading.

Why did what this little girl understood take me a lifetime to fathom?

“How do I get him to talk to me?”

She shrugged as if the answer was simple – which apparently it was.

“Just ask.”

Was it really that simple?

“How?”

“Just talk to him like you’re talking to me.”

That really was it.

“Oh, and one more thing.”

I looked into her eyes, so innocent. Not hurt by the suffering of this world.

“God told me that he wants to hug you.”

Then she proceeded to give me a hug, and then she was on her way.

I never saw her again.

That’s when it hit me. God is not a philosophical construct. He is not an embodiment of our good deeds.

He is not a concept to be interpreted in different ways by different people.

He is a person – just like you and me.

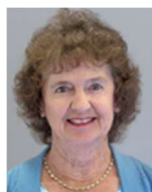
He wants to be loved – just like you and me.

But most of all, he wants to love you.

Come home – why?

Because he just wants to give you a hug.





Mini-Biography

Introducing Level Three Judge, Julia Martin

After attending Dannevirke High School, I completed an Arts degree at Victoria University, and then taught at Upper Hutt College before starting our family of three in 1971. In 1988 we sold our Wellington electronic business and moved to Cambridge where we bought a farm and for many years hosted overseas visitors.

I taught Bible in Schools for more than 30 years and have been involved in a variety of church ministries, including Gideons International. My other interests include gardening, music, travel, and 12 grandchildren.

In 1996 I joined NZCW with the intention of improving my writing skills. I completed NZCW's correspondence course (no longer available) under the tutelage of Arlene Goss; and in 2008 completed a comprehensive 'Writing stories for children' course with NZ Institute of Business Studies.

Entering the competitions proved to be a great impetus for improving my writing ability. I progressed through the levels to the Honours List, and since 2017 have been the level three judge.

I would encourage more would-be writers to enter the competitions to undergo the discipline of attempting set topics in different genre, while keeping to a word limit, format, as well as meeting a deadline date. Judging the entries is a pleasure and a challenge. I enjoy interacting with the entrants and seeing their confidence and writing ability progress.

As a freelance writer, I have mainly produced short stories, magazine articles, plays, poetry and children's literature.

I took on the role of NZCW Book Reviewer in 2015, and since then have completed 100 reviews of members' books for our magazine.

For several years now, I have been a Board member and enjoy working with a team of enthusiastic people using their various giftings to enhance and direct the organisation.

It has also been a pleasure attending many workshops, seminars, retreats and along with our local Waikato group, meeting in Hamilton.

I like the fact that NZCW is both evangelical and interdenominational and that the collective seeks to encourage Christian writers to use their diverse skills in both religious and secular channels for the glory of God. We do well to remember that the power of the written word is inestimable!

Join a Writers Group

AUCKLAND, ELLERSLIE
Sara McGuire
sara.mcguire81@gmail.com

AUCKLAND NORTH SHORE
Ted Woudberg
Mob: (021) 0270 3011
tedw.hbc@gmail.com

AUCKLAND SOUTH
Margaret Paton.
(INTERIM CONTACT PERSON)
margaretpaton@xtra.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH
Dave Palmer
Mob: (027) 209 4864
davepalmer@xtra.co.nz

HAWKES BAY
Debbie McDermott
Tel: (027) 769 2321
deborahmcdee@gmail.com

NELSON
Kay Peterson
(027)-547-6777
kaypeterson4@xtra.co.nz

NORTHLAND
Kathryn Paul
editor@nzchristianwriters.org

Join a Writers Group

PALMERSTON NORTH
Rodney Hickman
Mob: (022) 676 3640
rodneyhickmanpoet@gmail.com

TARANAKI
Judy Kibby
Mob: (027) 712 4390
judydfeetnshoes@gmail.com

TAURANGA
Cathy Harris
Mob: (027) 235 3919
cathy@blueskydata.co.nz

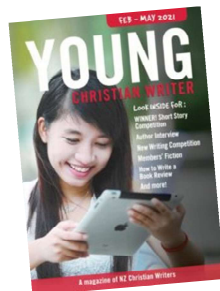
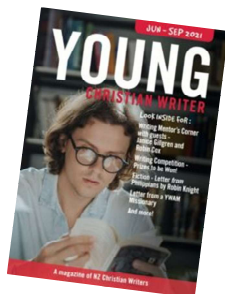
WAIKATO
Colleen Kaluza
colleen@wordwyze.nz

WELLINGTON
Stephen Douglas
Mob: (027) 276 2028
cwhuttvalleybeyond@gmail.com

WHAKATANE
Ruth Jamieson
(INTERIM CONTACT PERSON)
Mob: (027) 279 4184
rrjamieson200b@gmail.com

Join the NZ Christian Writers Group on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters>

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



W E L C O M E New and Returning Members:

Amy Sila

Auckland

Bethany Cammell

Papakura

Heather Brown

Te Aroha

Janice Martin

Huntly

John Bondada

Auckland

Julie Manwell

Tauranga

Kristy Cammell

Papakura

Neil Robertson

Blenheim

Nicky Sims

Porirua

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

Isaac's Sacrifice

by Rachel Jessop

Father – son weekends are always such fun...
One on one bonding time,
Men's talk, guy's food;
What an awesome adventure this would be!

Isaac looked at the donkey carrying the wood
And knew their trip would include a sacrifice –
His Dad always put God first.

But after they'd left the donkey and the servants,
And Isaac was carrying the wood,
He had a question:
"Father, where is the lamb for the sacrifice?"
Abraham didn't look at him.
"God will provide, my son."

Isaac was happy to trust his Dad. www.freechristianillustrations.com
They came to the place and built the altar.
Still no lamb.



Abraham sighed, picked up the rope
(wait, rope?)
And approached Isaac.
"Put your hands together Son."
Abraham bound Isaac's hands together.
Isaac couldn't believe it.
Surely not!

Abraham spoke again,
"Get on the altar my son."
Isaac looked at his Dad –
surely he must have gone mad, crazy;
But he looked quite calm, sane.
(Was that tears in his eyes?)

Isaac found himself getting on the altar.
It didn't occur to him to fight back or run,
Although he could have done either.
His Father got out the knife.
Isaac lay back and closed his eyes:
I must be dreaming.
But I will obey my Father.
Surreal.

His Father had one hand upon him,
One hand high in the air.
Isaac waited for that hand to fall –
But it did not.

His Father stepped back, looking around.
And there behind him was a ram,
Caught by its horns.
(How had they not seen that before?)

Abraham helped his son down
And killed the ram.
Together they lifted it onto the altar,
Taking Isaac's place.

Isaac watched his Father
Complete the ancient worship.
What had just happened here today?

His Father was going to...
Kill him.
He obeyed God that much.
What sort of God requests a Father
To slay his only son?

A God who would do the same.

If we will only see him;
And humbly accept him
To take our place...

Be Isaac.

Tips From an Editor

What to Check in your Final Document

by Janette Busch

Here is the second article about editing your work: the first covered *how* to check your document and this covers *what* to check.

It is *essential* that the final check you make of your document is on the printed (hard) copy. Research has shown that when editing on the computer your eyes can deceive you so you overlook errors. The reason is that as you are familiar with what you have written your eyes don't see any remaining errors on screen. Despite how many times you have read it, your eyes deceive you.

- Carefully check words in tiny fonts – footnotes, etc
- Double check proper names. Double check them even when you are sure they are correct
- Closely review page numbers and table/figure numbers for accuracy and check that they are in the correct order
- Check that landscape pages have the page number in the correct place on the page
- Check the words in captions for tables and figures
- Check that illustrations and diagrams are the right way up
- Check for spelling mistakes, missing and/or repeated words
- Double check little words: *or, of, it, and is* as they are often overlooked
- Check for inconsistencies in terminology, capitalisation and verb tenses
- Check for spaces between words
- Check for punctuation – take care to apply commas correctly and (nearly always) remove the “American” comma before the last item in a list
- Check that abbreviations are written out in full the first time they are used
- Check that bullet points and numbers are used correctly
- Take at least **four** passes through the document, each time checking for something different; do one check for spelling, another for missing/additional spaces, consistency of word usage, font sizes, etc
- Remember to permanently remove any editing Track Changes markings from the final document

This is the last of my five articles on editing tips. I hope you have found them helpful, and will end up paying less for copyediting and proofreading because your work is so ‘clean’.

Set Apart

(reflection on NZCW retreat)

by Valmai Redhead

My heart heard the call
'Come'
so I responded
with eager anticipation –
travelling, meeting, connecting
listening, absorbing, processing
tiring yet joyful

excellence not perfection
write from the heart
trample the distractions

word upon word
line upon line
ascending
to a climax
of identity –
who I am
not what I do

then as the rains fell and the wind blew
whipping up anxiety and concern

inside my spirit was quietly transformed
worshipping
standing on holy ground
knowing deep within
I am set apart
for the ministry
God gave to me.

Why are People Different?

by Fiona Murray

I was sitting in front of our first fire for the winter, mesmerised by the flames and quietly asking myself, why are people different? My thoughts turned towards the refining fire of God. God is constantly refining us with his holy fire. Our character, personality, dreams, strengths and weaknesses – He is moulding us to be more and more like Him.

God is high above our comprehension. He is perfect. His character is perfect. His nature holds many facets. Facets that will never be understood by the limitations of the mind. As human beings, we reflect His infinite features. There are those who walk with justice held high. There are others who are merciful and compassionate in a needy world.

There are people who speak great words of wisdom and knowledge to those who need to hear God’s voice. There are individuals who encourage and bring people together to complete a task. Some are called to take care of and shepherd His people. Some exhibit a deep sense of creativity through art, music and drama.

These examples are but a minuscule demonstration of God’s character. When you observe a group of people, you see how God has wired each of them so differently, to show the world who God truly is. God is inexhaustible. God is immeasurable. That is why people are so different. As a whole, we can testify to the image of the one who created us.

And so it is with the refining fire of God – He is honing us every day, so that one day we will be in perfection with Him.

Writing Competitions Points Board

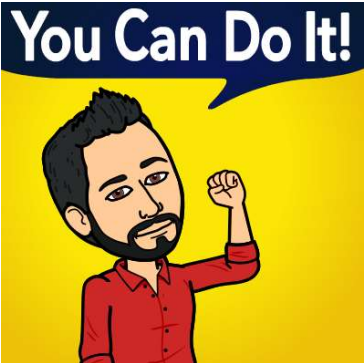
Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Elaine Dixon	15	Rachel Larkin	15	Jean Crane	15
Shelley Frost	12	Felicity Logan	12	Keith Willis	12
Julie Collins	9			Ruth Jamieson	9
Stephen Douglas	9			Janet Fleming	9

We are halfway through the year and the Points Board has been reset back to the beginning for all three levels.

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 vouchers. Our next prize winners will be published in the Dec 2023 – Jan 2024 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.

Please note published competition entries have not been edited.



Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Writing in the first person, put yourself into the shoes of a lesser known Bible character and tell the story of an event that happened in their life. Ensure you remain true to the facts while using your imagination to fill in the unknown. (500 words maximum)

General Comments

I was very pleased to receive 13 entries. All but one of the 13 entrants successfully met the first two key requirements of the competition—which was to write in the first person point of view about an event that happened in the life of a lesser known Bible character. This required using the Bible and other resources if necessary to research the facts concerning the character they chose to write about, and then using their imagination to fill in any unknown details whilst remaining true to the facts. Congratulations to the 12 qualifying entrants for doing this so well. You all made an excellent effort and your entries made for some interesting reading.

*The third key requirement was to ensure the number of words used did not exceed the **maximum** wordcount of 500 words. Unfortunately, four of the qualifying entries did exceed the maximum wordcount and this negatively impacted their overall score and placing in the competition. Do remember that the word ‘maximum’ means you can be up to 5% below the stipulated wordcount, but if you exceed it by even one word, you will lose some valuable marks as a result.*

Sadly, the 13th entrant was disqualified because their entry did not meet any of the requirements of the competition. i.e. Their story was not about a Bible character; it was not told in the first person point of view; It was 29% below the stipulated wordcount of 500 words maximum (we only allow a leeway of 5%); and it was on a controversial subject that Scripture does not endorse. While I was unable to accept this person’s submission as a valid entry, I have provided them with feedback that I hope they will take onboard. It is absolutely vital to ensure you understand what the competition requirements are and that you follow them if you are to avoid being disappointed. Deviating from the requirements to such a degree also makes marking and critiquing entries difficult for the competition judges.

Once again, well done to the 12 qualifying entrants for giving this competition a go, and congratulations to first, second and third place equal winners, Elaine Dixon, Shelley Frost, Julie Collins and Stephen Douglas.

First Place



Elaine
Dixon
of Tauranga

No Longer a Slave

I am a free man! Yes, that's me, the slave Onesimus! That is, I am no longer a slave in spirit. Since I met the Saviour, Jesus, I am no longer bound by the sins that used to enslave me. But now I have to live with the consequences of my wrongdoing. I robbed my master Philemon then ran away from Colossae to Rome where I thought I would never be found. I hated being a slave and became bitter and resentful of the hopeless life in which I felt trapped. It seemed that running away was the only answer. But God knew where I was and he had other ideas. He led me to Paul, who patiently showed me the way to freedom through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Since meeting Paul, I have realised that it is wrong for me to stay here in Rome. I am still a slave, even though I am free in Christ. Paul is very wise as well as kind. He has offered to write to Philemon, whom he also led to the Saviour, and ask him to take me back. I don't know what this means for me in the future. Philemon has every right to punish me severely for running away but I must obey my new Master, Jesus.

I have really loved being a helper to Paul by serving him in prison and would much prefer to stay here. Paul seems to appreciate what I do for him too. It is interesting that my name means 'helpful' and that is what I have become. I certainly was not very helpful to Philemon as a slave. I was too resentful of my position and so, so bitter. When Philemon reads the letter from Paul that Tychicus and I will take to him, I do trust he will forgive me, just as the Lord Jesus forgave us both.

Going back to Philemon will mean that I can join the church that meets in his house. I know Paul has written a letter to them also. I wonder how the believers there will treat me. Do they know that we are all equal as followers of Christ? However, I have no right to expect that I will be treated as a free man. I am prepared to work in the most humble position because I know I am free in my spirit, serving God as my true Master.

I am so thankful to be free from the sins that enslaved me before. Bitterness, pride, resentment and anger no longer have a hold on me. I will commit myself into my Lord's hands, for he is faithful and just in all his ways. He led me here in Rome, even using my rebellion to bring me to himself. So I know he will continue to lead me as I journey back to Colossae with Tychicus.

Second Place



Shelley
Frost
of Pegasus

Abigail

I always disliked panic but was trembling as I rode, carrying the fate of so many on my shaking shoulders. *Lord, be with me. Please. Why is my husband a fool?*

My donkey entered a gully without fear, even when the growing stamp of marching troops echoed from the walls ahead. David, son of Jesse, was close and coming for blood. I looked up the slope and the silhouette of a tall warrior stopped at the sight of my caravan. More armed men reached the ravine's crest to surround him.

I slid from my donkey and bowed but David said nothing, so I knelt pressing my forehead to the stony ground.

He approached, footsteps crunching against gravel while his scabbard slapped his leg and metal gleamed. His shadow covered me. My shoulders hunched. Was Goliath's sword about to take my head? Had I failed?

I looked up and a young man stood over me, his dark brows knotted in a frown. I swallowed but he already wore greatness like a cloak and my heart eased. Inspiration flowed as God gave me the words I needed. Our feast was accepted and we were spared.

I rode home with a song of thanksgiving on my lips and slept without stirring.

When the sun rose, I rose with it, to choose a worthy sacrifice. I tapped the warm fleece of a lamb and he obediently followed his shepherd away. I did my duty too, shaking my husband awake where he sat slumped among scattered goblets and food.

I told Nabal everything.

He lifted his head from the table, trailing saliva like dew. "WOMAN! What report is this? Do you steal from me?" He rose further, bracing his elbows on either side of a golden platter to chew on his anger. "Explain yourself. Or go, with only the clothes on your back."

"We'd have less than that if David hadn't protected us. Yet you insulted him and denied what was owed."

My husband growled while staggering upright.

I shifted to place the table between us. “Yesterday, his men marched this way to take what they wished, including your life.”

Nabal’s gaze narrowed in protest but I nodded. He clutched his chest. His skin mottled and he fell like an axe to crack the table. Time stopped, along with my heart. What had I done?

No, this was no doing of mine.

My pulse stuttered and I was finally moving, racing around the tilted table to minister to my husband. I pressed steady fingers into the rolls of his neck. A harsh pulse lurched against my hand like the striking of a distant gong. Yet he lay unmoving, as hard as stone.

Ten days passed while I tended a statue. Until he gasped and my searching fingers felt that ragged heartbeat stop.

I thumped back onto my stool and closed my eyes.

Widowhood would surely be challenging, even dangerous, but I was not without protection. *Please, walk with me, Lord. Now and always.*

Third Place Equal



Julie
Collins
of Whakatane

Man Overboard

“Granddad, tell me about the time you threw a man overboard.”

I was happy to retell this true story. I had retired as ship’s captain, having spent many years at sea. My bonfire, lit at sundown, was crackling joyously. I loved this spot on the beach and time spent with Sotiris.

“Well Sooty, we were sailing in a violent storm. The wind was ferocious, and lightening flashed everywhere. The waves were taller than trees and my crew were terrified. I worried about my ship sinking so I gave an order to throw cargo overboard. The crew and I prayed earnestly to our gods for rescue, but nothing happened.



Pictures from www.freechristianillustrations.com

I remembered we had a Hebrew passenger aboard and I went into the hold to find him. I could not believe he was sleeping, so I shouted above the noise of my creaking ship, "Get up and pray to your God to spare our lives." Meanwhile, my crew were casting lots to find out who had brought curses upon us and identified the culprit as this Hebrew. His name was Jonah. Jonah had boarded in Joppa and was disembarking in Tarshish. He told us his God, called Yahweh, was the Lord of heaven and everything on Earth. Yahweh had given Jonah a job to do. But worryingly, he decided to run away in the opposite direction! We asked him why he had disobeyed his God. Jonah replied, "The People of Nineveh were not worth saving." I could understand why he said that. The Assyrians were barbaric and cruel people.

The storm worsened. We asked Jonah "What should we do to stop this storm?" Jonah admitted the storm was his fault and said, "Throw me into the sea and it will become calm again."

We did not want to do this at first. We rowed harder towards land, thinking this man will surely drown if we chuck him into the sea. Eventually, we cried out to his God, "O Lord, don't make us die for this man's sin and don't hold us responsible for his death." Then we did as Jonah said and threw him overboard. The raging sea suddenly calmed. Then a massive fish, twice as big as our ship, swam passed and gobbled Jonah up.

I thought this was his punishment for disobeying God. As our voyage continued, I noticed rowdy songs changed to songs of praise to almighty Yahweh, our saviour. No longer did my crew fight. There were no deaths aboard the ship. We gained a reputation for delivering cargo in timely, perfect condition and, we enjoyed spreading the news at every port about the greatness of Yahweh.

The story did not end there. We learned that the massive fish spat Jonah out three days later, back at Joppa. I don't know how he survived. Perhaps he died and came back to life after being vomited up. Jonah delivered the Lord's message to the Ninevites. They were saved from Yahweh's wrath and became peaceful and trustworthy people."



Third Place Equal



Stephen
Douglas
of Lower Hutt

The Unnamed Relative

As the sun begins to rise over the ancient hills of Bethlehem, little do I realise that today will be significant in shaping the destiny of a particular family. Approaching the town gate, Boaz calls out to me.

I come and sit. Boaz asks about family before saying, with conviction in his voice, "Do you remember the man Elimelech and his wife Naomi, who left here during the severe famine? Well, they settled in Moab and had two sons. But while there, he and his sons died, leaving Naomi widowed. Later, Naomi heard that the LORD was blessing Judah with much food, so she decided to return. Ruth, one of her daughter-in-laws, vowed to follow her wherever she went and return too. Now today, the land belonging to our relative Elimelech is for sale, and as the closest kinsman redeemer, you have the right of redemption."

Surprised, I reply "I will redeem the property".

But next, Boaz tells me, "You realise your purchase of the land also requires you to marry Ruth to keep the family name."

"Then I can't redeem it," I reply, "Because it may endanger my own estate."

As I speak my words, I become aware that I am turning down a fabulous field. At the same time, I recognise the significance of the moment: by choosing to release my claim, I am giving Boaz the opportunity to care for Naomi and to marry Ruth. The townspeople already speak of Ruth's gleaning, and it is clear marriage is the next thing.

So, as the redeemer, I take off my sandal and say to Boaz, "You may buy the land."

With the elders and those gathered at the town gate as witnesses, Boaz replies, "You are witnesses. Today I'm buying from Naomi the property belonging to Elimelech and his sons, Kilion and Mahlon. Along with this, I agree to look after Naomi and take Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, as my wife."

The crowd applauds Boaz, saying a blessing: "May the LORD bless Ruth, who is coming into your home, and make her like Rachel and Leah, from whom the nation of Israel descended! May you prosper and be famous in Bethlehem."

Sometime later, I am at their home, entrusted with the sacred task of circumcising Obed. A reverent hush is present as I hold the child. Amid prayers and blessings, I carefully carry out the ritual in accordance with Jewish law.

During a lull, Boaz approaches me and says, "It is a joyous occasion for both of us to witness Obed's circumcision."

Reflecting upon my actions that day, when I chose not to become the family redeemer, I am happy. I don't mind being the unnamed relative who enabled Boaz to fulfil that role. I'm pleased that Ruth chose to come to Bethlehem, providing the means for Boaz to father a son. And like the woman of the town on the day of Obed's birth, I say, "Naomi has a son again," and Boaz smiles.

Level Two

Judge: Lesley Edgeler

Requirement: Chiasms are an integral concept in the Book of Psalms. Study the structure of Psalm 46 and explain (200 words including the Bible translation). Now write your own Psalm incorporating the chiasmic structure. (Maximum 12 lines)

General Comments

So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him. (Genesis 1:27a NKJV).

Biblical chiasms are perfect because they have been created by God Himself.

Chiasms usually form an X pattern.

The Proverbs 31 woman features several chiasmic structures, as do other Psalms and even some of Solomon's writings.

Each contestant was required to explain the structure of Psalm 46. This Psalm can form many different chiasmic patterns.

I received two well-researched entries.

I awarded first place to Rachel Larkin as she endeavoured to follow all the requirements of the first section which was to explain the chiasmic structure of Psalm 46. In doing so she explained that a chiasm can also 'form a circular pattern by using repeated words or concepts.' Her Psalm follows an ABCBA pattern and is appropriate to our current concerns as a society.

Second place goes to Felicity Logan who concentrated more on the Hebrew language and appropriate metaphors with which the writers include ‘invitations to pause for necessary reflection’. Her Psalm forms an AA¹BB¹ B¹BA¹A pattern. Felicity describes current conditions and exhorts us to reflect on certain things.

Both contestants were very brave to tackle such a difficult topic and need applauding. Very few points between them determined the outcome.

- *In the Gospels, shorter, more succinct chiasms are found; for example Matthew 23:11-12 “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (NIV).*
- *Repetitions can be included in different word forms: humble, humbled, exalt, exalted.*
- *Repeats are a unique feature of Scripture.*
- *Themes such as worship, prayer, praise and salvation are major elements of Biblical chiasms.*
- *In other chiasms, a whole paragraph or chapter of Scripture may form the entire chiasm. Given there is always an intersection of two tracts forming the letter X, a chiasm can be successfully written.*

First Place



Rachel
Larkin
of Auckland

Psalm 46: A Chiasmic Structure

A chiasmic structure follows a circle pattern by using repeated words or concepts. Psalm 46 seems to follow a “ABCACBA” structure using the Revised Standard Version. The “A”, “B” and “C” are groupings of similar themes or the use of repeated words.

The “A” section starts in the first verse with the phrase stating God is our refuge and strength. The psalmist inserts a similar phrase in the middle at verse 7, “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge”. This phrase is paralleled in the last verse creating a club sandwich effect. The parallelism reveals the focal point of the psalm.

The B section flows into verses 2 to 5 and encourages a response from the people to not fear even if nature quakes. Verse 10 picks up the same need for a helpful response by exhorting the reader to be still and know God.

The C section straddles verse 7 with an intense tone describing the raging nations, tottering kingdoms, and God's voice in verse 6. Then after the declaration of "the Lord of hosts is with us", verses 8 to 9 reflects on the works of the Lord in connection with the raging nations and tottering kingdoms.

God is our provider;

he supplies what we need beforehand.

Therefore, we will not be concerned though interest rates rise,
though there is no money in our purse.

The homeless are increasing; there seems to be no end to poverty.

Father God provides for us;

he is the Source of all things.

See the birds of the air, how God cares for them.

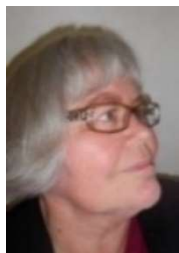
He knows the number of hairs on our head.

Stop counting the coins; start praising him instead.

Father God provides for us;

he is the Source of all things.

Second Place



Felicity
Logan
of Feilding

Insights into Psalm 46

"Tree of Life" version, a recent English translation directly from Hebrew.

Written language has recognisable patterns. Scriptures's psalms incorporate praise, principles (even prophecy) frequently carried via patterns.

The Hebrew language distinguishes chronologically only between “completed” (Past) and “not yet complete”. So when we look for tenses, narratives may appear to backtrack or leap confusingly. Thus a psalm may mention an event (“A”), rewind to past contributors to that (“B”), rephrase components (“B¹”) before returning to the “big picture” (“A¹”) That portion has an AB B¹ A¹ structure – a Chiasm which balances and emphasises key elements. Metaphors (bow, spear, chariot) relate big issues to the everyday. Invitations to pause for necessary reflection (“Selah”) are frequent.

In prayer, Jews address God as Adonai (a super-intimate relationship). Psalm 46 reminds us that Adonai-Tzva’ot (The Lord of Hosts) is in control, leads angelic hosts and is the believer's stronghold. Despite cataclysmic events there's no need to fear, because he is Adonai Elyon (God Most High) who will be exalted.

Peace, not fear! The psalmist mentions a river like that in Revelation chapter 22, with twelve kinds of fruit for food, and leaves for the healing of the nations. That's Peace!

A Song of Hope

For all humankind, a Song of Hope for God's coming kingdom on earth.
But first we must endure physical calamities of many kinds;
First experience disease and the destruction of what holds society together;
First see the erosion of godliness even within the established church.
– Think on that!

One thousand years of peace will be ushered in by Yeshua Christ's return;
One thousand years without war, pain or tears;
One thousand years for all those living to acknowledge God and learn righteousness.
-- Take a rest and imagine it!

Then you, Lord, will destroy evil as you prepare your new heaven and earth.
You will open the Book of Life – is my name in it?
– Think on that, too!

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: From the Bible, choose a young person (named or unnamed) who witnessed a miracle. Allow him or her to tell their story in a format suitable for readers aged 8 to 12 years. (250 words)

General Comments

As I've mentioned previously, writing for children is not as easy as it may seem. Reading is no longer a regular pastime for many young people and so books have to compete with all kinds of other devices and distractions which don't always require much effort or concentration.

On the other hand, children enjoy the sensational, spectacular, and even the supernatural.

The Bible is full of such stories and incidents involving miracles – defined as an act or event that breaks the laws of nature and is therefore believed to be the result of direct intervention by a supernatural force – in this case the God of the Bible with whom nothing is impossible.

This was a straightforward assignment. The writer had to choose a miracle from the Old or New Testament and describe it from the point of view of a young eyewitness and then write the account in a format suitable for readers aged 8 to 12 years. The language needed to be uncomplicated but engaging, and with a limit of 250 words every word had to count, so editing was crucial.

I was thrilled to receive ten entries, several from members who have just been promoted to level three. Judging was difficult. I looked for an eyewitness account that was 'scintillating' and stood out from the other entries. Several entries were rather bland. While they recounted an incident involving a miracle and were well written, they lacked passion and enthusiasm. Three entries exceeded the required length by too many words, so sadly lost marks.

I awarded first place to Jean Crane who surprised me by writing her account in poetic form. This required more effort and the result paid off even though her rhythmic beat (8,6,8,6) was inconsistent in several verses. Second place went to Keith Willis with his intriguing first sentence which drew me into his story. Third place equal went to Ruth Jamieson and Janet Fleming.

My thanks to all the other entrants and I look forward to your future entries.

**Check out page 46 for Level Three judge,
Julia Martin's own contribution to this
writing assignment.**

First Place



Jean
Crane
of Tauranga

God's Awesome Food Miracle at Zarephath

***My stomach felt so hungry
There was little food that day,
My throat felt dry and thirsty
But the rain just kept away.***

It hadn't rained for ages
No clouds were in the sky,
The land was dry and dusty
I asked my Mother, "Why?"

She said, "There is a famine
And all the crops have failed,
There isn't any water
To fill our drinking pail."

"Come help me gather up some twigs,"
My Mother said to me.
"So we can use the oil and flour
And bake a cake for tea."

While gathering up the little sticks
A man asked Mum for bread,
"We've very little oil and flour,"
Was what my Mother said.

"My son and I are gathering sticks
To cook our food today,
The final meal that we will eat
Before we pass away."

Elijah was a Man of God
He said, "Do not be afraid,
Just do what I have asked you to
Let mine be first that's made."

I took the twigs and lit the fire
While Mum mixed up the cake,
We did just what the Prophet said
A little loaf did bake.

Then something awesome happened
A miracle I'd say!
The oil and flour filled the jars
And never went away.

The oil just kept on running
The flour was always there,
Mum cooked a lot of food cakes
For everyone to share.

AND
I saw this awesome miracle
Every single day!
YES
Every single DAY.

Second Place



Keith
Willis
of
Kaukapakapa

My Day of Fame

I don't remember the first part of my story because I was dead!

The first thing I remember was sitting up and finding I was in a box up in the air. I was being carried by four men and there was a big crowd of people round me, including many of my neighbours. A man with a beard and very kind eyes had his hand on my shoulder. He helped me out of the box and put me into my mother's arms. She was crying but I didn't know why.

It wasn't until we got home that I was told what had happened. Apparently my heart had stopped beating during the night and my Mum had found my dead in my bed. She was totally distraught. My Dad had died not long ago and now she had lost her only child as well.

My Mum was well known and loved, so when the time came for my funeral nearly everyone in the village joined the procession to the cemetery. We had just got outside the town gate when a man stepped into the road and stopped the procession, much to the annoyance of the leaders. He told the mourners to stop crying and then he stretched up, touched the coffin and ordered me to get up.

That was when I sat up and found out where I was The man was called Jesus and he had been travelling around performing miracles. I was one of them! I'm alive! I'm even famous!

Third Place Equal



Ruth
Jamieson
of Whakatane

Jehovah Jireh

"Mum, the prophet Elisha is coming into town."

"Oh Josh, I wonder if he can help us."

I turned away. 'Would he?' It seemed God had abandoned us. Hadn't He allowed our father to die? My younger brother and I had tried to help Mum, doing whatever jobs we could—but it was never enough.

"Can you find your brother then we will go and see the Prophet?"

Prophet Elisha stepped aside as we approached him.

Mum cried out. "My husband is dead. You know he served Jehovah. Now the debtors are coming to take my two sons as slaves."

"Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

"Sir, I have only one small pot of oil left."

"Go to your neighbors and borrow as many empty containers as they have, then go into your house with your two sons and shut the door. Pour the oil out until all the containers are full."

We hurried on home and did as the prophet had said.

Mum shut the door and poured her one jar of oil into an empty jar, then another and another until there were no jars left.

"Josh, bring me another jar."

“They are all full Mum.”

Then the oil stopped flowing.

Tears of joy filled our eyes as we looked in amazement at the full jars surrounding us.

Now we could sell the oil and pay our debts. God had provided for us.

“Thank you, Jehovah Jireh,” I shouted.

Third Place Equal



Janet
Fleming
of Kaeo

He Used My Lunch

“Mum! Have you heard what happened?” James asked, rushing into the house carrying a basket of bread and fish.

“Why are you carrying a basket of bread and fish? I only gave you five loaves and two fish!”

“That’s all part of the story! Let me tell you.”

“I went to see Jesus. There was a crowd. Lots of people were there. Jesus made the blind people see, the deaf hear and the lame walk. He talked about God. He told us that if a person gives to God, God will give back to him.”

“But how did you end up with more food than you took?” Mum asked.

“It’s like this,” James continued. “It was getting late in the day and people were hungry. Andrew, one of the disciples of Jesus asked me for my lunch. I gave it to him. Jesus told the people to sit down. He prayed and thanked God for the bread and fish and then it just kept coming!”

“What do you mean?” Mum asked.

“Jesus turned my lunch into enough food to feed everyone and when everyone had eaten there was some remaining. He told the disciples to gather up what was left over and He gave me some.”

“I’m proud of you James. You gave your lunch to Jesus and He fed all those people.”

“That’s right, Mum and I didn’t miss out. I had a good feed and I brought some home for us.”

The following story is judge, Julia Martin's example for this assignment.

The Red Sea Miracle

by Julia Martin

"Oh no. We're trapped!" I cried. With the Red Sea ahead and the thundering clamour and dust of the Egyptian horses and chariots charging behind us – there was no escape.

"We're doomed!" shouted a man nearby. 'It's a cruel joke. Instead of dying in Egypt, we'll all die here in the desert.'

Terrified, I buried my head in my father's cloak and wept. "Don't be afraid Son. Remember all those miracles God performed back in Egypt. We must trust in our God. He will not fail us."

Under God's instructions, Moses stood up on a rise, raised his staff and stretched out his hand over the sea. A strong east wind blew and the sea began to ripple and churn and then parted in the middle. Great walls of water arose either side of a dry pathway and our vast crowd of people followed Moses to safety on the other side.

The Egyptian army followed in hot pursuit, but their chariot wheels got stuck and they made no progress.

When the final Israelite reached safety on the other side, God told Moses to stretch out his hand once more and the walls of water came tumbling down, drowning the entire Egyptian army. There were no survivors.

Our people shouted and cheered. We feared the Lord and placed our trust in Him and in His servant Moses. It was a miracle beyond belief and would never be forgotten.

We were free at last and on our way to the Promised Land!



Picture courtesy of www.freechristianillustrations.com

Competitions for October 2023

Due by 1 September 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: Research the origins of Labour Day. Then write an article on its benefits from a Christian viewpoint and include a concise bibliography listing two to three sources from which you got your information. Your bibliography must be no more than 15% of the wordcount. (400 words, including the bibliography.)

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org



Debbie

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Choose an old photograph. Write a short story inspired by the picture. Include a photo of the picture with your story. (500 words)

Email entry to Lesley Edgeler at level2@nzchristianwriters.org



Lesley

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a letter to a young Christian friend or relative who is about to embark on a course of study at a secular university, advising him or her how to gain a qualification without compromising their faith and trusting in God and the Bible. (250 words)

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org



Julia



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.

www.nzchristianwriters.org