

JUNE - JULY 2025

THE CHRISTIAN writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Upcoming Christian Writers Events

Books & Blooms

14 June 2025, Gordonton

Book Launch – Eco-Incites

14 June 2025, Auckland

Tauranga Christian Writers Weekend

4-6 July 2025 Tauranga

Book Reviews:

Road to Belonging by Lynne Leppard

Noah's Story by Paul Christian

Articles including:

NZCW Retreat Report by Kathryn Paul

The Life Book (Gideons International)

by Kathryn Paul

North Shore Christian Writers Report

by Ted Woudberg

Poetry, Notices, Celebrations,
Competitions and more!

A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



Mission: *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

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

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

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 and donations: treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org

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- 1) Digital magazine: Full membership \$50/Student membership (up to 25 yr) \$30
- 2) Printed magazine: Full membership \$75/Student membership (up to 25 yr) \$55

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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.

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Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St. Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: Write Up! – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	NZCW AGM Minutes 2025
Page 8	NZCW AGM 2025 President's Report – Justin St. Vincent
Page 9	NZCW Retreat 2025 Report – Kathryn Paul
Page 20	Book Review: <i>Road to Belonging</i> by Lynne Leppard – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 20	Book Review: <i>Noah's Story</i> by Paul Christian – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 21	<i>The Life Book (Gideons International)</i> – Kathryn Paul
Page 22	Book Launch Invitation: <i>Eco Incites</i> – Phillip Donnell
Page 23	Fire from Heaven – Clive McKegg
Page 24	North Shore Christian Writers Report – Ted Woudberg
Page 25	Blind Bartemaeus – Lesley Edgeler
Page 26	Songwriting DIY Column – Part Four – Felicity Logan
Page 26	Let's Celebrate – Your page to share your successes or milestones
Page 27	Anagram or Acronym or Acrostic? – Kathryn Paul
Page 28	The Rhythm of Falling – Stephen C Douglas as Kiwi Poet
Page 29	Event: Join Tauranga Christian Writers for an Inspirational Weekend
Page 30	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 32	Testimony – Leslie Kistan
Page 33	South Island Christian Book Authors Network – Verna McFelin
Page 34	Join a Writers' Group Near You
Page 35	Write a Book Hands-Free – Kathryn Paul
Page 36	Stay Connected Abide – Stephen C Douglas as Kiwi Poet
Page 37	Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 37	Writing Competitions Points Winners

Competitions

Page 38	Level One Results	Page 46	Level Three Results
Page 42	Level Two Results	Page 51	Competitions for August 2025

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



Welcome to our Jun-Jul 2025 edition of *The Christian Writer* magazine. THANK YOU so much for the fantastic time we all shared together at our Retreat 2025 with NZ Christian Writers. We were truly blessed by the brilliant insights, wisdom, and encouragement from our speakers: Vicki Millar, Murray Smith, Sina Steele, Chris Bovill, Rachel Weston and Peter Anderson.

Any retreat is not complete without plenty to EAT, so our bodies were nourished by the incredible menu curated by Jennifer Darling Retreat Catering.

For those who would like to learn more about our Retreat 2025, Kathryn Paul has included a full report featured in this edition of *The Christian Writer* magazine. Based on the phenomenal feedback we have received from our attendees, the positively overwhelming sense is that our Retreat 2025 was EXCELLENT, making it our BEST one yet! Thank you to all of you who also shared in our Movie Nights, Games Night, and Talent Night; what an incredible group to host at the beautiful Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga. My prayer is that each of our members continues to be blessed by NZ Christian Writers and, once again, we thank you for your ongoing support for our mission.

In addition, Kathryn did a brilliant job in chairing our AGM 2025 and has included the meeting minutes from our AGM 2025 within this magazine. I'll include this important note from my President's Report read at the AGM 2025: *'As we look to the future, our board will be focused on a season of succession planning. Noting my time isn't done yet; however, as we approach September 2026, I would have completed my ten years serving as president and will be anticipating welcoming the next president within the next 18 months or so.'*

If you feel that God may be tapping you on the shoulder to help serve NZ Christian Writers at board level, do feel free to reach out to me or any of our current board members to learn more. I believe this will be a season of renewal, where NZ Christian Writers can go from strength to strength. Thanks to the leadership of our board members, we are in a strong financial position that offers security and stability, while at the same time being positioned for growth into the future.'

Rest assured that I'm not going anywhere! I can see myself preparing a smooth transition for the next president and stepping to one side to still be involved with our board. If you would like to serve at board level and possibly look at the role of president for NZ Christian Writers for the next season, I invite you to email me here: president@nzchristianwriters.org.

Thanks again to member and photographer, Elaine Dixon, for the beautiful photo featured on the front cover of our magazine.

Be blessed

Justin St Vincent

Editorial: Write Up!

by Kathryn Paul



During April 2025 I shared a testimony in a private Facebook group regarding a difficult experience I've been through. The membership of the group is over 8000 Christian mothers. I was able to bring a story about great difficulty, God's provision and a happy ending. It was only a matter of minutes before I began to receive comment after comment from Christian mothers all around the world. They responded with gratitude to my words, which gave them hope while experiencing their similar situations. The post received over 200 reactions and over fifty comments. I expect many more mothers in the group read the testimony and didn't respond but still received some hope from my words.

There's a lot of negative and unhelpful content through social media. My example above, is one of the wonderful ways it can be used to make a positive difference. After reading my testimony, many Christian mothers were encouraged to take up the sword of God's Word and wield it actively in prayer, with renewed hope for their families. Praise God, that's so powerful!

Learning to use social media can pose a challenge for our senior generation, but it's worth the effort. I commend all who have taken courage and made progress with this. During our NZCW retreat in Whitianga I spent a bit of time attempting to assist my roommates with their questions around using Facebook. We took a humorous photo of our puzzled/stressed expressions. I'm sure I earned a few more grey hairs, because I found doing it for myself is a bit easier than explaining it for someone else. But it was worth it and I was pleased to see that one of the writers who I helped was already making some sales online before she arrived home. This was thanks to her learning how to share an Amazon link on her Facebook author page.



I encourage all who are writing for the Lord, whatever genre it happens to be, your writing is and will be powerful in God's hands. We, as Christian writers, are making a difference. If we don't speak up or 'write up', to help others, who will?

The more of us there are who write, the more God can take our writing into the far corners of the world to reach and help those who need to hear it. Let's pray for and support one another in our calling to write for Jesus. Together we can reach people all over the world. 'Write up!'

With love in Jesus,
from Kathryn

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

Notices

Creative Writing/Article Writing Submissions Wanted Please

You are invited to send your relevant contributions for our magazines, *The Christian Writer* and *Young Christian Writer*. See page two for details and email to editor@nzchristianwriters.org.

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>

South Island Christian Book Authors Network

Meetings are quarterly and are specifically offered to those interested in writing a Christian book or who have published a book. For meeting details contact facilitator: Verna McFelin at verna.mcfelin@gmail.com.

Raising Godly Mothers Magazine

If you are an older mother who would like to write an article for future issues of *Raising Godly Mothers* or if you are a young mother who is struggling, please contact Shing at rgm@rgm.co.nz. For information or to subscribe to the magazine visit: www.rgm.co.nz

Warning! Scammer Alert!

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 scammers' emails; simply ignore them.

Books & Blooms Event in the Waikato 14 June 2025

Ladies, you're invited to join us for an inspiring afternoon as authors share their stories. Paint your own floral notebook and shop for books and giftware to your heart's content. Afternoon tea included. 14 June 2025, 1:30-3:30 pm at Eastwest College, 21 College Drive, Gordonton, Waikato. Tickets: \$20 per person. Visit www.bit.ly/booksandblooms.

To locate and read past magazine issues visit www.nzchristianwriters.org/magazines and click on the relevant magazine cover.

AGM MINUTES 2025

NZ CHRISTIAN WRITERS | 42nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Flaxmill Retreat Centre, 1031 Purangi Road, RD 1, Whitianga 3591

On Sunday 4th May 2025, 9:05 am - 9:30 am

Chairperson: Kathryn Paul chaired, Justin St. Vincent took the minutes.

Apologies: Janet Fleming, Andrew Stirling, Julia Martin, Janette Busch, and Christel Jeffs

Minutes: from AGM 2024 read by Kathryn Paul

The chairperson made a motion that the AGM 2024 Minutes be received.

Moved by: Justin St. Vincent, seconded by: Kathryn Paul

Financial Report: received from Andrew Stirling, read by Kathryn Paul

ASB Balance at 04/05/2025 \$11,381.20. 296 members at present.

The chairperson made a motion that the Financial Report be received.

Moved by: Kathryn Paul, seconded by: Justin St. Vincent

President's Report: read by Justin St. Vincent

The chairperson made a motion that the President's Report be received.

Moved by: Justin St. Vincent, seconded by: Kathryn Paul

Board Update: All Board Members/Officers of NZ Christian Writers to be re-elected:

Election of Board Members:

President: Justin St. Vincent

Nominated by: Stephen Whitwell, seconded by: Iola Goulton

Vice President: Janet Fleming

Nominated by: Sara-Jane McGuire, seconded by: Sandy Miller

Treasurer: Andrew Stirling

Nominated by: Justin St. Vincent, seconded by: Debbie Bennett

Magazine Editor & Membership Secretary: Kathryn Paul

Nominated by: Justin St. Vincent, seconded by: Kay Peterson

Book Reviewer & Level 3 Competition Judge: Julia Martin

Nominated by: Sandy Miller, seconded by: Althea Barr

South Island Representative: Janette Busch

Nominated by: Kay Peterson, seconded by: Jennifer Somervell

Board Member: Christel Jeffs

Nominated by: Kathryn Paul, seconded by: Sara-Jane McGuire

Board members to stand as above.

Close: AGM closed with prayer by 9:25 am



AGM 2025 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Thank you for joining us at our 42nd Annual General Meeting for NZ Christian Writers. We are delighted to yet again be hosting our AGM at Flaxmill Retreat Centre here in Whitianga. This would be the fifth time we have hosted our Retreat at Flaxmill and during this time we have been encouraged, equipped and inspired to pursue our passion for writing and our love for Jesus.

For those who may be new to NZ Christian Writers, we are a vibrant community of close to 300 members nationwide. Our collective includes authors, bloggers, editors, lyricists, poets, publishers, songwriters, storytellers and writers. Our mission is: Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand, with a vision of encouraging and inspiring Christian writers throughout New Zealand. Five key areas of our service to the Christian writing community are: competitions, local groups, magazines, seminars and retreats. Members frequently tell us these are the areas that help serve them the most in their writing and publishing journey.

It is an absolute pleasure and privilege to be serving as President for NZ Christian Writers and a blessing to work alongside our board members who help to guide the way for our collective. I've often shared that our board members are the guiding lights for NZ Christian Writers and want to extend my heartfelt thanks for their insights, wisdom, and support. At this AGM, I want to take the opportunity to thank each of our board members: Janet Fleming, Kathryn Paul, Andrew Stirling, Julia Martin, Janette Busch and Christel Jeffs.

As we look to the future, our board will be focused on a season of succession planning. Noting my time isn't done yet, however, as we approach September 2026, I would have completed my ten years serving as president and will be anticipating welcoming the next president within the next 18 months or so. If you feel that God may be tapping you on the shoulder to help serve NZ Christian Writers at board level, do feel free to reach out to me or any of our current board members to learn more. I believe this will be a season of renewal, where NZ Christian Writers can go from strength to strength. Thanks to the leadership of our board members, we are in a strong financial position that offers security and stability, while, at the same time, being positioned for growth into the future.

My prayer is that each of our members continues to be blessed by NZ Christian Writers, and once again, we thank you for your ongoing support for our mission.

Be blessed,

Justin St Vincent, President, NZ Christian Writers
AGM 2025 President's Report
Sunday 4th May 2025

Retreat 2025, Flaxmill Retreat Centre, Whitianga

Report by Kathryn Paul

The NZCW Writers Retreat feedback overall rating of 9.8 out of 10 speaks for itself of the wonderful time we had together in Whitianga. There were speakers, workshops, great meals and fellowship. For those who couldn't make it, we've shared some of the content here for you.



Flaxmill Accommodation

Day #1: Thursday

After arrivals and settling into our five-star accommodation, the Retreat Programme began with a warm welcome from our NZCW president and Retreat M.C, Justin St. Vincent. We enjoyed our catered evening meal and, later, popcorn was served for the movie *Mom's Night Out*.

Day #2: Friday

Breakfast was available from 8 am and the programme started at 9 am with NZCW magazine editor, Kathryn Paul bringing a devotion. Friday's devotion focused on the scripture, *Commit your works to the Lord...* (Proverbs 16:3.) Our first workshop session then began with Vicki Millar.

Session One: God's Gift of Story – Vicki Millar

God gifted story from the beginning. Understand the power of story. The world is waiting for your writing.

1. What is Story?

Character/s and a situation where events occur, choices are made and consequences result.

2. How and Why God has Gifted Story

God has wired our brains to respond to stories as though we are living them. (Neural Coupling/Empathy). It's a safe way to learn about the world and our place in it. Through our imagination we can learn from the choices and consequences of stories.

Fiction: It's not real but we respond emotionally. Non-fiction and memoir really happened, and we respond emotionally as if it's happening to us.

3. Story in the Bible

The foundational story is God and humanity. Creation – fall – salvation – restoration. Consider the question: Does this decision have God's smile on it? The Bible is about real-life Bible characters. Jesus told fictional stories (parables); for example *The Prodigal Son*. Identity story – God's Word tells us about ourselves.

4. Story in our Daily Lives

Situations, events, choices, consequences.

5. What this means for you as a Writer

Fiction: What is the God purpose in your story?

Non-fiction: How can you use story to strengthen the impact of your teaching?

Memoir: What is the important God-message in your story? The main point you will leave people with?

6. You the Writer

What stories are you telling yourself about you as a writer?

7. What will your writer story be?

Joyful productivity? Published – helping others? Or – writing dreams unfulfilled? Time slipping away – frustrated and stuck. If you're not making the writing progress you want, what will you do differently going forward?

Vicki offers writers her 'Accelerator Program' – why? Because gifted writers aren't writing and because the enemy discourages writers. On Vicki's 'Accelerator Program' a writer can follow a proven pathway and get fully back on track.

We paused for a morning tea break then returned for another great session with Vicki Millar.

Session Two: How to Structure your Story – Vicki Millar

Curating your audience's journey using the '4S Simple Structure Formula'. This provides structure for fiction, memoir and non-fiction. The better we understand how our readers will respond – we can better structure our story.



You are taking your audience on a rollercoaster ride.

Beginning: establishing expectation for the reader.

Middle: ups and downs.

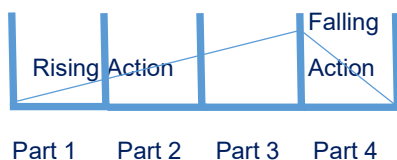
End: coasting into the end.

You need to be able to zoom in on details and zoom out on your scene. Zoom out to see the big picture structure.



Justin St. Vincent and Vicki Millar

Introducing the 4S Simple Structure Formula



Using the 4S Simple Structure Formula with Fiction:

Part One

Setting out the problem. Who, what, situation? Why do I care? Problem being faced.

Part Two

Starting to try and solve the problem but making stumbling attempts. The character doesn't know what he/she is doing yet. Often there's a lie-belief stopping them.

Part Three

Stepping up to battle. Taking responsibility. Conflict – internal or external.

Part Four

Solving the problem and going to the next level. How will life be different now?

For a sequel or trilogy – what newer, bigger problems have been created from the first story? The 4S Simple Structure Formula is a helpful tool, like a skeleton for the writer to develop their unique story on. Examples: *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, *Moana* – Disney, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen.

Using the 4S Simple Structure Formula with Memoir:

Use the four parts, above, to shape a real-life story. Get clarity on 'what is my main point?' What is the main God-message?

Using the 4S Simple Structure Formula with Non-fiction:

As above. Examples: Parenting, homeschooling. *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. *The 4-Hour Work Week* by Timothy Ferriss.

Vicki invited some attendees who were having difficulty with structuring to share their stories. Here are some of the tips she gave us:

- Wherever you're at is the best place for the next step for you.
- Bullet point events and dates of the event, then put them in time order.
- Are you telling a story to make a point? Or are you making a point and using a story to help with it?
- What is the main message? Write a draft of the back of the book blurb to help you with clarity.
- Get comfortable with knowing that what you've written so far is not what you're going to finish with.
- Vicki's mantra: DRAFT ONE – GET IT DONE.

After some free time and a lovely lunch together, we gathered again for Session Three to hear our second speaker, Murray Smith.



Session Three:

Finding my Writing Lane – Murray Smith

Thank you to attendee, Brian de Vetter, who provided us with his notes in the form of a mind map.

Notes are on the right in the mind map.

Psalm 45:1 ...*My tongue is like the pen of a skillful writer.*

After the break we joined Murray Smith again for Session Four.

Session Four: Writing to Reach the Unreached – Murray Smith

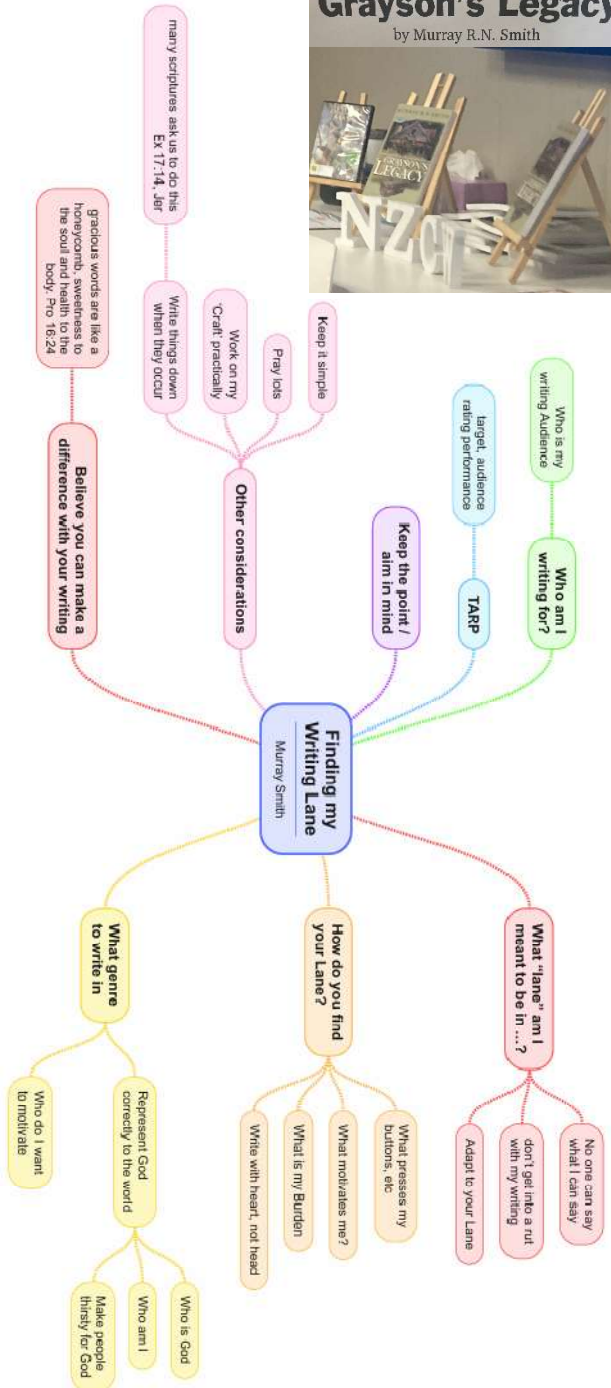
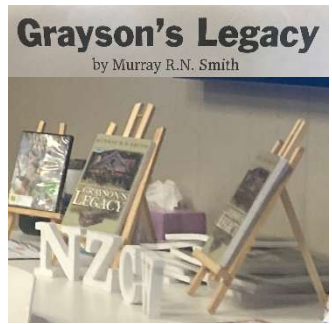
...*My pen is the voice of a skilled orator...*

Global literacy has increased. Thirty per cent of books are eBooks.

We write to relate.

Tell His story in an understandable and relatable way.

The challenge is to seek to be relevant and relatable.



Reveal

Engage

Look up

Ask questions

Teach

Emphasise



Murray Smith and Justin St. Vincent

Present truth in relevant ways. Write authentically. Avoid Christianese/jargon. You can use current events; for example Jesus does this in Luke 13:4.

REVEAL: Don't be so obtuse that you forget the source. Be direct – reveal the source.

ENGAGE: Practise empathy and wisdom, genuine care and gentleness. Avoid going for a 'slam dunk'. Instead, be prepared to take time and go for the long haul. Seek to anticipate the questions people are wrestling with.

LOOK UP: Observe the culture carefully. 'Lift up your eyes...' John 4:35. Discern the times. Respond prophetically.

ASK QUESTIONS: Provoke a deeper thought level. Recognise real roadblocks versus excuses, to faith. The goal – a personal faith journey. Relate to people one on one and it will help with relating through writing.

TEACH: Write as if coming alongside. Avoid judgementalism, rather, intreat – never belittle. Teach using stories.

EMPHASISE: The essentials. Writing is like sowing seeds. Keep the main thing the main thing. Your writing can bring comfort. You may not see the results. God gives the increase. Eccl 11:1, 1Cor 3:6-8, Isaiah 54.

After the day's four very informative sessions attendees enjoyed free time before the evening meal. After dinner and dessert some played board games, such as Scrabble, and then another movie was available to watch called *Beyond the Mask*.

Day #3: Saturday

Once again, the programme started after breakfast with a devotion brought by Kathryn Paul. Kathryn shared the testimony of leading her 95-year-old, tough atheist father to the Lord. She emphasised the scripture from 1Cor 13:8, *Love never fails*. Justin then introduced our next guest speaker, Sina Steele.

Session Five: Psalm Writing – Sina Steele

Sina's name means 'mustard seed'. She has a love for languages and writing psalms and poetry. Here are some points from her session.

- The Psalms: Can name emotions. We resonate with the human experience. Honest outpouring is okay.
- Experiencing distress – not running away from God but to Him. Example Psalm 13:1-6.
- We are God's poem. (*Poeia*)

Sina began with personal journalling. She began to share online and her words travelled around the world. She received positive responses from others. She put aside ten minutes a day to write a book. Poetry came out. She has now published a collection called *Flourishing* and another book entitled *Soul Scribbles*.



Writing Tips:

- Pray. Invite the Holy Spirit to bring inspiration.
- Embrace vulnerability. Be authentic. Use your unique voice.
- Write without editing. Let your pen and imagination flow.
- Write for an audience of One, the One who created you.
- Be rooted in scripture.
- Let everything you create be for God's glory.

As part of Sina's workshop, we took ten minutes to be alone and write. The prompts she gave us to choose from were: personal experience, thanksgiving, creation, lament, praise and personal prayer.

After morning tea, we gathered again to hear Sina speak about social media.

Session Six: Social Media – Sina Steele

It's helpful to equip ourselves to use social media effectively with platforms, our content and online design tools. Sina's Facebook page is called *Her Mustard Faith*. Sina has over 60,000 followers and her books have reached other countries.

Here are some of the points Sina shared with us.

- New Zealanders highest usage of social media are on the platforms Facebook, Messenger, then Instagram. Younger users are also on Tiktok. Kiwis average use is two hours a day on social media.

- Social media is important for writers. Writers need to identify which platforms to use – there’s many available.
- Marketing through social media is a way of communicating with people about your book. That’s what social media provides – an opportunity for connection and to build trust.
- Which platform to choose depends on who your audience is. I suggest you pick one or two relevant ones that will work for you.

Strategy

What are my goals?

Who is my target audience/s?

What are my competitors doing?

What’s my unique selling point (USP)?

What are my calls to action (CTA)?

What kind of content will I share?

On which platforms? When?

How will I track/measure results?

Audit – where am I at currently with my social media/digital presence?



Sina Steele and Justin St. Vincent

Content Creation

Content Streams can include devotionals, quotes, storytelling, book or event promotion, testimonials/reviews, behind the scenes, writing process, graphics, tips/educational and giveaways.

An example of a graphic design tool with a free user-friendly version is www.canva.com. Charitable trusts can apply to get the pro-version for free.

When taking photos for your content, take them in portrait rather than landscape. Using a portrait photo in your content will be bigger for viewers on a phone screen. Making reels for free can be done on www.capcut.com.

For scheduling content so it will go when you plan it to, Meta Business suite is free. You can find it at this link: [Meta Business Suite: Manage Facebook and Instagram in one place | Meta for Business](#). This is the parent of Facebook, Instagram and Threads. Using the ‘insights’ tab will give you information on your target audience and help you work out the best time to schedule your content to go out.

Sina says she hasn’t used paid advertising on social media. Instead, she wrote content that resonated with her audience, she then produced more, and people shared it. It’s helpful to use bite-sized posts for readers to share. Sina also mentioned using www.ingramspark.com for book publishing.

To connect with Sina on Facebook, visit www.facebook.com/hermustardfaith/. Or visit her website, www.hermustardfaith.com.

After some free time and a hearty lunch, we settled in to hear our next speaker, Chris Bovill.

Session Seven: Devotion Writing – Chris Bovill

Here are some of the points Chris presented to us during her session on writing devotions.

- Your motivation is to encourage the reader.
- Point them to scripture.
- To lift their eyes up and know ‘God sees you’. Trust Him. (Psalm 139).
- Meet readers where they are.

Three Parts to a Devotion

1. Scripture verse
2. A story or illustration
3. A takeaway application

It’s the Lord’s doing how He uses a devotion and who He reaches with it.

Who are you hoping to reach?



Justin St. Vincent and Chris Bovill

Your devotion might include:

Personal experiences
Observations
Interactions and things learned from others
Object lesson parallel
Biblical exposition
Personal reflection on a scripture verse
Poem
Photograph

Other ideas:

Sad or funny experience
Examples from travel lessons
Specialist knowledge
An unusual thing you saw
A poem or song on your mind
Old letters or diaries
An event that restored your faith
A new perspective you gained from a sermon



Marketing

Link arms with other writers and see what you can do.

Chris showed us how she has created an attractive gift box containing her two books, pen, scripture card and a fragrance.

Chris shares her devotionals on her Facebook page.



Following a coffee and tea break we welcomed our last speaker of the day, Rachel Weston, who spoke on the topic of Writing with Passion.

Session Eight: Writing with Passion – Rachel Weston

Here are some of the thoughts Rachel shared with us, inspiring us to write with passion.

Think about your 'why?'.

- Why do you write?
- What's your passion?
- What excites you?
- What are your experiences?
- What do you want to achieve?
- Think about your ideal reader – understand the market you're writing for.
- Passion provides energy and motivation to overcome obstacles.
- Passion helps with your meaning and purpose.
- Passion often brings joy, excitement and a sense of accomplishment.
- Passion can overcome fears and doubts.



Know your 'why'.

- Go hard or go home.
- Your why helps you set goals.
- Your why gives you a sense of purpose.
- Your why helps when you're feeling discouraged.
- Your why deals with fears and doubts, reasons/excuses putting you off. Negative self-talk – you're not the boss of me.
- Be brave.
- Take the wheel (or let go).

- Do the work.
- Get inspiration from God and others.
- Being you is what you have to offer.
- Feed your soul.

Success is built on the little things we do consistently.

- Set a daily writing time/goal and a goal of when you want it finished.
- Things don't always go to plan; for example Covid, cancellations, health issues. You can turn disasters into something good.
- Get critiqued (have a little cry if need be, then carry on).
- Upskill.
- Don't scrimp on money for manuscript assessment and editing.
- Comparison is the thief of joy. Your road to publishing will not look the same as someone else's. Celebrate other people's writing successes.
- Cheer yourself on. It can be lonely.
- You're enough. Being enough is an inside job. Isaiah 43:4 You are enough.
- Knowing your passion is having clarity.
- When approaching an illustrator ensure your manuscript is edited, ready to go and up to a high standard already.

Rachel shared that she puts a lot of time into marketing – including schools, libraries, bookshops and Facebook.

(Magazine editor's thought after hearing Rachel's session: Don't be a lukewarm writer! Think about the passion of Jesus using a whip to clear the temple. Go hard.)

With much to think about, attendees went off to enjoy free time and prepare for the evening talent show. After the lovely evening meal we settled in for a great time of entertainment. Participants shared a wonderful variety of talents and skills. Justin tested us with a fun writers quiz and then those who wanted to, enjoyed popcorn watching the movie *The Secret Garden*.



Justin St. Vincent and Rachel Weston



*Jennifer Darling,
caterer and entertainer*

Day #4: Sunday

The last day of the retreat arrived and, after breakfast, Kathryn brought her third devotion. She said that each one of us has a unique and essential part to fulfill in God's advancing force of Christian communicators. When God's love is flowing through our writing it's impossible to fail because God's love doesn't fail.

Kathryn also chaired the brief NZCW AGM where board members were re-elected. Then our church service began with worship led by Vicki Millar. Peter Anderson brought a positive message for the church service and the retreat was then brought to a close.

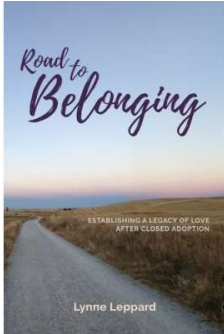


Justin St. Vincent and Peter Anderson



A huge thank you to Justin St. Vincent for his excellent facilitating of the retreat. We would like to thank Flaxmill Retreat Centre for a high-quality venue along with Big Toe Foundation who help make it financially attainable. We also thank Jennifer Darling Catering for the high-quality, memorable meals and wish to express much gratitude to all who made this a positive retreat experience. Well done, everyone!





Road to Belonging

By Lynne Leppard

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Torn Curtain Publishing 2024

Born in 1965, Lynne was put up for adoption by her young single mother who had no means of keeping her baby. Under the closed Adoption Act of 1955, all records were kept secret. No names or details could be disclosed, thus severing any contact or relationships between biological and adoptive parents. There was a perception back then that a baby was like a blank canvas and only needed to be nurtured and cared for regardless of who provided that care.

Lynne was adopted by a loving Christian couple who already had two older children both also adopted. With a new birth certificate, new name and family, Lynne tried to fit in but always struggled with her sense of identity, belonging, and feelings of inadequacy.

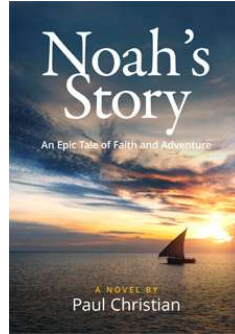
‘A part of me sensed a deep-rooted homesickness for my first family; an odd feeling of loss that simply would not go away.’

With tenacity and a strong faith, Lynne eventually found her birth mother and later her biological father; and fragmented pieces of her life started to come together, but it wasn't easy.

‘My birth mother and I had missed out on large parts of each other's lives, and reuniting felt like trying to build a bridge over a great chasm.’

Lynne's poignant and heart-stirring story gives those who were not adopted, insight and a deeper understanding and appreciation of the adoption experience.

Her story should also encourage and inspire those who were adopted and feel incomplete, to pursue their search for the missing pieces of their lives and hopefully discover their true identity and belonging.



Noah's Story An Epic Tale of Faith and Adventure

By Paul Christian

Review by Julia Martin

Published by Paul Christian with Castle Publishing Ltd 2024

Have you ever wondered what life was like for Noah and his contemporaries prior to the universal flood by which God wiped out all living things on the earth?

Or, what it would have been like for Noah and his family of eight when they emerged from the ark one year later as the sole human beings on planet earth, and were confronted with an environment completely transformed?

In his novel Paul has created a compelling story based on fact and fiction which fleshes out the characters we read about in the book of Genesis and their way of life.

He writes: ‘In this narrative I have attempted to combine Biblical truth with scientific evidence, along with historical events and the legends of many people groups throughout the world, while adding from my imagination as well to create a story.’

While it's obvious Paul has extensively researched the life and times of Noah to create this epic tale of faith and adventure, the story is still a novel, and the reader needs to be aware that a great deal of the story is fiction.

Paul explains: ‘What I have done fits comfortably with what might have been, what was, and what is yet for us to discover.’

It is a gripping story, and I was particularly impacted by his chilling account of the flood when it finally arrived, and the reaction of the people doomed to perish outside the ark.

It's a stark reminder of God's judgement still to come on sinful, unrepentant mankind.



The Life Book

A ministry of the Gideons International

Article by Kathryn Paul

At the recent NZCW Retreat in Whitianga, attendee Ron Peterson who is the 'top of the South Coordinator for Gideons NZ' blessed everyone with free copies of *The Life Book*. The Life Book is a tool to reach young people. It's available in New Zealand for free to churches who have youth groups. Christian teenagers are welcome to pass copies on to their friends as a form of outreach.

The Life Book contains the Gospel of John presented in such a way as to attract students. Since 2009 more than 56 million of these books have been released in the USA. New Zealand is being trialed as the first country outside the USA for this project. Using this free resource the church is able to be the mobiliser while the teenagers are the missionaries and book distributors.

Books are supplied in boxes of 100 copies delivered at no cost and there's no limit. Pastors and Youth Pastors can order directly from the website <https://thelifebook.nz>.

If you have any questions, please contact Ron Peterson at ron.petersonnz@gmail.com.



Are you hoping to purchase a great book by a Christian author? Are you interested in viewing the genres in which our members have been published?

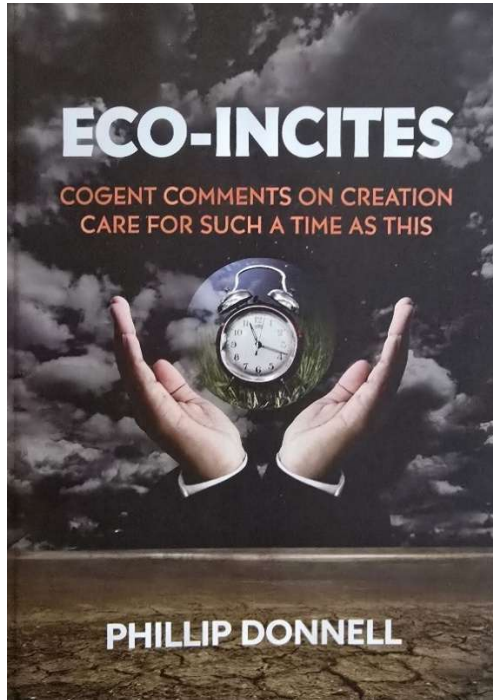
A massive thank you to Fiona and Alan Murray, who have, together, prepared the NZ Christian Writers Members' Books Catalogue. Click the image above to view over 200 NZCW members' books available for sale or go to www.nzchristianwriters.org/catalogue.

YOU'RE INVITED

to the official launch of Phillip Donnell's new book:

Eco-Incites

Cogent Comments on Creation Care for Such a Time As This



- 25 years in the making
- A commentary on creation care in New Zealand this century
- Full of biblical, sociological, historical and scientific reflections
- A timely call to action

**Remuera Baptist Church, 641 Remuera Road.
Saturday 14 June, at 7.00 pm.**

Phillip will share about the book and sign copies over a special supper.
(Followed by a talk about walking in Samoa for those who would like to stay on.)

RSVP for this event by email to phillipjohndonnell@gmail.com.
Phillip is also available for bookings to speak to groups and read some of his poetry.



Fire from Heaven

Devotional by Clive McKegg

Benjamin Franklin discovered that by using a sharp-pointed metal rod earthed to the ground he could make static electricity discharge, resulting in a spark jumping across a gap. His work resulted in the invention of the lightning rod, saving tall buildings from catching fire in an electrical storm and saving bell-ringers warning of impending lightning-strikes from electrocution.

An intercessor is a lot like that pointy conductor. We become sharp as we seek the Kingdom of God before all else. We boldly but patiently petition God with a sharp focus over an indeterminate period. We wait for the spark of divine intervention to jump between heaven and earth. We become better conductors as we are purged and refined from impurities. The testing and the waiting focus us so that our whole orientation is towards Jesus. We are earthed out as we are connected in love to the people in our areas of influence. The power is not for us but for the lost, broken generations around us.

Our inspiration is the persistent widow Jesus talked about in Luke 18. The story concludes with his statement “And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.” (Luke 18:7-8) David expressed the same idea: “I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined to me and heard my cry.” (Psalm 40:1) James echoes this when he says, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16) James illustrates with the example of Elijah – the lightning-rod-prophet.

By the day of Pentecost, the disciples were excellent conductors. They were in prayer, in unity, waiting for God’s Kingdom, following Jesus’ instructions. They had been deeply tested by their experience of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. And so, the great spark came! The watchers described tongues of fire on each of them as heaven touched earth and flowed out to the multitudes. As we approach the season of Pentecost let us also strive to be sharp, pure, earthed-out conductors, waiting patiently in persistent prayer, crying out like the widow for our people – that God would rescue the innocent, open the eyes the foolish and deceived, and that his church would be mature, united, and ready to disciple those who come hungry for God.



From Bible Colouring App

Auckland's North Shore Christian Writers Group April Meeting Report

By Ted Woudberg

The North Shore group's April meeting went well with eight attendees present.

Guest Speaker Rob Harley

We were indeed blessed and privileged to have famous television presenter and journalist Rob Harley as our guest speaker for the meeting.

He began his journalistic journey with his early years as a radio presenter on Radio Hauraki, Auckland's first pirate radio station and

then onto his years as a prime time television journalist on programmes such as *Assignment* and *Extreme Close Up* during the late nineties. He decided over time to change his reporting style from simply presenting news items to creating faith-based Christian stories about the 'solution' side of life.

His programme *Journey* has been snapped up by churches across NZ.

In his books he tells the heart-warming stories of true 21st century saints who were mainly women and who made great sacrifices for the betterment of mankind.

We were lucky to get previews of his bio and his 'Tips for writers' in an email which Ted distributed to all members before the meeting.

To show our gratitude Ted presented Rob with a gift at the end of the meeting. Dianne Bloemendal took a picture of Ted doing the presentation with our meeting hostess, Frances Hall looking on.

To learn more about Rob Harley and his writing, visit www.robharley.co.nz.

To join the Auckland North Shore group's next meeting in May, contact Ted Woudberg by email at tedw.hbc@gmail.com.



Frances Hall, Rob Harley and Ted Woudberg

Blind Bartimaeus

by Lesley Edgeler

1. Genesis 16: 13
(NKJV).
2. Excerpts from Mark
10: 49 – 52 (NKJV).

Time seems interminable
He's coming
I hear Him on His way
Ragged, I shudder
Standing in the beggar line
Outside the gates
I've heard of His miracles and I believe!
Will He hear me if I call?
Turn and see me like He saw Hagar?
She called Him You-Are-the-God-Who-sees-Me¹
Oh, if He could just...
Wait!
I hear more voices
A crowd has gathered
Excitement
Anticipation
I don't want to be overlooked
I must not miss out on this divine opportunity
It's scary; I cannot see Him
But I sense He is near.
"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"
"Be quiet! Let Him pass."
Voices cause my words to float away unnoticed
"Son of David, have mercy on me!"
My throat and lungs hurt from the effort
One voice...
"Call Him to Me."
Many voices encouraging me
"Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."
I throw off my garment and go to Him

"What do you want Me to do for you?"
His voice is gentle like rain upon my soul,
Yet questioning, emboldening
I can only speak in wonder, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."
Jesus replies, "Go your way; your faith has made you well."²
My eyes open
I see Him!
He is all I had hoped for and more
He smiles
Oh, what joy!
"No, not my way, Your way."
After all He's done for me:
Restored my sight, my dignity, my worthiness
How can I not follow Him?
He saved me from my wretchedness, from my poverty of spirit, from my hopelessness
I will be forever grateful
And follow Him until the end.



Bible Colouring App

Songwriting DIY

Column by Felicity Logan

Part Four: Note Values

Can you assign note values to your lyrics? Even if you don't understand time signatures you could probably slot your lyrics into one of these three:

Triple Time $\frac{3}{4}$ where it goes "1 and 2 and 3 and" repeatedly, as in a waltz.

Quadruple Time $\frac{4}{4}$ where it goes "1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and" repeatedly, as in a march.

Compound Time where it goes "1 and a, 2 and a" repeatedly, as in most nursery rhymes and jigs, especially suitable for lively tunes.

If not, see if toe-tapping helps you.

Dispersing notes within the bars:

Once again, your voice "performing" it expressively will help you. The simplest way is to take your word sheet with accented syllables underlined, and a / (barline) directly before each accented syllable. Decide which syllables have to be longer, place a — after these (or maybe 2 dashes) eg. "Your / POW'R — — is my /STRENGTH — — and your / WORD — — is the /HELP..." (etc.) This suggests bars with FOUR beats, but each emphasised note is using up three, so the mathematics requires the last two syllables to be combined into a single beat, serving to emphasise the important notes more effectively.

There will be times as you toe-tap, you'll be aware the "toe UP" seems to have two syllables rather than just one. In this case you've latched onto $\frac{6}{8}$ time with **six ♪ pulses but two main beats** per bar, eg. "when / E-ver I fal-ter, when- / E-ver I fall, when / E-ver I need all the / STRENGTH I can call on, I / KNOW... etc."

You'll notice six syllables in most bars (all being ♪), except that "fall" is in a bar with only five syllables and is the moderately accented syllable which will require a longer note.

(Part Five due out Aug-Sep 2025).

Let's Celebrate!

Do you have a significant writing related moment to share that we can celebrate? Perhaps it's a goal you've reached or a writing challenge you've overcome. Tell us so we can celebrate with you.

Congratulations to Kay Peterson of Nelson for the release of her third book in the *Adriel Series* entitled *Adriel and the Journey to Nowhere* with two more books to come. These books are highly recommended for younger readers who enjoy fantasy and futuristic stories that are wholesome and exciting.

Congratulations to Mary-Pat Ross for the publication of *Called to a Sun-Scorched Land: Missions to Mozambique*.

Here are some helpful writer/reader websites:

NZ Society of Authors: <https://authors.org.nz/>

Storylines NZ: <https://www.storylines.org.nz/>

Read NZ Te Pou Muramura: <https://www.read-nz.org/>

Christian Writers Institute (USA): <https://christianwritersinstitute.com/>

Omega Christian Writers (Australia and NZ): <https://omegawriters.com.au/>

<https://www.storymonstersbookawards.com/>

[Writer Beware - Shining a small, bright light in a wilderness of writing scams – https://writerbeware.blog](https://writerbeware.blog)

← Extra Note from Felicity:

Did you visit Dylan Laine on her YouTube video *How to write a melody – very easy trick – Songwriting 101?* Pause and review at intervals to take in how she uses the chord notes on a ukelele to suggest melody lines.

Anagram or Acronym or Acrostic?

by Kathryn Paul

Recently I made a blunder in a magazine issue and also with an assignment I set for our Northland Christian Writers group. It became apparent I couldn't remember the difference between anagram, acronym and acrostic. So just in case you're in the same boat as me, I thought it would be helpful to write an article about it.

The magazine blunder was in the December 2024-January 2025 issue on page 13. Our North Shore Christian Writers Group leader, Ted Woudberg contributed an acronym using the word 'communicate' and I labelled it incorrectly as an anagram, (sorry about that, everyone).

The local Northland writers' group assignment blunder was that I asked my group to produce an anagram using the word, 'paradise'. One member queried it, asking '*after a bit of playing around, Paradise can be rearranged into 'A despair'. Is this the whole assignment? Am I missing something?*' He had it right and I had it wrong – I should have said acronym. When we gathered for our meeting, I found members had produced either acronyms or acrostics.

So, what are the differences? I searched on Google for help.

Anagram: An anagram is a word or phrase formed by rearranging the letters of a different word or phrase, typically using all the original letters exactly once. (*From Wikipedia*). So as per the example above 'paradise' rearranged can be 'a despair'.

Acronym: An abbreviation formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word (example NASA). (*From Oxford Languages Dictionary*). Another example is, the curriculum Accelerated Christian Education is commonly called ACE. Below is the acronym I produced for the assignment using 'paradise': Well-known Bible teacher, writer and speaker, Joyce Meyer quotes a good one for 'fear' and while I was driving with a friend discussing the differences between anagram, acronym and acrostic we came up with an acronym for 'stress'.

P erfect	F alse	S erious
A wesome	E vidence	T ension
R adiant	A ppearing	R etaining
A mazing	R eal	E nergy
D esirable		S abotaging
I mmaculate		S elf.
S upernatural		
E verlasting		

Acrostic: A poem, word puzzle, or other composition in which certain letters in each line form a word or words. (*From Oxford Languages Dictionary*). Here is the lovely acrostic poem Janet Fleming brought along to share at the Northland Christian Writers group. Well done, Janet!

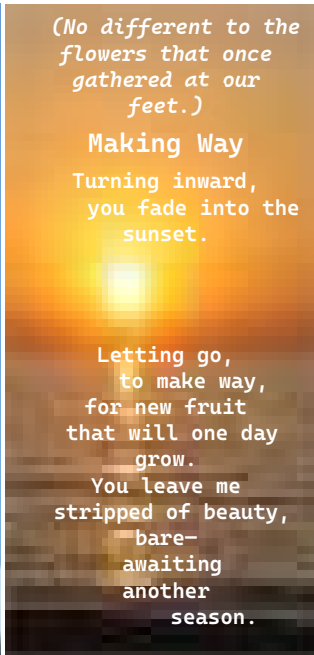
Paradise

by Janet Fleming

Present forever in Heaven,
Apart from sorrow and pain,
Resting in Jesus' own presence,
And meeting with loved ones again.
Darkness forever forgotten,
I'll gaze at that glorious place,
Such wonders as I've never known;
Enthralled by His beautiful face.

Now that this article has clarified the differences for us, I invite readers to send me either a Christian themed anagram, acronym or acrostic poem for the magazine. Have fun with it and I'm looking forward to receiving your contributions.

The Rhythm of Falling – by Stephen C Douglas as Kiwi Poet

 <p>FALLING, FALLING, falling... You burst into the scene in spring-fresh and full-and slowly, through the passage of time, you begin to brown. As the sun lowers down, down, down with shadows long upon the ground and summer's last warmth in the air, you fall-to make way for more. With bursting flight, you descend- As an answer to my why's.</p>	 <p><i>World in Motion</i> The stream lifts its music to my ears. Birds rise, seeking special places. Fighter jets in formation trace their supersonic race overhead. As you tumble falling-earthward gently touching the ground. Crushed beneath the feet of creatures greater than self. This is the season's shift-from young to old. The spring in your step, the colour in your skin-gone.</p>	 <p><i>(No different to the flowers that once gathered at our feet.)</i> Making Way Turning inward, you fade into the sunset. Letting go, to make way, for new fruit that will one day grow. You leave me stripped of beauty, bare-awaiting another season.</p>
--	---	--

Tauranga Christian Writers' Group

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in the Oropi Hills with like-minded people
and an outstanding speaker!*



5pm for dinner, Friday
4th to Sunday lunch,
6th July, 2025

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Rob Harley

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teacher and writer)

Subject:

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through his writing
journey and give
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constructing your
writing, expanding
repertoire, and
finding resources.
He will give examples
from his own work.
There will also be a
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Price: \$69 pp.

For more information and
to register contact: Cathy
Harris at
cathy@blueskydata.co.nz

The weekend will take
place at Jan
Pendergrast's comfortable
home in the Oropi Hills
and will be limited to 40
participants.

There is room for people
wishing to bring caravans
or motorhomes, but
accommodation in the
house will be very limited.

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

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

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JEFFS EDITING SERVICES

My name is Christel Jeffs and I'm a freelance editor/proofreader based in Northland. I have been editing since 2018 and hold a Diploma in Editing from NZIBS.

Services I offer:

- Manuscript Assessment
- Copy-editing
- Proofreading

I have edited 14 books to date, including numerous assignments, documents, and creative pieces.

If you need help with a piece of work – be it spelling, sentences or structure – I'm able to help. I will always honour your writing voice and the heart you've poured into your work.

Christel Jeffs (MCW, Dip Ed):

021 238 9234

E: christel.jeffs@yahoo.com

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Angela Curtis

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STEPPING STONE EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Dear Valued Writer,

Having your work checked is an essential part of the publishing process.

My name is Kathryn Paul and I'm keen to connect with you on this vital stepping stone of your writing journey. It's important to see it as an investment toward helping your book return the results that you and the Lord desire. I'd love for you to discover the qualifications, experience and encouragement I can bring to your publishing stepping stone. Please email me or visit:

<https://steppingstoneediting.mailchimpsites.com>

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WRITING ANSWERS

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

I work with authors to prepare their work for self-publishing. I make sure their documents are print ready.

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

Any questions?



Testimony

by Leslie Kistan

Dear Brethen,

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Praise and glory and wisdom and strength and honour and power be to you O God who sits on the throne forever and ever.

I felt a huge weight lift off when I was baptised together with my family several years ago in Auckland, which led to my sister-in-law and her children being recently baptised on Easter this month in S.A. The Lord Jesus has taught me, and I have learnt about loving everyone and forgiving others but mostly, forgiving myself, letting go of the past, and trusting the Lord Jesus.

Jesus is the way, truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Him.

I am a sinner whose sins were paid for by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, the only Son of God and our High Priest. Because of His grace, I have a place in heaven. My grandma took me to a Presbyterian church when I was a child in the early 1970's in S.A., but I chose another path. Never doubt the prayer of a grand-mum because her prayers protected me during some tiring times. I was led to Lord Jesus by an elder in NZ in the early 2000's after being away from the Lord for over 40 years. I now feel the unconditional love of our Triune God. **Also, I was healed by Lord Jesus and saved from drowning during a freak storm in NZ. Lord Jesus answers prayers: Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever. He still heals and is a Living God.**

My calling is to learn the Word, to spread the Word and help others understand the love of Lord Jesus through my testimony and book. Learning about scripture can come through many forms and, for me, the knowledge of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Francis Schaeffer came during the rest home ministry I am leading, which was a highlight. In addition, I am deeply interested in the work of David Pawson, Derek Prince, T L Osborn, Andrew Murray, Smith Wigglesworth, Francis Frangipane, Lester Sumrall, and Charles Spurgeon. These books educate me daily.

Psalm 45 17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore, shall the people praise thee forever and ever.

May everyone experience the loving relationship of Lord Jesus.

Neither is there salvation in any other; there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. [Acts 4 12]

Many thanks and Kind regards – Leslie Kistan



South Island Christian Book Authors Network (SICBAN) Meeting held 10 May 2025

Report presented by: Verna
McFelin

The South Island Christian Book Authors Network (SICBAN) met on Saturday, 10th May 2025, at Dawn's beautiful home on Marine Parade, South New Brighton, Christchurch. We are grateful to Dawn for generously opening her home for the Lord's purposes. The warmth and intimacy of the venue significantly enhanced the spirit of the gathering, creating a space where hearts were open, and the Holy Spirit moved powerfully among us. There is certainly a different atmosphere meeting in a home than meeting in a community venue. The home atmosphere is far more intimate.

Although fifteen members had registered, eight people attended on the day, as several were affected by the seasonal flu. Despite the smaller group, the meeting was deeply meaningful and fruitful.

The gathering began at **10:00 am** with tea, coffee, and muffins, offering a relaxed space for informal networking and conversation.

In the absence of a guest speaker this month, we trialled a new format based on feedback from a member survey conducted earlier. Each attendee was invited to:

- **Introduce themselves in more depth**
- **Share their current writing projects and published books**
- **Raise any questions or challenges they were facing in their writing journey**

This open forum created a rich time of connection, support, and encouragement. Topics discussed included:

- Various types of editing
- Publishing tips
- Spiritual inspiration for writing
- Writing for children's books. Did you know that children finish reading at the end of a line rather than at the end of a sentence? So, this needs to be taken into consideration when writing a book for children.
- Attendees were directed to the NZ Christian Writers Magazine for reputable professional writing services and further resources.

**HOT
TIP!**

A free resource table was available. Many left feeling spiritually refreshed, inspired, and re-energised to write. We look forward to welcoming both returning and new members to our August gathering as we continue to grow as a network of Christian writers supporting one another in faith and purpose.

Join a Writers Group

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HAWKES BAY

Debbie McDermott
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NELSON

Kay Peterson
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NORTHLAND

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Kathryn Paul
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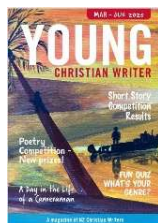
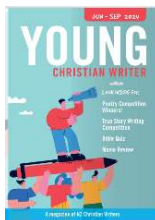
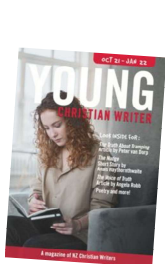
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Write a Book Hands-Free

by Kathryn Paul

Occasionally the question arises, 'How can I write my book without needing to type it? Those who experience dyslexia or have a slow typing speed sometimes ask this. Also, those who have busy lifestyles and the writing urge and ideas arrive while away from a keyboard ask, how can I write while I'm out and about?

Recently I received a Steve Laube Agency Blog called 'How to Write a Novel Faster Using Dictation Software'. Here's the link if you would like to read this informative blog: [*How to Write a Novel Faster Using Dictation Software With Misty M. Beller*](#) –

After reading the blog I decided that walking along the beach composing poetry or a story and having my device do all the typing for me sounded very appealing. So, I attempted to figure out how to get my iPhone to do it for me. Typically, getting my phone to do it, wasn't as straightforward as it sounded. But with a few Google searches on 'how to' and some helpful YouTube hints I learned how to enable 'Voice Control' on my iPhone. (Go to 'Settings' then 'Accessibility' then 'Voice Control'. My phone then took me through a helpful tutorial and I was impressed with how many voice commands I can give my phone to help me write and edit in a document.




After that I opened the Pages App on my iPhone, said 'tap start writing' and it opened a new page for me. Then using voice-control I said, 'Dictation Mode' and after that it typed everything I said into the document.

I can see it's going to take some practise to remember the commands and how to manage doing it well, but like anything, once you've done it a lot it will become easier and faster. I can tell it to insert the punctuation as well. So, I will say commands such as 'comma' or 'new line' and it does that for me. I am discovering it doesn't always understand my words or spell them correctly. For example, I said "cat-paw" and it inserted 'cat poor'. So, when I go to edit the first draft later it will probably be rather hilarious. 'The rough driving around the bends in the road' became 'The roof driving around the bins in the road'. However, I'm pleased I've managed to write many words of the first draft of a story while walking my dog. For those who regularly get stuck in traffic, using dictation could make it a lot more fun!

Voice-control allows me to tell my phone to do many other things without my having to touch it. This is a different thing from using Siri or Alexa.

If you know someone who wants to write but typing is an obstacle, or having the time to write is difficult, please share this article with him or her. I'm excited to finally have a helpful answer to this question.



*Abide in me
as I abide in you. Just as
the branch cannot bear fruit
by itself unless it abides in the
vine, neither can you unless you
abide in me. If you abide in me and my
words abide in you, ask whatever you wish,
and it will be done for you (Jesus; John 15:4&7).*

STAY CONNECTED – ABIDE

by Stephen C Douglas as Kiwi Poet

When Jesus walked the streets of Galilee he spoke in parables—stories rich with truth. Through them, he taught Torah lessons, principles of life; from the lips of one who spoke like no other, they came alive. Stories drawn from farming—sowing seeds, birds of the air, weed burning and even the mischief Sower was not spared. One story, still relevant today, is his vine story.

After much cultivation, the vine-grower plants young vines with passion and care, tending them with dedication to thrive. He prunes branches to bear much fruit, cutting away those with no fruit. In his day, juicy grapes were pressed with bare feet, then left to ferment in clay jars, then poured into new wineskins.

Jesus spoke:

“I am the true vine, and you are the branches.

A branch, cut off from me, cannot bear fruit.

So, stay connected—abide in me—the true vine!

Branches that bear no fruit will be gathered and burned.”

Jesus' words remain unchanged through the centuries—“A branch must stay connected to bear fruit.” Some listeners must have cringed at the words “be burned” knowing vine and branches grow as one, producing fruit to please the vine-grower.

Yet here lies a paradox—his listeners would have understood: new plants can spring from cuttings, so all is not lost! So, stay connected to Jesus, the true vine. Let your life produce fruit that pleases the Father,
the vine-grower.

Stephen's Inspiration: the Editorial in The Christian Writer, Feb-Mar 2025.

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

Courtney Lambert Turangi
Janet Scantlebury Waikato

Elaine Gousmett Dunedin
Jenny de Vetter Whangarei

Heather Phillips Tauranga
Jessica Mounter Bay of Plenty

Henri Hendrik Auckland

Joy Carter Hamilton

Luba Roth Christchurch

Karl van de Water Northland

Lyndelle Kelsen Hamilton

Michael Wilkes Waikato

Rochelle Embling Tauranga

Sina Steele Waikato

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

Writing Competitions Points Winners

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Verna McFelin	30	Robert Prins	42	Elaine Dixon	36
Peter Wilson	24	Christine Platt	36	Sandy Miller	27
Elaine Gosumett	12	Stephen Douglas	21	Heather Vincent	24
Renee Tavita	12				

Congratulations to our prize winners above! Also well done to Robert Prins and Christine Platt who are now joining Level Three. 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 usually awarded as Christian bookstore vouchers. Thank you to Andrew Stirling at www.purebooks.nz. Our next prize winners will be published in the Dec 2025–Jan 2026 magazine edition.

All new members begin by entering in Level One. To be promoted to Levels 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. It's like a mentoring system and competition all in one!

Please note published competition entries have not been edited.

Competition Results

Level One

Judge: Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Imagine you are a witness to Jesus raising the widow's only son from the dead (see Luke 7:11-17). Write a first-hand account detailing how this event impacted you. (400 words)

General Comments

I was pleased to receive seven good submissions to this competition, four of which were from first-time entrants. Well done to all of you for giving it a go.

Each submission was nicely written, but even more important than this was how well each entrant portrayed themselves as a witness to one of Jesus' amazing miracles and gave a first-hand account of the impact it had on them. This not only required using their imagination to visualise the scene, but it also meant engaging their emotions with the biblical account (i.e. how does it make me feel?), then describing both the scene and their feelings in their story to evoke a similar response from their readers. Communicating feelings (in this case, the awe and wonder of witnessing such a miracle) is an important tool in drawing your reader into your narrative. Weaving the five senses into a story is also effective in bringing it to life in the imagination of your audience.

Of the seven entries received, returning member Melanie 'Unufe was the only entrant to write from a child's point of view. Her story is particularly delightful and such a reminder of the importance of having childlike faith. She only narrowly missed out on being awarded a place in this competition and I do hope she will seek to get her story published in the magazine because it really is a worthy read.

While each entry has a great takeaway message and is worthy of publication in its own right, I could only award a winning place to those with the fewest mistakes in grammar, punctuation, formatting etc. First Place goes to Verna McFelin, Second Place to Elaine Gosumett, and Third Place Equal to Kathy Forster and Peter Wilson. Congratulations for doing so well.

In closing, please can I remind entrants to kindly include details of their name AND location in their entries (i.e. within the document itself) as these details are published with your entry in our magazine if you win First, Second or Third Place.

First Place



Verna
McFelin
of Christchurch

The Breath of Life

I will never forget what happened today in Nain. I was with her, my dear friend, a woman who had already lost so much. First her husband, and now her only son. My heart ached watching her walk behind his bier, her face pale with grief, her body trembling under the weight of unbearable loss.

The procession moved slowly toward the town gate, mourning with her, but nothing could ease her pain. She had no one left. No husband, no son, no future. And I, I felt so helpless.

Then, through my tears, I saw Him, Jesus.

I had heard about Him before, murmurs of miracles, stories of healings, rumours that He had power unlike any other. But I never imagined He would come here, to this moment, to us.

He and His followers stood in the way of the procession, and I tensed. Would they disrupt this final farewell? But then He looked at her, my grieving friend, and His face was filled with such compassion, like He knew exactly how deep her sorrow ran.

And then He spoke. "Don't cry." I almost flinched. How could He say that? Didn't He understand? Her son was gone!

Then it happened. Jesus approached the bier and touched it. The bearers stopped, frozen. He spoke to the dead boy, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" My breath caught in my chest as the boy, once lifeless, suddenly sat up. Gasps rippled through the crowd as the boy began to speak.

My friend let out a strangled cry, her hands flying to her mouth as tears streamed down her face. And then Jesus unwrapped the shroud and helped her son down. She rushed to him, tears streaming down her face, tears of joy, not sorrow.

She clung to him, sobbing, laughing, whispering prayers of thanks. I fell to my knees, overwhelmed by the sheer power of what I had just seen.

Around us, voices rose in awe and wonder. Someone cried out, "A great prophet has appeared among us! God has come to help His people." And I knew it was true.

I came to that funeral expecting to bury my friend's son. Instead, I witnessed the power of God with my own eyes. Jesus didn't just raise a dead man; He gave a grieving mother her life back.

And we will never, ever be the same.

Second Place



Elaine
Gosumett
of Otago

The Awakening

It is so easy to follow the crowd. And I was part of it that day.

Not knowing the widow and her only son well I walked at the back of the weeping, wailing women as they followed the funeral procession, the dead youth on the bier. You couldn't help but feel the sadness and despair. With no man to care for her now a life of poverty awaited. Grief was deep and so very real. This was the way it was in Israel then, women down trodden, oppressed by a foreign nation with their gods and taxes, and our own laws to live by- so many laws. I longed for freedom. I had been thinking of escaping this town, this land, longing for a better life.

Suddenly everyone started talking, the wailing stopped and the widow threw the shawl off her head. Wonder of wonders! The young man sat up and began talking. Alive now he was hugging his Mother and a man, a Teacher and his followers who had been coming to Nain. were grinning from ear to ear,

How could this be? I stood and watched stunned with amazement. What had happened? I had been so engrossed in my own thoughts I had not noticed.

"Hallelujah" the people began to shout. "Hallelujah, Praise be to the Living God." They were dancing and declaring that a Great Prophet had appeared. My tears had stopped and I found myself smiling. Oh how we laughed! God had come to help his people. This was what I had been waiting for though I knew it not.

It was such a great day, People began to tell others. It gave me hope now, hope for the women, hope for a new life. Hope for the nation.

So from that day I walked the streets with a sense of joy. I saw a way forward. Like the young man I too had awakened. A change was coming. A new era for everyone, women as well as men. So I never left. I stayed and followed the way of the Teacher. I became friends with the widow and learnt too of what the Teacher said how he felt her pain. He too was an "only Son" acquainted with grief, familiar with sorrow.

Later we were all to understand that more, but it had been then that life had started to change and we began to live – with hope.

Third Place Equal



Kathy
Forster
of Manawatu

The Miracle.

I remembered that day, oh so well! My younger sister Rebekah and I had headed to the market in Nain early. We had secured a good spot in the bustling market area. Now, we were ready to head back, having sold the grapes and figs we had brought in.

Suddenly, we heard voices and noticed a crowd of people surging into the streets of Nain. Hardly able to be seen was the Master, in the lead. Rebekah and I had often been part of that crowd, hanging on his every word, as he healed and taught the people.

From the opposite direction, a funeral procession meandered through the crowded streets. Atop the bier was a small bundle wrapped in rough linen fabrics. There was a young widow clinging to the bier. Her head was down, and she stumbled often as she walked alongside. I asked a woman walking past.

“Who has died?” I asked.

“It’s the widow, Sarah’s son. He’s barely eight years old. And last year Sarah lost her husband too!” replied the woman.

My heart thudded in my chest. Oh no, I thought. Sarah was regularly one who listened to all Jesus had to say. Since her husband had died, she didn’t have much food for her son and herself. The poor woman, I thought.

Just then, Jesus and his disciples met the funeral procession. Jesus said to the widow, “Don’t cry.” He looked visibly shaken. His eyes were full of compassion. Next, he approached the bier and touched it. The bearers came to a halt.

“Get up and walk,” instructed Jesus. Immediately the young boy sat up and began to talk. Jesus encouraged him to get off the bier, and to go to his mother. His mother wrapped her arms around him, hugging and kissing him, after he had walked the short distance to her. Everyone around was praising God for the miracle that had taken place.

“Surely a prophet has visited this town today,” the crowd shouted.

I was convinced that the promised Messiah had come. Sadly, lots of fellow Judeans didn’t believe that Jesus was the promised one. They attributed his miracles to works of the devil. Or they believed he was a prophet. I longed to tell my family and friends about this man, who I was convinced, was also God. Rebekah and I returned home with a song in our hearts. Jesus was the One!

Third Place Equal



Peter
Wilson
of New
Plymouth

A DAY I WILL NEVER FORGET

It is a lovely day in our quiet little town of Nain, all is well except that we have to bury Jacob, Naomi’s only son. I wonder how she will cope with this latest setback. She lost her husband just last year and it seemed as if Jacob would be a big help to her in dealing with that loss, but now this.

As the procession neared the town gate we met another group of people coming in. One of the men, he looked like the leader of the group, moved toward Naomi. I was wondering if he knew her. As he reached her he said, quite tenderly “Don’t cry”. He then reached out to the bier and we all stood still wondering what this stranger was going to do.

What occurred was absolutely amazing and startling. He called out to Jacob’s corpse (it was obvious it was a corpse) and said “I say unto you, Arise”. I can still hardly believe it but with my own eyes I saw Jacob sit up and start talking.

Naomi was so beside herself she didn’t know what to do. She was crying, weeping and laughing all at once. Here was her son alive, holding her in his arms when she was expecting to see him buried and lost forever.

Who was this man who could bring the dead back to life? While there was a definite rejoicing there was also a decided aura of wonder and fear. Who could do this? How could a mere man (at least that is what he looked like) do this; he must have some supernatural power. The guys with him told us his name is Jesus. They have seen him do some amazing things before but they had never seen a dead person sit up and talk.

We were all awestruck – a miracle had happened before our very eyes. Surely something like this could only happen by God’s power; is Jesus a God? He must at least know God in a special way. I will have to find out more about this man. Someone with power to do this must know God in an exceptional way; in a way I would love to experience. I will seek him out; he must be a prophet or someone very unique. I will see if I can join his group. I have to know him; I hope He lets me go with him.

Level Two

Judge: Shirley Jamieson

Requirement: Share your testimony to show what inspires you to write. Have you received encouragement that would also encourage other writers? (400 words)

General Comments

For Christian writers, we need encouraging comments to lift our spirits and inspire us to continue. Our writing comes from the heart, and blessing others is important to us. God’s inspiration can create a message within whatever genre we are working in.

It is easy to write when all is going well. Words pour over the computer screen in a waterfall of inspiration, writers’ block a distant misty cloud on the horizon. At other times everything stalls.

The authors who wrote the books of the Bible were all inspired by the Holy Spirit. I wonder what it was like for them. Did they ever stare at a blank scroll waiting for God’s eternal words to flow?

Whether that happened or not, we read that God sustained them. They persevered when times were tough. The book of Job comes to mind, and the book of Jeremiah. Many of David’s psalms were written as Saul pursued him intent on murder.

The Bible is God's holy message of hope and encouragement. He tells us of a new heaven and earth to come where there are no tears or pain.

Now though, we have opportunities to encourage others going through tough times. Showing others what God taught us in the dark days gives hope. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV) Paul writes: 'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.' We in Christian Writers are doing just that.

I received four entries for the competition this time. They all shared testimonies of what inspired them to write and had practical suggestions to encourage other writers.

I awarded Robert Prinns first place. His testimony began by showing how his inattention to what he read in the Bible gained him nothing. He began to meditate about what he read and make notes. It grew into inspiring others to discover the richness in God's Word. He also has practical suggestions to encourage other writers.

Christine Platt gained second place. She tells of being inspired to write devotionals which were translated in other languages for people in poor countries. She tells of the encouragement from her Christian Writers' Group to enter the competitions. This, in turn, encourages and inspires her to continue writing.

In third place, Stephen Douglas shared that his childhood years weren't focussed on reading and literature. As an adult, though, he discovered the creative outlet of writing poetry. He also shares that joining a Christian Writers' Group is an encouragement and inspires him to enter the competitions.

As we commit our writing to God, praying to him to inspire us, we believe he will use it for his glory. One day we will learn of the far-reaching effect that our words have made to bless others.

First Place



Robert
Prinns
of Auckland East

From Inattention to Impact

My writing career began because of inattention. Each morning I would read a chapter of the Bible, but forget everything I had read as soon as I walked away. Not good. The problem was solved when I bought a page-for-a-day diary and started writing short meditational thoughts on my daily Bible readings.

After I shared some of my thoughts as emails with friends and family, more and more people wanted to receive them. Then my friends began asking me when the book was coming out. I thought they were joking, but they were serious. From there my first book, *Thinky Things*, was born.

The powerful force that drives my writing is being able to encourage others with the encouragement God has given me. I love to see people changed by the word of God, and am honoured that God has allowed me to be part of that process.

Since *Thinky Things* was published in 2004, I now have eight titles on my shelf, and another one due out in the next few weeks. I have also been publishing an annual page-for-a-day meditational diary for people like me who want to get more from their daily devotionals.

As a writer, I know what it is like to sit in front of a blank page and wonder what to write. Those blank moments become opportunities for God to work in my life. When I don't know what to write, I ask God to open my eyes so I can see wonderful things from his word (Ps 119:18). And I also ask what he wants me to say and how to say it (John 12:49 NLT). The insights God gives as he answers these prayers are amazing!

Some years ago, I read *Chicken Soup for the Writer's Soul*. One piece of advice stood out for me from all the rest: write something every day. It is simple advice, but writing something every day means we get more practice. More practice means our writing improves.

My encouragement to you as a Christian writer, is to fan your gift into flame, get writing, write something every day, pay attention to God's word, and pray that God will give you insight, along with the right words and phrases to use as you put pen to paper.

With hearts turned to God, Christian writers can make a huge impact to individual lives and communities around the world.

Second Place



Christine
Platt
of Hibiscus
Coast

What Inspires Me to Write

My first motivation was when I perceived a need. I worked with The Navigators in the 80s and 90s in the French-speaking country of Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa. The Navigators' focus is evangelism and discipling and we rely heavily upon printed materials to guide the students. I discovered there were few Bible study and discipleship booklets available in French which were culturally appropriate and inexpensive.

I decided to write some. To my great surprise I thrived. I relished putting words on paper which would help people come to know Jesus and grow in their relationship with him. The most popular booklet was entitled '31 Days with Jesus'. This shows students how to have a daily quiet time and is based on Mark's gospel.

To my utter astonishment SIM¹ asked if I would give them permission to use another booklet I'd written entitled 'Nurture or Neglect?' a practical guide for caring for young Christians. "Yes, gladly!" SIM translated it into Portuguese, Spanish, Mandarin as well as English and French and made it available to their worldwide staff.

What a thrill to imagine people whom I would never meet being helped in their relationship with Jesus in Timbuktu, Mongolia and all places in between!

I was also invited by Scripture Union and Christina Press to write devotional notes for their publications. The study and preparation involved fed my soul.

In 2001 God led me to move to New Zealand and I got involved with a ministry to East Timor. Again, the same need. No Bible studies or booklets in the local language, Tetun. This required me to learn the language, and eventually a 3-part devotional on the Gospel of Mark was born. My brain nearly exploded at the work involved, but it was immensely gratifying to see it in print and being used by churches and Christian groups. I also wrote a book about my experiences in Timor. This was a massive learning curve but it finally got published.²

Currently my motivation has dipped. 'Have I still got something to contribute?' I'm not sure. With the encouragement of my NZCW group I decided to give it another go. I began by entering the NZCW competitions even when the topic wasn't my scene, like poetry. I received encouraging feedback, so I'm persevering. I've also submitted one devotional to an American publisher, 'The Secret Place'. I wait to see how God will lead.

1 Serving in Mission – an international, interdenominational Evangelical mission organization

2 Glimpses of Hope in East Timor 2020

Third Place



Stephen
Douglas
of Wellington

Testimony and Inspiration

Being the third in a family of eight siblings and raised in a home supported by a labouring income, opportunities to excel had limitations. Children who showed a natural ear for music had a chance to learn; I missed out here. My formal education ended at fifteen, well before the chance to fully grasp the value of literature. While our family took part in Christian church services and Bible readings, Kiwi and English literature were not a major part of my upbringing—apart from the Reader's Digest, father read and quoted when sharing the Bible at church.

My interest in reading paperbacks sparked in my early twenties when I was courting my girlfriend. I found reading novels rewarding and a meaningful way to spend my time.

Later, during an emotional phase in my life, I discovered the use of words poetically as my method to express thoughts and feelings. Looking at nature and wrestling with personal emotion, I began drafting poems in my own words and style. I have written a variety of pieces, motivated by the enjoyment of expressing thoughts and concepts using poetry. Years ago, I read my poems at a local group called *Pub Poets*. A choice of these I formatted into a booklet for family and friends. These days, I publish “finished or completed” writings to my website; **poet.kiwi**, while others lament their draft form. Often a phrase or a quote becomes my inspiration. I research my concept use online poetry sites to learn and help with a suitable expression. I am prepared to read my poems at functions when asked.

The most consistent encouragement received has come from **NZ Christian Writers**. Participation in a local support group and entering their Writing Competitions are incentives for me to write. With a set topic, a word count, and a deadline I find the process satisfying and challenging in a good way. It is rewarding to know my writings are read and commented on by others; I can express myself with words, even without formal education in literature. Publication in their magazine is “a place where my poetry can find a home.”

I don't have qualifications or published books, but I have found my voice. I hope that encourages others—especially those who came late to reading or writing—to give it a go. You start with your passion before being an expert.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Write a poem in any format depicting the state of the world today but ending with the hope of the Christian believer. (24 lines maximum)

General Comments

As a type of literature, poetry aims to evoke a reader's emotions, intellect and imagination by combining imagery and word choices arranged for their meaning, sound and rhythm.

Unlike prose, poetry often uses structured formats, stanzas, lines and meter.

Writing poetry, however, is not just about technical skill, but rather conveying a truth or insight in a way that resonates with the reader.

Of the six entries I received, five used various rhyming forms, while the sixth one used free verse which has no regular pattern of rhyme, rhythm or line length.

Free verse does have the advantage of being free of constraints for finding words that rhyme which may be a limiting factor and not always the best choice.

Someone observed that free verse is rather like playing tennis without a net! Neither rhyming nor non-rhyming poetry is better than the other – it's a matter of preference.

All the entries were worthy of an award, but I eventually gave first place to Heather Vincent for her entry which covered many aspects of the current state of the world today with a touch of humour, and she ends her poem in a convincing and challenging manner. Second place goes to Janet Fleming for an excellent poem with a powerful message, and third place equal to Eion Field and Elaine Dixon.

First Place



Heather
Vincent
of Tauranga

Confusion – Lies vs Truth

I'm getting very confused today to know just who I am
Am I a girl or am I a boy? A lady or a man?
No-one knows the truth but believes what the media tell
Anything goes on Television to help to make it sell.
Lies I hear so often make me cringe with shame
Doctors tell parents abortion's ok when tissue has no name,
Gender neutral bathrooms and drag queens in the school
Having two Dads or Mums makes kids think they are cool.
They call it 'woke' and like to think, that we are now awake
From the old ways of thinking and the new roads we will take.
And when life is proving to be, much too painful for you and me
Now with a simple euthanasia plan, We can end it all- legally!
This was once a Christian land, laws based on what God said
Not the lies man thinks of and makes up in his head.
So what is the Truth? And why should I now care?
It's about the One True God Whose Son came my sins to bear.
But they are fools who say there is no God, they've sent us all astray
What sorrow for them who say good is evil and that evil is OK.
So what hope is there for me and you, to bring peace to our land?
There's only One, the Prince of Peace, with Goodness in His Hand.
And what does God want us to do? In our age and in our youth?
But to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly in His Truth.

Second Place



Janet
Fleming
of Kaeo

From Suffering to Glory

Our world is filled with sadness and sin of every kind,
With earthquakes, wars and hatred, and so much pain we find.
Our God has been rejected, the Bible is not read,
And to so many people God might as well be dead.
His laws no longer matter or what He says to do,
And those who read the Bible they seem to be but few.
We're taken up with money, with drugs. and sex and booze
When we should reconsider the mighty God to choose.
But there's one thing that's certain – Christ Jesus lives today,
And soon He will be coming to take His church away.
That day will be so special, to see Him face to face,
The pain of earth forgotten as we view that glorious place.
So let us keep on trusting and serving through each day,
So that we might be ready when Jesus comes this way;
Our suffering will be over as we stand on heaven's shore
And gaze upon our Saviour with wonder and with awe.

Third Place Equal



Eion
Field
of Waikato

Times Like No Other

“It was the best of times, it was the worst. . . ”
Enduring words from centuries ago.
And in our own, the bespoke twenty-first,
These words define the present, yet more so.

The current years are scary, strange, unique.
Our times are unlike any former age.
The future of humanity looks bleak,
A daunting host of crises to engage.

There's conflict – millions homeless, thousands dead –
Bringing poverty, starvation, widespread disease.
It's ruined countries whose citizens have fled,
Multitudes becoming refugees.

Plus endless class and ideological wars;
Race, religion, political extremes;
Corrupt, arrogant, plain dumb dictators.
And a broken world economy, it seems.

Besides all this, the poor Earth stumbles,
Overheated, overwhelmed for its resource.
Why do we look on as she crumbles?
(Human measures having no effective force.)

But still “The earth is the Lord’s”, let’s not forget,
And “those who dwell in it.” That’s you, me, us!
But the world God made needed re-set,
So He gave the Earth His son – Jesus.

Third Place Equal



Elaine
Dixon
of Tauranga

Hope

Wars and rumours of war,
Pandemics, earthquakes and more,
Foretold by Jesus in the past,
Now we see it coming fast.

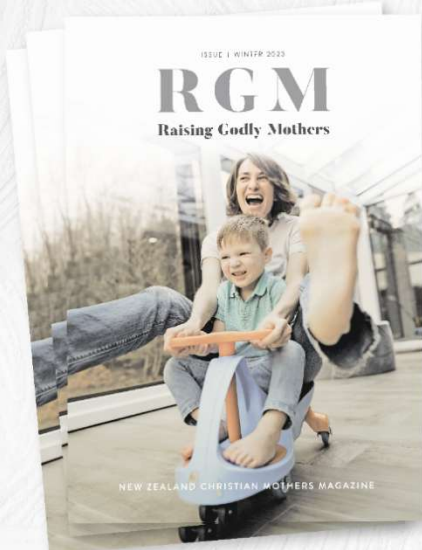
On every continent the same,
No regard for Jesus 'name.
Constant hate and misery great,
How long, oh God, must we wait?

Around the world in despair
We wonder who will care.
What is the answer to our state?
And will that answer come too late?

Eyes of faith see far,
Beyond the dimmest star.
The Creator's plan is working out.
The end of all things is not in doubt.

For God sent his Son,
To this world he has come.
He will return in power and might
To end all evil in one last fight.

So look up and hope in the King,
Our praises to him we must bring.
This present world will soon be past,
A new earth and heaven will come at last.



RGM

Raising Godly Mothers

Inspired by Titus 2:3-5, RGM is dedicated to providing inspiring and insightful content that nourishes the hearts and minds of Christian homeschooling mothers in N.Z.

Join the Movement

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Competitions for August 2025

Due by 1 July 2025

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 wordcount. A maximum wordcount has a 5% leeway under the wordcount.

Level One—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write an adventure story suitable for boys aged 13 to 15 years old. Use age-appropriate language and ensure your story contains plenty of action and excitement to engage and maintain the interest of your young readers. Also include a strong takeaway message they will remember. (500 words)

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org



Debbie

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Describe a hobby or pastime you enjoy doing, showing what materials, tools and expertise or training you need. (400 words)

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

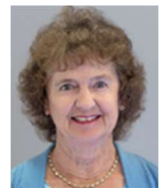


Shirley

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a précis of Stephen's speech delivered to the Jewish Sanhedrin prior to his martyrdom, as recorded in Acts 7:1-53. (400 words maximum)

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.