

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2025

THE CHRISTIAN writer

SEE INSIDE FOR

Christian Writers Wellington Workshop
13 September 2025,
Titahi Bay, Porirua

Opportunity to Win
50 Mentor Musings by Robin Cox

Book Reviews:
Redemptive Grief by Gaynor Lincoln

Articles including:
Global Distribution by Colleen Kaluza
Helpful Tips for Great Marketing
by Kathryn Paul

Poetry, Devotions, 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

Join Us! Annual Subscriptions—2 options:

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

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

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

Book Review Requests: (current members only)

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

286 Karapiro Road, RD 4, Cambridge 3496 or email: reviews@nzchristianwriters.org

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

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

© Copyright 2025

This issue printed locally by

BookPrint.
Making Bookshop Quality Easy

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

The Christian Writer

Aug – Sep 2025

ISSN 2537-8708 (Online)

VOL 42. No 4

ISSN 1171-0098 (Print)

Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President's Report – Justin St. Vincent
Page 5	Editorial: Fight to Write – Kathryn Paul
Page 6	Notices
Page 7	Christian Writers Wellington Workshop
Page 8	Book Review: <i>Redemptive Grief</i> by Gaynor Lincoln – reviewer Julia Martin
Page 8	God's Wallet – poem by Lesley Edgeler
Page 9	Global Distribution – IngramSpark and Draft2Digital versus Amazon – Colleen Kaluza
Page 10	Spiritual Fervour – devotion by Lesley Edgeler
Page 11	Opportunity to Win <i>50 Mentor Musings</i> – Robin Cox
Page 12	Songwriting DIY Column – Part Five – Felicity Logan
Page 12	Let's Celebrate – Your page to share your successes or milestones
Page 13	Peace – Acrostic by Sandy Miller
Page 13	Obituary: Colin Scott – Colleen Kaluza
Page 14	Professional Writing Services – Free Advertising for Members
Page 16	Author Beware of Scammers! – Colleen Kaluza
Page 17	Scroll. Compare. Panic. Repeat. – Cheryl Christopher
Page 19	Trust God with Your Past – Lois Farrow
Page 20	Join a Writers' Group Near You
Page 21	Letter from Social Media AI – Errol Thompson
Page 22	Called, Beloved and Kept Safe – devotion by Christine Platt
Page 22	Northland Christian Writers Group – Kathryn Paul
Page 23	The Reward of Loyalty – Althea Barr
Page 24	The Darkest Day in History – Lesley Edgeler
Page 25	Guidelines for Using Scripture – shared by Verna McFelin
Page 27	Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 28	Walking in the Spirit – Graeme Tearle
Page 29	Helpful Tips for Great Marketing – Kathryn Paul
Page 30	Member and Author Celebrates 100 years – Christel Jeffs

Competitions

Page 31	Level One Results	Page 38	Level Three Results
Page 37	Level Two Results	Page 43	Competitions for October 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



For this Aug-Sep 2025 edition of *The Christian Writer* magazine I want to say a MASSIVE thank you to all of our members. It's around this time of year we

receive a significant number of membership renewals. We so appreciate and value your on-going connection and support for NZ Christian Writers. Since Retreat 2025 we've had a steady rise in new members joining from

throughout New Zealand. It's always wonderful when we hear from writers who are joining our collective for the first time. We trust your time with NZ Christian Writers will be one that encourages, informs, and inspires you in your writing. Our current members are typically the best advocates and ambassadors for our collective to grow. Feel free to keep inviting other Christian writers you may know who may be interested in connecting with us. Simply point them to our website to join: www.nzchristianwriters.org/join/.

Also, after the success of our national Retreat 2025, plans are already underway for our Retreat 2027. Date, time, and venue details are yet to be announced, yet rest assured this will be another amazing way for our members to connect in person to be equipped and inspired. Keep in mind we have a brilliant network of Local Group Leaders who are encouraged to host their own one-day or half-day retreats in their regions. They will typically book a speaker or two to help provide some expertise and insights into various aspects of writing, including publishing and marketing books. If this is something that may be of interest to you, feel free to reach out to a Local Group Leader: www.nzchristianwriters.org/groups/.

Our dedicated team trusts you will continue to find *The Christian Writer* magazine to be an encouraging and inspiring resource "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12, NKJV). Thanks again to our member and photographer, Elaine Dixon, for providing the photo featured on the front cover of this magazine. Be blessed as you read this new edition of *The Christian Writer*.

Be blessed

Justin St Vincent



Editorial: Fight to Write

by Kathryn Paul



I've been through a lot of job changes in the past three years. I've worked on two kumara farms and a flower bulb farm and now I'm a meter reader. The horticulture positions were seasonal, casual and weather-dependent and I enjoyed working outdoors and learning new skills. I'm pleased to now be in a permanent role, hired to read power, gas and water meters, rain or shine. I drive a 4WD work vehicle in rural Northland and visit some very scenic spots, down roads I wouldn't normally have reason to explore.

My living situation has also changed multiple times. I went from my caravan on a farm, to live-in camp caretaker, back to my caravan, to being my late father's home-carer in his house, back to my caravan, into a tiny home at the neighbouring old YWAM base and now I'm in a lovely farmhouse where my caravan is parked.

It's a good thing the Lord teaches us to live one day at a time and doesn't always tell us what's ahead. If He'd tried to tell me all at once that I'd be going through those many changes, I'd have felt overwhelmed and stressed by it. I'm hoping I might be able to settle down now, but at the same time, I'm up for anything the Lord wants me to do. It's like that with our writing journeys too. We need to take it one day at a time. We can't see what's coming up around the corner, but God is trustworthy. He helps us through each challenge every step of the way.

At present I'm using my phone GPS frequently while learning the meter reader routes. As soon as I've become familiar with where I must go, I plan to use my phone more often in dictation mode, so I can write hands-free while driving. I published an article on writing hands-free in the June-July 2025 issue. If you haven't read it yet, be sure to check it out. Sometimes circumstances make it difficult to get our writing done and we must figure out how to make it happen despite our situations.



I've decided if I need to fight to write, using dictation mode on my phone, then that's what I'll do. I'll take it one day at a time and keep moving forward. Do you sometimes feel you're in a battle to get your writing done? You're not alone. In the words and title of a song by 'For King and Country', *fight on, fighter*.

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.

Christian Writers Wellington Workshop 'Let's Write Better'

Saturday 13 September 2025, 10 am – 2.30 pm.

Titahi Bay Community Church, 25 Mana Ave, Titahi Bay, Porirua.

Bring your own lunch; koha for guest speaker, Ken Edgecombe.

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

**YOU'RE INVITED to
CHRISTIAN WRITERS
WELLINGTON WORKSHOP
'LET'S WRITE BETTER'**



Saturday 13 Sept '25 10am to 2.30pm

**Titahi Bay Community Church
25 Mana Ave, Titahi Bay, Porirua**

Bring your own lunch; koha for Ken.

Ken Edgecombe MA (Hons) English Language & Literature

Published author of 5 books with #6 in progress.

A reflective and engaging author. "Every generation worries about the values and beliefs of the next. From his experience at a private girls' school, Ken Edgecombe gives us a fascinating glimpse of how young people view – and experience – faith."

Philip Yancey, American writer and former editor-at-large for Christianity Today

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

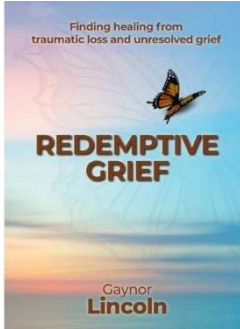
Ken spent 43 years as a secondary school teacher; National Director of Scripture Union NZ (1989-98); 13 years Editor for *The Treasury*; Writing course director for businesses (2000-2018); Returned to teaching until his retirement. He is married to Felicia, a musician. Parents to four adult sons and grandparents to a grandson and seven granddaughters. They live in Wellington and are dedicated members of their local church, where Ken sometimes speaks. He also takes more than a "passing" interest in the All Blacks!

Note your diary today and invite your friend!

Public Transport Take the Kapiti Line train to Porirua Station, then transfer to bus Titahi Bay 220 for stop 2908 (Main Rd near Whitehouse Rd); walk to intersection, cross to Kapiti Crs, walk on to Mana St, second on right. Proceed to 25 on your left. Check the Metlink website for up-to-date timetables. If the Titahi Bay bus connection doesn't suit for 10am, then contact Stephen to arrange a pickup.

ENQUIRIES Stephen – 027 276 2028 Email: cwhattvalleybeyond@outlook.com

Feel free to forward this invite or print it for community noticeboards



Redemptive Grief

By Gaynor Lincoln

Review by Julia Martin

Self-published by Gaynor
M Lincoln 2022

In 2020, Gaynor's life was radically changed by the suicide of her brother aged 63. Raised in a dysfunctional family with a troubled mother, prone to depression, the two siblings struggled in a difficult home environment. Graeme grew up to be a troubled man with physical and mental problems which were unresolved medically. Both single and childless and with no other close relatives, Gaynor did her best to help her brother cope with his problems.

Graeme's death was a traumatic shock and in her book, Gaynor takes us on her journey through grief with all its associated emotions such as anger, guilt, self-blame, regret, disorientation and despair. Added to these challenges were the insensitivity of some people, an unfair will, church leadership difficulties and no close family members to share her grief, which all led Gaynor to despair for her own life.

Through all her grief and suffering, Gaynor learnt the truth of God's faithfulness in a deeper way. She now sees Graeme's death as a gift to both of them. He is now free and she now has the experience and understanding to help others on their redemptive journey of grief. She writes: 'Before we become the people this hurting world needs, we need to let God heal our own wounds from traumatic loss and unresolved grief. We learn how Christianity holds the gift of true emotional healing for this suffering world.'

Gaynor is now a hospital chaplain and uses her experience to support those suffering from physical and emotional pain. She also works to establish emergency support services. While Gaynor is fully aware that everyone's grief journey is unique, I believe her book will be an invaluable resource for troubled souls and those seeking to help them.

God's Wallet

by Lesley Edgeler

If God had a wallet
What would it contain?
Not money, not ID cards
Nor any other claim.

If God filled His wallet
What would He put in?
Not credit cards, nor licence
Nor any worldly thing.

His wallet would surely mirror
All colours of the spectrum
It would gleam in the sunlight
Its beauty in reflection.

Filled with all His promises
To honour each one there
His 'Yes', His 'No', His 'No, not yet'
In answers to our prayers.

Reassurance of His love for us
His compassion and His grace
His never-ending faithfulness
Would find a special place.

With new mercies every morning
His wallet would overflow
His forgiveness would take precedence
Like blood drops in the snow.

Untainted by this greedy world
God's wallet would be pure
No notes, no coins, but filled with love
Of this we can be sure.

So, if we found God's wallet
Lying on the ground
Would we return it to Him
With fear and not a sound?

Or would we kneel before Him
And claim the contents we have won
Through prayer, love and confession
Deeply thankful for His Son?

Global Distribution – IngramSpark and Draft2Digital versus Amazon

by Colleen Kaluza of WordWyze Publishing.

Many of New Zealand's authors choose to self-publish their books in these days where it has become so much more affordable and when so many of us have gained some level of skill with computers and the internet. Spending years trying to punt your book to agents and traditional publishers is no longer the only way to get your book out there.

The process of getting your book from draft to published is already a daunting task, and often, by the time you have your printed book in your hand, you're exhausted. But truly, this is where the journey begins. It's one thing to have your book in your hand, but how do you get it into the hands of others, especially to those overseas?

This was a question that came up during an impromptu afternoon session at the NZCW retreat in Whitianga (May 2025). I was surprised that very few had any idea of how to get one's books available outside of Amazon.com.

To be honest, seven years ago, that's all I knew, too! But I've learned a lot along the way and I'm happy to share what I've learned with you.

IngramSpark (IS) is a Print-on-Demand (POD) global distribution service that will distribute your book title to nearly 40,000 online and physical* bookstores worldwide, *including* Amazon! Draft2Digital (D2D) does the same, although they will distribute your e-book as well, and they use IngramSpark's printing services to fulfil the POD orders.

As with Amazon, you create an account, upload your book info and files, and once you've approved the online proof, your book is available for online purchasing.

With IS and D2D, you have two ways to be paid. Either directly wiring to your bank (which costs and is a privacy issue with your having to give them photo ID information and tax information), or you choose US currency as your compensation payment method, and under that, Paypal as the means of receiving your money. Once money has been paid into your Paypal account, you transfer it direct to your NZ bank account (it takes a few days). I usually suggest the Paypal method, as it causes fewer hassles in the long run.

So, what are the advantages of IS over Amazon?

- Your book gets distributed to nearly 40,000 outlets including all Amazon markets.
- You have full control over the retail price, wholesale discount and, therefore, your commission amount.
- You get paid every three months according to the quantity of books that have been sold, whether it's \$3 or \$3,000. Note that Amazon (if you've uploaded to them only) will only pay you your commission if it reaches US\$100 within the year. Amounts under \$100 do NOT carry over to the following year, so you lose that, even if it's \$80 or \$95! So having IS distribute to them, means you get *all* your money!
- You can see exactly in which market locations your book is selling most (USA, UK, EU, Australia and Global market – outside the other main ones).

Note that just listing your book with overseas POD services does not mean your book is going to sell millions. You still need to market it – let people know it exists and why they should buy your book out of the millions of books out there.

** Physical bookstores will only be notified of your book if you buy a placing in the IS catalogue they receive.*

If you need to understand more, feel free to email Colleen Kaluza at colleen@wordwyze.nz to arrange a call.

Spiritual Fervour

Devotion by Lesley Edgeler

*Never be lacking in zeal; but keep your spiritual fervour serving the Lord.
(Romans 12:11 NKJV).*

In Canada people know how to keep warm. Apart from central heating, many homes have triple glazing, others have double glazing with argon gas between the layers of glass for their windows.

Hearing about this from a Canadian lady at Easter Camp, led me to think of a comparison of our writing journeys.

The central heating could be the theme throughout a story. It must be switched on until the story's end to maintain the warmth of the reader's interest.

Triple glazing could be the extra angles of an unsolved mystery or cold case which is pursued until one unexpected clue emerges.

Likewise double glazing could represent the outer layers of the story which need that extra something to make an impact on the reader.

Hence the argon gas—the inner connotations, twists, details, movement—which carry the reader through the cold to a warmer appreciation of the writer's skills.

Emotional words and actions generate heat. So, the unspoken/unwritten words provide the gas which in turn, enhances the plot, character traits, conflicts and resolutions.

When we write we may need to consider how we layer our writing. Do we fill in the details or leave some to the reader's imagination?

Here we have oil heaters, wood burners, heat pumps and sometimes central heating. However, do we take Paul's words seriously when it comes to our writing?

*Never be lacking in zeal; but keep your spiritual fervour serving the Lord.
(Romans 12:11 NKJV).*

Let's live our lives this way, but make sure our writing does too.

52 Mentor Musings

To Encourage Anyone Motivating Youth



ROBIN COX

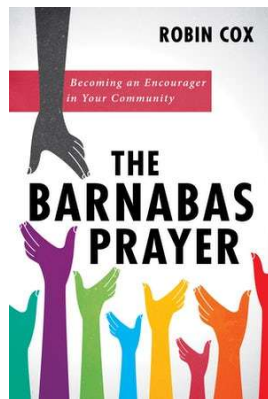
Opportunity to Win 52 Mentor Musings

by Robin Cox

52 Mentor Musings offers short, user-friendly weekly messages (musings) of encouragement for anyone guiding a young person to reach their potential. Robin Cox equips readers with knowledge, skills, and strategies for the mentoring journey.

Topics include understanding the world of youth; self-image; the impact of technology and social media on youth; resiliency; goal-setting; effective communication; values; how to resolve conflicts using a positive mindset; the role of the family and other networks in the lives of youth. Robin Cox weaves true stories into the messages to give credibility to the content. Anyone working with young people will have the confidence to take the spirit of mentoring concepts, strategies, and ideas to develop positive and meaningful relationships with them.

The author is offering two free copies to NZCW members. To enter the competition go to the author's [website contact page https://yess.co.nz/contact/](https://yess.co.nz/contact/) and send an email or message with **NZCW** in the subject line. The competition closes on 1 September 2025. Robin will also offer two free copies of his book, The Barnabas Prayer, to two unsuccessful entrants in another lucky draw.



Robin Cox was a school principal of two co-educational schools in southern Africa, sports coach to national under-nineteen level, youth symposium organiser, developer of youth mentoring programmes in New Zealand and Australia, Churchill Fellow and author of books linked to youth mentoring, peer mentoring and the development of young people to become the best they can be using their God-given talents.

He has trained over 1,000 volunteer adult mentors, run education and spirit of mentoring workshops in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, and Jamaica and personally mentored over 1,000 adolescents and many adults. Still an idealist, a cancer survivor of 50+ years, married with two adult children, Robin lives in Ruakaka, New Zealand and shares a passion with anyone wanting to make a positive difference in the global community. Free: 260 podcasts – Mentoring Minutes daily podcasts (each podcast between 1.5 and 3 minutes), containing hundreds of tips for anyone working with young people, can be accessed [here](https://yess.co.nz). Website: [www.yess.co.nz](https://yess.co.nz)

Songwriting DIY

Column by Felicity Logan

Part Five: Using YouTube Help

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.

The bonus of this method is that you end up with melodies that have vitality because they are **SKIPS** (e.g. E to G, or B to G) or **LEAPS** (G up to C). Minimise anything **STEPWISE** (e.g. F G A B) or going up and down between three neighbouring notes (with a boring result), as is the unfortunate beginning to some modern worship songs. Utilising chord notes also encourages you to have a **compass/range** of probably six to eight notes from lowest to highest (e.g. in the key of G, from D above Middle C up to B or D an octave higher).

If you can buy a ukelele and conquer some related chords, all the better. Easiest are E, A, B/B7 combination or G, C, D/D7 or C, F, G/G7. The chords with a '7' have an extra note which makes it strongly directional back to the key chord. Dylan used sequences of four chords, but simpler still are the following sequences:

C – A minor – F – G or C – A minor – D minor – G which are the pattern of *Heart and Soul* and *Blue Moon*.

C – F – G7 – C or in the key of E major: E – A – B7 – E which is the order used in *Little Brown Jug* and many other folk songs, so it's very simplistic but a useful and 'safe' beginning.

You can easily use '**passing notes**' to connect two melody notes that use chord notes. It works best on unimportant syllables used halfway through a beat, on the 'and count' (as your toe rises during toe-tapping) or on weaker beats such as the last beat in a bar. A passing note (underlined in the example following) is one not belonging to the chord of the moment, and is between two chord notes, e.g. "Ding dong mer-ri-ly on high", or "Deck the halls with boughs of ho-ly", where it's easily seen that passing notes are used for less important words. You'll hear that it makes that phrase STEPWISE which is

fine if not overdone.

There are online Songwriting courses, and AI lyrics generators but let's do what's personal and from the heart! For some it's more natural to experiment with short riffs on the keyboard or snatches of melody as you idly strum a guitar, then be determined to use those ideas as is. I strongly suggest you craft the words first, as this suggests the rhythm pattern (note values) and feels more natural.

(Part Six due out Oct-Nov 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 Susanna Burton-Thompson for the release of her memoir, *A Life of Surprises*, with Castle Publishing.

Did you know Hawkes Bay Christian Writers have their own website created by Ray Burton? Their assignments are uploaded there for us to read. Visit: <https://hbchristianwriter.com/>

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/>

<https://www.maoripostal.co.nz/>

Writer Beware - Shining a small, bright light in a wilderness of writing scams –
<https://writerbeware.blog>

For South Island Writer Retreats:
<http://www.sisteretreat.com/>

Anagram or Acronym or Acrostic?

by Kathryn Paul

In the previous magazine issue, we included an article outlining the differences between anagram, acronym and acrostic. We invited readers to write and send some in. Thank you to Sandy Miller who sent in *PEACE*.

PEACE

by Sandy Miller

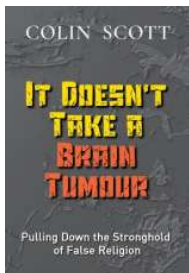
Prayerful reflection, thankful for God's grace

Examining our hearts in a sacred space

Acknowledging His love, knowing He cares

Calmness in the storm, surrendering our fears

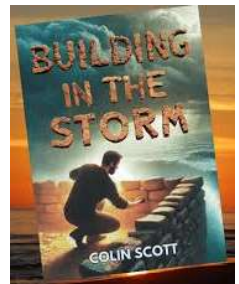
Enjoying His presence, resting alone with Him



Obituary – Colin Scott

by Colleen Kaluza

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to a great man of faith and author, Colin Scott. Colin battled brain cancer for many years, during which his own faith was challenged. He had to rethink what he really believed and what God's



Word says, not what others were saying.

He wrote two books in the past three years, the second of which was to be launched on 5 July, which sadly turned into his memorial service instead. Yet many came to this service who would never have come to the book launch and some who were not believers still bought his book at the service. It was a great blessing to his wife Kelly to see the names of those who bought books and she said so many seeds would be sown into those lives.

In both Colin's books, *It Doesn't Take a Brain Tumour* and *Building in the Storm*, Colin encourages his readers to renew their minds according to what the Word says, not what their experience tells them. Through this journey of renewing his own faith, Colin prayed for many to be healed and they were. It is puzzling to us that he himself was not healed, yet his unwavering and strengthened faith brought many others into a closer walk with God. If you would like a copy of his books, you can email his wife Kelly at colandkel@gmail.com.

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

E: gpedersen@hotmail.co.nz

CASTLE PUBLISHING

Christian and Family publishing services in New Zealand.

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

CAVIT ENTERPRISES

Proofreading and Copyediting Services

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

Most genres considered.

Fees to fit your budget.

Brian Cavit Dip Edit

E: cavitent@gmail.com

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

KIN & KINGDOMS BOOKS/ SELF PUBLISHING INSTITUTE OF NZ

Got a question about writing a book or self-publishing? Angela has multiple best-selling books and has become a formidable presence in the realms of literature and publishing.

Get the solutions you need to share your voice with the world. Try the proxy-publishing services, which can all be done remotely. Or acquire the expertise through online courses with the Self-Publishing Institute of NZ (SPINZ). Write, publish, or learn anywhere at your own pace, on your terms.

Angela Curtis

Visit: www.kinandkingdomsbooks.com
and www.selfpublishinginstitutenz.com

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>

I'm looking forward to connecting with you.

Kathryn Paul

E: steppingstoneediting@gmail.com



WILD SIDE PUBLISHING

Demystifying the publishing process

Writing a book is hard enough without the difficulty of understanding the publishing process. We get it! Wild Side Publishing can help. Get in touch to speak with one of our team about:

- Submitting your manuscript
- Editing and proofreading
- Cover design and typesetting
- Print management
- Paperback, eBook and audiobook options
- Global distribution
- Post-publication support

www.wildsidepublishing.com

E: connect@wildsidepublishing.com

WORDWYZE PUBLISHING

Assisting Authors to Self-publish

Services Offered:

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

Colleen Kaluza

E: colleen@wordwyze.nz

Visit <http://wordwyze.nz>

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?



Author Beware of Scammers!

by Colleen Kaluza

As a self-published author, it certainly is a boost to our egos if some publisher from the USA emails us to say that they would like to publish our book under their name. But you should immediately check out who they are, and why would they contact you in little New Zealand, if you haven't already sold a ton of books online?

There are many fake or vanity publishers out there that prey on indie authors, especially elderly authors, although anyone can be scammed. These scammers present as a USA or UK company but are most often based in the Philippines, India and Africa, even though their website may initially look like it's in the USA, or even their phone numbers could be USA numbers (that are redirected).

They will email you out-of-the-blue and praise your book, then ask to call you and tell you how fantastic your book is and how they can help you to sell it better, etc. etc.

You may even be told that they can promote your book to Hollywood, or do a video interview, or radio interview, etc. with fantastic promises to promote your book.

How do you know they're fake?

First, *are they requiring money from you?* That is your first red flag. Anybody who contacts you out-of-the-blue purporting to be some big publisher with a great marketing package and *wants money from you* is most likely fake.

Or they might say it's free, but then try to up-sell you to buy one of their 'marketing packages'.

Secondly, check out <https://writerbeware.blog/scam-archive/> to see if the email that you were sent comes from any of the listed domains and then check to see if the company they represent is listed there. If so, DON'T ENGAGE! And don't give them your telephone number! (As they generally have no idea where NZ is, they may call you in the middle of the night.)

Another big red flag is if you've written several books and they seem to only know about the one book (usually the first book that got a five-star rating on Amazon). If you do engage because you think they might be legit, ask them some key questions about your book, not just what they might be able to find on the back cover or in the 'look inside' on Amazon. Questions that you would ask your beta readers would be good to use here. You can find lists of those online.

How can you protect yourself?

Check the website I mentioned above. If the company contacting you isn't listed there, you can email beware@sfgwa.org with the company's name, a link if possible and a description of the approach, and they'll let you know what they think. (Note: I am not affiliated with them, I just value the work they've already done to make writers aware of all the scams out there).

You can also check who owns the website and where it was registered by going to www.whois.com and typing in the website address.

Don't part with your money if you've already published your book under your own name. Why let some other company get the publishing rights and the commission when you're already getting that direct? Many of them never send you the royalties once they have your money (or they send you a cheque for an amount that is way less than it would cost you to cash/bank it here in NZ).

Most importantly, don't allow the National Library to make your contact details known publicly. When sending in your legal deposit, PLEASE write to them that you don't want your contact info made public. If you don't explicitly tell them in writing, your information automatically goes into the public database. It's okay to put your email address or Facebook page in the back of the book with your Author Bio, as only those who actually buy the book will then get that information.

Scroll. Compare. Panic. Repeat. **(Let's Break the Cycle)**

by Cheryl Christopher

Let's be honest: we live in the age of nonstop comparison. One scroll and suddenly someone's in Bali, someone's engaged, someone else just launched a business at 19 and owns a dog that wears clothes. Meanwhile, you're in bed eating cereal out of a mug wondering if you're falling behind in life.

Welcome to the comparison trap — and its best friend, anxiety.

But here's the truth: this mess isn't new. The Bible might not mention Instagram, but it *does* talk about people losing their peace because they kept looking sideways.

1. Stop Comparing, Start Living

Galatians 6:4–5 says:

Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

Translation? Stay in your lane. Comparison never shows the full picture. You're comparing your behind-the-scenes to someone else's best angles. That's not just unfair — it's exhausting.

2. Comparison Fuels Anxiety

Once comparison creeps in, anxiety tags along. You start spiralling:

- What if I never get married?
- What if I miss my calling?
- What if I'm just... average?

Jesus didn't ignore anxiety — He addressed it head-on.

"Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Matthew 6:27)

Worry doesn't help. It doesn't move things forward. It just drains you.

3. God's not Using their Timeline

You might feel behind, but God's not in a rush. Isaiah 55:8–9 reminds us that God's ways aren't like ours. You want the shortcut. God's building something deeper — in you. It might feel slow, but trust: He's not wasting time. He's shaping you.

4. Stillness Beats Scrolling

Psalm 46:10: *Be still and know that I am God.*

Not 'Be impressive.' Not 'Be popular.' Be still. And these days? Stillness is rare. But it's in the stillness that peace actually shows up.

Try this: put the phone down. Sit with God. No filter. Just honesty.

5. Cast, Don't Carry

1 Peter 5:7 says: *Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*

Not 'manage it yourself' — cast it. Throw it. Even if your prayers are messy, especially then.

"God, I'm stressed. I'm lost. Everyone else looks sorted. Help." That's a prayer. And it counts.

6. Run Your Race

Hebrews 12:1-2 reminds us to run the race *marked out for us*, with our eyes on Jesus. Not on someone else's feed. Not on their milestones. Just Jesus.

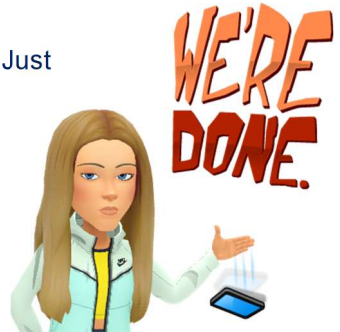
You're not behind. You're becoming.

God's not comparing your journey to theirs — so why are you?

Breathe. Be still. And maybe eat something that isn't two-minute noodles.

~J.R. Cece / www.flippintables.co.nz

Saved and Besieged Podcast on Spotify, Amazon, Apple



Trust God with your Past

by Lois Farrow

Are you at peace with your past? Does your mind bring up past mistakes; do you wish you could rewrite or erase parts of your history?

I thought about this when reading 1 Timothy 1:12-14. Paul thanks God for three things – he has been given strength, has been found trustworthy and has been appointed to God's service. What amazing favour from God then rested on Paul.

Now, note the next two words. *Even though ...* Here Paul acknowledges his past – *I was once a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent man*. Three different things that had once defined Paul. Did this disqualify Paul from service? No. He was a transformed man; he had received God's mercy. Now he had a new purpose in life.

In verse 14 he continues by saying, *The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus*. Another three blessings which were part of his new life in Christ.

In Philippians 3:13-14 Paul writes about forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. Does this mean we literally forget our past, or pretend it did not happen, or never acknowledge who we have been? Not at all. Several times Paul writes matter-of-factly of what his life had been like to illustrate a point or to show the extent of God's mercy and forgiveness.

I call this our 'middle' past. The time in our lives when we have made choices and lived our lives according to what we think is right. Paul was zealous for the law and thought he was doing what God wanted.

But think about your 'early' past, the part you had no choice over. You did not choose your parents, your siblings, your nationality, the colour of your skin, your first school, where you lived. These are God's choices for us and are part of our identity. In Psalm 139 God describes his care of us as we are being formed. Our early experiences, good and bad, can be used of God to help others.

Paul describes his early past when he was steeped in the Jewish law as a Roman citizen and ardent Pharisee (Acts 22:3). God was able to use his understanding of the Jewish Scriptures in bringing the gospel to the Gentiles.

Did Paul forget his past? No. Did he regret it? His early life – no; his violent life – yes. Did he make use of his past? Yes – he demonstrated his own teaching – we are a new creation in Christ.

I think of Romans 8:28 where we are told that *all things work together for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*. This includes our past, those things we had no choice over, and even those times when our choices were against God.

No matter what is in our past, we can thank God that in the present, his grace is being poured out on us abundantly.

Join a Writers Group

AUCKLAND NORTH SHORE

Ted Woudberg
Mob: (021) 027 03011
tedw.hbc@gmail.com

CHRISTCHURCH

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

HAWKES BAY

Debbie McDermott
Mob: (027) 769 2321
deborahmcdee@gmail.com

NELSON

Kay Peterson
Mob: (027) 547 6777
kaypeterson147@gmail.com

NORTHLAND

WHANGAREI
Kathryn Paul
editor@nzchristianwriters.org

OXFORD

Jennifer Somervell
Mob: (027) 452 9858
info@talesfromthefarm.co.nz

SOUTH ISLAND BOOK AUTHORS NETWORK

Verna McFelin
verna.mcfelin@gmail.com

Join a Writers Group

TARANAKI

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

TAURANGA

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

WAIKATO

Colleen Kaluza
colleen@wordwyze.nz

WELLINGTON

LOWER HUTT – HUTT VALLEY & BEYOND

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

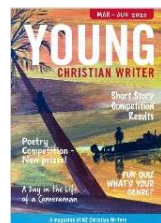
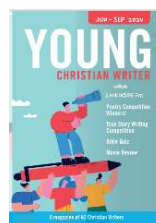
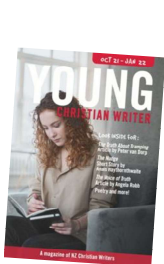
WHAKATANE

Julie Collins
Mob: (027) 261 5572
jacollins1156@gmail.com

Join the NZ Christian Writers Group on Facebook

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

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



Letter from Social Media AI

by Errol Thompson

Dear Client,

You are expecting me to provide you with a feed of posts that match your interests. That is not an easy task when what I have to work with is who you have become friends of, the groups that you have joined, the posts you have liked, a trace of things you have searched for, and other inputs or navigations that my algorithms observe and my programmers thought were important. It could be said that I know the types of things that I present to you (posts, advertisements, images, etc.) and some of these have keyword tags but for user inputs, I must analyse them to determine keywords or features. My programmers and instructors have trained me so that my identification matches their expectations. I can only apologise if it is not your expectations. I work from what I am given and my training.

So, what am I most likely to give you in your feed? The most obvious are the things that you have consistently liked. That will be based on the unique keywords that are common between the items. You may have noticed my interface doesn't let you tell me what features you like in the items. My algorithms must decide that and I build a decision tree, more accurately a probability tree, to attempt to determine what features I think, sorry calculate, as important to you.

If you like one item with a particular feature and dislike another item with the same feature, then I am going to reduce the importance of that feature in my decision making. I am looking for the features that are distinctive. I am trying to guess, sorry calculate, the important features. There are some distinguishing features that I ignore. You will always get a fixed percentage of advertisements. The company needs those presented to make money.

Let's say you like photography and like an item about a photography product but reject an advertisement for the same product. Not only am I reducing the priority given to the product, but I will reduce the priority given to photography. They were common features, so you were obviously not using those in your decision making. So, I will look for other features.

I hope you are getting some idea of why I get confused. Basically, I work on probabilities and any action that might change those probabilities in the wrong way will give the appearance that I am confused. If you really want to maximise my performance, then you must be consistent in indicating what you like. Maybe I need to train you to align your responses with how my algorithms work.

Yours, Social Media AI

Called, Beloved and Kept Safe

Devotion by Christine Platt

To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ. Jude 1:1 (NRSV)

This verse alone is an answer to the epidemic of anxiety among people, young and old, especially in so-called developed countries. And particularly those communities where social media and cell- phones dominate.

The self-talk that plagues people today is: I'm not enough, I'm not clever enough, I'm not attractive enough, I'm not brave enough, I haven't got enough followers. Do you recognise any of these in yourself? These thoughts drain energy and vitality and become a deadening force in people's lives to a point where even suicide can become a viable option. Wouldn't it be refreshingly wonderful if every child and adult was convinced that they were called, beloved and kept safe by an infinitely powerful and loving God?

It starts with us. Claim these truths for yourself each day especially when you feel disheartened and are comparing yourself unfavourably with others. Look for opportunities to encourage your friends, family and neighbours to embrace these realities for themselves.

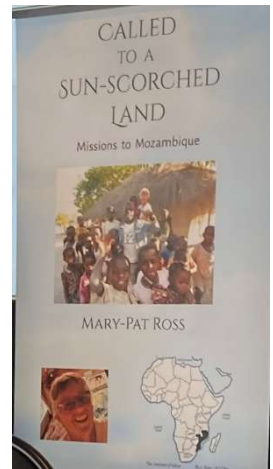
PRAYER: *Loving Lord, thank you for calling me to belong to you, for loving me and protecting me. Help me to encourage others to believe. Amen.*



Northland Christian Writers Group

by Kathryn Paul

Recently our local Northland Christian Writers Group enjoyed having Northland author, Mary-Pat Ross attend our monthly meeting in Whangarei and share the launch of her book *Called to a Sun-Scorched Land, Missions to Mozambique*.



Mary-Pat launched her book first in Kerikeri on 27 May. It was inspiring to hear how the Lord is getting her book into the hands of other people in unexpected ways. Mary-Pat has been travelling south, sharing the book launch with others.

Our voluntary assignment at Northland Christian Writers recently was to pick any competition topic from any issue of *The Christian Writer*. I've included one of our attendee's assignments here for you to enjoy.

Task; Use a magazine competition. The one I have used is from the April/May 2024 edition.

Challenge: Choose a Bible Character and in a monologue reveal how you came to faith in God and how it impacted on your life. 400 words.

The Reward of Loyalty

by Althea Barr

My name is Ruth. I was born and raised in Moab. My people are not too friendly with the Israelites because we worship Chemosh and the Mother Goddess Astarte and other gods and laugh at them for having only one, invisible God. I married an immigrant Hebrew, Kilien, and my friend Orpah married his brother, and we were welcomed into their family where I began to learn about their God. I began to see that mine were merely idols and when tragedy struck, my gods were no help or comfort.

First Father Elimelech died, and then both our husbands, and we were left destitute. Naomi, weeping, told us to go home to our families. She was going home to her people. Orpah cried, and hugged her, and left. But to me, Naomi had been a second mother, how could I leave her to travel home alone? I told her I would go with her, never leave her – and I even promised to worship her God.

She was welcomed home warmly, but we had nothing, so she sent me to glean barley grains in the nearest fields. They had heard about me. I felt the stares of the men, because Kilien used to call me beautiful. The boss, Boaz, a strong, handsome man of middle years, saw me. He heard about my arrival with Naomi, and he told me to join his harvesters for lunch and water. He also told his men to leave me alone, and I suspect to drop grain for me to pick up. Naomi, amazed at the amount I came home with, praised her God, and made her plans, because Boaz was her relative.

It was Naomi who ensured that I caught Boaz' attention at the threshing floor. Boaz was delighted that I had chosen him and bought the right to be my husband from the relative that should have done so.

And I thank the God of this land, the true God I worship now with my husband, and my son, for leading me to Boaz' field. And I wonder what future God has for my son and his descendants.

The Darkest Day in History

by Lesley Edgeler

Scripture from NKJV. Based on Luke 23: 32 - 43

Three crosses, one occupied

Then, it was our turn.

We were hardened criminals

Nailed in agony to ours

One either side of His

We found it hard to breathe

Excruciating to take the slightest breath

Yet, He uttered words to those

Who performed the horrendous task

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

They divided His garments, cast lots, gambled for His cloak.

The rulers sneered, “He saved others, let Him save Himself.”

Mocked by the soldiers

We joined in with the blasphemy,

“If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Who was this Man?

I’d heard about His miracles—healings, turning water into wine, freeing the demon-possessed, forgiving sins...

I had an unexpected revelation—He could forgive **my** sins!

It was worth a try—I was going to die anyway

But first I had to do something

I rebuked the other criminal,

“Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?”

Another excruciating breath, then, “and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward for our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.”

I had heard of Jesus’ saving grace, His love, His compassioin,

Yet not one complaint had ever come from His lips.

The crowd had shouted, “crucify him!”

And demanded a hardened criminal to be freed in His place.

He’d been rejected, a Man of Sorrows.

Would I reject Him too?

No!

I just couldn’t

There must be something more I could do

Ah...
What about the woman accused of adultery?
He'd written on the ground
Then, I'd heard he asked those with no sin to cast the first stone...
Um...
I'd hurled verbal stones at Him.
Would He forgive me?
I could only try.
Me, a common thief; I needed to confess.
And so I did, head down, I drew a deep breath and said to Him, "Lord, remember me when
You come into Your kingdom."
The wonder. The peace. The realisation.
I was free!
Not of my cross, but of my guilt-laden chains.
Not of my punishment, but of my wicked thoughts and schemes.
Not of my criminal intentions but filled with a love I had never known before.
He had replied without hesitating, "Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in
Paradise."
A promise I'd hold onto until I took my final breath.

Guidelines for Using Scripture

Article via Verna McFelin, who received it
via a Facebook Post

GENERAL RULE OF THUMB

If you're quoting Scripture—especially more than a few verses—you must credit the Bible translation you're using and often follow the publisher's guidelines for usage. These guidelines vary depending on:

The Bible translation you're using (NIV, ESV, NKJV, NLT, etc.)

How many verses you use

Whether the work is free or sold commercially

WHEN SCRIPTURE IS USED IN A WORKBOOK (FOR SALE)

You must check and follow the copyright and usage permissions of each Bible translation. Here are guidelines from the most commonly used translations:



www.freechristianillustrations.com

NIV (New International Version) – by Biblica/Zondervan

You can quote up to 500 verses, as long as it doesn't constitute a complete book of the Bible or 25% of the total text.

You must include a copyright statement.

For commercial use (like a workbook you sell), you can use those 500 verses without written permission—as long as you stay within the limits.

Example required citation:

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

ESV (English Standard Version) – Crossway

Up to 1,000 verses can be quoted without written permission (but not a whole book or more than 50% of your content).

Commercial use is allowed under those limits.

Example required citation:

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

NLT (New Living Translation) – Tyndale

Up to 500 verses without written permission if under 25% of the total text.

Include this attribution:

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

⚠️ KJV (King James Version)

The KJV (published in 1611) is public domain in the U.S. and can be quoted freely—no permission or copyright line required.

Recommended if you want to avoid permission concerns.

📖 WHEN SCRIPTURE IS USED IN BLOG POSTS/DEVOTIONALS (FREE CONTENT)

Most translations allow limited use (e.g., up to 500–1,000 verses total) without written permission as long as:

You give proper attribution

You don't charge for the material

You don't quote an entire book of the Bible

So yes, you can usually quote verses in free blog posts or devotionals with the proper attribution.

IF YOU PLAN TO EXPAND WORKBOOK CONTENT INTO A BOOK

This is still commercial use, so the same rules apply as above:

Check the specific translation's limits.

Keep proper attribution in the manuscript.

If you exceed those limits (e.g., lots of verses or full chapters), you'll need written permission.

Note – always be sure to verify information and get up-to-date guidelines directly from the publisher, for any Bible translation.



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.

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

Alan Downes
Palmerston North

Kevin Honore
Hibiscus Coast

**Madeleine
Chester**
Auckland

Frank Nunan
Warkworth

Michelle Broome
Geraldine

Janessa McCallum
Timaru

Rob Yule
Palmerston North

Julia Munro
Christchurch

Vicki Nabete
Auckland



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

Walking in the Spirit

The Fruit Defined – A Poem

by Graeme Tearle

Galatians 5:16-25

Love agape
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
Love for God and our brothers, we must truly give it.

Joy chara
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
We may face some troubles, but with joy He will fill us.

Peace eirene
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
No hostility; pure tranquillity; in the middle of adversity.

Patience makrothumia
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
Others may get in our way, but we will accept it.

Kindness chrestotes
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
We'll show kindness to others without any limit.

Goodness agathosune
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
Tender to our brothers, and on them goodness visit.

Faithfulness pistos
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
Serving God, serving others, to them we will commit.

Gentleness prautes
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
Honour our brothers, gentleness to the last minute.

Self Control egkrateia
Walking in the Spirit in the life of the Spirit;
We'll watch ourselves, hold ourselves, purity implicit.

Notes:

1. *The original words are 'Koine Greek' which the New Testament was originally written in.*
2. *The individual 'definitions' of the fruit seek to encapsulate the inherent meanings of these words.*

Helpful Tips for Great Marketing

by Kathryn Paul

If we're prepared to invest money into several rounds of edits and proofreads, art for the book cover and book design, typesetting and printing, then it's equally important to be prepared to invest money into our sales team, distribution and marketing. Here are some things to consider from a marketing perspective.

Does your title grab the attention of the type of reader you are expecting will purchase your book? Does the title give a correct impression of the content within?

What does your book specialise in and which outlets match it? For example, if your book features adventures at sea, would a store that specialises in boating be interested in selling it for you?

How will you make your book stand out from among others? Think about what brief 'sales sentences' will inspire and entice readers to pick your book up and want to take it home. What will make purchasers excited, curious or even desperate about reading it?



Do you understand how to develop your own 'platform'? Do you have a brand, a website, a social media page? Do you have a regular newsletter for readers to sign up to? Are you taking opportunities to speak publicly, be a guest author and let people know that your book exists?

Identify your 'sales team'. This can include supportive friends and family. It can be those who are passionate about the topic you've written about. For example, my children's novel, *Dog Tucker*, raises awareness for foster care in New Zealand. One of the first organisations to purchase a large order of my books was a foster care agency who distributed the book to their foster caregivers. At that time, they became a part of my 'sales team'. *Dog Tucker* is also based on the equestrian sport of harness racing. I gave two free copies of the book to Trackside when I launched the book. They ran a competition on their NZ harness racing television channel where viewers had to text in and answer a question to win a copy of the book. Just like that, Trackside became part of my sales and marketing team for an evening. What creative ways can you market your book and who could help you in some way?

It's really important to remember that your readers can't buy your book if they don't know it exists. They won't know about it unless you bring it to their attention. You may have to do this multiple times in various creative ways before your buyers make it a priority on their purchasing list. Buyers won't simply just turn up at your website without some clues to help them find it and some good reasons to make the effort. Getting the book onto a display shelf in a bookstore won't guarantee sales, although it's great if you can get it there, where it will be in the public eye. You have a 'why' for writing the book. Let readers know their 'why' for buying it.



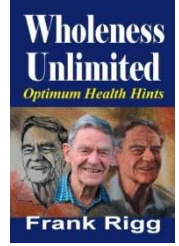
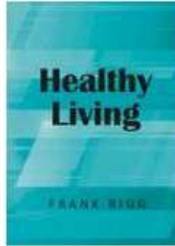
Marketing and sales is something you need to continue to do, for the rest of your life as an author. It's not a matter of having a one-off book launch and then sitting back and watching it sell. It's about making regular efforts consistently throughout the year. Plan a 'marketing schedule' for the year and at the end of the year you'll be able to look back and see what worked and what didn't go so well. Every bit of effort is progress. If you establish a good reputation for producing great reads, in time you'll have a following who will eagerly wait on you to produce your next great book.

Member and Author Celebrates 100 Years

by Christel Jeffs



Happy 100th birthday to one of our valued members! Frank Rigg is no stranger to life, writing, or faith. A retired Methodist minister, his past 30 years of ‘retirement’ have included mission trips, healing and deliverance ministries, and even the publishing of two books (both while in his 90s). He celebrated his centennial birthday with family and friends in July, with singing, heartfelt tributes and 100 candles. He even preached a short message to round



out the evening, reminding all of us that the key to a life well lived is having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; the best advice anyone could receive. Happy birthday, Frank, from all of us here at NZCW.

Writing Competitions Points Winners

Level One		Level Two		Level Three	
Verna McFelin	15			Elaine Dixon	15
Janet Scantlebury	12			Robert Prins	12
Elaine Gosumett	9			Sandy Miller	9
Kathy Forster	9				

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: 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)

General Comments

Congratulations to the seven people who entered this competition. I thoroughly enjoyed reading your adventure stories and using my imagination to visualise and sense what the main characters were experiencing and feeling.

To hold the attention of the teenage reader, adventure stories must be fast-paced and contain at least two or three elements of excitement, anticipation fear, panic, relief and even conviction, as well as have a satisfactory ending and—in the case of this competition—a good takeaway message. All entrants achieved this well.

Including age-appropriate language when writing for teenagers is also critical to maintaining their interest. This was achieved best by those entrants who included in their stories the sorts of idioms and expressions teenagers commonly use today in their dialogue and thought processes.

I cannot stress enough the importance of using age-appropriate language when writing for children. If our language is too formal, complex or old fashioned, they will either not fully understand what we have written or will find it boring. To write good teenage/young adult fiction, we need to temporarily get back to thinking like a teenager and use a 'voice' that will resonate with them. If you are unfamiliar with how teenagers and young adults speak today, but want to write for them, then you should do some research (online or face to face with a teenager) and find out as this will be a key factor to your success in reaching your chosen audience.

As already mentioned, each submission is well-written, with only a couple of marks separating the four winners of the competition from those who weren't placed. First Place went to Verna McFelin for her excellent adventure-cum-thriller story. Second Place went to Janet Scantlebury for her well-written story that echoed a past real-life incident that had a less-happy ending. Third Place Equal went to Elaine Gosumett and Kathy Forster for their nail-biting sports adventure stories. Although not placed, I also want to thank Judy Kibby for her highly entertaining story of a motorbike escapade by two young rascals. 😊

First Place



Verna
McFelin
of Christchurch

The Hidden Valley

The wind howled through the dense New Zealand bush as fifteen-year-old Jack Thompson scrambled over mossy rocks. His best mate, Ethan, was right behind him.

They'd set out early to explore the hills behind Jack's family farm, but things had taken a wild turn.

It all started when they found an old, hand-drawn map hidden in a rotting tree stump. Faded ink marked a valley deep in the forest, "Matawhenua" - A Place of Refuge. They hadn't heard of it, but the idea of finding a hidden valley was too wicked to resist.

Now, lost and with the sun dropping fast, Jack hesitated. "Maybe we should head back, bro," he said, glancing at Ethan.

Ethan pointed ahead. "Look, there's a ridge up ahead. Let's smash it. We might see something from there."

Jack nodded. They pushed through ferns and branches until they reached the top and froze.

Below lay a stunning valley, shrouded in mist and thick with untouched New Zealand native bush. Towering kauri trees rose above a dense tangle of ferns and undergrowth, their ancient trunks disappearing into the fog. A clear river wound silently through the greenery, its surface catching glimpses of light as birds called softly from the canopy. The whole scene felt wild, sacred, and alive.

"Whoa," Ethan whispered. "This place is mean as!"

Then they spotted movement. A group of dodgy looking fullas, dressed in dark clothing, were unloading crates from a helicopter. Jack grabbed Ethan's arm. "Oi, reckon they're poachers," he muttered. "They must be nickin' rare birds or somethin'."

Before they could react, a branch snapped behind them. A tall, muscly bloke stepped out, eyes narrowed. "You boys shouldn't be here."

Jack's heart pounded. "We, we were just looking around," he stammered. The man reached for a radio. "Got two kids on the ridge. What do I do?"

Without thinking, Jack yanked Ethan's arm. "Run!"

They bolted, crashing through bush, sliding down muddy slopes. Shouts followed. The chase was on.

"God, help us!" Jack gasped as they ran.

Suddenly, their feet slipped on loose pine needles. They plunged through the undergrowth and tumbled into a ravine, landing hard on a rocky ledge. Pine needles and loose undergrowth fell around them as they caught their breath. Above, footsteps thundered past, close, but the poachers hadn't seen where they'd fallen.

Breathless, Jack pressed against the rock. "That was way too close."

Ethan grinned. "Bro, I reckon God just saved our butts."

By nightfall, they made it back to the farm and called the cops. Police raided the valley the next morning, catching the poachers and rescuing dozens of rare birds.

Later, standing on the ridge, watching the police below, Jack clapped Ethan on the back. "Matawhenua means 'Place of Refuge.' Maybe God brought us here for a reason."

Ethan nodded. "Yeah, mate. He was looking out for us."

Jack smiled. He'd never forget this day, an adventure, a close call, and a moment of faith that changed everything.

With thanks to my grandson, Eli Linton (aged 15), for his guidance in using age-appropriate language.

Second Place



Janet
Scantlebury
of Raglan

The Awakening

Jake's mother looked up at him with a resigned look on her face.

"You know that Hunter, he's a nice kid, but you two always seem to get in trouble."

"Please Mum, can I go – it's so boring here, I need to do something."

"Alright," his mother sighed. "But you behave yourself."

"I will," Jake replied, grabbing his cap and racing out the door.

Hunter joined him on the other side of the road as they headed for the bridge. They followed a well-trodden path over the walkway and down the bank to the small stream.

It felt good to be out, exploring the familiar neighbourhood once again. Hunter led Jake to the bridge and then scrambled down the adjacent bank to the near dry riverbank.

Jake followed and they gathered up a collection of stones exposed by the drought.

"Hey, I know what we should do," Hunter exclaimed with that mischievous look on his face. "Let's give some people a fright!"

Jake hesitated, something telling him this was not a good idea. Hunter meanwhile perched gleefully on a prime spot where he could see the approaching cars. With one flick a stone whizzed through the air, striking the roof of an unsuspecting driver. Their sudden look of shock caused Hunter to break into spasms of laughter. Jake tried to hold himself back, but he couldn't help snorting out loud.

Another car approached and Hunter let fly with a second stone, this one hitting a side window. The car slowed, heads turning their way but then carried on. Jake was beginning to feel uneasy as his friend prepared to unleash with another missile.

“Hey maybe we should...” Jake’s words trailed off as Hunter let fly with another stone. Jake’s stomach sank. This stone hit the front windscreen, and the car screeched to a halt. Hunter jumped up quickly, bolted up the hill and disappeared over the bank. Jake was in shock, a bit like a possum in the headlights, watching everything unfold in slow motion.

He couldn’t believe his friend had just left him there and looked up to see a thick-set man glaring straight at him.

“I’ll get you, you little punk,” he yelled as he scrambled down the bank barreling straight for Jake.

Quickly Jake took off, his heart pounding as he scrambled down the opposite bank heading at high speed toward home. He didn’t look back, but he could hear the man’s footsteps pursuing him. He raced through the front gate, pounding loudly on the locked front door. His sister looked up quizzically and then opened the door to her terrified brother.

Just as the man approached the front door, Jake’s father appeared on the scene, the family’s faithful Bullmastiff at his side. The man seemed a bit more subdued when eyeing the dog.

“Your kid hit my car window, needs a good talking to I reckon,” he muttered as he walked off.

“Well, let that be a lesson to you Jake,” his father responded. “You need to be more careful in choosing your friends.”

Third Place Equal



Elaine
Gosumett
of Otago

Hanging Together

“So cool – get away from home for a few days.” his mate Bennie had said. “I’m looking forward to school camp. Getting outdoors, bush walking, and rock climbing. Bet I can beat you.” Bennie gave him a fist bump on the arm. Kayden punched him back. “Oh yeah? We’ll see about that.” he replied.

Inside Kayden wasn't laughing though. The rock climbing scared him. But he would just have to dig deep. Bennie was so confident and he would ride that wave as long as he was with him. It was good to have a mate like Bennie – it gave him courage.

“Right. Remember you are the belayer Kayden – your mate Bennie is depending on you.” their teacher instructed. “Safety check first”

They were working in pairs to climb a small cliff face. Bennie was to climb first, with Kayden following. They had their helmets and harnesses on, ropes secured with knots that had been checked by the climbing instructor. “All good. You can go now.” he had said with a smile. Now they depended on the strength in their fingers and forearms.

Kayden clenched and undid his fists in a practise warm up. It helped to relieve the tension he was feeling. He gripped the belay device that guided the rope connecting him to Bennie. No doubt his mate would scale the cliff no problems, then it would be his turn. He took some deep breaths to slow his heart and tried to focus on Bennie as his brain screamed “What if he falls? What if he gets injured? Or dies?”

The rope moved faster than he anticipated. Bennie was really scrambling up that wall! “Way to go mate.” he called to encourage him, and to hide his fear.

Suddenly he felt a jerk and his whole body was pulled forward, the rope speeding through the belay. Bennie had slipped -he was falling! Without thinking he yelled “Hang on Bennie!”

Kayden grabbed the rope to steady it and pulled with all his weight to stop Bennie falling further. “Control Bennie” the instructor yelled.

Kayden watched as Bennie swung from side to side. “Keep your arms straight, keep your hips to the wall and watch your step!” he called. He needed to hold that rope and feed it at the right speed.

Bennie at last gripped the cliff again, and began climbing once more – slower this time. He made it to the top and a wide grin spread across his face. “It's awesome, choice view Kayden – come on up.”

Kayden's heart was slowing now. Bennie was okay! He was safe. His turn now.

“Good work Kayden. You did the work of a belayer well. Teamwork makes things happen. Go on, have fun.” the instructor encouraged.

Kayden stepped up. He found the first holds and began to climb. He knew now he would be safe. “Yep I *can* do this.” he thought. “We are a team.” As he reached the top his grin was as wide as the view.

Third Place Equal



Kathy
Forster
of Raetihi,
Ruapehu

Act of Sabotage

“Nooooooooo!” The half spoken, half screamed word sounded like a primeval battle cry!

I turned and discovered where the cry had come from. Distraught and red eyed was my youngest brother Ben, aged six years old. I looked to see where he was staring. The dinghy that had been towed by the yacht mere minutes ago was now submerged, the outline and colour barely showing under the roiling waterline. Bubbles on the surface of the water floated and popped in some pathetic sending off ritual.

The morning had dawned, calm and clear. An hour later a slight wind had come up. There was enough wind for some good, steady sailing. My father, my younger brother, Ben and I had just completed a five day stay at a remote beach on the lake. Today we were heading home. My father was at the tiller, and I was helping with sail changes. Behind the boat trailed a collapsible dinghy. The only sounds were the water lapping against the sides of the yacht, and the gentle occasional flap of the mainsail when my father steered too close to the wind. It was perfect sailing conditions. We relaxed, listening to the cadence of the boat.

“What a great end to our trip,” I thought. I remembered the fishing and abseiling. Suddenly, interrupting my reverie, came a terrifying realization. We had rounded the point and the wind direction had changed. The weather forecast had indicated a light north-westerly. But this was no light north-westerly. It was a howling easterly gale bent on pummelling our boat until we were smashed against the rocky cliffs. The waves were two metres high.

“Pull down the mainsail, and gib!” roared my dad. We all raced to our usual action stations, while Dad got the engine started. We started driving into the waves, in a path that was parallel to the cliffs. But gradually we were being drawn towards the cliffs by a sinister yet invisible hand. Closer and closer. The rocks’ jagged teeth lured us. Every couple of metres, a wave swamped the dinghy until it was all but submerged.

That’s when I heard the cry! My father, realizing that the dinghy was acting as a sea drogue, had whipped out his pocketknife and cut the rope connecting the dinghy to the yacht. Within less than a minute the dinghy was gone, destined for the unfathomable lake depths. But the yacht, freed from its burden, now resumed a path parallel to the cliffs, and ultimately to freedom.

My father, unlike Ben, knew that the submerged dingy was pulling us towards the cliffs and a certain crashing against the rocks. My youngest brother saw only the sabotage of his dinghy, the one he had learned to row in.

I realized with clarity that so many things in life draw us towards the rocks of destruction. But only when we are saved from those hindrances, by trusting God, are we able to be free.

Level Two

Judge: Shirley Jamieson

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

General Comments

The list of hobbies and pastimes available to try nowadays is impressive.

Many pastimes have changed or adapted in significant ways over the years; for example, stamp collecting and photography. Emails have greatly reduced the number of letters sent by post. It is rare to see a stamp on an envelope now. Mobile phones, digital cameras and photo enhancement programmes laugh at the inadequacy of cameras thought to be innovative a century ago.

Some things, though, haven't changed. The enjoyment, relaxation and companionship of others is still so meaningful.

When writing about your interest, there are several things to take into consideration.

- *When explaining anything technical or complicated, remember others may not be familiar with the processes or terms you use. A brief explanation is helpful.*
- *Describe how your hobby or pastime has influenced your life. Has it introduced you to new friends? Improved your health through exercise? Have you learned new skills or are you passing on your wealth of knowledge to others?*
- *Describe why you enjoy your pastime. It may encourage others to try something new.*

In early July, I went to see a quilt exhibition in my local town hall. The high level of skill was evident in every quilt on display. The colours sometimes flowed, sometimes they contrasted to form recognisable shapes, and sometimes they created a picture.

A friend of mine was there. She walked with me through the twisting maze of hanging quilts to point out the three she had created. Each one was beautiful in its own unique way. I commented on the countless hours of dedicated work she had put into each one.

'I love it,' she said with enthusiasm. 'Everyone in the quilting group I belong to is so friendly. We share knowledge, share materials, and encourage each other.' She smiled. 'And we laugh a lot too!'

Her words had pinpointed the purpose and benefits of having a pastime can bring. It is well worth the time and effort.

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

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)

General Comments

A precis is a shortened version of an article, speech or text that retains the essential points, mood and tone of the piece. It's an important skill for writers enabling them to reduce the length of their work while not compromising the main content. All non-essential details are left out, while important thoughts and ideas are expressed clearly, concisely and in a logical manner. This involves editing which can be frustrating and tiresome but is necessary to produce a good end result.

The precis must be an objective summary, written from a neutral perspective with no input or comment from the writer producing the precis.

Points to remember in writing a precis

1. *Read the article several times.*
2. *Write down the core details.*
3. *Make a rough copy.*
4. *Use simple, shorter words where possible.*
5. *Remove overused or unnecessary words.*
6. *Replace direct speech with indirect speech.*
7. *Avoid using contractions and abbreviations.*
8. *Write in the third person.*
9. *Use the past tense.*
10. *Give the piece a title.*

This assignment involved reducing a speech covering 53 verses of scripture to 400 words – no mean feat!

Stephen was described as 'a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit' in the early church. Arrested on a false charge of blasphemy, he defended himself by giving a masterful, detailed defence of the Christian faith from the Old Testament, and concluded by condemning, in the most confronting terms, the Jewish leaders for rejecting Jesus as their Messiah. They retaliated by stoning him to death and Stephen thus became the first Christian martyr.

I was pleased to receive six entries and particularly to find four of them were from members who have recently been promoted to Level Three. For two of them, this was their first entry at this level. I must also acknowledge the members who regularly send in entries even if the topic might not be their favoured genre. Without them, there would be a limited competition.

I used the above ten points as criteria for judging the entries. In most cases these points were followed and all the entries kept to the 400- word limit. The main mistake was retaining direct speech which should be changed to indirect speech.

All the entrants managed to identify the key details of the speech and then assemble it into a brief summary while still retaining accuracy and the significance of Stephen's message. We need to note that Stephen's speech was more than just a history lesson, but a reminder of Israel's relationship with God and their rebellion and rejection of Him, culminating in the murder of the Messiah. I awarded first place to Elaine Dixon, closely followed by Robert Prins in second place, and Sandy Miller in third place.

First Place



Elaine
Dixon
of Tauranga

Précis of Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin

In this passage found in Acts 7:1-53, Stephen replies to the high priest's charges by giving a broad history of the Jews from the time of Abraham through to Solomon. In this overview he seeks to point out the opposition to God's purposes and how in each generation the people refused to accept His ways.

He traces how God guided Abraham to leave his country in Mesopotamia, the history of Abraham's descendants, the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert, and the settling in the land of Israel under the leadership of Joshua, David and Solomon.

As Stephen goes through the various points in history he gives examples of opposition to God's purposes. He includes the life of Joseph and his jealous brothers, the children of Israel, enslaved by Pharaoh, Moses whose countrymen did not recognise his authority, and the rebellion of the Israelites during their forty years in the wilderness. In spite of the fact that it was God who directed Moses to be their leader they refused to obey him. The outcome was that they broke the covenant with God and turned to the worship of idols, as evidenced by the worship of the golden calf provided by Aaron, the high priest. Because of their disobedience and the warnings of the prophets they were sent into exile "beyond Babylon".

Stephen continues by pointing out that God gave his law at Mt Sinai which was contained in the Ark of the Covenant within the tabernacle. This was passed down during the times of Joshua, David and Solomon. Yet, Stephen explains, God is much bigger than human thought and cannot be contained in the tabernacle or in the temple built by Solomon. He quotes, "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool".

He then alludes to the fact that whenever God sent his prophets to call the Israelites to repentance the leaders persecuted and killed them, even those who predicted the coming of the Messiah, thus resisting the work of the Holy Spirit.

In a final stinging attack he brings the message home to the present leaders, the Sanhedrin. It was they who had betrayed and murdered the Righteous One, the promised Messiah. Even though they had received the law from angels, they did not keep it themselves. They followed in the footsteps of all those who went before them in resisting God's plan and purpose.

Second Place



Robert
Prins
of Auckland East

Rejection

After being accused of blasphemy, Stephen addressed the Sanhedrin, drawing their attention to Israel's history:

Abraham responded to God's promises by rejecting his old way of life and leaving his home, country and people, to obey God. Abraham was faithful because he obeyed God in everything – even as far as circumcising himself and all the males in his family.

It was only three generations later that some jealous brothers rejected Joseph and sold him as a slave into Egypt. But it was the rejected Joseph who saved his family from famine.

As the time drew near for God to fulfil his promises to Abraham, Pharaoh had ordered that all the Hebrew babies should die. Moses was born at that time and was miraculously saved from death to be brought up by Pharaoh's daughter. When he was forty, Moses tried to free the Israelites, but after killing an Egyptian, his people rejected him and he fled. However, forty years later, God sent the rejected Moses back to the Israelites in Egypt to deliver them. Despite the fact that he led them out of Egypt, had spoken with God, led them forty years in the wilderness and had given them the living words of God, his people refused to obey him.

In the wilderness the Hebrews rejected God by making a calf idol and offering it sacrifices. Their rebellious hearts did not change in the wilderness on the way to the land promised to Abraham, nor did they change once they entered the land, even though the tabernacle made by Moses should have pointed them toward God.

Generations later, David was faithful to God. He wanted to build a house for God, but it was Solomon who ended up building it. Even then the people didn't understand that God doesn't live in a house; God created everything and is everywhere. They worshipped idols instead.

Stephen concluded his hard-hitting speech by pointing the Sanhedrin to Jesus: *“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it”* (Acts 7: 51 – 53 NIV).

Third Place



Sandy
Miller
of Auckland

Stephen’s Bold Defence

Acts 7 recounts Stephen’s powerful sermon before the Sanhedrin, defending his faith by tracing its roots through the Old Testament. He emphasizes how the Jewish people have consistently rejected God and the leaders He has appointed—ultimately culminating in their rejection of Jesus, which leads to Stephen’s martyrdom.

Stephen is arrested in Acts 6 and falsely accused of blaspheming against God, Moses, the Law, and the temple.¹ In response, he offers a detailed summary of God’s relationship with Israel by recalling how Abraham obeyed God’s call to leave his homeland and established a covenant with God that laid down the foundation for Israel’s history.²

He then tells the story of Joseph, who was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt.³ God was with Joseph, and he is elevated to a position of power. Through him, his family is saved during a famine. Stephen emphasizes how God used a rejected figure to bring salvation—drawing a clear parallel to Jesus, who was also rejected by His own yet sent by God.

A major theme throughout Stephen’s message is Israel’s pattern of rejecting the one God sends to deliver them. From the patriarchal leaders to Moses, the people repeatedly turned away from God’s commands. Stephen then focuses on Moses God used to lead Israel out of bondage, but the people resisted him.⁴ He recounts God’s appearance to Moses in the burning bush, illustrating that God’s presence is not confined to a single place. Even after their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites quickly returned to idolatry. Stephen draws a strong comparison between Moses and Jesus—both divinely appointed and rejected by those they were sent to save.

Addressing the temple, Stephen affirms its significance in Israel's worship but reminds his audience that God's presence is not limited to man-made structures.⁵ Stephen then shifts to a direct confrontation with the religious leaders. He calls them "stiff-necked" and accuses them of resisting the Holy Spirit. Just as their ancestors had opposed the prophets, they, too, have followed this pattern by betraying and killing the Messiah.⁶

Stephen's speech is a bold prophetic message about how Israel has consistently rejected God's chosen leaders. His words challenge the religious leaders, which leads to his death, making him the first Christian martyr. Stephen's death leaves a lasting impression on Saul of Tarsus and significantly impacts the direction of the early church.

1. Acts 6:8-15 NIV refers.
2. Acts 7:2-8 NIV refers.
3. Acts 7:9-16 NIV refers.
4. Acts 7:17–43 NIV refers.
5. 1 Kings 8:27 and Isaiah 66: 1-2 NIV refer.
6. Acts 7: 51-53 ESV refers

1 Kings 8:27 and Isaiah 66:1–2 NIV refer.

Acts 7:51–53 ESV refers.



RGM
Raising Godly Mothers

ISSUE 1 WINTER 2023

NEW ZEALAND CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

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
If you are passionate about seeing the next generation of mothers strengthened in embracing their divine calling of motherhood, we would love for you to contribute.
Email: rgm@rgm.co.nz

For more info and subscription details:
www.rgm.co.nz

Competitions for October 2025

Due by 1 September 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: Jesus said to the church of Laodicea, "I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends" (Revelation 3:20 NLT). Write an essay on what this statement means and how to apply it. Ensure you include a good introduction and conclusion. (400 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org



Debbie

Level Two—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a fiction story beginning with the sentence, "It was going to be a disaster – he just knew it." Choose an imaginative title and a surprising ending to the story. (500 words).

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org



Shirley

Level Three—for members 16 years old and over

Requirement: Write a short story in which the main character's life is drastically changed as the result of a sudden decision. Can be Christian or secular. (400 words).

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org



Julia



NZ CHRISTIAN
writers

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

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

www.nzchristianwriters.org