

Philippians



God's Very Special Letters

The Epistles for Kids

2026 Australian Christian Book of the Year

Philippians, Colossians & Philemon, 1 Peter
God's Very Special Letters.
The Epistles for Kids

Matt Dodd (Illustrated by Thom Bransdon)

The Open Word

9781764357401, 9781764357432,
9781764357463

Four New Testament letters have been brought to life for readers of all ages. This new translation uses direct and plain language and is a joy to read. The text is complemented by illustrations that advance the narrative, remind us of the culture and fortunes of the original readers, and ensure that people remain the focus of complex theological ideas. This unprecedented and wonderful initiative makes these epistles accessible to children and offers older readers a fresh encounter with familiar and favourite parts of Scripture. Why hasn't this been done before?

2026
AUSTRALIAN
CHRISTIAN
WINNER
BOOK OF
THE YEAR

Judging Criteria

The **Australian Christian Book of the Year Award** is given annually for a book written by an Australian citizen normally resident in Australia. The award recognises and celebrates excellence in Australian Christian writing. A shortlist is announced in July and the award is presented during August. The award carries a prize of \$3,000. Supplementary awards may be made. Entries are judged with an eye to the following:

Original nature of the work.

Literary style, including suitability for the target audience.

Competence and expertise displayed by the author in writing the book and examining the underlying thesis.

Design, layout, cover, text and illustrations.

Contribution that the book makes in meeting a need for Christian writing for the Australian situation and in the Australian market.

Judges

Greg Clarke has a doctorate in modern literature and long experience in publishing, academia and Christian mission. He is the CEO of Leprosy Mission Australia and the author of the 2014 Australian Christian Book of the Year, *The Great Bible Swindle*. Greg and his family are members of St Mark's Anglican Church in Darling Point, Sydney.

Amy Isham manages the Mannix Library at the Catholic Theological College in Melbourne. Amy has a

PhD in Leadership, is a CPX Associate and publishes academically in the discipline of Religious Studies. Amy is married to Rev Luke Isham at St Kilda Presbyterian Church and has one gorgeous teen daughter, one adorable teen son and two agouti guinea pigs.

Grace Lung is Director of the Centre for Asian Christianity at Brisbane School of Theology and Coordinator of the Next Generation Bicultural Program at Melbourne School of Theology. She writes and teaches on

Asian Australian and intercultural faith, and pastors with her husband at Rise Alliance Church on Brisbane's southside. Grace studied at Sydney Missionary and Bible College and Fuller Theological Seminary.

Awards Coordinator

Michael Collie





Shortlisted

A King Washes Feet
How to Love and Forgive
Your Friends and Enemies.
An Illustrated Bible Study

Jessica Claire Bond

Bethany House

9780764245312

This beautiful book is an invitation to watch Jesus wash the feet of people we like and people we don't like, people who fail us and people who hurt us. This is a confronting, concrete and compelling exploration of God's grace. Jesus' call to forgive those who betray us and love those who repel us is costly and radical. Jessica Claire Bond's prose is natural and her illustrations are disarming. The transition of these popular images and reflections from social media to print is successful because they are moving, provocative and profound. Will you allow Jesus to wash your feet and discover the comfort and challenge of his mercy?



Shortlisted

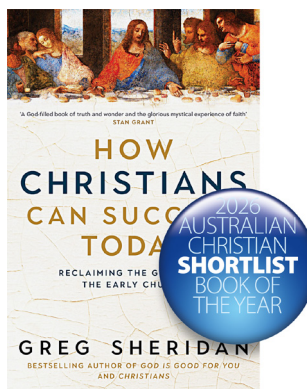
Called to Care
For People and Planet.
A Christian Response to the
Climate Challenge of Our
Generation

Jo Knight

Inter-Varsity Press

9781789745054

Locating us within the gospel arc spanning Creation to New Creation, Jo Knight looks at how climate change impacts people and the body of Christ. The call to love our neighbour is also a call to care for God's creation. What does this mean for us as individuals, churches and Christian agencies? While Knight writes with the authority of global experience, her appeal is local and manageable. This book is rich in resources and proposals for the head, heart and hands. Perfect for individuals and small groups.



Shortlisted

How Christians
Can Succeed Today
Reclaiming the Genius
of the Early Church

Greg Sheridan

Allen & Unwin

9781761471124

A prominent journalist explores the ways Christians influence their society. First, he tracks the impact of figures in the first four centuries of Christianity. Then we eavesdrop on his conversations with contemporary Christians, both famous and unknown, who are making a difference. The good news has always been countercultural. God has always used ordinary people to advance his mission. This is an inspiring collection of stories and a valuable contribution to public debate about the place of Christian thinking in the history of civilisations.



Shortlisted

Leviticus on the
Butcher's Block
Making Head or Tail of the Bible's Toughest Book

Phil Bray

Resource Publications

9798385240333

Conversation around the barbecue will never be the same again. In this book, a butcher explores the ways burnt offerings, animal sacrifices, food offerings and scapegoats served to bring people closer to God and anticipated the crucifixion. Bray offers hands-on insights, uses helpful analogies and writes with enthusiasm and larrikin wit. This is a warm welcome to a book of the Bible many find alienating. Leviticus is not so tough after all. Taste and see.



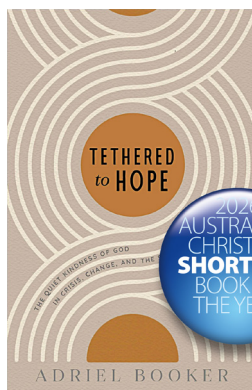
Shortlisted

Murriyang
Song of Time
Stan Grant

Bundy

9781761427909

This is an invitation to heart and mind, sensitive and perceptive observer. *Murriyang* is a song of things and renewal and careful reading is a prayer. It is a letter from a son to his father. It is a theological and philosophical and logical journal. It is a conversation between his childhood and regional New South Wales and life as a global journalist. He is a vulnerable but articulate writer, his faith in Jesus, spirituality and the Australian



Shortlisted

Single Ever After

A Biblical Vision for the Significance of Singleness

Danielle Treweek
The Good Book Company
9781802543261

With her 2024 Australian Christian Book of the Year (*The Meaning of Singleness*), Danielle Treweek showed us that we are made by God for relationship with him. Our marital status is not eternal but our walk with Jesus is. In *Single Ever After*, her encouraging and liberating message is accessible to everyone. She helps us examine our assumptions about marriage and singleness, and develop mutually supportive relationships that deepen our commitment and satisfaction. Treweek is a confident and magnanimous communicator. This is a punchy and cheerful guide to living well in Christ's diverse household of faith.

Shortlisted

Tethered to Hope

The Quiet Kindness of God in Crisis, Change, and the Spaces in Between

Adriel Booker
Baker Books
9780801075827

Overwhelmed? Confused? Anxious? Lost? Whether your crisis is a result of inner turmoil or external changes or simply the uncertainty of living in an age of wars and rumours of wars, our security is not found in the strength of our grip but in the God who never lets go. This is a timely reminder of the ways God has demonstrated that he is trustworthy. Adriel Booker's fluency and freedom is evidence of deep reflection and a thorough ordering of her experience and reading. Adriel is a kind and patient companion with words of comfort, hope and love.

Shortlisted

The Mythical Life of the Good Christian Girl

Realising True Freedom in Christ
Polly Jane Butterworth
Youthworks Media
9781922866295

This book exposes the unreasonable and sometimes contradictory expectations that weigh down Christian women and girls. Maintaining appearances leaves us alone, anxious and ashamed. The way forward is not to pretend to be perfect but to be honest and know the perfect love that casts out all fear. Butterworth draws on personal memories and professional experience as a school chaplain. She writes with a gentle power that both provokes and reassures her readers. And for many life-long Christians, this book will provide a path to healing and build confidence in the saving grace of Jesus.

Shortlisted

Unshaken Allegiance

Living Wisely as Christians with Diminishing Religious Freedoms

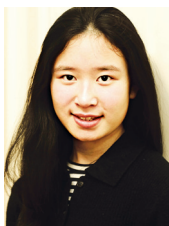
Patrick Parkinson
Matthias Media
9781922980496

A Christian lawyer and legal scholar provides a clear, balanced and practical guide to living faithfully as followers of Jesus in a pluralistic age. The author examines our evolving legal framework and social milieu, recent challenges to religious freedom, and what the Bible says about our obligations to Caesar and Christ. Parkinson is a calm, wise and godly mentor. Ask not what will advance our own liberty and interests but rather what will advance the gospel.



2026 Australian Christian Teen Writer Award

Winner



Hanna Pheh ***The Unintended Race***

While observing her family come to faith, a young girl wrestles with questions of life, death, forgiveness and divine providence. The author skilfully evokes life in Kuala Lumpur in the 1980s and carefully respects the perspective of a child. The writing flows smoothly and uses sophisticated vocabulary and structure. A beautifully crafted novel.

Extract from *The Unintended Race*

Just hours ago at dinner, Pearl and her siblings had worried that Pa wouldn't make it.

Ma, however, hadn't dismissed them yet. She still had something to say. And she seemed to struggle to say the words.

Finally, she simply said, "Spending will have to be cut down. The hospital fees aren't too large, since the hospital is government-run, but the daily expenses are a lot, and Pa isn't working."

The truth was out. But Pearl wasn't particularly affected by it. It didn't matter if their family didn't have enough money

for luxuries. Anything that was necessary was enough.

As they left the bedroom, Pearl's eyes rested on the ancestral altar, and she instantly looked away. She remembered that Pa had been planning to go to the temple in Ipoh when the accident had occurred.

So! He'd been stopped. Stopped dramatically. It was strange. Was it a coincidence? The temple and the accident? Together! Somehow Pearl knew that Pa had been stopped from going to the temple.

Second Prize



Aoife Martin ***Neither Height nor Depth***

Phoebe carries a letter dictated by Paul to his secretary Tertius from Corinth to Rome. What could go wrong? The author displays a good understanding of the Greco-Roman world, early church history and the Epistle to the Romans. This biblical adventure is nuanced, tense, dramatic and very moving.

Extract from *Neither Height nor Depth*

"Oh Phoebe, we thought that you'd been mugged, or worse,"

The woman hastily wrapped her arms around me before muttering, "We're so glad you're okay. There's someone here to see you. He sounds important and wants you to do something for him. He wanted to wait for you to get back before explaining more. He's in the dining room ... when you're ready."

My eyebrows furrowed. I wasn't totally surprised. Being a deacon, many people came to ask me to heal sick children, or seek favours or financial assistance, most

of which I did, but someone of importance wasn't usually good news.

I slipped out of my sandals, shrugged off my overcoat, and walked through the rooms. I saw some of my brothers and sisters in Christ congregating in a circle, talking in hushed tones, but there were two people who I didn't immediately recognise: a bald, squat man and a tall man with thinning brown hair.

Someone in the circle met my gaze, and with wide, alert eyes informed the mystery guests that I had arrived. The bald man calmly nodded, and spun around, presenting me with a face I knew well and an assertive character that turned and shook heads wherever he went.

The corners of my mouth turned up, and my tense shoulders relaxed. It was only Paul.

Third Prize



Steffan Sween ***The Night Watch***

A pickpocket in eighteenth-century London gets more than he bargains for when he steals a Bible.

This story follows the fortunes of a convict who meets Jesus, changes his ways and serves with the colonial police force under Governor Arthur Philip. The subject has been well researched, the dialogue is convincing and the development of faith is natural. "My King has other plans." Excellent historical fiction.

Extract from *The Night Watch*

Apart from the boat's dreadful rocking, the stench on board was beyond anything I experienced in London.

On my left I saw a fella reading a book with faded pages bound in leather.

"Trying to sleep?" I joked.

"Can't sleep with seasickness. I wanna read a chapter or two before cap'n comes down and threat'ns us to sleep." He had a strong eastern cockney accent.

"I own ... er got a similar looking book ... well, kind of own." I hesitated before deciding to take the book out of my satchel and show it to him. "You want it? It's useless to me. Can't make head or tails of it."

"Why, it's no 'ifferent at all!" His blue eyes lit up. He turned my copy to the same page he was on and read slowly, "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.' What's your name lad?"

"Alfie."

"You ever 'eard about Jesus, Alfie?"

Honourable Mentions

Ezra Hahn

From the Depths of Despair

A teenage boy grieves the death of his best friend. Why did God let him die? Does it help to know that God loves the people we love even more than we do? A realistic look at loss, pain, grief and friendship.

Naomi Theos
Burdens

Cara's parents are arguing. At school she is ostracised. She is alone with her phone and FOMO. Then a friend inexpertly introduces her to Jesus. The tale is confidently narrated in a teenage vernacular. Raw and authentic work.

Oliver Wakelin

The Restoration of Bramble the Wombat

A wombat called Bramble is infected with mange and lives as a hopeless outcast. Wedge Tail (an eagle) points Bramble to

the Fountain of Life who, ultimately, gives up his life for the wombat. A successful and adorable allegory.

Judging Criteria

The **Australian Christian Teen Writer Award** carries a prize of \$1,000 and is offered annually for the best unpublished manuscript written by an Australian citizen under 18 years of age.

The **Young Australian Christian Writer Award** carries a prize of \$2,500 and is given annually for the best unpublished manuscript written by an Australian citizen under 30 years of age.

The 2026 Young Australian Christian Writer Award was withheld. Supplementary awards may be made.

The winning works will explore a Christian perspective or theme and incorporate, explain or encourage Christian life and values. Entries are judged with an eye to the following:

Original nature and content of the work.

Literary style, including suitability for the target audience.

Contribution that the work makes in meeting a need for Christian writing in Australia.

The 2026 Australian Christian Literature Awards were announced and prizes presented in Melbourne on Thursday 20 August 2026.

The Australian Christian Literature Awards are administered by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Australia Incorporated (trading as SparkLit). A member of Missions Interlink and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

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resources are scarce. We provide theological texts and essential Bible reference works to students and pastors in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

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SparkLit



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Titles submitted for the 2026 Australian Christian Book of the Year Award

10 Publishing

Read, Think, Pray, Do, Simon Camilleri (Illustrated by Dominic On)

598 Press

Travels of a Wimpy Mum, Vanessa Foran

Acorn Press

The Freedom Trap, Priyan Max Jeganathan

Allen & Unwin

How Christians Can Succeed Today, Greg Sheridan

Angel Tien Le

Woven by Love, Angel Tien Le
Woven by Love: The Second Thread, Angel Tien Le

Ark House Press

Certainty for Life, John Diacos
Encounter, Ian Reilly
Faith Full, Cynthia Kinloch Dixon
How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds, James Campbell

At the Edges

Edge-Walkers, edited by Armen Gakavian, Karina Kreminski and Steve Taylor

Baker Academic

A Basic Guide to Biblical Theology, Alan J. Thompson
Whispers of Revolution, Michael F. Bird

Baker Books

Tethered to Hope, Adriel Booker

Balboa Press

Twin Keys to the Celestial Scroll, Elizabeth Bartell

Baptist Mission Australia

Step In, Mike Stevens

Barry Borneman

The Unfolding Story of a Dreamer, Barry Borneman

Baylor University Press

A Handbook to Second-Century Christianity, edited by Michael F. Bird and Scott Harrower

Bekker Media

Red Dirt & Gold Dust, Lindy Price

Belinda Peoples

For Hope, Love & Life Itself, Aduk Dau and Belinda Peoples

Bethany House

A King Washes Feet, Jessica Claire Bond

Boolarong Press

The Honeypot, Russell Guy

Brian Medway

Available, Brian Medway

Bundi

Murriyang, Stan Grant

Cascade Books

In the Shadow of a Rugged Cross, Charles R. Ringma

Charlotte Blaxland

Miracle Boy, Charlotte Blaxland

Crossway

Strengthened by the Gospel, Brian S. Rosner

Crystal Street Press

Marriage, the Christian Way, Ralph G. Bowles

Darcy Kelso

Is It Loyalty or Fear, Darcy Kelso

Eagna Publishing

Advance Australia Fairer, Graham Joseph Hill
Born, Not Built, Graham Joseph Hill
John and Mary McKittrick, John McKittrick and Graham Joseph Hill

Genesis

Truly Positive, Simon van Bruchem

Green Hill Publishing

It's Complicated, Tim Davey

Hodder & Stoughton

Leviticus, Katherine Davis

Inter-Varsity Press

Called to Care, Jo Knight
The Amazing Depth of the Simplest Truth, Tim Patrick

Jenny Nicholls

Shattering Deception and Revealing Truth, Jenny Nicholls

Langham Academic

Mafanikio Theology, Tamie Davis

Lucid Books

Full Phoenix Rising, Duncan Robinson

Magnetic Inspiration

I've Travelled the Multiverse, Anne Miles

Malcolm Nicholson

Methodist Evangelical Revivals in Van Diemen's Land, Malcolm Nicholson

Matthias Media

Prayerfulness, Peter Adam
Unshaken Allegiance, Patrick Parkinson
Warriors of the Word, Colin Marshall

Michael Faintree

The Power of Our Confession, Michael Faintree

Milton & Hugo

Twelve Stones of Grace, Nicky McMaster

Nerida Cuddy

Companion, Nerida Cuddy

Newey Printing Company

A Journey with John, Catherine Chegidden

Parousia

God-Forsaken Place? Roman Namor

Paul Arnott

An Audacious Adventure, Paul Arnott

Poetica Christi Press

Galilee, Peter Stiles

Resource Publications

A Pocket Christian Catechism, Charles R. Ringma
Caught in the Cross-Fire, Michael Kenneth Wilson

God Walks Into a Bar ..., Grenville Kent
Leviticus on the Butcher's Block, Phil Bray

New Normal, Paul Mercer

Richard Ansoul

The Sky King, Richard Ansoul

Sand Pearl Press

Prayer and Discipleship, Kathleen Vergers

Saved by Grace Stories

The Third Cross, Craig Minty

Signs Publishing

Bubsie and the Boys, David Riley
Sailor, Soldier, Vicar, Farmer, Daniel Reynaud
Sasha and the Scary Spotlight, Simone Field

Table 3 Publishing

It's My Call, Brendan Roach

Tellwell Talent

The Personal Love Letter Everyone Needs to Read, J. A. Moore

The Good Book Company

Single Ever After, Danielle Treweek

The Open Word

Philippians; Colossians & Philemon; 1 Peter, Matt Dodd (illustrated by Thom Bransdon)

Thomas Nelson

Don't Look Back, Christine Caine

Ultimate World Publishing

Answering His Call, Amanda Dyer
Hope for the Future, Amanda Nickson

Wakefield Press

Missionaries, Madness & Miracles, Robert J. Kempe (translated by Victor C. Pfitzner)

Wangarr Creations

God-Wangarr Nir'yurr, Marcus Mungul Lacey and Paul Wurrumdhun Tolliday

Winram Enterprises

He Counted Them, Grant Windle

Wipf and Stock

Christianity Is Better than You Might Think, So Ri Jung
Bible Translating as a Loyal Activity, Tobias J. Houston

Youthworks Media

Scary Stuff, Sarah Allen
The Mythical Life of the Good Christian Girl, Polly Jane Butterworth
What Now? Matt Shannon



Where the gospel is preached, books are needed
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