

APRIL - MAY 2017

THE CHRISTIAN writer



BOOK REVIEW

Keep Smiling

BY EION FIELD

SEE INSIDE FOR

Competitions
New Members
& Latest News

Rightly explaining the word of truth – 2 Timothy 2:15
(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)



Editor: Debbie McDermott (email: sddp@xtra.co.nz)

Postal Address: 18 Matai Street, Waiuku 2123

Membership, Subscriptions and Address Changes:

Jan Pendergrast (email: jan@roads-end.co.nz)

Annual Subscription: Single \$35 (digital mag) / \$45 (hard copy mag)
Double \$50 (digital mag) / \$70 (hard copy mag)
Student \$15

Subs are payable by direct or online banking to NZ Christian Writers, a/c 12 3040 0547346 00
Cheques can be sent via post to Jan Pendergrast, Seales Road, Oropi RD3, Tauranga

Book Review Requests: (members only)

Post a copy of your book to Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496

(NB: Your book will be added as a donation to the NZCW library on completion of the review.)

The Christian Writer is published bimonthly by the New Zealand Christian Writers and distributed to all its members. Contributions on the theme of writing are always welcome. If you have some advice or encouragement for Christian writers, or an announcement of some event of interest to members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 20th day of the month prior to the publication date. Submissions must be emailed as Microsoft Word or Open Office documents and are to 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 the highest quality of writing possible.

© Copyright 2017

This issue was printed by:

BookPrint.
Making Bookshop Quality Easy

Unit 7, 1 Greenwich Way
Unsworth Heights, Auckland
New Zealand

T: 09 972 3020
M: 021 860 864
W: www.bookprint.co.nz

The Christian Writer

Apr – May 2017

VOL 34. No 2 / ISSN 1171 0098

Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President’s Report – Justin St Vincent
Page 5	Autumn Seminar Report – Debbie McDermott
Page 8	He Never Lets Go – Sara McGuire
Page 9	Writing Briefs: Sir Donald J Wiseman OBE – Frederick Swallow
Page 9	Noteworthy Mention: taken from ‘Fifty Books that Changed the World’
Page 10	How to Write a Speech – with acknowledgements to WikiHow
Page 11	Why? – Ruth Linton
Page 12	Get Creative: Why Do We Do That? – Lesley Robbins
Page 13	Welcome to New Members
Page 13	NZCW Writers Groups
Page 13	Professional Editing / Writing Services
Page 14	Featured Book Review: Keep Smiling – Eion Field
Page 14	New Library Additions / Notable Mention
Page 15	Second Book Review: Tangle – John Sturt
Page 15	Notice Board – 2017 ARPA Awards Auckland Writers Festival

CW Competitions

Page 16	Under 20s Results	Page 21	Level Two Results
Page 17	Level One Results	Page 25	Level Three Results
Page 31	Competitions for June 2017		

The views and opinions of authors expressed in this magazine do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

Website:

Our vibrant, user-friendly website is full of interesting information, such as details of seminars and copies of past magazines. It also gives each individual member an online presence. So please encourage other Christian Writers you know to join us via our website.

www.nzchristianwriters.org

President's Report

Inspiration is a powerful life-giving moment that can motivate each of us into action. Our very own Debbie McDermott was inspired to write, and encouraged to record, seven inspirational God Spots for Rhema Media. God Spots are designed to be sources of inspiration that point people back to the Bible. These one-minute audio spots will be heard in rotation via Rhema Media's nationwide radio networks: Rhema, Life fm, and Star. Debbie's God Spot themes are: *Victory Is An Attitude, Seasons For Our Benefit, Labels, Being Understood, Light Of The World, Did God Really Say?* and *Encouragement*. To find your frequency or to listen online, go to: www.rhema.co.nz.

Just recently our committee decided to switch our magazine printing supplier to BookPrint. As a printing business owned by Christians, BookPrint are supporting our core values of: Professionalism—producing publications with a high value of professionalism; and Quality—raising the quality of Christian publications throughout New Zealand. They also have very competitive rates on bookshop quality page layout and typesetting, so maybe they can help serve your latest manuscript. In addition, BookPrint were very generous to offer a 25% discount on book design to all

our members, and a 15% discount to friends of our members. To redeem this fantastic offer, please email Tim Brown at BookPrint: tim@bookprint.co.nz

Another one of our core values is Social Outreach. Essentially, writing about our Christian faith and values is a social outreach to readers throughout New Zealand and around the world. Our Autumn Seminar on Saturday 4th March included Lew Meyer sharing powerful sessions on social outreach: *The Gospel & Evangelical Writing*, plus *Writing For Mission, Vision & Video*. In addition, Tracey Olivier inspired us with her seminar sessions: *Create Your Best Writing Year Yet: Part 1: Asking The Right Questions*, and *Part 2: Navigating The Land In-Between*. You'll be able to read notes from our seminar review in this latest magazine. We'll explore the context of social outreach further at our upcoming Retreat 2017, on April 27th-30th at Flaxmill Retreat Centre in Whitianga. Sara-Maria, Maxima, and I are looking forward to sharing this time together with many of our writers.

I trust you too are inspired by reading our latest magazine.

Blessings,

Justin St Vincent



Autumn Seminar Report

By Debbie McDermott

The autumn seminar—held on 4th March at Rossgrove Chapel, West Auckland—was attended by 14 people. The day began with a welcome, a prayer and three God Spot devotionals Debbie McDermott had written for Rhema Media’s radio network.

Justin St Vincent then introduced our first keynote speaker—**Lew Meyer**, National Director of OAC Ministries. A well-known evangelist and prolific writer of numerous booklets, Lew spoke on:

The Gospel & Evangelistic Writing



Lew Meyer

www.oac.org.nz/lew-meyer-1

After sharing on the booklets and picture series he has written, Lew spoke on many important aspects of evangelistic writing across the different age groups. To begin with, we need to clearly understand:

The Key Elements of the Gospel

- **The basis**—we are created and owned by God, whose person is revealed in creation.
- **The tragedy**—mankind is out of relationship with God because of sin.
- **The ‘badspel’**— We have all broken God’s law, and are lost, heading for judgment and unable to rescue ourselves.
- **The Gospel**—God is love. He has mounted a rescue plan effected in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

- **The Response**—repent by turning to God and placing faith in Jesus Christ.

Salvation

- **Jesus is God**—yet He is also the sinless Man who died to provide eternal salvation for us.
- **Jesus rose** from the grave for our justification and is alive (Romans 4:25).

Process of becoming a Christian

Success is taking people further along the journey to salvation. The steps of this journey include:

1. An awareness of the supernatural.
2. A better understanding of God.
3. An awareness of the facts of the Gospel.
4. An awareness of the implications.
5. A seriousness about the state of their soul.
6. An attitude of repentance and faith.
7. A new disciple is born.
8. Evaluation of the decision.
9. Incorporation into a church.
10. Involvement in prayer, Bible study, fellowship, stewardship, gift development, witness and discipling.

Two Great Tools of Evangelism

1. Your story or someone else’s.
2. His Story—the Gospel message.

Writing for Children

Very young children think concretely, whereas older children think abstractly. Communicate the Gospel in a manner that is appropriate to your audience.

1. Decide your age range.
2. Know your goal.
3. Recall your child-self—feelings, memories, worries, pleasures.
4. Avoid fairy tale endings.

5. Include action and description, not just conversation.
 6. Some humour is good.
 7. Don't talk down to the reader. A story should not be so complex it is hard for children to follow, neither should it be so simple that it bores them. Use rich language that will spawn learning and curiosity while also being entertaining.
 8. Don't be afraid of down-to-earth subjects that children face today. Divorce, abuse, pornography, racism, bullying, violence, substance abuse, and peer pressure can all be handled carefully, clearly and sympathetically.
 9. Include imagery.
 10. Get a child to read it as a reality check.
- have short sentences for faster pace
 - have human interest illustrations
 - have allegory
 - have lots of artwork, photos, cartoons
 - are inexpensive

4. Writing evangelistically for teenagers:

- Correcting their world view—start at the beginning
- Objectivity—reason, logic, evidence
- Subjective—testimony, real life stories, emotional appeal
- Fiction—allegory, possibly oblique. e.g. Tolkien vs Lewis

How to Write a Book

1. Determine your goal.
2. Define your topic.
3. Create an outline.
4. Determine how you will write. Avoid jargon.
5. Set up a schedule and daily goals.
6. Create the environment.
7. Write, don't critique. Be yourself.
8. Rewrite and polish.
9. Find a professional editor.
10. Publish it.
 - Don't do a big print run first. Dreams are free, printing is not.
 - Self-publishing is easiest at first.

Writing for Teenagers

1. Understanding teenagers:

- What do they believe?
- What are they like?
- What moves them?
- How do they best receive information?

2. They are:

- the next generation of adults
- sometimes needing to learn to read
- needing to learn to value books
- needing writing that captures their hearts and minds.

3. Books that communicate to teens:

- have an appealing cover
- are full of interesting writing
- are relevant
- speak the lingo
- have simple words
- have humour
- have a personality flow
- have frequent titles and subtitles

Reality Check

- Publishing is a collaborative process (author, artist, editor, proof reader, marketer).
- Publishing is a business. Wonderful books get published; wonderful manuscripts don't. A publisher must believe a manuscript will sell when it competes with 5000 other books.
- Be prepared for rejection.

- Be realistic. Take advice from someone who is experienced in publishing and who is tough enough to say you are wasting your time or that you need to revise your expectations.
- Don't write for the money.

Making of a DVD Series

- You need the right people and image.
- You need the right writing.
- You need the right sound mixing.
- You need the art of team management, producing and directing.
- Post production is only as good as production.
- You need effective marketing.

Our second keynote speaker of the day was **Tracy Olivier**, a Life Strategies Coach with Business Edge and author of *The Journey from here to there: learning to navigate the land in between*. After briefly introducing herself and telling us some of her history, Tracey spoke on:

Creating your best writing year yet



Tracy Olivier
<http://traceyolivier.com/>

Asking the Right Questions

Powerful questions are provocative queries. Jesus was brilliant at asking questions that called for an honest answer.

He is the centre of everything. Our task is to co-labour with God to become what He wants us to be, and to be a good reflector of who He is—just as the moon is a good reflector of the sun.

Powerful questions make us think.

Anatomy of the ‘Aha!’ moment

1. **Impasse:** “I’m stuck.”
2. **Reflection:** “I need to clear my mind.”
3. **Insight:** “Aha!”
4. **Motivation:** “Let’s go for it!”

A map is totally different from the territory it looks like. We are very good at distracting ourselves when we have a problem. However, questions have a way of unlocking issues. Part of what we write happens in our heads and hearts. We need to make sure our heads are in the right space if we are to achieve our writing goals.

Questions we need to ask

(based on a list by Jinny Ditzler)

1. What did I accomplish?
2. What were my greatest disappointments?
3. What did I learn?
4. How do I limit myself and how can I stop?
5. What are my personal values?
6. What roles do I play in my life?
7. Which role is my major focus for next year?
8. What are my goals for each role?
9. What are my top 10 roles for next year?
10. How can I make sure I achieve my top 10 goals?

Navigating the land in-between

- Our **current reality** is today's news and level of events.
- Our **vision** is our desired future.
- **Growth** is the time gap it takes to where we currently are to where we desire to be. To get there often involves running to our pain, not away from it.

The Map

Tracey said the way to achieving our goals is like climbing down the mountain of our current reality, traversing a valley and then climbing the higher mountain to reach our desired future at the top. This involves experiencing a range of emotions and breakthroughs along the way, including:

- **Disharmony** at the outset.
- **Awareness and hope** as the journey progresses.
- Traversing the '**Valley of Insight**', which includes going through those spiritual wildernesses and forests and fighting the 'giants' along the way.
- **Settling and Victory**.

We need to remember that failure along the way is just feedback from which we can learn and improve.

Growth: The Quality Problem

Sometimes we can fall into the 'Crazy 8' rut of feeling sad one moment, and angry the next. This is evidence that there is an underlying issue that is preventing us from growing in an area. The tendency is to create safe problems to avoid feeling this way. Rather, we should deal with the **real** problem that is causing us to feel as we do.

Let's Go to the RIM

R = Recognise
I = Investigate
M = Move

In closing, Tracey made the following valuable points:

- Fears are shadows of what might happen.
- Giants are bullies.
- Just stick to what you know God's told you to do.
- Don't come up with the 'What ifs' in a negative way.
- Is there pruning you need to do in your life?
- Winners are often quitters of things that don't work.
- Growth and contribution are the two prime needs we have.

All in all, this was an excellent seminar that I could easily have sat through again. The teaching was greatly beneficial and we all came away encouraged and refreshed.

He Never Lets Go

By Sara McGuire

When things don't go our way, we can get disappointed.

When children run to us because something didn't go their way, we embrace them.

I'm grateful I can run to the Rock who is my refuge, an ever-present help.

As things threaten to steal our peace and joy—we release them to the one who is high above anything we go through.

As I try to help God and do things that are not my ways or my plans, he gently nudges me and reminds me:

"My Child, I've got this. Trust me. Put your hand in mine. I will never let go."

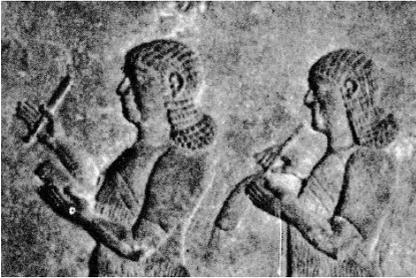
WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian writing of
today and yesteryear—

by Frederick Swallow

Archaeologist confirms Bible

Sir Donald J Wiseman OBE, assistant curator of western antiquities at the British Museum, taught himself, at an early age, the Aramaic language from Hebrew headings in Psalm 119.



*Scribes with scroll and writing board about
740 BC in the reign of King Pula, 2 Kings 15*

Donald Wiseman was an editor of *The IVP New Bible Dictionary*, wrote *Illustrations from Biblical Archaeology*, plus many Biblical archaeological books. He held deep convictions about the Bible's reliability in archaeology, so confirming creation and the Bible. He went with archaeological expeditions to Syria and Turkey. During the Battle of Britain, he served as an intelligence officer and personal assistant to New Zealander Sir Keith Park, deciphering German codes, and spoke often by phone to Sir Winston Churchill. In 2010 age 92, he joined Christian Writers in heaven.

Bibliography, Google Tyndale.

Noteworthy Mention

take from 'Fifty Books that
Changed the World'

Submitted by Fred Swallow

Google religious books section writes that the Bible heads the above list.

'This sacred text [The Bible], brought Christianity to the world and has continued to serve as a source of inspiration for millions of people. It is the most translated and most frequently purchased book in the world.'

Promote your book in
Christian Life



Low-cost package with **free**
synopsis of your book in the
editorial pages and advert in
the Resources section

Contact Ray Curle, Initiate Media
p 09 281 4896 or email
advertise@initiatemedia.net
Check out www.initiatemedia.net

How to Write a Speech

Choose Your Topic Well

A good speech focuses on a message, which needs to match the occasion. It should resonate well with the audience's interests, and be important to the listeners. Good speeches depend on delivery and the heart put into it by the speaker. If you are enthusiastic, odds are your audience will be too.

Find Purpose or Thesis

Why are you giving a speech on this topic? Thesis is the main point to emphasise. What's your message? Your topic may cover your near-death experience, but your thesis or purpose could be advocating the use of seat belts.

A good speech is made for a good reason: to inspire, to instruct, to rally support, to lead to action, etc. These are noble purposes—not merely to sound off, feed the speaker's ego, or to flatter, intimidate, or shame anyone.

Get Organised

All good speeches require shape: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Below is what you are aiming for:

Open with a big statement that will grab the attention of the audience.

For the body of the speech, state at least three points to support your argument. If they build on each other, good. For your first draft, you can make a list and pick out the strongest arguments later.

Conclude with a powerful summary of what you came to say.

Get Persuasive

If your points are illogical, don't attempt to pad them with other reasons. Make sure your reason is sound, then you can try to add persuasive techniques.

Plato's appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos

come in handy here. Persuade your audience to agree by gaining credibility (ethos), influencing their emotions (pathos), or by simple use of logic (logos). One is not necessarily stronger or more effective than the others; it all depends on the situation.

Choose Words Wisely

Cater your speech to your audience—what do they want to hear? What do they know? Don't waste time explaining concepts they already know; or worse, assuming they know the basics and confusing them. Put yourself in their shoes as you write. What background knowledge do they need before you jump into the meat of your argument?

Grab Their Attention

Personalise your speech by hooking members of your audience. Build agreement with your topic and a sense of rapport. Wear your sincere smile, even in your writing. Audiences will be able to tell. You may want to begin with an amusing one-liner or thought-provoking anecdote that can be connected to the situation. As you're writing, think about what you would say to a friend. The more comfortable and open you are, the more your audience will feel drawn to you.

Focus on Your Message

For some, it's easy to get side-tracked or to try to attack too many things at once. Your speech has one message and it is the only thing that needs to be addressed thoroughly. Don't focus on the details or something completely unrelated. Your audience will be left wondering what is going on. Rambling will lose their attention. When you have a point addressed and taken care of, do not be afraid to move on. You have more points that deserve the spotlight—give each its evenly-spread due.

Illustrate

Make your writing graphic. Your goal is to make the main points of your writing in the

speech stick in the minds of your audience. So think visually. Images should be used appropriately. If you're talking numbers, use graphs. If you're talking emotions, paint a picture. Know your context.

Think in Pauses

The best actors are equally effective in between their lines. Write pauses, or beats, when you really want a point to sink in. People will automatically take notice. Now that's commanding a room. Speeches need to be natural, not read off a paper. When you talk, you have pauses. This is not slowing you down or showing your weakness; it shows that you have this down so well, you're talking about it like an old pro.

Be Aware of Your Transitions

Build clear and sensible transitions from one thought to the next. Spell out to the audience when you are taking a turn in your thoughts with phrases like: "As an example of this..." Transitions should not only go in between points in the body of the speech, but also after the introduction and into the conclusion. Your speech is one cohesive work, not a series of points that work independently. Show your audience that by transitioning clearly.

The Conclusion of your Speech

Conclude by summarising your speech and leaving the audience with a question or thoughts of implications. Leave them with something—what do you want that something to be? Repeat key ideas. Make the audience recall and get on the mainline. Be sure they leave with the ideas you don't want them to forget.

Give your audience a sense of completion in what you write. Bring them back to the beginning, but with a louder spirit. This can be done by starting the last paragraph with a strong, declarative sentence that re-makes your point.

(With acknowledgements to WikiHow)

WHY?

By Ruth Linton

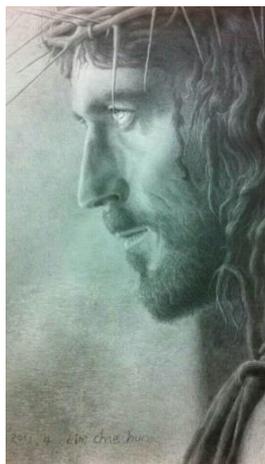
Why did you come
To a world so blotched and torn,
Where sorrow reigns and evil spawns?
Why did you come?

I came as king
To reign in righteousness and peace,
To bring forgiveness and release.
I came as king.

Where is your crown,
Your sceptre and your throne?
A wreath of thorns to make your glory
known?
Where is your crown?

I rule above
The systems of this earth's domain,
God's redeeming love proclaim.
I rule above.

Behold your king
Who dies to conquer death.
Submit and live, He lives to bless.
Behold your king!



GET CREATIVE

Many thanks to new NZCW member Lesley Robbins for submitting the following thought-provoking piece on the topic of *Why Do We Do That?*

Why Do We Do That?

I began to realise I was actually falling short. I had just yesterday read in my Bible, 'God has given you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.' I had read it before and I knew the Bible verse. But now I realised I had done nothing. What would God think? All my Bible reading had not produced a thing. Would God be angry and demand my talent back again? I began thinking that even asking God what I could do was going to put the brakes on my life which I thought was going along in the right direction. I wondered what my talent was. I could bake. How could I use my baking to serve God?

Suddenly an idea began to come. I needed not only to bake for something but I needed to use my baking somehow to fulfil the great commission. It had always seemed as if opportunities never appeared to come up and I had to admit I hadn't looked for them. 'Get Creative,' I thought. If I couldn't do it by speaking to people maybe I could do it by writing something. A flyer maybe. I could place it with a small bag of muffins in letterboxes.

I went to my Bible and looked for the passages that outlined the plan of salvation and one that showed that God loved the world that much. I began to type and soon had a flyer that said what I wanted to tell people. Getting up from my computer I went out into the kitchen and began to make my first batch of muffins.

—Lesley Robbins

The next topic will be

It will be awesome when!

Maximum 250 words for prose and 4 verses (6 lines or less per verse) for poetry. Include the words 'Get Creative' with your submission, as well as set the next 'Get Creative' topic. You may also include a picture with your piece if you wish.

Deadline: 10th May 2017

Email submissions for consideration to
sddp@xtra.co.nz

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Linda Bartlett
Henderson, Auckland

Lew Meyer
New Lynn, Auckland

Keith Newman
Haumoana, Hastings

Tracey Oliver
Cambridge

Barb Walker
Hastings

Garry Wills
Hamilton

REMEMBER

to email your photo and mini bio to Justin St
Vincent (editor@xtrememusic.org)
for uploading to our website

Need Professional Editing/Writing Services?

These New Zealand Christian Writer
members can help:

Janette Busch
E: WritingAnswers1@gmail.com
Mob: +64 21 233 7691

Marie Anticich
E: marieanticich@gmail.com

Sue Beguely
E: sue@triplecoilscript.co.nz
Mob: +64 27 533 0188

NZCW Writers Groups

AUCKLAND – WEST
Dianne Spain
Tel: (09) 626 3141
dispain54@gmail.com

CHRISTCHURCH
Dave Palmer
Mob: (027) 216 5743
davepalmer@xtra.co.nz

HAWKES BAY
Jennie Chappell
Tel: (06) 877 5874
heugh.chappell@clear.net.nz

KAWERAU
Ruth Jamieson
Tel: (07) 323 6774
subhouse@xtra.co.nz

NORTHLAND
Janice Gillgren
Tel: (09) 433 9752
jangill1359@gmail.com

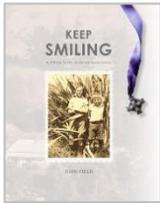
TAURANGA
Jan Pendergrast
Tel: (07) 543 2147
jan@roads-end.co.nz

WHAKATANE
Ruth Corbett
Tel: (07) 307 1511
promisekept@vodafone.co.nz

If you are keen on joining one of these
groups, please feel free to contact the
group leader / host in your area for
further details.

Library Corner

Featured Book Review



Keep Smiling

A tribute to an uncle we never knew

By Eion Field

Review by Julia Martin

The author never knew his uncle and namesake but felt compelled to investigate and record his inspiring story. Born in 1917, Eion Field grew up in New Zealand. His life ended tragically at age 24 in a Japanese prison camp in Java.

The first part of the book tells the history and movements of a close-knit family as they faced the trials and challenges of the 1920s to 1940s. Old photographs in sepia add interest to the narrative.

When World War Two broke out in Europe, Eion was working at a tin mine in Thailand. As the Japanese invaded South East Asia, he miraculously escaped to Singapore and then to Java where he was captured by Japanese soldiers.

Through careful research the author has pieced together the events of this perilous time, including the last days of Eion's life and his unlawful execution in 1942.

I recommend this book to readers who are particularly interested in this theatre of war.

Photographs and full details describe the aircraft and weaponry used by both sides in this conflict.

It's the tragic story of a true hero, caught up in terrible circumstances that cut short a promising life.

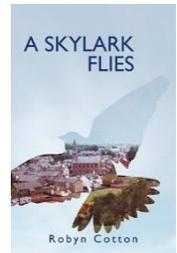
New Library Additions

A Skylark Flies

—Rose is on holiday in the UK when she is brutally assaulted. Find out what happens as Tommy has power over his victim and Rose has power to release him from his guilt and shame.

By Robyn Cotton

www.daystarbooks.org

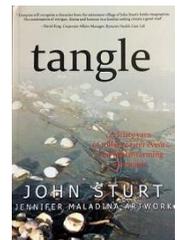


Tangle

—This story describes life in a retirement village by the sea in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. It includes drama, romance and lively debates by the residents about important life issues. Life at Newlands is never dull.

By John Sturt

jasturt@xtra.co.nz

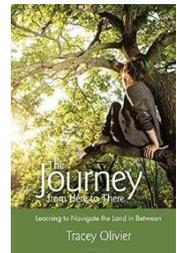


The Journey From Here to There

—What if we had a map and compass for life? What if we could navigate confidently through the tough patches? This book is about getting from the safe but stifling place called Here, to the life-giving place called There.

By Tracey Oliver

www.amazon.com



Notable Mention

Bereavement

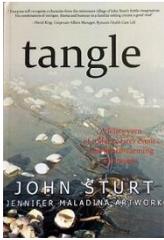
—Published a few years ago, *Bereavement* is a lovely compilation of true stories of the grief people known to the author have gone through. Written with compassion and sensitivity, the book is worth reading if you are dealing with grief and sorrow.

By John Milne

johnmilne38@gmail.com



Second Book Review



Tangle

By John Sturt

Reviewed by
Julia Martin

Tangle is John Sturt's first novel and is a departure from his usual non-fiction writing.

He uses his knowledge and experience of life in a retirement complex to concoct this light-hearted novel set in a fictitious and idyllic location in the Bay of islands.

Such retirement places are a microcosm of society with people from all walks of life and backgrounds coming together and sharing their life stories and experiences.

Drama, romance and humour emerge as the residents of Newlands interact in a 'tangle' of relationships.

The characters are colourful and appealing. George, a sarcastic misfit, is obese but refers to himself as 'a nutritional overachiever.'

Doloros is a larger-than-life resident who arrives on a Harley-Davidson motorbike, dressed in black leather and gets caught up in a local drug trade.

As the residents interact, they debate life issues such as loneliness, euthanasia, elder abuse and the after-life.

The author's medical background assists when health issues arise; and his references to Maori terms (glossary included) give the book a true New Zealand flavour.

This book is a fun read and will appeal to older readers who enjoy a good yarn assisted by large, bold print.

NOTICE BOARD

2017 ARPA Awards for excellence

The 2017 Awards cover material published in the calendar year 2016.

A **Gold Award** will normally be awarded in each category. **Silver and Bronze Awards** may also be awarded, unless, the judges feel the standard was not sufficient for one.

For the Publication of the Year, there will be **only one award** made in each of these categories.

Each member can submit 7 entries.

Publications with current financial Staff Members are allowed an additional entry per staff member (maximum 5 extra entries).

Deadline: 5pm 19 May 2017

For further details and conditions of entry, please contact Elizabeth Harris:
+61 8 88472332 / admin@arpanews.org

Auckland Writers Festival 16-21 May 2017

The Festival brings the very best local and international writers of contemporary fiction and non-fiction, scientists, economists, poets, journalists and public intellectuals together with audiences to explore ideas, share stories and experience brilliant conversations.

For more information, please visit
www.writersfestival.co.nz

Competition Results

Under 20s

Judge:

Vicki Nogaj

Requirement: Write a Gratitude or 'I am Thankful' poem. Maximum of 5 verses, with each verse consisting of 4 lines. Rhythm and rhyme optional.

First Place



**Bonnie
Smithies**

of Christchurch
(18 years old)

Showered with Blessings

I'm thankful for things
that are all in my life
For the blessings God's showered on me
What follows is an overflow
of my grateful heart
(I like making lists, you see.)

The sound of my brothers
at play in the pool
Strawberries to eat when it's hot -
oh so cool
Sisters to laugh with, and talk to a lot
The lovely smell of tomato
soup in the pot.

A rabbit to pick up and cuddle just when
I feel like I need a cuddle again
A camp to attend and friends
once more to see
Chocolate to eat that will satisfy me

Penpals who write me
a lovely long letter
That feeling when after
an illness you're better
Flowers that lift their petals up to the sky
A fluffy white cloud lazily floating by.

Finishing up doing any big chore
Like mending that skirt
you so carelessly tore
The knowledge that God
will not leave us alone
Being able to come in prayer to his
wonderful throne.

Judge's Comments

Hi Bonnie.

This was a lovely simple poem written from a heart that is grateful for the little everyday things most take for granted, even the tedious things, like completed chores.

The first stanza confused me a little as the structure/rhythm differs from the rest of the poem. e.g. The first stanza follows a b c b, then switches to aa bb etc. I think the poem would flow better and capture the reader's interest more if the first stanza was changed. Or it could even be left out. It is more of a 'tell' stanza and the rest are more 'show'. I like the creativity and flow of the rest of the poem, ending with the last two lines which leaves us with the reason such gratitude exists. A great effort!

NB: I also sent your poem to Ruth Linton as she is the expert in critique and her feedback has been so helpful in my own work... (Ed's Note: Ruth's comments have been included on p.17 as a tutorial to those who are interested in writing good poetry.)

Ruth Linton's comments:

All poetry, even blank verse, has a flow or an underlying rhythm and train of ideas. In some poems, the rhythm is very marked, in others more obscure. Bonnie has chosen to use both rhyme and rhythm. Therefore, both should be consistent.

The rhymes are mostly consistent—the first two lines of the verse and the last two lines. However, in the first verse only line two and four rhyme. On a more technical note the rhymes, 'letter' and 'better' (Verse 4) make the lines end with a non-accented syllable, something not normally considered 'correct' and in Bonnie's poem breaks the pattern of the other verses.

In several places, I couldn't decide where the accent fell and that is why it was difficult to get the flow. It appears the major rhythm pattern is an accented syllable/word followed by two non-accented syllables. Looking at the pattern it becomes easy to see where there needs to be words or syllables added or deleted. (Also, it would have been better if all lines had begun with a non-accented syllable.)

You may also notice each line had four accented syllables/words except line two and four of verse one (only three) and the last line of the poem (five accents). This is another inconsistency.

Finally, the flow of ideas isn't logical throughout. Bonnie has attempted to list things she is grateful for but at times I felt the ideas within each verse were rather unrelated. I did, however, enjoy the contrast of feelings in the second verse: 'it's hot—oh so cool'.

Level One

Judge:

Debbie McDermott

Requirement: Put together a 'bucket' list of four to five things you would really like to do one day, explaining why you would like to do them. 250-300 words.

General Comments

I received three well-written entries, one of which did not appear to follow the key requirement of the competition. However, on reading Lynley's story about her current situation, it became clear why she only listed one thing she wants to do, rather than the four to five asked for. Not only is her reason valid, I feel it does align with the main criteria of the assignment, which was to write about what she wanted to do in the time allotted to her.

Out of the three entrants, only Yvonne gave her article a suitable title. This is an important aspect that I cannot stress enough—especially if you want to publish your work. The first thing a publisher or editor will see of your manuscript is its title. It should therefore be as original and interesting as possible. Short and unambiguous titles work best.

I found it interesting that each entry was written as an article rather than as a bullet-pointed or numbered list. Although such a format was not stipulated in the competition requirements, it would have been an acceptable layout. Giving each point a heading may have also enabled better optimisation of the word count.

Thank you, Ellaine, Lynley and Yvonne for your entries. Keep up the good writing. I look forward to receiving more from you.

First Place



**Ellaine
Millard**
of Whakatane

Bucket List

There are perhaps a few very special experiences that people dream about having in life. Here are the ones I desire to do. I am sure they will bring much joy and fulfilment before the proverbial ‘kicking of the bucket’ arrives.

First on the list is to go and live with my mother, to care for her in those beautiful sunset years. I imagine lots of quality mother / daughter time; laughing and telling stories about all we’ve lived through. I also hope we can eat lots of healthy snacks while conquering giant ‘Wazzup’ puzzles together.

Then I want to go and live with my daughter in London for the winter, while she is studying Art-psychotherapy. As it is we talk on the phone for hours every week. We love sharing about her work and study; bouncing ideas and knowledge back and forth. Candidly, we solve all sorts of society and family issues.

With the mother / daughter bonding done I would then build a ‘tiny house’ on a truck. They are so adorable. They have the bonus of low carbon credit, minimal housekeeping and no gardening; all the more time to write. I need a movable home so my husband

and I can travel this beautiful country. We have a mandate to inform the landless Maori with a documentary on sustainable forestry.

Finally, I am drawn to set up a small community in Fiordland’s Beech Forest. I will need the help of my husband, my two sons and my daughter in law. Any other whanau are welcome who want to join in establishing a legacy for the young people.

These things completed I’m sure I could contentedly accept the bucket being kicked.

Amen, So be it!

Judge’s Comments

Ellaine met the key requirements of this competition exceptionally well. There is a very good flow to the whole piece, and her paragraphs are short and well balanced. I particularly enjoyed the strong Kiwi flavour to her writing and her touch of dry humour in the second last line.

Speaking of herself and the members of her family in such a warm manner also shows that relationships are more important to Ellaine than things are. This makes her bucket list very appealing to the reader.

Ellaine’s standard of writing is excellent. My only recommendations on areas needing correction are as follows:

- *It is no longer common practice to use quote marks to highlight idioms or unusual expressions/words. I suggest removing them from kicking of the bucket, Wazzup and tiny house.*
- *Para 2—Wazzup should be spelled Wasgij.*

- *Para 5—‘daughter-in-law’ should be hyphenated.*
- *Final line—replace the comma after ‘Amen’ with a full stop.*

Thank you for an excellent piece of writing Ellaine. Do keep it up.

Second Place Equal



**Yvonne
Mossom**
of Whangarei

A Pilgrimage

My list of things to do will not include sky-diving, swimming with dolphins or climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. It will be a pilgrimage to places where God’s power and presence will be paramount.

A trip to Tekapo to view the night sky would be one of my priorities. The first time the huge ‘bowl’ of the universe ‘hit’ me I was standing on a hillside at Balgowan in the Natal Midlands in South Africa. I was speechless and frustrated. The haze of man’s lights from a nearby village blurred the vision of God’s creation. I need to go somewhere dark.

The lava flows in Hawaii might be a good spot to remember the solidified flows of basalt that make up the Natal Drakensberg. They tower into the sky above the plains of Natal. Climbing those cliffs had made me wonder what it would be like to see molten rock. God at work moulding his earth...

The Aurora Borealis is evidence of God playing with colour. I am busy at the moment working on a quilt with bright colours against a black background. I could use some inspiration.

A return visit to the Sea of Galilee to see the fishing-boat that has been salvaged out of the sand is essential. It is thought to be one similar to the boat the disciples used. To be out on the lake in a storm would have been terrifying. How could Jesus have slept through it! I need to feel again His presence here on earth.

The reason this is a pilgrimage is that it would be so encouraging to see the might of God at work; his presence here in a world that does not recognise his power.

Judge’s Comments

Yvonne met the requirements of this competition very well. As mentioned in my general comments, she is also the only one of the three entrants to have given her article a suitable title. This scored her a couple of extra points. However, as ‘bucket list’ does not appear in her title, it would have been appropriate for her to clarify the opening sentence for the reader by including the word ‘bucket’ before ‘list’.

Yvonne’s article is unusual in that it is a mixture of the things she would like to do, the things she is doing, and the things she has already done. This added an element of interest that I found appealing.

While there is generally a good flow to the piece, I did wonder what Yvonne meant by the lava flows of Hawaii and the solidified flows of basalt in the Drakensburg. Do

remember that as writers, it is important to always clearly communicate what we are trying to get across. This is particularly so when writing about things or places about which our reader may be uninformed.

Apart from mixing some of her tenses, Yvonne’s grammar and punctuation are good. Corrections needing to be made are:

- *Para 2—sentence 1 should read: ‘...will be one of my priorities.’*
- *Para 2—sentence 2: It is not necessary to enclose owl and hit in quote marks.*
- *Para 2—sentence 4: delete ‘haze of man’s’. It is unnecessary.*
- *Para 2—sentence 5 should be written as ‘I needed to go somewhere dark’.*
- *Para 3—sentence 3: delete ‘had’.*
- *Para 4—sentence 2: To improve the flow, rewrite the first part of this sentence as ‘At the moment, I am...’*
- *Para 5—sentence 2: delete ‘one’ so the sentence reads ‘It is thought to be similar...’*

Well done on a great entry, Yvonne. I look forward to receiving more from you.

Second Place Equal



**Lynley
Smith**
of Snells Beach

Bucket List – a true story

I stood, dumbfounded by the swelling round of applause from the elderly audience of about 60 Brisbane Probus club members.

I had just begun my presentation and felt compelled to share a small testimony about myself. My testimony to the diagnosis eight months before of an incurable and untreatable form of leukaemia and the subsequent choices I faced, was the perfect preamble to my talk, which dealt with the choices facing a courageous woman as she considered the prospect of a gruesome death during World War 2.

“Bucket list – I don’t have one,” I told the audience. “As I plot my course through this totally unfamiliar challenge, I have only one desire – to do only what is important, to do what has eternal value. My choice is to focus only on what really matters.”

Later, ruminating on the transition I had made in very short time from regarding my life experiences as collectable items which gave meaning and texture to life, to seeing them as hollow Pyrrhic victories in the greater scheme of things, I was puzzled. I understood that now time was of the essence. But I could not understand fully why and how my thinking had changed so dramatically.

However, one sleepless night, a picture dropped into my mind – in fact two pictures. They explained it all.

Firstly I saw the beautiful broad Champs Elysee in Paris, bordered by exclusive boutiques and leading to the Arc de Triomphe.

The second picture, which followed immediately, was of the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, with its narrow slippery steps, terminating in its very own Arc de

Triomphe, the cross of Calvary. Suddenly I understood. The Lord himself had set me on another road. The joy of this journey is inexpressible.

Bucket List – BUCKET LIST? Who needs one?

Judge's Comments

I was deeply moved by Lynley's testimony. Although she felt unable to provide the itemised bucket list asked for, paragraph 3 clearly shows what she really wants to do in the time allotted to her. This is what a true bucket list is all about. In my opinion, she has therefore met the key criteria of the competition very well.

The flow of Lynley's entry is excellent and fully engages the reader. However, a couple of sentences are far too long. We need to remember that living in such a busy world, with so many distractions, can make concentrating on long sentences very difficult for the reader. On the other hand, shorter sentences make for easy reading at a faster pace.

If keeping sentences short is difficult, or if shortening a sentence would cause its context to be lost, then resort to using parentheses or long em/en dashes to break the sentence up. e.g. the over-long second sentence of paragraph 2 could be written as:

'... preamble to my talk—which dealt with the choices facing a courageous woman...'

Apart from a few mistakes, Lynley's entry is very well written. The only corrections needed are:

- *Para 1—Club in 'Probus Club' should begin with a capital C.*
- *Para 2—sentence 2: insert a comma after 'leukaemia'.*

- *Para 3—sentence 2: as the word 'only' occurs twice, I recommend replacing the first 'only' with 'but' so that this part of the sentence reads "...I have but one desire—to..." Also, as 'only' is used to emphasise what is important, I recommend rewriting this phrase as "to only do what is important..."*
- *Para 4—sentence 1: insert 'a' before 'short time'. The word 'pyrrhic' should begin with a small p.*
- *Para 4—sentence 2: as 'time' is the object of the sentence that needs to be stressed, it would be better to rewrite this sentence as: 'I understood that time was now of the essence.'*
- *Para 4—sentence 3: 'fully' should come before understand, not after.*
- *Para 6—incorrect spelling of Elysees.*

Thank you for a very good entry, Lynley. I really appreciate what you shared and hope to receive more from you.

Level Two

Judge: Janet Fleming

Requirement: Write a short story of an event that significantly impacted your life, and why. 400 words.

General Comments

There were six entries in this section, and although each was quite different, all were of a high standard and made for interesting reading.

True life stories can make such an impact on others and be an encouragement or bring a challenge to the reader, whether they are a Christian or not.

The topic for this section was to write a short story (which all did) and to tell why that event significantly impacted your life. Some included the reason this event impacted their life throughout their story, while others explained why at the conclusion of their story. Unfortunately one entry missed the deadline.

First Place



**Lynda
Otter**

of Tamatea, Napier

It's never too late

The phone call from a non-Christian friend came late in the evening. Kevin (a mutual acquaintance) was dying of cancer. He was anxious and unsettled, asking questions about God.

“Will you go and see him?” my friend pleaded, so I telephoned Kevin’s wife to ask if I could visit.

“As long as you don’t talk about God,” she said firmly. “He has never believed in God and I don’t want him hassled now.”

When I visited Kevin, there were no other visitors and Kevin was tossing and turning in obvious pain. I touched his shoulder and said hello. He opened his eyes and looked into mine. I saw his pain and his fear. At that moment I knew that no other person had a right to decide another’s eternal fate.

“Do you want to know about God?” I asked. He nodded. I had the incredible

opportunity of telling Kevin about God’s love for him and His amazing plan of redemption for each of us.

“Do you want to ask Jesus to be your Saviour?” I asked gently.

“Yes,” he whispered. I prayed the sinner’s prayer aloud with Kevin repeating me. Then I prayed silently and earnestly feeling God’s presence strongly in the room.

“I love you Jesus,” Kevin blurted out with such a strong conviction that I trembled in awe at God’s mercy. For the first time during my visit, Kevin lay quietly and peacefully as I continued to pray.

Kevin died a few days later.

Previous to this event, I had read an article by a prominent Christian minister, who was discussing his thoughts around the fact that people who said they would “think about God when they got older” very rarely changed their entrenched lifelong beliefs. This made a great deal of sense to me at the time until I saw God’s love and mercy in action as I sat at Kevin’s bedside.

I realised anew that God loves us so much, that he pursues us even unto death (Psalm 139:7-8). He will never give up on us. I also understood that only God through his Holy Spirit can soften hearts to receive his Word otherwise it falls on deaf ears. The main impact this event has had on me, is to be receptive and obedient to His leading and to be available to speak out when the Holy Spirit convicts me to do so.

Judge's Comments

Lynda depicted the atmosphere of her story well. It certainly struck a chord with me, I guess in part due to my passion for evangelism and the fact that we encountered a similar situation. Sadly, I don't have the assurance of our friend trusting Christ on his deathbed.

Where you state 'with Kevin repeating me' it needs to be 'with Kevin repeating it' or 'which Kevin repeated after me'. In the following sentence, I would put a comma between 'earnestly' and 'feeling'.

This was certainly a lovely story and brought joy to my heart. It puts the challenge to each of us that we need to 'always be ready to give an answer to everyone... concerning the hope that is in us.' (1 Peter 3:15)

Well done!

Second Place



**Eion
Field**

of Hamilton

Unforgettable Night on the Road

It was August 1974. My wife and I were on the big island of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, in a Methodist mission. One day we were returning to our remote station, a 100 km journey from the main town (Kieta) on the east coast. The road led high over the central range, past a copper mine, down to the populated areas along the western coast.

The road was good and the Landrover running well, though the brakes needed

attention. I drove carefully, more concerned about the weather; in the rainy season several rivers on the western side would flood. Some had bridges, but five had to be forded. If flooded they were impassable.

With some difficulty, we crossed the first four. It was well after dark when we got to the last river – in flood. We'd have to wait. Our children, 3 years and 15 months old, were hungry and tired. We all needed to be home.

Finally, the flood having lessened, we decided to attempt the crossing. It was nearly midnight, moonlit despite drizzle. The Landrover was heavily laden; I sent her at it with plenty of power in low 4WD. Jenny was praying fervently.

The water came high around the engine. It kept going but midway across we lost traction, the wheels skidding in the soft riverbed. I worked the clutch a few times, and somehow the tyres found grip – we moved forward another five metres. Then the engine died ...

I knew why – water had got onto the electric fuel pump. Now what? I had an idea – surely an answer to Jenny's prayers.

I took the crank-handle, waded around the front of the vehicle, and with it still in first gear, wound her forward. It was slow and taxing but she inched ahead and finally got out of that river, water pouring off the back. Now on dry land the fuel pump magically came alive and the engine started. But another problem struck -- water had seeped into the bell-housing causing the clutch to slip. We were going nowhere.

Again, I'm sure prayer steered my actions. I sat behind the wheel and let the clutch keep slipping at low speed. Sure enough, the friction soon heated and dried out the clutch-plate. We were mobile again. Late that night we got safely home, grateful to the Lord after a most unforgettable journey.

Judge's Comments

This story was 'close to home' as we regularly take children to their homes across the river and we can never be sure we will be able to get them there.

It was a nicely written story through which you wove your message on the value of prayer. I don't doubt the event impacted your life and made you more conscious of the power of prayer. I admit I consulted Mike, my husband, on some of the mechanical points.

In the third paragraph, I would probably put 'we got to the last river which was in flood'.

Landrover should be Land Rover.

Good work, Eion.

Third Place



**Ruth
Jamieson**
of Whakatane

Faith Develops In The Dark Room

The sound of gurgling woke me. My 15-year-old imagination pictured the worst.

My sister and I shared a bedroom with windows that opened onto the front door landing—a sore point because she liked to leave them open. “Anyone could climb

in,” I would argue. At least her bed was closest to the windows I reasoned.

Woken, I screamed for my father who slept in the adjacent room. While my aunt came and the family doctor summoned, I sat in the hallway, bewildered—she had never had a convulsion before.

Switching on the light, the darkness left the room but a fear of that darkness seeped into my being. From that night on sleep evaded me, as I would lie wide-eyed, listening. The old house creaked and groaned. I was sure someone was coming down the hall. Even with a light left on my imagination saw the shadows.

My parents were concerned with my disturbed sleep. Often I would wake my dad and he would change beds with me so that I could sleep with mum. A half dose of mum's sleeping tablets didn't seem to get me through the night and a visit to the doctor didn't help either. I realize now, I am thankful he didn't prescribe medication that could have had unwanted side effects.

I guess I was the subject of prayer as the months past.

It was summer, the season of tent meetings at the Mount Bible Class Camp, Mount Manganui. I don't recall the speaker's message or anything else that day other than what happened next outside that large marquee. I stood beside my aunt as she motioned for the speaker to join us. She briefly told him of my sleeping problems. He turned to me and asked, “Are you a Christian?”

Initially stunned by his simple question, I replied, “yes.”

“Well, I want you to read Psalm 121 when you can not sleep and memorize it so you can recite it in the dark.”

That was it. This doctor, whether medical or theological I do not recall, had given me a prescription that has lasted many years.

It was a faith spurt in my spiritual journey. Every time I hear Psalm 121 read, it takes me back to that dark time in my life that I believe God allowed to strengthen my faith.

Judge's Comments

Your introductory paragraphs are quite graphic, catching the reader's attention, and you bring out clearly how this event impacted your life. It must have been very frightening for you at such a young age. It was great that Psalm 121 was a help to you. It stands out in my memory as well, being read at my late father's funeral as we stood looking across to the hills at Totara North. God's Word can impact us at any time of life, if we will allow Him to speak to our heart.

There are one or two minor errors. 3rd Paragraph, 2nd sentence needs 'with the family doctor' or 'the family doctor was summoned.'

'As the months past' should be 'passed'.

When you 'can not' sleep should be 'cannot'.

A good effort.

Commended

The Power of Words by Susan Flanagan and **Please don't send me to Siberia** by Pamela Lowrey. (Both entries will receive an extra point towards end of year totals.)

Level Three

Judge: Julia Martin

Requirement: Write a 4-5 minute children's play suitable for an Easter production at a public primary school. The message and directions should be simple and clear, for children 8-10 years old. Have a maximum of 5 characters. Extras for background effects and props are acceptable. 500 words max.

General Comments

I was pleased to receive four entries for this competition. While writing for children may seem easy, that is not always the case. Consider these points:

- 1. The play has to be suitable for a public primary school rather than a church setting. This means the language used must be clear and simple as many children today are not familiar with 'christianese' jargon and concepts. Preaching should be avoided, particularly in this context.*
- 2. As the play is only 4-5 minutes long, it's best to keep the plot simple with one or two acts. Stage directions and props must be minimal too as there may not be time or the place to set up complicated settings.*
- 3. Concentrate on the age of the children in the audience and aim for their level of understanding. Keep the dialogue short in case the performers want to learn their lines.*
- 4. Try to engage the audience so they take something of value away. Choose an arresting title and give a satisfying conclusion.*
- 5. If basing your play on Scripture, make sure you check the details. I was amazed to find basic inaccuracies in two of the scripts. This can cause confusion and a loss of credibility.*

First Place



**Janet
Fleming**
of Kaeo

Jesus is Alive!

**Characters:- Stranger (Jesus),
Cleopas, Friend, Peter, Thomas**

(Two men are walking along a road)

Cleopas:- “Isn’t it sad about Jesus?”

Friend:- “Yes, it’s very sad. I thought He would have saved Israel.”

Cleopas:- “I did too. Hello.”

(Turning to acknowledge a fellow traveller walking alongside)

Stranger:- “What’s the matter? Why are you sad?”

Cleopas:- “Haven’t you heard the news?”

Stranger:- “What news?”

Friend:- “Are you a visitor to these parts? I mean the news about Jesus from Nazareth. We thought He would save our people but they nailed Him on a cross.”

Cleopas:- “Some of the ladies told us they went to His tomb and saw angels who said He is no longer dead but alive. Two men went to the tomb and His body was gone.”

Stranger:- “Why don’t you understand? Haven’t you read what the prophets wrote? Christ must suffer and then enter His glory.”

Reader:- The men listen amazed as the stranger talks about the writings of

Moses and the prophets, explaining what they mean.

(By now it is growing dark and they reach Emmaus. Cleopas and his friend arrive at their home and the stranger goes to carry on)

Friend:- “Stay with us. It’s getting late.”

Stranger:- “Thank you.” (They enter the house)

Cleopas:- “Have some food.” (Sitting down at the table)

(They begin to eat. The stranger takes some bread and breaks it. At that moment Cleopas and his friend jump to their feet as they recognize their visitor)

Both Men:- “It’s Jesus.”

Cleopas:- “He’s gone. Just vanished like that.”

Friend:- “Come on Cleopas. Let’s go back to Jerusalem and tell the others the women were right. Jesus is alive!”

(The men quickly return to Jerusalem. They aren’t sad now. They knock on a door and enter the room where eleven men and two women are sitting looking sad)

Cleopas:- “Everyone, Jesus is alive.”

Friend:- “We saw Him.”

(They all look terrified as Jesus suddenly appears in the room)

Jesus:- “Why are you frightened? Why don’t you believe? Look at my hands and my feet. It’s really me. Touch me.” (He holds out His hands) “Have you got something I can eat?” (They pass Him some fish) “I told you these things written about me must happen.”

(Suddenly Jesus disappears again and soon after Thomas enters the room)

Peter:- “We have seen Jesus. He was here.”

Thomas:- “I must see the nail prints in His hands and touch them with my finger, I must put my hand into the spear wound in His side or I won’t believe.”

(Eight days later the disciples are together. Again Jesus suddenly appears)

Jesus:- “Thomas, put your finger in the nail holes, put your hand in my side, now, stop doubting and believe that I truly am alive.”

Thomas:- (Kneeling) “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus:- “Thomas, because you have seen me you have believed, but those people who haven’t seen me and have believed are those who are most blessed.

Judge’s Comments

Janet has chosen a passage of Scripture for her simple, straightforward one act play. The details are accurate according to the biblical account and her play flows well. It requires few props and could easily be performed anywhere in the school.

She has chosen a good title and ends with a satisfying conclusion which gives the audience something to think about.

There are a few words and phrases the children may not understand:

‘He would have saved Israel’ and ‘He would save our people.’ From what are they being saved? Christians understand these terms but children in a secular school most probably won’t and could get a wrong impression.

‘...and then enter His glory’. What does

this mean? Try to re-phrase this to make it clear.

There is no need for speech marks around the words spoken by the characters in a play.

Well done Janet. I can see this play fitting into an Easter programme in a Religious Education class or similar and having a positive impact.

Second Place



Judith Powell
of Oxford

Lost?

Characters: SAM PAT DANNY
TERRY JACK

[Children enter from stage right one by one as though walking up a steep hill. At the back of the stage is a steep bank and a cliff drops away at the front.]

SAM. *[Puffing]* Gosh that’s steep. How far now?

PAT. Not far. The top’s just up there.

DAN. I can’t see it.

TERRY. Me neither. It’s too cloudy.

JACK. It smells like sea fog. You can smell the salt.

[They all sniff]

JACK. It’s here!

[They peer around.]

SAM. Sit down! Don’t fall over the cliff. *[They sit]*

PAT. I can't see my hand. *[He holds his arm straight out.]*

DAN. I've got my GPS – that will tell us where to go. *[He pulls it out, looks at it and jumps up.]* This way. *[He starts walking.]*

TERRY. Stop! It will direct us the shortest way, straight down the cliff. Stand still!

SAM. I've got a map.

TERRY. But we don't know exactly where we are on it. The path's too windy.

JACK. What about my compass. *[Waves it around.]*

TERRY. Same problem. We know we go southeast but the track's wriggly.

PAT. Here's my cell phone. Can we call someone to help?

DAN. They won't be able to see in the fog either, even if we have cell phone coverage.

TERRY. What can we do?

DAN. We're really lost, aren't we?

PAT. We know where we are and where we're going. We just don't know how to get there.

SAM. I know. Let's rope ourselves together. Then if someone goes over the edge we can pull them back. We can just touch the bank and shuffle along really slowly.

PAT. Okay.

[They rope themselves in a line about a metre apart, and shuffle along touching the bank with their left hands.]

DAN. I think I see something.

JACK. I can see my feet.

PAT. I can see my hand again. *[He holds it out]*

TERRY. But what's that?

[They peer into the fog.]

SAM. It looks like a big cross.

TERRY. What do you mean? A cross?

SAM. Like the one Jesus died on.

PAT. But what's it there for?

SAM. I guess it's to remind us that Jesus died so we can get to heaven.

DAN. Because without Him we're lost and can't find our way to God the Father. Jesus took the punishment for all the things that stop us being able to find Him.

TERRY. Do you mean He died so we can live? But why?

DAN. Because He loves us so much.

PAT. Just like we couldn't see where to go, and got lost in the fog. We can't be good enough to reach God on our own, so Jesus made the way for us.

TERRY. But what does it all mean?

SAM. It means we're not lost any more. We can be God's children like He wants us to be. Jesus made the way for us.

ALL. Hooray! *[They high five each other]*

Judge's Comments

I was pleased that Judith thought outside the square and was inspired to write something different from the other entrants

who all based their plays on the Easter stories recorded in the gospels.

This gave a fresh approach and is possibly more interesting for the children as they have no idea where the plot is heading.

I'm not sure how the setting could be arranged on stage with a steep hill, bank and dangerous cliff.

The fog would also require imagination on the part of the audience.

I like the build up of the drama to a climax as the climbers discover all their aids are insufficient to find their way out of danger in such impossible conditions.

The link with the cross of Jesus is quite a stretch for the mind as the play suddenly shifts from the physical to the spiritual. This may be hard for children in this age group to grasp. However it does get the message of Easter across in an effective way, and without preaching.

The text moves along quickly with short statements which would be easy to memorise.

While the title is a little dull, there are few mistakes in the script and Judith has avoided jargon for the most part.

Overall, a good entry, Judith.

Third Place



Lois Farrow
of Christchurch

HE IS ALIVE

Mary and Joanna
Angel
Peter and John

(Stage background: Stage right open tomb with round stone rolled to one side)

(Stage middle ground: Large wall. Left third: inside room, rest of wall: stone wall.)

(Mary and Joanna enter stage left carrying spices, walk slowly across stage.)

Mary: What are we going to do?

Joanna: I don't know. That stone is huge, there's no way we'll be able to move it.

Mary: I don't understand what happened. How could Jesus die? How could he let those wicked men take him and kill him? Now he's gone! What are we going to do?

Joanna: I don't know, I don't understand either. We put all our hopes in him, and now he is dead. Our hopes are gone, everything is gone. (Quiet weeping)

Mary: We've got to get to his body somehow so we can anoint him with these spices. It's the least we can do.

(Women come around the corner and see the open tomb.)

Mary: What! Someone has been here. What happened?

(Peer into tomb and quickly come out.)

Joanna: It's empty! There's no one there!

(Angel appears, women fall on the ground.)

Angel: Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen, as he told you before. He said he had to be delivered to sinful men, but on the third day he would rise!

(Angel disappears.)

Mary: Where did the angel go? I remember now, Jesus did say he would rise. We've got to tell the others, let's go.

(Run back to disciples in inside room, excitedly tell them.)

Peter: No way, you're dreaming.

John: That can't be true, it just can't.

(Peter and John run to the tomb, look in, and come away puzzled.)

Peter: How come he's not there? Who took away the stone? Where has he gone?

John: He can't have gone anywhere himself, I saw him dead, and dead is dead. The women said he is risen, do you think....

Peter: Hardly, they're imagining that angel.

John: But the tomb is empty, I think what the angel said is true.

(Back at the house, mime animated discussion.)

Peter: Well, I'm not going to believe unless I see the marks in his hands, and put my hand in his side.

(Exit stage.)

(A week later, all on stage)

Peter: He came! Jesus himself came to us. He showed me his hands and side and said it really was him. I feel so embarrassed for not believing!

John: I'll never forget the way you fell down and said 'My Lord and my God!'

Peter: What else could I do? I was so ashamed. Now what do we do?

Mary: We need to tell people.

Peter: Yes! This news is too good to keep to ourselves. Let's go and tell everyone.

All calling to audience: Jesus is risen, He is alive, we saw him, He's not dead any more,

Everyone together: He is alive!

Judge's Comments

Lois has chosen to base her play on the story in the gospels about the women who went to the tomb and found the Lord's body gone and the reaction to this startling discovery by them and by the disciples. It's a straightforward account but lost marks because of inaccuracies in the facts of the story.

It was not Peter who doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead and claimed he would not believe unless he saw the wounds of Jesus. It was Thomas—known widely, even today, as 'doubting Thomas.'

This is serious error and the play loses credibility. If we base our writing on true stories then we must research and check the facts carefully.

I found the stage setting rather complicated for a 4-5 minute play. The title is a good one and the conclusion has a note of triumph which suits the theme of the Easter play.

Lois has avoided jargon in most cases. The sentence: 'He said he had to be delivered to sinful men, but on the third day he would rise' needs simplifying for children to understand.

I can imagine this play being performed at a public school. So keep up the good work and use your writing skills for this type of occasion as there is always a need for short dramas of this kind.

Competitions for June 2017

Due by May 10th

EMAIL ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT, COMPLETE WITH WORD COUNT AND YOUR NAME.

Font: Times New Roman, 11 pt. **Heading:** Bold, 14 pt. **Line spacing:** single.

Spacing between Paragraphs: 6 pt. **Paragraph Indentation:** None.

Send a high resolution photo of yourself in the event you are awarded a place.

NB: If you are not sure what level you're on, email the editor at sddp@xtra.co.nz

Level One—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: Write a four-minute speech on why you think family is important. Make sure you express your Christian worldview clearly, but without being preachy. 400 words.

Email entry to: Debbie McDermott at: sddp@xtra.co.nz



Debbie

Level Two—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: Write a collection of treasured moments and memories to make up a written treasure chest. Try and write a short paragraph per memory or one sentence for shorter moments. Give each one a title or precious stone e.g. Ruby. Max 500 words.

Email entry to: Jan Pendergrast at: jan@roads-end.co.nz



Jan

Level Three—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: Write a practical but sensitively worded letter to a friend who is going through a trial similar to one you have experienced. Tell how God helped you through your trial, and how you believe God can help your friend through his or her trial. Although an imaginary friend is acceptable, your letter will probably appear more authentic if written for a real friend. You can change details to preserve anonymity. 200-250 words.

Email entry to: Julia Martin at: pemburyestate@slingshot.co.nz



Julia

Under 20s—for members 7-19 years old

Requirement: Design a treasure hunt and come up with 10 creative clues to lead someone to your treasure. Use a real or imagined location or map as the basis for your hunt, and make sure you provide your reader with a starting point for the first clue. Each clue should hint at where the next clue can be found. Reveal what your treasure is at the end. 250 words.

Email entry to: Vicki Nogaj at: nogaj@vodafone.co.nz



Vicki



NZ CHRISTIAN
writers



EION FIELD has been interested in writing as a hobby for many years. He enjoys writing stories with strong plots, as well as metred poetry with Christian themes.

In 1980 he wrote a play called *Fishers of Men* which was performed by members of his church, complete with a rowing boat on the stage. More recently Eion self-published a novel, written in a modern setting and with a Gospel theme. He enjoys writing regularly for *The Christian Writer* magazine, and especially appreciates the feedback he receives to develop his technique.

Eion is married with four adult children and his other hobby is playing the banjo. He and Jenny have always lived in the Waikato, but have spent short periods living and working in Bougainville and East Timor.

eionfield@gmail.com