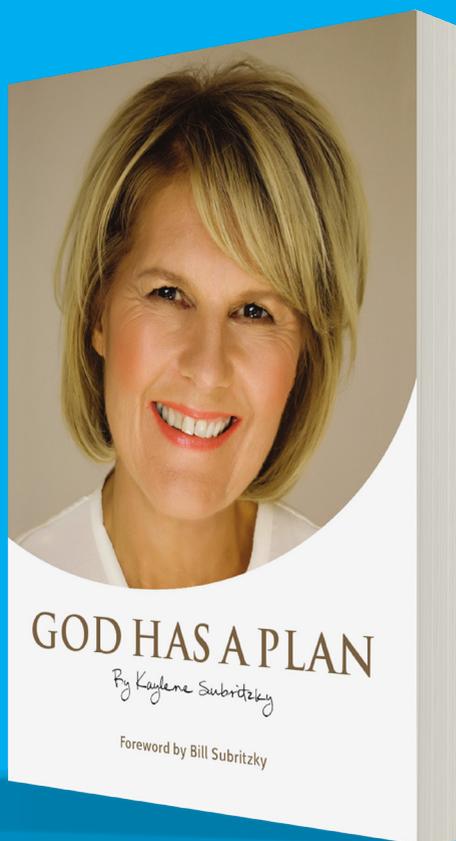


DECEMBER 2017 - JANUARY 2018

# THE CHRISTIAN writer



## BOOK REVIEW

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God Has a Plan  
BY KAYLENE SUBRITZKY

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)



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### **Membership, Subscriptions and Address Changes:**

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### **Annual Subscriptions—2 options:**

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Pay subs 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

(Your book will be added as a donation to NZCW's 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.

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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](http://www.nzchristianwriters.org)

# President's Report

Christmas is just around the corner, a wonderful time of year where church and community gather together to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It's so important during the busyness of this time of year that we take time to remember the reason for the season. Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith and it is in Him that our hope is secured. Christmas Day, just like any day in the calendar, is a day where we can celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ. His virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death, and restorative resurrection are essential elements to understanding the Gospel. Our faith in Christ is what unites us in this unique collective of NZ Christian Writers.

The featured book for this edition of *The Christian Writer* is Kaylene Subritzky's *God Has a Plan*. Each of our writers who attended the Retreat 2017 would have received a complimentary printed copy of this brilliant book after the seminar sessions hosted by Kaylene. Inside this evangelical publication you'll find the sustaining hope of Jesus Christ, Kaylene's testimony, plus highlights from her marriage and ministry with global evangelist Bill Subritzky. The NZ Christian Writers committee felt this would be the perfect publication to inspire us for the Christmas and New Year edition of our magazine. In addition, a free eBook copy of *God Has a Plan* is available to download from: [www.DoveMinistries.com](http://www.DoveMinistries.com).

Let's determine to make the approaching New Year a season of refreshing, reflection and renewal. Refreshing as we share time together with friends and family in our church and communities. Reflection as we remember the challenges, opportunities and successes of the year that has passed. Renewal as it can also be a season when we experience some free time to write and pursue the publications or projects God has placed on our hearts. Let's each look to God with positive expectancy and renewed hope to see what He has planned for our lives during 2018.

All the best for a fantastic Christmas and New Year season.



Maxima, Sara-Maria and Justin

Blessings,  
Justin St Vincent

# NZCW Competition Winners for 2017

Results are based on the number of entries submitted and the total number of points awarded for the year.

## Level One

**1st Place**  
Yvonne Mossom

**2nd Place**  
Ellaine Millard

**3rd Place**  
Non-applicable  
(insufficient entries received)

## Level Two

**1st Place**  
Lynda Otter

**2nd Place**  
Pamela Lowrey

**3rd Place**  
Ruth Jamieson

## Level Three

**1st Place**  
Judith Powell

**2nd Place**  
Lois Farrow

**3rd Place**  
Pat Kerr

## Under 20s

**Commended**  
Bonnie Smithies  
for entering once this year.

No other entries received

## Congratulations to all Prize Winners

Yvonne Mossom and Ellaine Millard  
will now move up to

### Level Two

Lynda Otter, Pamela Lowrey and Ruth Jamieson  
now qualify to move up to

### Level Three

if they wish

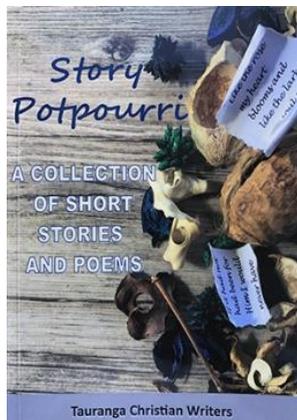
Do be encouraged to enter the 2018 competitions. Overall winners for the year in each level receive \$60 for 1st Place, \$50 for 2nd Place and \$40 for 3rd Place.

# The Story of *STORY POT POURRI*

By Ruth Linton

The story began at the beginning of 2016 when a group member suggested we combine some of our group assignments into an anthology, with the purpose of placing copies into rest homes as a form of Christian outreach. We wanted contributions to be suitable for residents to read or have read to them, so made a conscious effort to have a selection of history, fun stories, poems and Christian stories and parables—a readable, non-preachy quality collection.

Group members contributed writing they felt would be suitable and one meeting was dedicated to deciding which were most appropriate. After each item was edited, it was emailed back to the writer for their approval before collating them. Where possible, writers sent photos or pictures to illustrate their work but a group member, Belinda McCallion, used a computer programme to modify and enhance pictures for most articles. We kept these in black and white to keep costs down, but did use several colour photos and public-domain clipart. In the finish we had 35 contributions collated in an A5 size. This was a challenge for me and I found myself procrastinating when I didn't know what to do. Jan Pendergrast, our published author, gave lots of support and it was a wonderful learning experience. We used size 12 font; margins were 15mm at the spine and 12mm at the page edge.



After checking and re-checking, the manuscript was saved as a PDF print-ready file. We asked for quotes from two Tauranga printers but finally used the slightly more expensive of the two as the graphic designer I consulted went out of his way to help. Also his company had past connections with New Zealand Christian Writers and was sympathetic to our vision. Jan applied for the ISBN number—an important item for any books we publish—and the graphic designer produced the barcode. He recommended paper quality (100gsm and a smooth finish) and a glossy cardboard cover, pure bound because, at 80 pages, stapling was inadequate. He showed me how to make the cover about 3mm bigger all round (called *the bleed*) so, when printed the colour went right to the edge. He helped number the pages correctly so the contents opened out on mirrored pages and the first item was on the right (recto) side, as in all books. The small extra cost was worth it in producing a quality booklet, and in the learning I received.

Group members pre-ordered personal copies and indicated how many copies for the rest homes they were willing to sponsor. Most also pre-paid so we could settle the printer's account with a little temporary bank rolling from two members. Our final order was for 150 copies. This allowed us to distribute them to all local rest homes as planned and some went to our correspondence members in Whakatane and Tokoroa. Those whose work was

published took copies and personally delivered them to the homes, reporting an enthusiastic reception all around.

When we ordered 150 copies I wondered if we would be left with a pile to 'get rid of'. In fact, within three months of their printing in February this year less than 20 remain. I believe this is because we all gave time, talents and resources to bless others and extend God's kingdom.

A copy of our anthology may be purchased for \$10 plus \$2 per copy for postage. Please email Ruth at [ruthlinton2015@gmail.com](mailto:ruthlinton2015@gmail.com) for order and payment details.

## Prayer and Fasting

By Sara McGuire

Matthew 6:16-21

There are times in our busy lives when we need to lay aside time to specifically hear from God. When we stop and assign a specific time and place and align our priorities with God's, it enables us to be close to the Father Heart of God.

In our key verse of his teaching on fasting in Matthew 6, Jesus is encouraging and drawing us into a more intimate and closer relationship with our Heavenly Father. When we surrender our natural desires, we are then able to fully and completely enter into the spiritual. By combining prayer with fasting, we are giving God control and enabling him to steer us in the direction he wants us to go. Keeping our minds cleansed enables us to more fully hear from him. When our spirit is submitted, we are ready to listen for his instructions and hear what he wants us to do.

## WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian writing of today and yesteryear—

Series by Frederick Swallow



Church of the Nativity and Bell Tower

## O Little Town of Bethlehem

**Phillips Brooks**, an Episcopal minister and author from Boston, wrote this carol after visiting the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in 1865. Lewis Redner, his organist, penned the tune on Christmas Eve, to be sung the next day.

Emperor Constantine first built the Nativity Church in 330 A.D. It has remained over the years largely unaltered and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Inside is the cave grotto marked with a large 14-point star where Jesus is said to have been born. On Christmas Eve, the church bells are broadcast worldwide.

# Writing a Fiction Book Review

By Jan Pendergrast (*with help from Bill Asenjo and WikiHow*)

We usually review a book we have enjoyed, but on occasion we battle through one not so enjoyable. Maybe we have been asked to review a manuscript, or read something a friend has recommended, but haven't connected with it at all.

Whether we enjoyed the book or not, it is still interesting to read someone else's opinion of it.

## Read and 'inwardly digest' your chosen book

Brainstorm your book. Take notes as you read. Jot down impressions you have. Is there a major theme, an overall message or lesson you have perceived between the lines? (It helps to sum up the book's theme in one word.) How is the plot structure developed through the story? What about character development? Can you relate to the characters? Were you satisfied with the book's ending? Do you think the author was successful in conveying the message and goal of the book?

## Write the Review

### The Review Heading

Book reviews begin with the title, author, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, and number of pages. Include its RRP (Recommended Retail Price) and the reviewer's name.

### The Introduction

As with all writing, begin your review with an introduction that will grab your reader's attention so they will want to read the rest of the review. Some possible openings include an historical moment, an anecdote, a surprising or intriguing statement, or a declarative statement.

Briefly include in your introduction relevant details like the author's background, and if applicable, their previous work in the genre.

Give a summary of the narrative without revealing the outcome. Keep it short, to the point, and informative. Talk about the main characters. Were they credible? Did the characters overcome problems? Could you relate to any of them? Did they irritate you? Would you have reacted the way they did? Don't mention what happens from the middle of the book.

## Evaluate and Critique the Book

This is the heart of your review, so be as direct and clear as you can.

Use the answers you brainstormed during your preparation for the review to formulate your critique.

Address how well the book has achieved its goal.

Use supporting quotes and passages from the book to back up your critical discussion.

## Conclusion

Write a concluding paragraph or several sentences that sum up your analysis of the book. Do not introduce new material in your conclusion.

Did you like the book? Was there a favourite piece, or one you didn't enjoy? Examine its strengths and weaknesses, and discuss whether you would recommend this book to others. If so, what type of person would enjoy it?

The general rule of thumb is that the first one-half to two-thirds of the review should summarise the author's main ideas and at least one-third should evaluate the book.

Give the book a numerical score, a thumbs-up—or down, or a star rating.

Remember, your review must be fair to the author and the reader, as your comments will influence whether your reader will buy the book.

## The Beauty of Spring

by Pamela Lowrey

The Lord, the God of all Creation  
comes to our small southern Nation,  
gently waking all the earth  
heralding the new Spring birth.

The birds begin to joyously sing  
flying intent on silent wings,  
preparing nests in chosen trees  
camouflaged from enemies.

Bulbs press up toward the light  
Daffodils, freesias, and paper whites.  
Delightful fragrance fills the air,  
dispensed so delicately with care.

Blossoms appear in scarcely a blink  
in shades of delicate white and pink,  
explode like fireworks suspended mid-air,  
a sight to make us stop and stare.

The bees they buzz and dart and flit  
gathering pollen every last bit,  
working steadily producing honey,  
in combs so pure and oh so runny!

So let us bring our thanks to Him  
and give due worship to our King  
who gives to us upon the earth  
the beauty of the Springtime birth.

Editors Note—Pamela's lovely poem was the winning entry of a poetry competition run by St Luke's Anglican Church in Havelock North.



# NZCW Writers Groups Highlights

Compiled by Debbie McDermott

I have learnt from experience the tremendous value of belonging to a New Zealand Christian Writers Group. Not only is it a safe place in which to have your work objectively critiqued by fellow writers who genuinely want you to succeed in your craft, the wide variety of assignments also helps broaden your writing skills. Apart from this, they are also places of tremendous fun and fellowship, as well as encouragement.

There are eight NZ Christian Writers Groups across New Zealand, four of which are fairly new start-ups (see page 12 for full details).

Below are reports from some of our groups, highlighting their activities and successes throughout this past year. Enjoy.

## Christchurch Christian Writers

Report by John Lindsay

In Christchurch we have a small but enthusiastic group with five to ten attending our monthly meetings in a home yet to be rebuilt after being severely damaged in the earthquakes seven years ago; a reminder of the ongoing impact of this upheaval.

George Bryant's *Christian Writing Seminar* was one of the highlights of our year. A number of those who attended do not belong to Christian Writers, so it was good to know the advertising had reached beyond our membership.

Pauline Marshall recently published her first book, an illustrated children's story about Hannibal, the camel who longed to be special. We shared Pauline's sense of accomplishment because we have discussed her questions about writing, illustrating and publishing for many months.

At our November meeting we had a visit from another newly published author, Kathleen Keith-Gillon. Sisters Kathleen and Anita have been missionaries in Colombia for nearly 40 years and this book, *It's All About Him – Hope for the Desperate in Colombia*, gives an insight into the lives of the people who come into their home searching for light in dark circumstances. Our Janette Busch helped Kathleen prepare the material for publication.

## Hawkes Bay Group

Report by Jennie Chappell

The fledgling Hawkes Bay Group has 12 members with a diversity of writing genres including poetry, short stories, book manuscripts and plays. Our agreed purpose is 'to encourage and affirm each other as Christians who are writers' and there is a sensitive and supportive atmosphere at the meetings.

Meetings have a simple format, including a set topic, writing tips, project updates, and general discussion, with opening/closing prayer. The format is subject to change, as and when appropriate, giving a relaxed atmosphere which members appreciate.

Three members—Ellaine, Pamela and Lynda—have all been placed more than once this year in the NZCW magazine competitions, and Ellaine attained 4th place in the Ashton Wylie Unpublished Manuscript Awards 2017. Group meetings will be bimonthly in 2018 and we look forward to spending time in faith and fellowship as we share our writing journeys.

## Northland Writers Groups

Report by Janice Gillgren

Our groups have continued to go steadily throughout the year. One member's book (Clare Matravers) was published, and the God Spots we wrote as an assignment last year were aired on Radio Rhema. We repeated the exercise this year, but our God Spots have not yet been aired.

## Tauranga Christian Writers Group

Report by Jan Pendergrast

We have 16 members on our list, three to eight of whom attend our monthly Thursday morning meetings.

We begin at 9.30 for a meet and greet before our meeting begins.

Each member takes a turn at running the meeting, organising the agenda and devotion, choosing the assignment topic and preparing the teaching topic. If the member cannot host the meeting, someone else fills that role.

Our usual mid-winter retreat at my place was a low-key exercise this year with everyone spending a quiet time writing, reading, walking or sleeping. We didn't eat too much this time!

Members travelled to Gaynor's home in Rotorua for the July meeting as it was in the school holidays.

At the beginning of the year we published an anthology, *Story Potpourri*, to which most members contributed. Belinda McCallion designed the cover. We donated a book to each of the retirement and rest homes in the Tauranga area. A few books remain to be sold at \$10 each.

Jeanette Knudsen launched her *Four Kiwis on the Silk Road* and Angela Curtis launched *Shotover*, her book about her great grandfather's gold discovery, as part of the Thames 150 years celebration.

As usual we will conclude our year and celebrate our achievements with a shared lunch.

## Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

**Allan Gallagher** of Invercargill

**Annette Rattray** of Picton

**Mark Tobias** of Wellington

**Peter Leong** of Oteha, Auckland

**Sue Thatcher** of Whangaparoa

### REMEMBER

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

## Need Professional Writing Services?

These New Zealand Christian  
Writer members can help:

### **Iola Goulton**

E: [igoulton@christianediting.co.nz](mailto:igoulton@christianediting.co.nz)

### **Janette Busch**

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or [Janette.Busch@gmail.com](mailto:Janette.Busch@gmail.com)  
Mob: +64 21 233 7691

### **Marie Anticich**

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### **Sue Beguely**

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[promisekept99@outlook.com](mailto:promisekept99@outlook.com)

If you would like to join or find out more  
about the group in your area, please don't  
hesitate to contact the group leader.

# Get Creative

As I didn't receive any Get Creative submissions for this issue of the magazine, I decided to use a very thought-provoking piece that has not yet been published.

## It Will Be Awesome When...

By Carol Duffy

**It will be awesome when I go to school**, I thought.

It was—for a while, but I had to go every day; I couldn't play.

**It will be awesome when I'm 10**, I thought.

It was—for a day, till I realised 10 is just a number, like 9 or 8 or 5; having two digits didn't change anything.

**It will be awesome when I'm a teenager**, I thought.

It was—sometimes, but there were mood swings, confusion, more responsibility. I wasn't a child or an adult.

**It will be awesome when I fall in love**, I thought.

It was—every time—for a while.

**It will be awesome when we're married**, I thought.

It was, it is, but not all the time.

**It will be awesome when we have children**, I thought.

It was, it is, but not all the time.

**It will be awesome when...**

**WAIT!** Consider this—awesome loving, faithful husband; awesome children and grandchildren; comfortable home in an awesome place... and an Awesome Loving Heavenly Father!

It *IS* awesome **now!** I have learned, like Paul, to be content whatever state I'm in. (Philippians 4:10-13)

## The next topic will be Psalm 138:8 The works of your hands

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.

**Deadline: 10th January 2018**

Email submissions for consideration to: [sddp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sddp@xtra.co.nz)

# Successful Tauranga Book Launch

Report by Ruth Linton

If you were asked would you know where countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were? In 2011 Jeanette Knudsen and husband, Martin, along with friends, Maurice and Anne O'Reilly, set off in two land cruisers to drive the Silk Road traversing many such Central Asian countries, most being former members of the USSR. It was a journey of 16,000 miles and took two and a half months to complete.



The venue and audience

At the time Jeanette recorded the journey in a series of travel blogs but, at the beginning of 2017, felt it was 'unfinished business' and with the encouragement of friends decided to change it into a book. The result is a 210 page book called *Four Kiwis on the Silk Road* and includes maps for each of the four sections plus 40 colour photos.

The book launch was held in the Bethlehem College Staffroom, Tauranga, at 2:30 pm on Saturday November 4th. Speakers included Peter Hayward, president of the Christian Education Trust, Todd Mueller, National MP for Tauranga and George Bryant representing the publishers, Daystar Books. Jeanette gave a fascinating address mentioning some of the highlights of the trip—being forced to buy diesel on the black market, Asian squat toilets and the amazing diversity of landscapes crossed, some 3,000 feet above sea level. As Todd Mueller noted, the strength of the story is the engagement with the people they encountered, including many self-important bureaucrats in ex-Communist nations.

The 80 guests were enthralled by the presentation and a large number of books were sold making the launch worthwhile.



L to R: George Bryant, Martin Knudsen, Todd Mueller and Jeanette Knudsen

Copies can be purchased from Jeanette Knudsen

([mjknudsen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mjknudsen@xtra.co.nz)) for \$29.95 PLUS postage.

## Featured Book Review



### God has a Plan

By Kaylene Subritzky

Review by Julia Martin

Kaylene's story is one of dramatic transformation from a troubled, disillusioned young woman into a spirit-filled born-again child of God with a new perspective, and a peace, joy and contentment she'd never known before.

She describes her childhood growing up with an alcoholic father, and a mother and brother who did not cope well. Having to take on responsibilities way beyond her years, she grew up too fast. As she writes:

'The desire for love and security, so lacking in my early life, transformed into a sad cycle of unhappy relationships.'

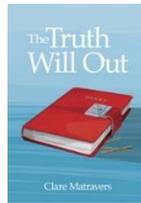
Everything changed radically when she attended a Christian event. 'The Lord found me there, at that place of deep hurt, anger and repentance, and I felt a new outpouring of His great love for me.'

Becoming a born-again Christian resulted in new doors of service and opportunities opening up. In 2012 she married Bill Subritzky, a leader of many ministries which Kaylene continues serving with today.

Kaylene felt inspired by God to write her story for those struggling with life's pain. She intersperses it with Bible passages and handwritten insights where she bares her soul with honesty and vulnerability. Her integrity shines through this small book and I recommend it as a useful tool for helping those struggling to find fulfilment in Christ.

A free copy of this eBook is available from [www.DoveMinistries.com](http://www.DoveMinistries.com)

## Second Book Review



### The Truth Will Out

By Clare Matravets

Review by Julia Martin

Many of the mysteries of Clare's first novel *Ripples in the Water* are gradually uncovered in this sequel. Once Sapphire's secret is revealed to her daughter Candace, the teenager reacts in ways that lead her down a dangerous pathway.

Clare shows her writing skills by building up suspense and intrigue so the reader keeps turning the pages. She is not afraid to deal with subjects such as suicide, rape or prostitution, but shows there is a way out of these dark places and that the gospel of Jesus Christ brings hope, forgiveness and a new start.

Available in Print or eBook format from [www.castlepublishing.co.nz](http://www.castlepublishing.co.nz)

## New Library Additions

### Simply Poetic

—Rod's 9th volume of poems on a wide variety of themes. Copies of all volumes are available as PDFs from:

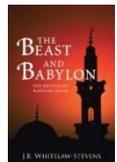
Rod Hickman  
[rodnehickmanpoet@gmail.com](mailto:rodnehickmanpoet@gmail.com)



### The Beast and Babylon

—answers questions about the two symbolic entities in Revelation and the latter-day beast power.

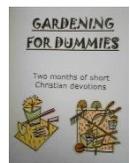
By J B Whitelaw-Stevens  
[www.westbowpress.com](http://www.westbowpress.com)



### Gardening for Dummies

—Devotions about gardening and other tasks: choices; witness; provision; de-cluttering; planting in your life. Free eBook available from:

Felicity Logan  
[felicity.logan@compassnet.co.nz](mailto:felicity.logan@compassnet.co.nz)



# Competition Results

## Level One

**Judge: Debbie McDermott**

**Requirement:** Research the background story of a traditional or modern Christmas carol and include your personal thoughts and reflections on this. 300 words.

### General Comments

*I received three very good entries on three different Christmas carols, two of which were traditional while one was more upbeat. Each contestant had researched their subject well and some of the points they highlighted in their articles really sparked my interest. I particularly enjoyed reading about what their carol of choice meant to them.*

*While it was not specifically stated in the competition requirements, the reason each entrant was asked to share their personal thoughts and reflections on the carol they had chosen was to give them opportunity to include a strong takeaway message in their article. As Christian writers, presenting a clear takeaway message to our readers must always be our objective. It is therefore vital to ensure we factor one into our writing assignments—particularly when working on a research article with a strict and very limited word count.*

*In such instances, it is helpful to estimate how many words you will need for each section of your article, and then stick to these estimates as best you can. For example, the word allocation for this 300-word competition could be as follows: 70 - 80 words for the introduction, 120 - 140 words for the main content, and 80 - 110 words for the takeaway message. Not only will this method ensure you have sufficient words at your disposal to adequately put across your takeaway message, it will also enable you to present your reader with a well-balanced article.*

*Do remember, too, that while there is usually a certain amount of flexibility with word counts, 10% over or under the stipulated word count does cost you a point.*

### First Place



Yvonne  
Mossom  
of Whangarei

## **A Modern Carol. Mary's boy child: Jesus Christ**

Jester Hairston wrote this carol in response to a request from Walter Schumann, director of the Hollywood choir. He had written the melody for a friend's birthday party and because most of the guests were West Indians, he used a Calypso beat. It was an

immediate success and Harry Belafonte asked permission to record it. It was the first single to sell 1 million copies on the UK singles chart. in 1957.

What is the secret of this success? Is it that catchy beat? Is it the message of the first Christmas? Is it the delightful recording by Boney M, the West Indians who have enjoyed such acclaim since they recorded it?

The beat is reminiscent of tropical holidays in contrast to carols depicting 'snow lying all about'. Could that be the reason? Or is that these carollers from the New World have surprised us with their cheerful story telling of the first Christmas?

Ask a seven year old. He will tell you, "It's about Jesus' birthday. The angels came told us that it happened in Bethlehem. It's in the Bible." "Why is that important?" you ask. "Because man will live for ever." That sums it up.

Why do I love this carol? Its simplicity is refreshing. The message comes across loud and clear. Nothing is left out. The heavenly choir that was the first carol, shepherds watching their sheep, the stable with cattle -are all there. It is a reminder as you shop in the supermarket. When you buy gifts for your loved ones, you will hear this carol and the words will be imprinted on your brain. It fills me with joy and hope. I am encouraged to praise, to pray, to persevere.

## **Judge's Comments**

*Yvonne met the requirements of this competition exceptionally well. Her article is well-balanced and has a very good flow to it. The heading (which incorporates the title of this calypso carol) leads straight into the opening paragraph, and each paragraph follows on nicely from the previous one. All the historical aspects on how this carol came into being, and how quickly it gained popularity, have also been properly researched and presented in a concise and interesting manner.*

*Yvonne's clear takeaway message on what this carol means to her can be found in the last three sentences of the second to last paragraph and in the last two sentences of the final paragraph:*

*"Why is that important?" you ask. "Because man will live forever." That sums it up.' 'It fills me with joy and hope. I am encouraged to praise, to pray, to persevere.'*

*Yvonne's grammar and punctuation are very good overall. The only areas for correction are as follows:*

- *Heading—Replace the full stop after 'Carol' with a colon, and the colon after 'child' with a comma.*
- *Para 1—last sentence: rewrite '1 million' as 'one million'. In modern literature, numbers 10 and above are written as numerals, not words.*
- *Para 1—last sentence: the full stop after 'chart' needs to be deleted.*

- *Para 4—sentence 1: 'seven-year-old ' should be hyphenated because it is an adjectival phrase describing a noun (i.e. the child referred to in the next sentence).*
- *Para 4—sentence 3: insert the word 'and' after came.*
- *Para 4—sentence 4: delete the space before the question mark.*
- *Para 4—sentence 6: 'forever' should be one word, not two.*
- *Para 5—sentence 5: delete the hyphen after 'cattle'. It is unnecessary.*

*In closing, I just want to say thank for being such a faithful contestant this year, Yvonne. It has been a pleasure to receive your entries and see how much effort you have put into growing your writing skills. Do keep up the good work.*

## Second Place



Ellaine  
Millard  
of Whakatane

### Whose Epiphany?

I wonder if it was John Henry Hopkins, who in 1863 had a revelatory moment; or whether it was the legendary Melchior, Casper and Balthazar whose perception believed Jesus to be the *perfect Light*. Maybe it was both. Whether it was the quest of the Magi or the insight of Hopkins, we now have the blessing of *We Three Kings* as part of our Christmas worship.

The three male voices and their gifts have traversed a long way. This story is known throughout the east and the west. It is particularly relevant in Brazil and Spain as *Three King's Day*; a folk celebration of music, song and festal visiting, which announces the arrival of the Messiah, at the end of the twelfth holy night after Christmas; January 6<sup>th</sup>. In Spain, this celebration starts with an evening parade and is then when the children get their presents. I question how that practice would go down in our culture.

A traditional gift is given to the children on *Three King's Day*; a small box containing a piece of chalk, a gold ring and a piece of amber. With the chalk the date and the magi's initials are written on every door of the house, as protection against illness and misfortune. The 2017 inscription would look like this -20+K+M+B+17. It is also a day to eat specially prepared *King Cake*, in which there is a lucky coin, almond or small baby Jesus. The person who gets the token is expected to host the next year's celebration.

For me the gold acknowledges the precious gift that the Messiah gives us in sacrificial love. The frankincense reveals the power of a prayerful relationship with God. And Myrrh represents the healing resurrection power of cross.

Thanks to three wise kings for following the star to Bethlehem.

## Judge's Comments

*Ellaine presented me with an exceptionally well-written and interesting article that is particularly informative on the Three Kings festival, about which I had no previous knowledge.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed the strong introduction that encapsulates a lot of information in a nutshell. However, as the name of the carol has not been mentioned in the heading or the opening sentence, it would have been a good idea to insert 'carol' after 'We Three Kings' in paragraph one. Although it is a well-known and popular carol, it is possible some folk may not be familiar with it.*

*There is a very good flow throughout Ellaine's article for the most part, and I appreciated how she expressed what the carol means to her in paragraph four. My one concern is that this lovely fourth paragraph seems disconnected from the preceding three and interrupts the flow of the piece as a result. This interruption is largely caused by the sudden switch from the tradition of The Three Kings festival to what the carol means to Ellaine.*

*My other concern is that neither frankincense nor myrrh have been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. This could be quite disconcerting for the reader who has little knowledge of the Bible and what these two elements represent. Had Ellaine not used up so much of the limited word count on describing the Three Kings festival, she could perhaps have included a bit more information on myrrh and frankincense as well as crafted a better lead in to her takeaway message in paragraph four, thereby strengthening its impact.*

*Ellaine's grammar and punctuation are excellent, with very few errors needing correction. My only recommendations are as follows:*

- *Para 2—sentence 3: delete the unnecessary comma after 'Messiah' and replace the semicolon after 'Christmas' with a comma.*
- *Para 2—sentence 3: in modern literature, numbers above 10 are now written as numerals, not words. I therefore recommend changing 'twelfth' to '12th'.*
- *Para 2—sentence 4 is a bit clumsy. I suggest rewriting it as: '...starts with an evening parade, at which the children get their presents.'*
- *Para 3—sentence 3: replace the hyphen with a long em dash.*
- *Para 3—sentence 4: I recommend rewriting 'small baby Jesus' as 'a small image of baby Jesus' or something similar.*
- *Para 4—sentence 3: insert the word 'the' before 'cross'.*

*In closing, I just want to say thank you for being such an enthusiastic and faithful contestant this year, Ellaine. Your entries have been consistently well-written and entertaining. I have also appreciated your follow-ups on some of my comments and critiques. This shows you are a writer who really seeks to excel in your craft. Keep it up.*

## Third Place



Lesley  
Robbins  
of New Plymouth

## A Christmas Carol

This beautiful Christmas Carol was written by a man named Phillips Brooks way back in 1868. He had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and he had gone out into the hills surrounding the town where the shepherds received the good news told to them by the angels.

He looked over Bethlehem at the night sky a dark inky blue the stars twinkling and the houses with their occupants all inside and probably asleep.

Lewis Redner the organist from his church wrote the melody and the Sunday School children's choir at his church sang it.

This song to me shows by the melody and the words the beauty of the night sky and the small town sitting in the quietness about to receive the greatest visitation ever known.

God was about to bring to the world His very own son Jesus. The words of the last verse 'Oh Holy Child of Bethlehem descend to us we pray cast out our sin and enter in be born in us today' ,is our deep cry. There is no other way we can be saved we need Him and He came.

The words in the first verse reveal every human being's condition. Everyone has known what it is to hope that help is out there and that it is available from somewhere with the fear that there are things that are way too big for us and we needed a big helper, these things were going to be met that first Christmas night.

### Judge's Comments

*Lesley has met the key requirements of this competition very well. Paragraphs one, two and three show she has researched her subject thoroughly and her article is written in a lovely, gentle manner that clearly conveys to the reader what the carol means to her. The takeaway message in the final paragraph is also clear, though it would have been a good idea to quote at least one line from the verse mentioned. As Lesley was 45 words below the stipulated word count, this could have been done with ease.*

*One thing that is not clear in Lesley's article is the name of the carol. While Phillips Brooks may not have originally given his carol a title, it has come to be traditionally known as 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. It would therefore have been appropriate to have either used this name as the heading of the article, or mentioned it in the piece itself—preferably in the first paragraph.*

*There is a good flow to the article, but I feel it could be improved on by putting paragraph six before paragraph five. My reasoning is as follows:*

- *It seems odd to mention the carol's last verse before mentioning the first verse.*
- *Ending the piece with 'There is no other way we can be saved...' would significantly increase the impact of the takeaway message.*

*There are some corrections that need to be made. My suggestions are as follows:*

- *Para 1—simplify sentence 1 by deleting 'a man named' and 'a way back'.*
- *Para 1—sentence 2: delete the repeated 'he had' and 'out' after 'gone'.*
- *Para 2—Break up this very long sentence with commas as follows: 'He looked over Bethlehem, at the dark inky blue sky twinkling with stars, and the houses...'*
- *Para 4—The words 'to me shows' cause an awkward pause in the sentence. To avoid this, rewrite the first half of the sentence as: 'The melody and the words of this song show me the beauty of the night sky and the small town...'*
- *Para 5—sentence 2: the space after '...today' is in the wrong place.*
- *Para 6—sentence 2 is far too long. Beginning the sentence with, 'Everyone', and then changing the subject to 'us' is also incorrect. To break up this sentence into bite sized pieces and personalise the takeaway message, I suggest rewriting it as: 'We have all known what it is to hope help is out there and that it is available from somewhere. We know what it's like to fear things are way too big for us. All of us have needed a big helper, and He came on that first Christmas night.'*

*Well done, Lesley, for presenting me with a lovely piece of writing. Keep up the good work. I look forward to receiving more entries from you.*

## **Level Two**

### **Judge: Jeanette Knudsen**

**Requirement:** Combining part of your testimony with the gospel message, write a Christian leaflet for giving to seekers that includes a call to consider the claims of Jesus Christ and receive him. Then typeset your text in 4 columns. Include a picture if you like. 500 words max.

### **General Comments**

*Thank you to those who entered. I enjoyed reading your entries and hope you enjoyed the writing experience. There were just two entries. I have awarded them second place equal as both had strengths and weaknesses, with neither outshining the other.*

*Both writers tackled the layout specifications well, presenting four columns and A5 sizing. I encourage others who may have been put off by the requirements to have a go and seek help to improve your expertise.*

*I looked for an eye-catching beginning that would draw the secular reader to continue further. I also looked for plain English and an absence of 'Christianese'. As Christians we understand the meaning of many common spiritual expressions, but they may be a mystery to the non-Christian seeker.*

*Writing can always be improved by writing in the active, rather than the passive. Words to watch and avoid are was, had, have.*

## Second Place Equal



Pamela  
Lowrey  
of Havelock North

### Whose report do you believe ?

I woke perspiring under a cluster of super bright lights surrounded by staff and wondering where I was.

With drips and tubes everywhere something must have gone wrong, terribly wrong ! But what ? Having been admitted into the City Hospital for what appeared to be a fairly routine surgery to remove a large tumour, I was not prepared for this outcome.

After some time I was wheeled to an unfamiliar Ward and left behind a curtain. I heard the staff asking , “ Who is she ? What is she doing here?” My heart sank. There was no sign of the familiar staff whom I had met the

previous day who were appointed to care for me. My husband spent a frustrating hour trying to find me.

My throat was so sore I could barely speak. I learnt that I was in the CANCER Ward. That was a shock! A second team had been called in to complete the complex 3.5 hour surgery to remove four tumours!

Gradually, it was spelled out to me that I was not expected to live and if I did I would never be able to eat solid food again but would be totally reliant on a feeding tube which was already in place.

This was the time to put my faith in God into action. I knew many people were praying for me here in New Zealand and around the world.

I prayed and read my Bible at every opportunity I got. As a teenager I committed my life to Jesus at a Billy Graham Crusade. He became my best Friend and my desire has been to live my life for Him. He has never let me down. I wasn't afraid of dying as I knew I would go to heaven, The verse I clung to was from Psalm 118 verse 17. 'I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.'

I was not allowed any water and was dependent on a drip for a week. After a CT scan which had shown that my stomach was healing from a 25cm slit during surgery it was thought that I might be able to eat eventually.

I read a wonderful account about an American lady named Betty Maltz who had peritonitis, died,

went to heaven and and came back to life. By mistake, she was given a full dinner and dessert which she ate and was totally healed.

Like Betty, a full dinner was brought to me. I remembered Betty, prayed as she prayed and believed for a similar miracle, enjoying every mouthful. The Dietician was aghast but that meal proved the turning point in my healing and I left the Hospital with a "Miracle" Testimony.

God cares for you just as He did for me. Ask Him into your life and you will find your real purpose and destiny.

I chose to believe God's report.  
Whose report will you believe ?

## Judge's Comments

*Well done, Pamela. Your struggle to get the assignment done was worth it. I like the way you begin with the telling of a crisis in your life; this holds the reader and encourages them to continue to the end to the 'preaching' part. You can improve your writing by:*

- *Avoiding long sentences; e.g. middle of column 2, Gradually...*
- *Avoid fillers like: 'After some time, gradually, what appeared to be'. They slow your writing down.*
- *There are unnecessary capitals—ward, cancer, friend, dietician, testimony; don't be tempted to capitalise for emphasise or because a word has a spiritual meaning; (not sure if City Hospital is a title, in which case the capitals remain).*
- *Write in the active, rather than the passive; e.g. Instead of a full dinner was brought to me, write the staff presented me with a full dinner. Writing in the active makes your work flow better and become more lively. Another example of passive writing is 'it was spelled out to me', instead of more simply, 'I understood' or 'I gathered'.*

## Second Place Equal



Lynda  
Otter  
of Tamatea, Napier

### Why Jesus?

I have always believed in God, but as a teenager I walked away from Him to live my own life and escape the prison of His rules. However, in my late twenties I realised that nothing I was doing made me feel complete. Nothing made me feel whole. Not my husband, my work as a Registered Nurse, my family or my social life. I wandered into a church one Sunday morning and finally understood that I could no longer live a life without God. I needed to have my own personal relationship with Him. That morning, I knelt and asked God to forgive my

sins and invited His Son Jesus to be my Saviour. I finally felt free. I finally felt whole. I finally felt complete. I have journeyed with Him since that time and cannot imagine living without Him being the centre of my life.

I would not want it any other way.

Do you feel incomplete? Is life unsatisfying? Does nothing fill the emptiness inside? You might like to consider the truth about Jesus. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, sent to redeem us from the sin that prevents us having a relationship with God. Jesus died on

the cross to take the punishment for our sins. Jesus rose again after three days and is alive today.

When we ask Jesus to be our Saviour, we accept that he has taken the punishment that we deserve. When we ask forgiveness for our sins we can trust that God will forgive us. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour we can trust that when our life on earth is finished, we will live in Heaven with Jesus for eternity.

Everyone will live in eternity – the question is, where and who with?

Do you want to live with Jesus for ever? If you are really sincere that you do, you can pray the following prayer.

Dear God, I ask Jesus Christ to be my Saviour. I believe that Jesus took the punishment for my sins. I now ask forgiveness for my sins. I believe that I am forgiven and that when my life here is over I will have eternal life with you. Thank you Father, Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer, you are encouraged to join a local church who will help you to continue your journey with Jesus.

## Judge's Comments

*Well done, Lynda. You make good use of repetition and short sharp sentences at the top of column 2. The following comments are to help you improve:*

- *You need an attention-grabbing beginning that will cause the reader to stay with you.*
- *You do avoid 'Christianese' but several of your expressions are border line, like 'I walked away' and 'I have journeyed with him'.*
- *New paragraph needed in column 1, 'I wandered'.*
- *Your writing is one third story and two thirds 'preaching'. To hold the reader better, reverse these proportions.*
- *'You might like to consider'—write instead 'I challenge you to consider', or just 'Consider'. This makes it more dynamic.*

- Same with 'you are encouraged'; make it active, not passive; e.g. 'I encourage you'.
- Avoid words like 'could' and 'have', which slow your writing down.

## Level Three

**Judge: Julia Martin**

**Requirement:** Write a poem giving humorous and practical advice to a newly engaged couple. This poem should have discernible rhythm and a clear rhyming pattern. 25 - 30 lines.

### General Comments

*As we know, poems are written for all kinds of reasons and come with diverse themes, forms, styles and lengths. This competition involved writing a poem in a humorous but sensitive manner, giving practical advice to a newly engaged couple.*

*For this assignment, I was looking for a light-hearted poem with an upbeat rhythm suitable to be read or recited at an engagement party or the like.*

*I awarded Judith first place because her poem had a consistent rhythm and theme throughout and contained a balance of humour and practical advice.*

*I enjoyed reading the other two entries as well.*

## First Place

### Better Than Sliced Bread

Judith  
Powell  
of Oxford



You fell in love  
And plan to wed.  
They say it's good,  
It beats sliced bread,  
But make the knot  
Of threefold thread.

Love can grow stale  
Just like the bread.  
Here are some things  
That must be said,  
To keep it fresh  
Until you're dead.

You must ask God,  
“Is this the way  
You want for us  
To take today?”  
Then wait to see  
What He will say.

You'll need to talk  
And listen too.  
(Do you hear what  
Is said to you?)  
Then chew it well  
And pray it through.

Just like sliced bread  
The years to come,  
Some thick, some thin,  
Won't all be fun,  
But God's with you  
Thru' every one.

## Judge's Comments

*Judith gave her poem an appealing title which begs the question as to what is better than sliced bread? She has chosen a simple rhyming pattern with five beats to each line and has kept this consistently throughout each stanza.*

*I like the way she has maintained the comparison between love and sliced bread. It's simple and effective.*

*While the poem is not hilariously funny, it does give sound Christian advice in a light-hearted manner to a newly engaged couple.*

*Stanza 4, line 3. The beat is wrong. Maybe replace line 3 and 4 with –*

*‘To hear the truth  
That's good for you’.*

*Stanza 5: final line. No need to shorten ‘through’ to ‘thru’ as the full word has only one syllable anyway.*

*The poem ends on a strong note. Well done Judith!*

# Marriage Construction Zone: Drive Carefully

John  
Lindsay  
of Christchurch



I heard you're engaged, that's great news  
Now it's time to consider the cost  
Of planning a wedding and hearing the views  
Voiced by those who still love you the most.

You surely will quickly find out  
That your great Uncle Sydney must come.  
Of course he'll refuse on account of his gout  
But will send a grand gift for your home.

Then bridesmaids and best man to find,  
Plus the flower girls and boys with the ring.  
The best man must learn that his words should be kind  
As he praises Aunt Annie who'll sing.

Next think of the pastor who'll stand  
And pronounce when you really are wed.  
He must make it clear that this marriage so grand  
Came from God, so we do as he said.

At weddings it seems there's no end  
Of the photos, both close up and group,  
But think of the guests as they wait to attend  
Your rich banquet, beginning with soup.

The day that you're due to be matched  
Will eventually dawn and proceed.  
It may not turn out quite the way you had planned  
But enjoy and draw all by your lead.

As years pass, please live out your vows  
And grow older with love in your eyes.  
Stay close, boost your mate, make a home in your house  
Then with wrinkles and grey hairs be wise.

## Judge's Comments

*John has provided an interesting title for his poem.*

*He has maintained a consistent, though unusual, rhythmic pattern throughout all his stanzas of 8,9,11,9 beats.*

*His poem is a mixture of humour and good advice for the newly engaged couple in which he covers a wide range of topics for them to consider for their impending nuptial.*

*Some of the rhyming is a bit forced:*

*Stanza 1—'cost' and 'most'.*

*Stanza 2—'come' and 'home'.*

*Stanza 1, line 3—No need for an apostrophe in 'pla'nning'. Only use an apostrophe if you omit a syllable to keep the rhythmic pattern.*

*You've put a lot of effort into this assignment John, with a pleasing result.*

## For you both...

Pat  
Kerr  
of Roxburgh



## Third Place

Lovers!

They forget others and kiss and coo  
And plan the babies of their future  
And share the dreams of life just for two  
And whispering as their love they nurture  
They lay aside all worldly blues  
Make sweet memories and not just a few;  
Actions: laughs and secrets- all new.  
Falling fast, head over heels,  
Joyful shrieks and many squeals!  
In love; new love, soon to say: "I do!"

Others!  
Who remember their first Love?  
How special and unique is the start,  
is life together, like hand in glove.  
Begin correctly: the horse before cart.  
Planned "I'll alter him"? Eyes above!  
Aisle, altar, hymns: God's is true love!  
A bride and groom! Your own beloved!  
For a time, leave others:  
parents, sisters and brothers.  
You are a couple now: live life. LOVE!

## Judge's Comments

*Pat has chosen an unusual and complicated rhyming pattern which she has apparently based on the format of a stanza from the poem 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' by Robert Browning. While I admire her effort, I feel this pattern is rather ponderous for a light-hearted, humorous poem of this nature.*

*She has used several familiar sayings and platitudes such as 'head over heels', hand in glove', 'the horse before the cart' which have the tendency to reduce the freshness and originality of the poem.*

*While there is some good practical advice for the newly engaged couple, the poem is lacking in humour and the ideas don't always flow logically. The short phrases in the second verse tend to make the poem disjointed.*

*Punctuation throughout the poem is complicated and should be used only when necessary to ensure the meaning of the poem is maintained. Keep exclamation marks to a minimum.*

*A brave attempt Pat, and I encourage you to keep on entering the competitions as you've had good success in many of the other assignments.*

## Under 20s – No entries received

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE TO YOUNG MEMBERS**

While there will no longer be an Under 20s competition, if you are 16 years old or above, you are now eligible to enter Level One competitions.

# Competitions for February 2018

Due by January 10<sup>th</sup>

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

**Font:** Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

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

**Alignment:** Justified. **Send a photo** of yourself for publishing purposes.

**NB:** If you are not sure which level you're on, email the editor at [sddp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sddp@xtra.co.nz)

**Level One**—for members 16 years old and over

**Requirement:**

Research and write a mini biography of someone you consider to be one of New Zealand's heroes of the Christian faith. Include a bibliography listing at least two sources from which you obtained your information. The total word count for the whole article (content and bibliography) must be 500 words maximum.



*Debbie*

**Email entry to:** Debbie McDermott at: [sddp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sddp@xtra.co.nz)

**Level Two**—for members 20 years old and over

**Requirement:**

Write a book review of a self-published Christian fiction book published within the past five years. 250 words, including all details required for a review.

Refer to Jan's article on Page 8 for guidelines on writing a review.

**Email entry to:** Jan Pendergrast at: [jan@roads-end.co.nz](mailto:jan@roads-end.co.nz)



*Jan*

**Level Three**—for members 20 years old and over

**Requirement:**

Write a humorous script for a puppet show suitable for a church family service. No more than four puppets and there must be a takeaway message for the children to deduce themselves. 400 words maximum, excluding directions.



*Julia*

**Email entry to:** Julia Martin at: [pemburyestate@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:pemburyestate@slingshot.co.nz)



NZ CHRISTIAN  
**writers**



In *God Has a Plan*, **Kaylene Subritzky** recounts her personal journey to Christianity. She tells of her earliest days growing up with an alcoholic father to her marriage in 2012 to evangelist Bill Subritzky, Kaylene describes

the sometimes painful process of seeing things the way they really are, then following God's clear signposts towards the ultimate goal of being born again through the Holy Spirit.

Her story is touching, humorous, honest and sprinkled with gospel-driven insights that will help you to appreciate and understand the power of Jesus Christ and the glory of God.

Read inspiring insights that will help you improve your life. Discover Bible teachings that help you overcome problems. Gain an understanding of how to become a Christian. Have hope for a more meaningful future and see that God loves you. Realise that it is never too late to find God and His plan for your life. *God Has a Plan* is available as an e-book download from:

[www.DoveMinistries.com](http://www.DoveMinistries.com)