

Australasian Religious Press Association

CONFERENCE 2017

AUCKLAND

Connections + Community

ARPA AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE
FOR 2017

Results and judges' comments

AUGUST 25TH - 27TH 2017
RYDGES HOTEL AUCKLAND
59 FEDERAL STREET





**THE 2017
GUTENBERG AWARD**

*The Premier Annual Award of the
Australasian Religious Press Association
is made to*

The Record Magazine and The eRecord

The Citation

This is a dual publication recognition for one ARPA member: ***The Record Magazine and The eRecord***; Publications of the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth.

The Record Magazine is a high-quality print production, combining a good range of articles, excellent use of high quality photos, and accessible design, especially in the use of colour with the text, avoiding the too-often trend to use colour that can look startling or intriguing on screen, but in print is too often unreadable.

Contemporary issues are addressed through a focus on a topic through series of articles, news and interviews, along with church news, world affairs, and historical links. The magazine is also available on-line.

The eRecord provides an email based link to the church news, again combining excellent photos, and accessible and readable design. Links

to social media provide a comprehensive communication package.

I believe *The Record Magazine* illustrates that print still has a distinct place to offer in this increasingly convergent media world. There is a place for a high-quality coffee-table type digest that can be taken away and consumed at different times and in different places.

Both publications combine to provide the Archdiocese with a diverse and helpful way of communicating to members today. It is therefore my great pleasure to present the Gutenberg Award for 2017 to *The Record Magazine* and *The eRecord*.

Peter Bentley
President
27th August 2017

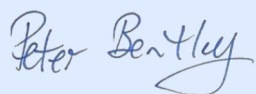
THANK YOU TO OUR JUDGES

The Executive and members of The Australasian Religious Press Association, wish to thank the judges for the care and concern with which they have made their judgements in all of the 2017 ARPA Awards.

While some of the categories attract a large number of entries and these in particular, require considerable time and effort on behalf of the judges, even those with less entries, still mean in some cases, hours of work.

Each year when invited to be a judge, every person has accepted the task willingly and without hesitation.

ARPA appreciates this willingness and thanks the judges for their involvement in the Awards which are such an important part of the work of the Association.



ARPA President, 2017-18



PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR 2017

*Annual Trophy Award of the
Australasian Religious
Press Association Is awarded to*

The Melbourne Anglican (TMA)

The Melbourne Anglican wins this award on the breadth and diversity of its content. The April 2016 edition cover story on Stan Grant, stories about the Bali 9's Andrew Chan, Rowan Callick's appointment to China, and the winner of the Templeton Prize, are all stories of current interest.

Similarly, the February 2016 edition front page reports both David Suchet's recording of the Bible, along with the Lambeth Conference, and rather than the usual official courtyard photo of the assembled dignitaries, runs with a picture of the Australian primate, who is also the Melbourne archbishop, foot-washing. Powerful stuff.

The film and book reviews give a perspective absent from the mainstream media reviews, and there is a professionalism in the writing, as evidenced by the by-lines of the writers. The balances within the paper's content, reflected in the presentation of that content in the design, demonstrate an "editorial intentionality". The publication takes the reader not only into the mind of

the archdiocese but into its heart. I would like to make two other observations about the overall quality of publications. This is the third year in which I have judged this category of the awards. In that time the standards of design across ARPA publications have improved immeasurably, particularly in those publications with an in-house design capability. I'm not sure why this is. It may be a consequence of what we call "digital democratisation": the availability of more user-friendly software, better access to visuals both professional and reader generated, or the employment of (younger?) editorial and production staff with a high level of skills in the digital space. The second observation I wish to make is that despite the relativities of scale, the New Zealand publications as a whole are as good as, if not better than, the Australian publications. In particular, *Touchstone*, *NZ Baptist*, *Tui Motu*, *War Cry* deserve to be commended, particularly for their design, but also for their content.

PUBLISHING

Category 2

Best Regional Publication

BRONZE

**The Anglican Encounter,
Anglican Diocese of Newcastle
Editor, Louise Mackay**

This publication continues to improve in its use of photography and design. Navigation of the magazine is assisted by articles being categorised into sections and accessed by an index. Greater clarity and impact could still be achieved with attention to detail in the design layout. Issues and topics that are specific to the region are dealt with in many of the articles giving a decidedly local flavour to the content. The team seems eager to improve the relevance of the production by providing a readership survey. Well done.

BRONZE

**The Gippsland Anglican
Anglican Diocese of Gippsland
Editor, Jan Down**

A strong 'newspaper' layout gives this publication a distinctive image. The local issues are cleverly combined with the broader Melbourne viewpoint by inserting 'The Melbourne Anglican' into the Gippsland content. Use of cover headlines with page numbers and an index along with the newspaper layout allows the reader to easily navigate the publication.

BRONZE

**The Presbyterian Pulse
Presbyterian Church of Australia, NSW/
ACT**

Editor Karen Forman.

This publication offers a large quantity of articles for the amount of printed pages. Included amongst the regional news stories are refreshingly thought-provoking pieces that address the issues that face our wider communities today. The cover design works extremely well when the photo chosen is a good one. Mixed designs for cover headlines and lack of attention to detail in the general design layout weaken the publication's visual impact.

Judge's comments:

The actual decisions took a lot longer than I expected. After reading the publications and studying the layouts and writing I was finding it very hard to see a clear winner. I hope my final decision to award three Bronze prizes and no Gold or Silver meets with your approval. While I am aware of the fact that these three groups made the effort to enter and will be making the long and expensive trip to attend the awards, I did not want to award the prizes to publications that fell short of the mark, and in doing so dilute the worth of the award. I hope my comments have been constructive and not damning as I know the amount of work that goes into any publication is enormous!

the article. Very clever and very effective. A deserving winner.

SILVER

**"Why 'All Of Us' will not help all of us"
By David and Roslyn Phillips, for Vox
Point**

A lengthy headline but redeemed by the astute use of the repeated phrase. It offers too, an intriguing hint of political hypocrisy. Another inducement for the reader is that everyone is included – as one or other of the 'us' – so it has a subtle attraction and interest to all!

BRONZE

**Not awarded given the paucity of
entrants and the standard of
remaining headlines).**

Judge's general comment:

While the category description was followed to a greater or lesser degree by all entrants, the missing descriptor, in my opinion, is that 'a successful headline is one that will draw the reader into the article so that the article will actually be read'. The headline is the prime and often the only motivator for the reader to read on so it is critical, if a writer's work on any article is to reach its intended audience, for the headline to be as effective as possible. In fact, from the few entries received for this category, one wonders if editors, journalists and the like, really appreciate and understand the importance of an arresting headline.

Category 23 Best Social Media Campaign

GOLD

Synod 2016 by Tim Lam, for Crosslight

Tim Lam and his Uniting Church VicTas media team developed an engaging and creative social media campaign for the 2016 Synod using Twitter and Facebook, using only organic means (not paid) which is always a challenge when trying to reach out to a broad audience. A video on creative worship achieved over 2000 reach and 201 engagements. A photo gallery from the Sunday session had 368 engagements and 1760 reach. Combined total reach hit more than 16,700, which appeared quite successful. A total of 264 tweets were sent with almost 53,000 impressions. The campaign showed use of social media can enhance the experience of a synod and increase engagement between members and with the outside world, without detracting from the event itself. (*It makes a big difference to the bad old days of trying to photocopy a bunch of photos and compile memorable quotes from synod reps to put into a paper newsletter to drop on peoples' seats each morning.*) Kudos to Tim and the crew and all the best with the next campaign.

SILVER and **BRONZE** not awarded

Category 21 Best Original Photography

GOLD

“Father and son”

By Shar Davis, for War Cry (New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga)

Father and son indicates something of the team work in bringing the Gospel to this country, as the event is commemorated in the National Maori Ministry Hui. The photographer Shar Davis has captured the feelings of determination by the father and the trust of the child, in the faces of the subjects. The composition and leading lines make this an outstanding photo for the War Cry magazine in New Zealand.

SILVER

“Australian Outback”

By Emma Collett, for bca, The Real Australian

The ruggedness of the Australian outback has been captured photographically by the photographer, Emma Collett as well as something of the youthful enthusiasm of the four children. The layout, using the banks of the river, leads the viewer into the distance and the fastness of the areas of need. The Real Australian magazine of the Bush Church Aid is to be congratulated for sharing something of their area of ministry, through such a photo.

BRONZE

“St Patrick’s Church, Church Hill, Sydney,”

By Glen McCulloch, for Marist Messenger

The scene inside St Patrick’s Church, Church Hill, Sydney, captured the sense of grandeur found in this historical church. The leading lines and placement of the point-of-interest, convey a pleasing visual impact. The photographer, Glen McCulloch is to be congratulated for this entry for the Marist Messenger.

Judge’s comments

The variety of entries indicated something of the expertise and professionalism of the photographers involved. The quality of each entry was to be commended and the subjects illustrated ranged from the very simple to the complex. The publications using the photos are also to be congratulated on the layout and composition used.

Category 22 Best Headline

GOLD

“Priests of Burden”

By Judy Adamson, for Southern Cross, Sydney Anglican Diocese.

Brief, apt for the story, a very smart but unexpected twist on a common saying (‘priests’ and ‘beasts’ – they even rhyme!) and a commonly-held belief among laypersons that the clergy are above or at least cope with any burdens ... these all add up to a headline that captivates and encourages the reader to go further into

WRITING

Category 3 Best New Writer

GOLD

“Why I Pulled My Kids from a ‘Safe School’ ,School”

By Ian Miller, for Vox Point

An interview with Cella White, a courageous mother who protested against the anti-Christian agenda being forced on many parents of public school children. This is an insightful, counter-cultural analysis of what many Christians see as a disturbing trend in secular education.

SILVER

“May Those in the Shadows be Seen by Those in the Sun”

By Monica Dutton, for Good Oil

A moving, well-crafted piece about an unlikely, thirty-second encounter between a homeless man and someone from a completely different social situation. That unexpected but positive encounter represented for the author everything that was contained in the passion, death and resurrection of Christ.

BRONZE

“Ken Ham, a Queenslander with all the answers

By Ben Rogers, Journey Qld

Ken Ham, the Queensland creationist, grabbed many headlines for the \$100 million replica of Noah’s Ark, which he built in Kentucky, USA. This is an interesting and engaging article which presents a fair and balanced picture of a

man who has caused much controversy in and beyond Christian circles.

Category 4 Best News Story

GOLD

“Hero Refugee”

By Mark Bowling, for Catholic Leader

SILVER

“Synod side-steps on marriage”

By Jan Down, for Gippsland Anglican

BRONZE

“Medicinal cannabis: new legislation a helpful step”

By Elaenor Nield , for Revive

Category 5

Best Feature, Single Author

GOLD

“Embracing Weirdness as a Disciple of the Way”

By Heather Dowling, for Revive

According to the Australian Bureau of statistics almost 50 percent of Australians have experienced a mental disorder at some point in their lives. We’ve come a long way in understanding mental illness; and active spirituality, whether attached to religion or not, is now recognized as part of positive growth in mental health. This article sheds an interesting light on an important issue.

SILVER

"Norm Hewitt's Private World"

By Ingrid Barratt for WarCry New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga

Former All Black Norm Hewitt lets us into his private world, and the moment he got on his knees in prayer for the first time. It was the beginning of a transformation from violence and alcohol to reconciliation and discovering his true, quiet greatness. An engaging story.

BRONZE

"My Brokenness is no More or Less broken Than Yours"

By Tess Holgate, for Eternity News

A frank interview with Greg Lake who discusses same-sex attraction candidly from personal experience and from a refreshingly Christian perspective.

Category 6

Best Feature, Multiple Authors

GOLD

"The Future of Faith"

By Deb Bennett, David Southwell and Nigel Tapp for Crosslight

Is the Church in the twenty first century still relevant to the faith needs of the young people of today?

This insightful article looks at this question through in-depth interviews with two women, brought up in the church who have drifted away, and three young people without a church

background who are now finding a sense of spirituality through a church youth group, but not Sunday church attendance.

These personal stories are supported by informed comment from social commentator Hugh Mackay, who looked closely at the issue when researching his book *"Beyond Belief"*. The feature is well researched, well-crafted and presented in an easily readable style.

SILVER

"Prison Break "

By Dianne Jensen and Ben Rogers for Journey

Aborigines only make up 3% of the Australian population but 27% of the national prison population according to 2015 Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

These alarming figures are not new and form the basis of this article by Dianne Jensen and Ben Rogers.

The item looks at the breadth and complexity of the problem and the glimmer of hope provided to some inmates by First Peoples Chaplains as they provide important ministry in very challenging circumstances.

With solid background and comments from 7 indigenous prison chaplains the feature has authority and the human interest aspect of first-hand experience.

BRONZE

"Reaching Tourists with the Gospel"

By Val Ishri and Janine van den Tillaart for bca, The Real Australian

There are many ways to provide a Christian Outreach and not all of them

SILVER

WelCom (8/10)

Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington

Excellent, clean design. Ads are placed in lower half and don't impede flow or scanning. Front page dynamic, strong masthead.

BRONZE

North Coast Anglican (7/10)

Anglican Diocese of Grafton

Clean design. Masthead dated and a bit weak. Careful use of colour - page not flooded with ink. Consistent typography.

Category 20 Best Design Website

GOLD

Adventist Record

Adventist Media Network

The trend in news websites is to have a 'clean' look with plenty of white space to rest the reader's eye and traditional headline/story combinations.

The Adventist Record achieves this clean look while ensuring there is enough content on the home page to engage the reader.

The site also makes good use of the **issuu** digital publishing platform so readers can access the entire Record online in its "print" format. It has links to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube platforms which are directly relevant to the Record's content.

The use of a short news video segment highlighting main stories shows innovation.

The judge recommends the use of

higher-resolution and sharper focus to engage readers better, and in a slightly larger format.

The text font (I think it is 'open sans', but could be mistaken) should also be adjusted for greater clarity, as it can appear a little washed out. Otherwise, the site is a solid effort, making the most of modern web applications, highlighting the strongest stories in the Record in a clear, concise and navigable way.

SILVER

Eureka Street

Jesuit Publications

Eureka Street is well-known for its outstanding content, especially commentary, and this is highlighted on its website.

Navigation between content topics is simple through a header bar.

The site makes full use of social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and itunes for podcasts.

The layout is simple and the text font is very readable.

One flaw however is it suffers a bit from 'sameness' - as you scroll down the page the headline/story format gets a bit tedious and should be broken up with a bit of variety.

Well done to the Eureka Street team.

BRONZE

Not Awarded

Highly commended

The Melbourne Anglican.

A very interesting image, with good use of colour and dimensions, for a very traditional interpretation of Christmas.

Category 18 Best Design Magazine

GOLD

NZ Baptist—(10/10)

Baptist Churches of NZ

Outstanding, consistent, clean, bold, professionally designed. an excellent understanding of typo

SILVER

Guardian, Adelaide Anglicans (8-9/10)

SILVER

Insights (8/10)

Uniting Church of Australia, NSW/ACT

BRONZE

War Cry, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga (7/10)

Judge's comments

Magazines had a range of mediocre entries, but also several at the top level, making the final decision hard.

Generally, some that may have had higher scores if their designers had a better understanding of typography consistency. Some were too heavy-handed, others used too many display fonts in their headlines.

Others had fabulous cover designs and mastheads, but everything went downhill on the inside, with over-stuffed pages, inconsistent typographic or old fashioned treatments or bad allocation of advertising

Those that were successful in being awarded my top points were those who designed their pages using a consistent column grid throughout (not mixtures of 2/3/4 columns), used images boldly, created white space effectively in layouts, and allowed the eye to rest or focus on the most important elements on a page. Their covers were bold, contemporary and topical, and reflected the style inside.

Category 19 Best Design Newspaper

GOLD

The Advocate, Baptist Churches of Western Australia (9/10)

Excellent, great design. Designer/typesetter has 'graphy' elements. Ample leading (line spacing) allowing ease of reading and less 'ink' on the paper. Easily navigated. Judicious use of white space, lead quotes, strong captions (people sometimes only read pic captions) Good balance of story sizes - large, small, snippets. Even Feature issue on mental health, while obviously a special edition, maintains the established style and formats that make this design so workable, repeatable and legible. Newspapers are not as popular with people under 50 these days, however this fresh design might still attract a few of those in the 35-50 age group, as well as traditional newspaper readers.

involve encouraging people to attend church services. This simple story of one woman's efforts to spread a little light among the tourist population of Coober Pedy, is a clear demonstration of thinking outside the box and using what God given gifts we have to engage in a active discipleship.

Val Ishri is the tour guide at the underground Catacomb Church at Coober Pedy and is in daily contact with a steady stream of tourists. She uses the opportunities which sometimes present themselves to tell her visitors about her Christian faith.

Judge's comments

Once again more than half the articles presented for judging as 'Best Feature, Multiple Authors' did not meet the criteria and so were not considered for an award. They were either written by one person or were a collection of separate articles around a common theme, sometimes with no attempt to draw them together as a single feature. These often lacked the required '*strong personal interest, depth and colour*' and could not be considered a '*feature*' in the true journalistic sense.

Category 7 Best Profile story

GOLD

"Ode to Joy"

By Ingrid Barratt for War Cry, New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga

This profile, by quite a margin, is the stand-out winner.

It portrays the subject in a captivating manner that makes the reader feel they personally know her. She reveals her

faith, knowledge, talents and compassion with a simplicity, lightness, humour and grace and these qualities are superbly mirrored in the writing style itself.

As a profile story, this is the complete package. Thank you for the privilege of reading it.

SILVER

"The Godfather"

By Tick Zweck for The Lutheran

A moving and always engrossing profile of a Lutheran pastor's 50 years ministry in Port Pirie. His big personality and depth of faith shine through. He made his mark far beyond his own congregation having had significant influence and ministry among the wider community. This carefully-crafted piece, well-illustrated, does credit to the man and his life-long mission.

BRONZE

"Chaplaincy is a Privilege"

By Michael Fitzsimmons for Tui Motu InterIslands

Maintaining interest and focus throughout, this piece very effectively profiles a hospital chaplain, clearly explaining why she does what she does, and for whom. It not only explains her task as a chaplain but also offers insights into health and sickness that she has learned from her work. This adds another dimension to an already fascinating profile with writing that impresses for its simplicity and clarity.

Judge's comments:

The thirty entries in this category offered diversity both in subject and writing style. However a lack of attention to the description of requirements for this category as outlined in the entry form effectively eliminated a few entries as they did not comply with those requirements. Further, five of the entries used a simple Question and Answer (Q&A) format. Assuming the 'answers' are verbatim (perhaps with some editing), then it leaves little on which to judge the entrant's writing skills. The narrative style is definitely preferable for this category.

Category 8 Best Editorial or Opinion piece

GOLD

"Why Pākehā need to know who they are: Belonging in Aotearoa "
By Alistair Reese, for NZ Baptist, February–March 2016

Alistair Reese charts a course towards reconciliation between first peoples and colonisers. Rather than a concession to a vulnerable native minority, Reese demonstrates that a treaty is a gift to settlers in need of identity and a place of belonging. Generosity and respect—not rights—are the heart of a covenant relationship. This is counter-intuitive, counter-cultural and profoundly Christian. A big idea is navigated with gentle and simple words. This is bold, powerful and timely writing for readers in both Australia and New Zealand.

SILVER

"I Believe in the Church: Joining in with the Life of the Trinity "

By Greg Liston, for NZ Baptist, October–November 2016,

A kind and timely reminder that the significance of the church comes not from our influence and position in society but rather our humble participation in the eternal, loving community of the Trinity. Again, a big idea is developed with simplicity, warmth and hope.

BRONZE

"Battlers 'sick of being ignored' turn to Trump"

By Bradley Billings, for The Melbourne Anglican December 2016

The election of President Trump inspired a number of commentaries. Some were smug and dismissive. Others were contrite and reflective. Bradley Billings endeavours to understand the people who voted for Donald Trump and why the media, pollsters, experts and celebrities got it wrong.

Judge's Comments

2016 was a sobering year. Not least for the media which failed to anticipate the results of elections that yielded Brexit and President Donald Trump. Our surprise and disappointment are the measure of our ignorance. As journalists and commentators, this is cause for reflection. How can we be so

smile to the reader while offering insight into an aspect of our faith and its practices'. I know that humour is somewhat subjective, but one entry seemed to lack any! In judging this category over several years, it has struck me that sometimes the humour may be only, or particularly, apparent to the publication's discrete readership.

Category 16 Best Cover Magazine

GOLD

bca, Real Australian, (2) Spring 2016

A very well balanced cover, very good use of colour. Visual interpretation of distance in word and imagery. Image is relevant to header and the 3 sub-headers. Well done.

SILVER

Presbyterian Pulse September 2016

Overall, this cover brings a very human element to institutional care meeting children's special needs. There is a nice wash colour in the background of the cover. The headers down the left of the cover should have been a little further left for balance.

BRONZE

Insights, April May 2016

Well balanced image, taken with an eye to using the vertical lines to extend the reader's eye and the focus on the woman. Good image to illustrate the header. But the header and sub headers are lost - rethink colour and size and type of font.

Highly commended

Majellan

Beautiful use of colour, good complement and contrast between the 2 faces and the direction they are each facing. Good choice of posed photo. Very relevant photo for the header.

Judge's comments

Many editors and/or designers had good idea but need to think about balance on the page. Some covers just need a little tweaking.

Category 17 Best cover newspaper

GOLD

The Advocate, October 2016
Baptist Churches of Western Australia

A monochromatic colour scheme that works because of the imagery that is used - the head profile made in barbed wire - which illustrates well what the main story is about. The picture speaks 1000 words in this instance. Everything is well balanced on the page.

SILVER

New Zealand Catholic, Oct 2-15 2016

A well balanced page, with main image well posed and a good choice. Good use of colour across the entire page. And good use of font style and size.

BRONZE

North Coast Anglican, May 2016, Anglican Diocese of Grafton

A well balanced page, with good use of colour. The choice of main photo is interesting because the image draws the eye in to the page.

deep, grappling, thorough, logical, inspiring and hopeful as it seeks to lead its readers into authentic and inspired relationships with people near and far who come into their lives as 'neighbours'.

BRONZE

"Young Presbyterians advocating for our earth"

Angela Singer, for Spanz, Magazine, Autumn 2016

The bronze medal winner "*Young Presbyterians advocating for our earth*" brings an encouragingly fresh and hopeful perspective as it inspires its readers to think about the intrinsic connection between faith and ecology. The article is simple but deep, honest but positive, and gentle but proactive.

Category 14 Best Review

GOLD

"'Playing God' (Video Game. Dragon Age: Inquisition) "

By Emmet O'Cuana, for Crosslight

It's not often you see a video game being reviewed in a church magazine, so it was somewhat surprising to see this entry by Emmet O'Cuana. Emmet summarises the game Dragon Age in an articulate and readable manner. The review also explores some of the similarities between religion and games, which was most interesting and could be the theme of a longer piece at some stage. A highly original piece of work. Let's see more of it!

SILVER

"Gold Coast"

By Darren Mitchell, for Zadok Perspectives

This movie review by Darren Mitchell is an engaging and thought-provoking perspective on a relatively unknown Danish movie, which on the face of it deserves a wider viewing. Mitchell's piece deals well with the movie's themes, acting, music and historical background and places it in the context of a new crop of Danish drama which is capturing global attention.

BRONZE

Not awarded

DESIGN AND CREATIVITY

Category 15 Best Humorous Item

GOLD not awarded

SILVER

"The Habit"

By Steve Monson, for NZ Catholic

It appears that this cartoon is one of a series that regularly appears under the title, *THE HABIT*, and I commend the paper's editor for maintaining this regular feature

BRONZE not awarded

Judge's comments

This is a wide-ranging category that encompasses cartoons, articles, quotes, photographs, headlines, etc. This year there was only a small number of entries in this category. One seemed incomplete, and not all really met the criteria, to 'show the lighter side of the faith journey in a manner that will bring a

connected yet so out of touch? Preaching to the converted is hazardous; more so when we are confined to an office and customized news feed. The successful pieces in this category married confidence with humility. The best writing was disciplined, logical and winsome. More importantly their authors are listening.

Category 9 Best Column

GOLD

"The Bentley Report"

By Peter Bentley, for ACCatalyst

Good clear writing, well-crafted arguments, interesting topics relevant to the readership

SILVER

"Moderator's Musings"

By Andrew Norton, for SPANZ

Far from predictable church leader exhortations – thoughtful and thought-provoking, sometimes challenging, even lyrical.

SILVER

"Everyday Spirituality,"

By Alison Sampson, for Zadok Perspectives

These columns stood out because they integrated the faith element into well-written accounts of ordinary situations rather than tagging it on at the end.

Judge's comments

The requirement to produce four consecutive examples of a regular column is a real test of consistency plus creativity. It was also disregarded by a

number of entrants sending promising material, who lost points for not adhering to the award conditions. The variety of entries is extraordinary and encouraging. Some bravely reach out to difficult audiences – young people, children. Others read like homilies, and could well fill the 'sermon' slot in a service. Topics range from the cosmic to the domestic – rather too many slices-of-life with a moral or text at the end – and the style ranges from tightly written to rambling. Important questions are: Is it well-written and well-constructed? Does it make me think? Would I follow this columnist issue by issue?

Category 10 Best Blog

No Awards

Category 11 Best Faith Reflection

GOLD

"God Knows Our Beginning and End when we Don't Know"

By Gordon Preece, for Zadok Perspectives

Gordon Preece's article is not a quick read. Again and again I found myself going back over a paragraph or two as I studied it. Preece explores a scenario that is increasingly emerging in our society. It warns against defining people by their defects. Among the many 'gems' in this article, Preece states: '*The shaping of people's identity or sense of self comes ultimately from being known by God, even in the womb ...*'

GOLD

“Pain that won’t go away”

By Stephen Abraham, for The Lutheran

Stephen Abraham describes his life journey following an accident that left him with chronic back pain. He describes the struggles and emotions he and those close to him went through, and explains how reading the book of Job helped him come to terms with his situation, even though he still doesn’t have answers to all his ‘Whys?’.

BRONZE

“Living with Hostility”

By Paul Harris, for The Presbyterian Pulse

‘Living with Hostility’ is a succinct analysis and commentary on the socio-political context that western churches are increasingly finding themselves in. Harris maintains: ‘We shouldn’t withdraw. Instead, we should bless. But we also shouldn’t just blend in.’

BRONZE

“Building to Plan”

By Robin Drake, for Canvas Magazine

‘Building to plan’ challenges readers to think through their attitude to a church that is less than perfect, but is ‘still God’s way of gathering his people together on earth’.

Judge’s comments

This category attracted a large number of entries – not surprising for what is a

Christian organisation. The entries covered a wide range of topics; many were personal stories of how faith helped the writer address and come to terms with challenges to their faith and health. Topics addressed included stress, worry, depression, looming death, Alzheimer’s disease, the nature of the church, aspects of worship, marriage, identity, church finance ... to name just some.

In assessing entries in a category such as this it is important to be aware of the theological perspective from which the article is written. This was particularly important in several articles that were quite discrete to a particular denomination.

I found it particularly challenging this year to decide the Awards. I found most of the articles really stimulating and thought provoking. Several had particular ‘add-on’ features. One had a few questions for reflection, and another a series of reflection points that individual readers may have found helpful, but which could also be used as a basis for group discussion. I was surprised to note that some entry forms were inaccurately filled out. I noted one or two lapses in proof reading. In one article I found the ampersand (&) in the text where it shouldn’t have been (!).

I also found it a challenge to read some of the articles that were electronically submitted in A4 format that reduced the type size to 8pt or less!

Category 12 Best Theological Article

GOLD

“Pope’s Star Man on Jesus, aliens, faith”

By Rowena Orejana, for NZ Catholic

SILVER

“Beyond the immanent frame: Re-visioning the good life after neoliberalism”

By Ian Barns, for Zadok Perspectives

BRONZE

“Seven things I wish Christians knew about the Bible”

By Michael Bird, for Eternity News

Judge’s comments

Theology is a word that can be interpreted very widely as it means, according to the Oxford dictionary, “the science of God.”

I am conscious that for our purposes there are a number of other categories in the awards that further refine things that relate to God. If articles are more about the other categories then I do not consider them for this award. I would suggest that when articles are considered for submission that those submitting them carefully choose the most suitable particular category that is available.

In looking through the articles I receive I identify them for the “Best Theological Article” category to articles that mainly concentrate on the person and meaning of God rather than the things that people do to gain access to God or articles on denominational praxis or biblical interpretation and so on. However in some submissions articles are so well written and are worth notice that for them I apply my rule less strictly.

Category 13 Best Social Justice Article

GOLD

“Mum, Dad, I’m gay”

The Lutheran Magazine, writer’s name withheld. November 2016

Incredibly and deeply moving and memorable, the gold medal winning article “Mum, Dad, I’m gay” convincingly argues that God’s love and compassion are vastly more important than theological formulae and black-and-white man-made constructs. The article is open, honest, authentic, and willing to embrace the way that God-given experience can inform faith.

SILVER

“‘Neighbouring’ must include listening”

By Dr Lynne Baab, for Refresh Journal

This brings an honest and fresh understanding to a well-known theme in the Christian story. The article is