

OCT 21 - JAN 22

# YOUNG

## CHRISTIAN WRITER

Look INSIDE For:

*The Truth About Tramping*  
Article by Peter van Dorp

*The Nudge*  
Short Story by  
Anais Haythornthwaite

*The Voice of Truth*  
Article by Angela Robb  
Poetry and more!

A magazine of NZ Christian Writers



**Mission:** *Connecting Christian writers in New Zealand.*

**Vision:** *To cultivate, encourage and inspire a vibrant community of Christian writers throughout New Zealand.*

**Values:** *Christian faith, God's Word, professionalism, quality and social outreach.*

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**Editor and Membership Secretary:** Kathryn Paul: [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)  
For magazine contributions, address changes, membership queries.

**Treasurer:** For subscriptions, donations: [treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:treasurer@nzchristianwriters.org)

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286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496 or email: [reviews@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:reviews@nzchristianwriters.org)

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

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Contact David at  
[hello@bookprint.co.nz](mailto:hello@bookprint.co.nz)  
09 443 1775  
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### Website:

Check out our website for how to join us and to view copies of past magazines. Members with published items have a free profile page on our site to promote their work. Please encourage other young Christian writers you know to join us via our website:

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

# President's Note

Welcome to our latest edition of *Young Christian Writer* where you will find inspirational articles, fun stories, insightful interviews and ideas to help equip and support you in your writing.

Writing can often seem like a solitary activity that we do on our own. I remember writing stories when I was much younger. I looked forward to time alone where I could craft a story, create characters and enjoy the process of shaping a narrative that would take readers on a journey. Several of my friends at the time also enjoyed writing, so we would share with one another the latest adventure we were creating. Connecting with others provided me with a brilliant source of inspiration.

If you are new to writing, may I encourage you to connect with others who can encourage, up skill, and support you in your writing. One great place to go is our growing community on Facebook. There you will find people that are happy to share their writing experience and journey with you. Feel free to join our Facebook Group here: [www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/newzealandchristianwriters/)

We trust you enjoy reading *Young Christian Writer*.

Justin St. Vincent, President, NZ Christian Writers



## “Hi!” From the Editor

You're a champion! Yep – right now. You've already made it. God designed you and says in His Word you are fearfully and wonderfully made. He doesn't make mistakes. You are meant to be here on this planet and you're not alone. He loves you so much right now and He wants you to connect with Him through His love and connect with others through His love.

You don't have to do anything to earn His love. It already belongs to you. You can't do anything to lose His love. He's a good father who never gives up on His children no matter what they do. He does give His children a choice though. He allows them the freedom to reject Him. His children can choose to walk away and refuse to be in relationship with Him. When this happens it hurts His heart more than we can ever imagine. He can't force them to come to Him because it's their choice.

When His children choose to seek out a relationship with Him it makes Him so happy He spins with joy! Now they are allowing Him to help them with their lives. He knows He can help them to be so much happier than they would be if they were without a relationship with Him. He's relieved they are safer and not lost from Him.

He wants to help you with every area of your life. You can ask Him to show you how much He loves you. You can ask Him to shine His love through you and your writing to love and build up others. All it takes is prayer, which is talking to God about anything you want to. Sometimes He answers straight away, sometimes it takes a while. But He will answer you personally in some way. He loves you and is always listening.

With love in Jesus Christ, from Kathryn

# Writing Mentor's Corner

Janice Gillgren didn't start writing till some years after she left school but has been making up for the late start. She likes writing articles for blogs and magazines best and will give most forms of writing a try. She led one of NZ's Christian writing groups for a long time and is a writing competition judge for *The Christian Writer* magazine. Janice really likes helping people who want to learn the craft of writing and has been a mentor to many new writers.



**Editor:** Hi Janice, what are three principles of writing that beginner writers need to know?

**Janice:** Three principles to help the beginner writer:

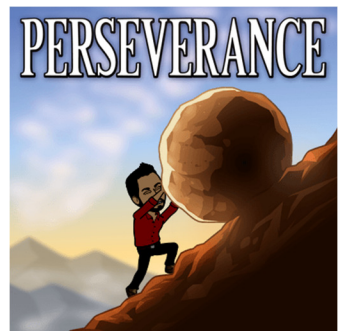
Writing is a journey of many discoveries.

Language is an amazing creative gift of God, but the gift doesn't come fully developed. You have to learn how to use it.

In starting your writing journey, remember these three words: '**Attitude Before Aptitude.**' Attitude means a settled way of thinking or feeling about something. Aptitude means a natural ability to do something.

Here are three **attitudes** that will help you on your way to gaining **aptitude**:

1. **Purpose:** Be willing to let God's purpose develop in you. God gives us creative skills for many reasons, and His purposes become apparent over time. You might only sense a vague calling at first, but as time goes on, this will become clearer.
2. **Patience:** 'Rome wasn't built in a day' and neither will your writing skill develop overnight. Don't be lured by the dream of instant success.
3. **Pursuit:** Develop good writing habits. Think of yourself as an apprentice and pursue success by learning from those who are skilled.



Send in your writing to be published in *Young Christian Writer* magazine! We accept poems, articles, short stories, and photos with captions! We will publish as many as space allows. Email your writing to Kathryn at [editor@nzchristianwriters.org](mailto:editor@nzchristianwriters.org)





## Article: The Truth about Tramping

By Peter van Dorp

*Photography by Peter's family including professional photographer, Chloe van Dorp*

Imagine you're walking through lush, green forest. Birds are singing lazily in the trees and a small creak is gurgling nearby. If this sounds nice then try adding a fifteen kg pack, sore back, shoulders, and feet, pouring rain, mud, and ferocious sand-flies. If this still sounds nice then there's something wrong with you.

My family and I have gone on a dozen or so tramps together. In all of them, I've found that it gets less and less enjoyable the more weight you are expected to carry. For example, the first tramp I went on, my pack weighed approximately 5 kilograms and the entirety of the tramp was spent walking across sunny paddocks, along riverbanks, and through tunnels of trees. To get to the hut it took us two and a half hours. Despite this, the first thing I did when I got back to the car park was kiss the ground. From there our tramps have only gotten tougher. One of the more recent tramps I did was spent fighting our way through bush without paths and wading up rivers for eight and a half hours.

This is only one of the gruelling aspects of tramping. To make trampers' packs as light as possible, somebody thought of the brilliant idea of designing meat that comes in dehydrated cubes. It looks quite a lot like the stuff that you mash up to give to your dog, except the stuff you buy for tramping isn't sold in the pets' section and usually has some sort of phrase like "deluxe, outdoor cuisine" in big lettering on the front of the packet.



After downing your freeze-dried packet of cubed lamb, you may need to use the bathroom. In posher tramping huts, this may require you to hike several hundred metres to a small hole in the ground with some boards stuck up around it. As you perch on the edge of the cold wooden seat and fumble for the community roll of toilet paper sitting by your feet, you use your other hand to swat off squads of incoming flies and other unidentified insects.

Back in the hut, you try desperately to catch a wink of sleep. The loud snoring, buzzing sand-flies and the person crunching on the choice apple in the corner do nothing to aid your attempts to rest.







“Why do people do this?” You may ask. “Why do they throw themselves at 80 kilometre per hour winds and stumble along mountain ledges?” I don’t have the answer to that question. All I know is that there are far less hazardous ways to enjoy God’s creation.

You would think that it would get easier as the tramp progresses because your pack would get lighter as the food was eaten. However, by the start of the second day, you pull on your pack and immediately feel a flash of pain dance through your shoulders and down your back into your lower calf muscles. Thanks to sore muscles, your pack seems to remain the same weight for the entirety of your hike.

By the end of the tramp, you’ll be glad to get out of the bush, hop into your vehicle and drive back to civilization, good food and a warm bed. You’ll promise yourself that you will never go on another tramp in your life. But before long, your yearning for adventure will call you and you’ll find yourself booking another five day walk into the middle of nowhere.





# Short Story: The Nudge

By Anais Haythornthwaite (age 13)

The fire red dirt bike sat there in the shiny shop window, practically begging Alfie to take it home with him. The only thing about it he didn't like was the price tag. With a sigh Alfie hitched his backpack higher up on his shoulder, kicked up his rusty bike stand and rattled down the hill. When he finally arrived home and hopped off his bike, he swung open the front door and dumped his backpack in the hall. He sat down on the couch and thought about how he had felt at school that day. All his friends had shiny new Mark4 bicycles and had been BMXing in the field at lunch. Alfie had no Mark4, so he had sat on the side waiting for a friend to offer him a ride.

Alfie sat there wondering what to do when he thought about his friend Joshua. Josh worked as a window washer. Alfie thought that if he went and asked him for a job he would be sure to earn enough money. He hopped up off the couch and hurriedly wrote a note to his Mum, saying he would be out for a while. Then he clambered onto his bike and pedaled off in the direction of Josh's house.

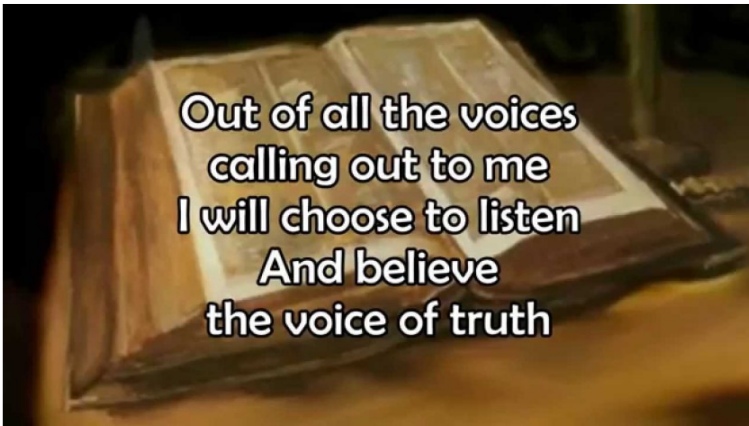
Two months and several sweaty afternoons later Alfie sat down to lunch on the steps of the library. He was soaked from hoisting cold buckets of water up to his partner on the ladder, and his arms were tired from lifting sponges up to the windows. But Alfie was glad. His last day as a window washer had gone well. He opened his wallet and counted his money, \$55. Only ten dollars short of the amount needed to get that bike. Alfie felt totally deflated, he had asked for the longest term of work that was on offer and now he didn't know what to do. He considered asking one of his mates to loan him some money. No, he owed them too much money already. That night as Alfie was washing the dishes, elbows deep in foam, the doorbell rang. He turned to rinse off the suds and answered the door. There was Josh leaning on his red Mark4. "Hey Josh. What are you doing here?" asked Alfie.

Josh seemed a little awkward. "Well," he said, "I kinda got a nudge to give my bike to you. I know it sounds strange but I want to do it. Here." he said, leaning the bike into Alfie's arms. "Keep it. I've got my old bike." Then he turned, saluted Alfie and walked down the hill.

(Josh later told me how he wrestled with that prompting feeling and how it was hard to give his bike away. He too had worked hard for the money to buy his bike. But somehow he couldn't shake the nagging feeling that this was what he needed to do. A few days later Josh met me at the park on his classic bicycle and together we sat and enjoyed an ice cream.)



*Photo from GT Bikes*



*Picture from Brucesebiblepage*

## **Article: The Voice of Truth**

by Angela Robb

Jesus answered, "...For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." John 18:37

"But God, I don't *want* too!" Why did He always have to ask me to do such hard things, like speaking for a few minutes to our New Zealand friends about life in China? Yet my parents were asking me to do that very thing and I was resisting, convincing myself that I was terrified. I was listening to my feelings... and they were lying.

Have you ever taken time to realise how feelings-focused we are? Almost every decision we make is based on the question "How do I feel about this?" We let our feelings tell us what's true, instead of letting the truth transform our feelings. Of course if our feelings are always reliable, then there's no problem with relying on them. If our feelings are always trustworthy, then trusting them is not an issue. But we know that feelings are fickle and constantly influenced by our circumstances. Everything from spilled cereal, bad weather, flattering words or cancelled classes affects our emotions, either positively or negatively.

Yet in our pride, we invest our feelings (or lack of them) with final authority rather than recognising that they are so often full of lies – lies that feel like the truth. Dr. Lloyd Jones writes, "Have you ever realised that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?" From the moment we wake, we have a choice to listen to lies or to talk truth to our self.

When I chose to listen to my feelings (the ones that were lying to me) the day before I was to share about China, I only upset myself further. I let my emotions affect me more than the truth – the truth that God had called me to obey my parents, and when He calls, He equips. Once I reminded myself that God is sovereign, and good, I was able to calm down. I still felt anxious, but I convinced myself that my Creator was more powerful than my nervousness.

The next morning I listened to a Casting Crowns song that spoke straight to my circumstance. After discussing fear and lies, they come to this conclusion...

*But the voice of truth tells me a different story*

*the voice of truth says 'do not be afraid!'*

*and the voice of truth says 'this is for my glory'*

*Out of all the voices calling out to me*

*I will choose to listen and believe the voice of truth*

Of course, I realised again, *this is a choice*. We have to choose to listen and to believe the voice of truth that speaks in scripture. Choosing to wholeheartedly believe the truth of God's word will always bring us in time, to trustworthy feelings that are anchored in truth.

The time came for me to talk about my involvements in Beijing. By that time my emotions had relaxed enough to allow me to say what I needed to and it really wasn't that terrifying. As a result, I learned the power of talking truth to myself. I began realise how much I could accomplish if I didn't allow my fickle feelings to always dictate my actions. I needed to talk to myself.

I am not saying that our feelings are useless and that we should totally ignore them. We *should* consider how we feel – but we must begin with truth. The starting place is choosing to believe the truth regardless of how we feel, and then let our feelings come out of that faith. As Lloyd Jones states, "What we have in the Bible is Truth; it is not an emotional stimulus... and it is as we apprehend and submit ourselves to the truth that the feelings follow... I must never ask myself in the first instance: What do I feel about this? The first question is, Do I believe it?" And, I would add, are we willing to act upon our belief – to choose truth over feelings.

*Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. (1972). Spiritual Depression: It's Causes and It's Cures. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.*





# Just Share the Gospel

by Kathryn Paul



Don't get distracted  
By fear or dismay  
Just share the Gospel  
and God's power display.

Don't lose the focus  
Of what we're here for  
Just share about Jesus  
His love at the core.

Don't slip into arguments,  
Matters that waste time  
Just reach out to others  
Pull them from slime.

Don't hide yourself away  
Too scared to try  
Just step out in God's wind  
He'll help you fly.

Don't miss the train  
Due to pick people up  
Just hop on board  
Find those who say, "Yup."

# Social Distancing Trees are Deepening Their Roots

by Kathryn Paul

During level four lockdown I was walking my dog out the back of the farm where pine trees have been planted by the thousands. I stood staring at these pine trees. They appeared to be social distancing at roughly two metres apart.

None of them could reach out their branches and touch the trees nearest to them. In my isolation I felt like one of those trees and I felt sad for the trees. But then the thought came that each tree was having to deepen their roots down into the ground. This is what was



happening to me in a way, I was having to dig deeper down, planting myself further into my relationship with the Lord, finding company and comfort from Him.

Suddenly I could see there's a positive side to isolation. If we bear up through this difficult season, we will come out stronger in our character and closer in our relationship to God. When we are finally mature enough to touch those around us, our roots will be firmly established in His love.

A few days later a wild, windy storm came and I was looking from a high point at some very tall, mature pine trees. Instead of isolation I would say these trees were living in a 'bubble' together. My line of sight was level with the tops of these great trees. In the wind the tops of the huge trees were swaying back and forth, hitting one another, looking crazy. They bumped and scraped but they all remained strong. It reminded me that if we are living or working in close quarters with other people, our roots need to stay deep in God. So when we bump each other through stormy times such as conflict or testing, we will come through together okay. I encourage you to keep digging deeper into your relationship with the Lord.

# The Life of the Party



## Are we celebrating life and enjoying the time God has gifted to us?

*We all like to be invited to a party or a celebration. It is a time to put aside our cares to honour someone or something special in our lives. Whether it is a birthday, a wedding, an anniversary or simply a get-together, we plan to have a good time. In our quest to make merry, we avoid rude and depressing people and seek the 'life of the party' where people are joyful and carefree. Naturally, we want to celebrate with those who are celebrating.*

God is hosting an event called, 'Time'. He has called us to be the 'life of the party' and rejoice in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. He has arranged the catering, brought the gifts and paid the costs. All we need do is choose to attend.

Even in our darkest hours we should turn on the lights (remember God's grace and provision) and celebrate. God understands that every party has broken glasses (tragedies), but He has said He will pick up the pieces and clean up the mess (if we let Him). God has taken away all our excuses for being miserable. He commanded us to cast our cares and worries on Him and celebrate as if every day is Christmas (because it is).

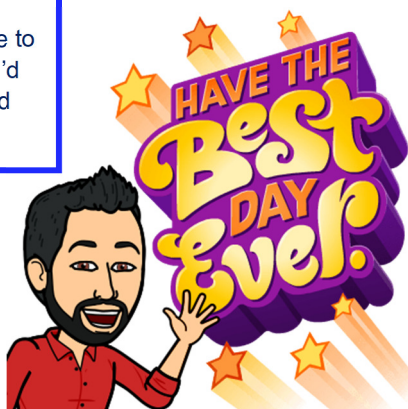
God has asked just one thing. When people pass by and see us celebrating, we should invite them in saying, 'The Host welcomes all guests – there's no charge, the bill has been paid – walk through the "Door of Christ" and give your cares and worries to the Host.' (Psalms 13:5-6) *Courtesy of [freechristianillustrations.com](http://freechristianillustrations.com)*





Regarding the Jun-Sep 2021 Letter writing competition: Unfortunately, no entries were received for this competition, so we were unable to award the prize. Feel free to let us know if you'd like us to offer another writing competition and what you'd like it to be.

Many thanks to our contributors and readers!  
We trust you've enjoyed this issue of  
*Young Christian Writer* magazine!





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

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