THE GOSPEL COALITION AUSTRALIA

Writing for TGC Australia: A Guide for Contributors

Thank you for your interest in writing for TGC Australia. Our hope is that it will help give you a clearer picture of the process and criteria we use to assess the contributions that we receive, and thus help you to know whether and how to go about making a submission, and what to expect from that point.

1. What to Expect

TGC Australia is an organisation built around strong convictions and a very small staff team. The first means that if you want to write for us, we will want to know what sort of person you are and what you believe. The second means that our response times vary anywhere from a few days to a few months.

Expect us to edit your writing—sometimes quite a lot. We want your post to be as readable, persuasive and as accurate as it can be. We also want it to conform to the style and format of our website. We will send you the edited file with tracked changes so that you can interact with our proposed edits.

2. Basic Submission Requirements

1. **Residence:** We primarily accept submissions from citizens and residents of Australia and New Zealand.

2. **Confessional Agreement:** With few exceptions, we require our writers to agree with our [Foundational Documents](#).

3. **Referees:** We require contact details (email and phone) for two referees who can testify that you are a person of good character and sound doctrine. Apart from exceptional circumstances, one of these should be an elder/minister of the church you currently attend.

4. **Bio and Photo:** a short bio (under 300 words) in separate file and a good-quality headshot.

5. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest:** if you are reviewing a book or event, or writing about an organisation or circumstance with which you have some direct personal, organisational or professional connection.

6. **(Optional):** We welcome suggested cover image and in-text images for your piece, provided you can give evidence of their copyright status.

7. **Formatting requirements:**

   a. Word .docx format.

   b. 12 point, Times New Roman, 1.5 spaces.

   c. Document title: 'Article <Article Title> <Author Name> <YYYYMMDD>.docx' (for eg Article Why Biblical Theology Matters Mikey Lynch 20230327.docx).

   d. 1000 words maximum.

   e. Break article up into sections of 300 words or less, with sub-headings.

   f. Conform to style rules listed below.

3. What We Accept

1. We will consider both pitches and full articles.

2. We very rarely republish material that people have already posted or published elsewhere, including personal blogs.

We're looking for posts that:

- stimulate thought and encourage joyful, persevering obedience in the various different spheres of life and ministry.

- Are charitable and persuasive.

- Are theologically, intellectually and ethically serious.

- Are engaging and accessible to a broad range of adult Christian readers (not just those with a formal theological education).

- We also are looking for posts specifically written for an adult non-Christian audience.

What we don't want:

- posts that present a view that is at odds with TGCA's objects or Foundation Documents. TGCA does not always insist that guest writers must be in agreement with every principle, but we won't publish contributions that challenge or undermine them. Nor are we likely to publish posts from people who are known to be campaigners against our foundational beliefs.

- Posts that don't engage with Scripture or offer a distinctly Christian insight.

- Posts that we consider across as uncharitable or reactive or harshly polemical.

- Posts that we consider overly-concessive. While we seek to frankly recognise human sin, failure and limitation, we tend not to publish pieces which do not seem to us to have theological and ethical clarity and confidence.

- Politically partisan posts.

- News pieces. While we are open to articles which reflect on current events, we are not primarily focused on published news and opinion pieces.

4. Notes on Style and Structure

This is a bit of a grab-bag section, but we will appreciate it if we can see that you have paid attention to it.

Aim for readability

Remember, as you write for TGCA, that our site is an online publication. This is significant because readers approach screens with less patience than they do printed material. They feel no obligation to continue reading, and you have to convince them to keep going. Here are some ways to make it easier for them:

a. Write for individual people. Think of a few people you know for whom this article would be especially relevant. Write to them, rather than in the general and abstract.

b. Use sub-headings to break up your text. Ideally, the reader should be able to track your argument or the basic content of your article simply by reading the subheadings).

c. Keep your paragraphs short. Keep to one idea per paragraph so it's easier to absorb.

d. Generally try to keep sentences short—under 20 words—and minimise the use of subordinate clauses or shifts in perspective.

e. Avoid both formality and informality. We are neither a formal news site or academic journal, nor a personal blog or lifestyle magazine. Read a few of the articles we publish to get a sense of tone we prefer.

f. Vary the length of your sentences. This will make your writing more interesting by giving it a more interesting texture. Trust us. It will.

g. Use short, direct and active sentences (e.g. 'This indicates...' rather than 'This is indicative of...';)

h. Aim for a sharp introduction to hook your readers. For example, you might try to think of:
   —an interesting image, story or anecdote;

—a provocative statement or a profound question;
—a bold claim.

i. Economise. Every word counts. Avoid tangents. Stay focussed. Remember that our ideal word count is 1000 words.

j. *Use key words or phrases early on in your article*.
    Show them that the article is actually what the title and preview quote said it would be about.

k. *Look for potential pull-quotes in your article*.
    As you read over your article, are there particular sentences or phrases that stand out and make you think, "yes, this could be a pull-quote"? If there's not, consider how to add something more punchy. [we're looking for good substance and form]

Miscellaneous Style Rules

a. *No capitalisation for divine pronouns.*
    God is "he" and "himself" at TGCA, not "He" or "Himself" (unless we're starting a sentence).

b. *Bible/biblical, Trinity/trinitarian*
    Capital letter for the noun, lowercase for the adjective

c. *Write out Bible book names in full.*

    Even when in brackets after a quotation.

d. *Use quotation marks consistently*
    Sometimes we use 'single' inverted commas; sometimes we use "double". Either is okay but please be consistent. Please not that we *don't* use one sort of quote for word definitions and another for quotes speech. They should be the same, except where there are nested quotes. E.g.:
    – "The LORD said to my Lord, 'sit at my right hand … '" or
    – 'The LORD said to my Lord, "sit at my right hand … "'

e. *Don't put quotation marks around paragraph-length quotes*.
    Our style is to make these italic and indent them (though the Bible reference at the end of Bible quotes shouldn't be italic).

f. *Keep all-caps, italics, underline and bold to a minimum*. Let your writing do the work, don't rely on formatting to convey emphasis unless absolutely necessary.

g. *Put full stops, commas, question marks inside the quotation marks unless the quote is only one or two words long.*

h. *Use M-Dashes and N-Dashes appropriately.*
    TGCA style stipulates that we use m-dashes without space—like this—rather than hyphens (-), when a substitute for parentheses or a colon.
    — On a Mac you can get this by typing "shift+option+hyphen".

    —On a PC: Alt+Ctrl+ - (minus).

N-dashes are to be used when a substitute for pairing (Tiger–Lion combat), for number range (1–10) or scores (a 5–2 win).

—On a Mac type "option+hyphen".

—On a PC: Ctrl+ - (minus).

Hyphens are to be used for compound words (sister-in-law) and numbers (forty-two).

i. *No double spaces between sentences.*

j. *Ellipses …*
   Don't just type three full stops. Use the correct symbol once and leave a single space on either side of it … like that.

5. Copyright

1. TGCA writers retain full copyright for their work. But we ask that if/when re-publishing any piece first published by TGCA, including in a book, that the original piece, including its URL be cited.

2. TGCA claim first publication rights, exclusive publication rights for forty-eight hours and retain perpetual publication rights.