



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, with multiple rounds of edits. 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 of more substantial edits (we won't track minor changes), and comments with requests, explanations and requests. You can then interact with our proposed edits.<sup>1</sup>

It can be an adjustment to experience a formal collaborative editing process. Feel free to push back and ask questions, but also be willing to compromise and trust the process. On the one hand it is your work and you need to be happy with it. On the other hand, it is our publication and it needs to be suitable, according to our editorial judgment. If we cannot reach an agreement on significant matters that you are comfortable, it is perfectly appropriate to withdraw your article.

---

<sup>1</sup> Interacting with tracked changes works well if we are both using Microsoft Word. If you use some other software platform, such as Google Docs, deleting and editing text does not export well back into Microsoft Word, so we ask that you provide alternate text in the body of the file and comment what you suggest you would delete/replace.

## 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:
  - a. An elder/minister of the church you currently attend.
  - b. A Christian outside of your current church.
  - c. If you have been at your current church for less than 12 months, you must provide an additional reference from an elder/minister from your previous church.
4. **Bio and photo:** a short bio (under 150 words) in separate file and a good-quality headshot.
5. **Declaration of no disqualifying conduct:** a declaration that
  - a. you are not aware of anything in life or doctrine that could potentially disqualify you from writing for TGCA; and
  - b. that you are of good repute with current and previous employers (whether secular or Christian), and churches.
6. **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.
7. **Declaration of use of generative artificial intelligence tools:** if used in any aspect of the preparation of the contribution, we require a declaration:
  - a. that substantial use for brainstorming or research is referenced in the article.
  - b. That no generative artificial intelligence tool was used for structuring, first draft composition or substantial style editing.
8. **(Optional): We welcome suggested cover image and in-text images for your piece,** provided you can give evidence of their copyright status. As with 7, above, please declare if generative 'AI' was used in its creation.
9. **Formatting requirements:**
  - a. Please include the title of the article in email subject line along with the word 'submission' or 'pitch'.
  - b. Word .docx format.

- c. 12 point, Times New Roman, 1.5 spacing.
- d. Document title: '<YYYYMMDD> <Author Surname> <Author First Name> <Article Title>.docx' (for eg 20230719 Lynch Mikey Why Biblical Theology Matters.docx).
- e. 1000 words maximum.
- f. Break article up into sections of 300 words or less, with sub-headings.
- g. Conform to style rules listed below.

### 3. TGCA Music submissions

The TGCA Music podcast welcomes submissions recordings of new Christian songs—both those written for congregational singing as well as those simply for performance; both those written for adults and children. We also welcome submissions of workshops and interviews about a Christian approach to music, whether songwriting, leading music at church or other matters.

1. **Audio recordings of workshops and interviews submitted to TGCA Music** must conform to the same standards as articles (see above), except for written formatting requirements. In addition:
  - a. The interviewer must conform to our confessional agreement standards. We will allow greater flexibility on confessional agreement/references checks required for the interview subject on a case-by-case basis.
  - b. Provide title of audio, all participants, date, location and name of event (if relevant).
2. **Songs submitted to TGCA Music** must meet the same standards as article submissions (see above) for all performers. However, we will allow greater flexibility on confessional agreement/references checks required for on a case-by-case basis. In addition submissions must include:
  - a. Audio file of song (less than 2 MB)
  - b. Promotional artwork.
  - c. Production credits.
  - d. Lyrics: include punctuation. Don't repeat choruses and other parts that repeat verbatim. Only capitalise at start of new lines if it is the start of a new sentence.
  - e. Artist's note.
  - f. Copyright details.

## **4. 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:***

- Articles that present a view that is at odds with TGCA's objects or Foundation Documents.
- Articles that don't engage with Scripture or offer a distinctly Christian insight.
- Articles that we consider across as uncharitable or reactive or harshly polemical.
- Articles 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 articles.
- News pieces. While we are open to articles which reflect on current events, we are not primarily focused on published news and opinion pieces.
- Articles that were substantially created using generative artificial intelligence tools. While we accept use of such tools for research and brainstorming purposes, we require substantial use of AI for research and brainstorming to be referenced in submissions and we do not accept submissions in which AI was used for structuring, first draft composition or substantial style editing.

## 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. *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 ... "'
- d. *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).
- e. *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.
- f. *Put full stops, commas, question marks inside the quotation marks unless the quote is only one or two words long.*
- g. *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).
- h. *No double spaces between sentences.*
- i. *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.
- j. Use abbreviated Bible book names in brackets in main body text (Eph 2:1); full Bible book names in larger quotes (Ephesians 2:1).
- k. Hyperlink to online articles and pages, rather than footnote references.

## **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.