

# Style Sheet

## Note on the readership / target audience

This publication is for rural pastors in Africa. Remember three things about the target audience:

- **First, we are writing for a different culture**—humour, figures of speech and imagery, length of articles, etc., will be adapted accordingly.
- **Second, these brethren come from a non-literary culture** and struggle developing reading and study habits. The purpose of our work is to help them establish a culture of reading, long-term, but with material that will help them now presently.
- **Third, English is not their first language.** Articles **MUST** be written with this in mind, hence the importance of closely following the style sheet, especially the “general GUIDELINES.”

## General GUIDELINES

While we welcome difficult theological and biblical concepts and sound exegetical work, articles must be written in simple language—common words and plain style are important.

- **Use short clear sentences (and short paragraphs)**
  - Example:
    - *“It was not only a consciousness of the sins of adultery and murder that moved David to repentance; it was the voice of the prophet Nathan.”*  
Should be
    - *“David was moved to repent not only by a consciousness of his sin, but by the voice of the prophet Nathan.”*
- **Use clear and accessible words** (if there is a simple way to say it, say it simply)
  - Example:
    - Justify yourself / excuse yourself
    - Explicit / clear
    - Linguistic / language
- **Avoid double negatives.**
- **Avoid the overuse of the passive voice.**
- **Avoid irony/humour** (unless explained)
- **Avoid academic / technical language.**
  - Examples:
    - Jonah’s prayer not Jonah’s Psalm.
    - Story not narrative (except on rare occasions)
    - Biblical or Bible not canonical
- **Avoid the overuse of adjectives**
- **Avoid colloquialisms/slang from your region**
- **Avoid first-world analogies/terminology**

- Provide context/explanation if using historical references; don't assume they are familiar with major events in world history, or key figures of Church history.

## General STANDARDS

The British spelling of words will be employed. Please use the Oxford English Dictionary as your reference.

We will use YAHWEH, not JEHOVAH, for the name of the Covenant God.

Articles should not include footnotes.

Do not include Hebrew or Greek words in the text. Explain the original language word in English.

All quotations of the Bible will be taken from the **New King James Version**.

Except the feature commentary, which is limited to 1000 words, all articles fall into three categories:

- 350 words (one page)
- 450 words (one and a half pages)
- 650 words (two pages)

***If articles submitted do not fall into one of these categories, they may be rejected or heavily edited.***

## Formatting

Articles should be submitted in Word Doc. or Google Doc., **NOT** in email text.

- **Font** should be Arial pt. 11 throughout.
- **Title and subheadings** should be bold, Arial, pt. 11, and centre aligned
- **Name of the author** should be on next line after title and right aligned
- **Body text** should be Arial pt. 11, and left aligned.

**Paragraphs should be separated by “add space after paragraph” not by two returns.** On Word and Google Docs. go to “format” > “line and paragraph spacing” > “add space after paragraph”

## Abbreviations & words to spell out

1. In general, abbreviations, other than those which have come to be recognized as part of standard usage, should be avoided in the main text.

For example, the following should be spelled out in full when they occur in the text:

- names of Bible books
  - Old Testament
  - New Testament
  - chapter, page, verse.
2. In parentheses or notes, usage of abbreviations should be consistent throughout (always use 'page' and 'verse,' not a "p." or "v").
  3. Use the short form "e.g." for an example, not "i.e." or "ex."

## Bible references

1. Names of Bible books should always be written out in full whenever they occur in the main body of the text.
2. Specific Bible references should be set in the following style:

Matthew 1:3; Luke 1:1–14; 3:5,7; Romans 3:26; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

- A space between the book name and a chapter number
  - A colon (:) after the chapter number.
  - No space after the colon, then the verse.
  - Use a semicolon (;) followed by a space between individual references, except for other verses in the same chapter.
  - A comma is used, between verses of the same chapter quoted individually (3:4, 8, 17).
  - Use an en dash (-) for a continuous quotation of two or more consecutive verses.
3. Where a different Bible version is quoted from the main one in use, the reference should be followed by a comma and the appropriate abbreviation (eg. AV, NKJV, NIV, NASB, RSV, ESV, etc.) after the reference.
  4. Do not use italics when quoting Scripture directly, only if emphasizing particular words or phrases within the quotation. The whole reference should not be in italics but in quotation marks.

## The use of ellipsis

1. For omissions within a sentence, just use the ellipsis.  
eg. You are clothed with ... majesty.
2. For omissions between sentences, insert punctuation.  
eg. As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him. ... He remembers that we are dust. ...

## The use of hyphenation

1. For a “non” word, use a hyphen (eg. non-denominational).
2. For a “sub” word, close up (eg. substandard).

## The use of capitals

**Titles should be lowercase, except the initial word and proper names.**

1. In general, keep capitals to a minimum as they distract the reader.
2. Use italics for emphasis, not capitals and not underlined.

### Specific examples

Use capitals for:

- Names and titles of the Godhead, offices of Christ,
  - eg. Prophet, Priest and King, Creator, Saviour, Redeemer, Master (when referring to God and Christ),
  - Christian, Christianity, non-Christian (but unchristian, without the hyphen),
  - Messianic.
- proper names of people, places and adjectives derived from proper names,
  - eg. Pauline, Corinthian, Roman
- formal titles of individuals or organizations
  - Dr., Mr.
- names of individual churches or denominations
  - Presbyterian / Baptist / Anglican
  - Southend Baptist Church
- the Bible, the Scriptures, the Word of God
- Gospel, when referring to one of the four Gospels.
- the Law, the Writings and the Prophets, only when used as titles for sections of the Hebrew Bible.

Use capitals to limit the meaning of a word to a specific instance:

- the Reformation, when referring to the period in history which bears that name
- the Fall (standing alone, but the fall of man, Adam's fall)
- the Sermon on the Mount
- the Ten Commandments
- the Second Coming
- Puritan, referring to that era, as opposed to a more general sense

Use lowercase for:

- pronouns and possessives (he, him, thou, his, my, me) referring to persons of the Godhead (except when quoting directly from a Bible version which capitalizes these words)
- adjectives, e.g. divine, almighty, heavenly, sovereign, biblical, scriptural,
- deity, divinity, unless used as names for God
- person, in such phrases as the 'the person and work of Christ'
- church, except when used as part of the title of a specific local church or denomination evangelical
- gospel (unless referring to one of the four Gospels)
- titles of doctrine, e.g. justification by faith, the atonement
- the cross, the resurrection
- heaven, hell
- devil, satanic (but capital for the proper name Satan)

## The use of numbers

1. Numbers of less than a hundred, should be written out in full; numbers of 100 or more should be shown in figures. In the case of a list of statistics, it may be better to use figures throughout, rather than a mixture of words and figures.
2. En dashes are always used in conjunction with numerals (not hyphens).
3. When using a range of numbers, include the full number. i.e.
  - a. Wrong 1991–2; Correct 1991–1992
  - b. Wrong 221–3; Correct 221–223

## The use of dates

1. Spell out (in lowercase letters) references to particular centuries. Decades may be either spelled out or expressed in numerals with apostrophes.
  - the twentieth century (not the 20th C)
  - during the eighties and nineties, the '80s and '90s
  - the 1880s and 1890s (not the 1880s and '90s)
  - in the case of: "a twentieth-century author" it should be hyphenated
2. For AD and BC use caps  
follows the date, e.g. 70 BC or 70 AD
3. Spell out (in lowercase letters) died, reigned, and circa
  - circa, not c.1585
  - died, not d.1501
  - reigned, not r.1666–1700

## **Punctuation**

Use of exclamation marks should be kept to a minimum—for occasional emphasis only.

## **The use of block quotes**

Three lines and more will be set apart as a block quote

## **Quoting**

Keep original punctuation, and capitalization if quoting. However, if the work is a reprinting of an original source, capitalization can be removed (apart from proper names). Italics can also be removed.