

A to Z of Writing the Feature/News Article

- I. DETERMINE TYPE/SUBJECT/THEME OF ARTICLE: Endless variations, including, but not limited to—
 - A. News
 - B. Feature
 - C. Historical
 - D. How-to
 - E. Topical
 - F. Opinion
 - G. Personal experience
 - H. Inspirational/devotional
 - I. Biographical-Interview

- II. GATHER MATERIAL:
 - A. Personal experience
 - B. Interviews
 - C. Research
 - D. Survey
 - E. Onsite investigation

- III. ORGANIZE MATERIAL:
 - A. Chronologically
 - B. Order of Importance
 - C. Bullet Points

- IV. WRITE THE ARTICLE:
 - A. Headline or Title
 1. Should be catchy and to the point
 2. Can sum up theme/purpose of article
 3. Can be quote from article
 4. Can reference element of article

B. Lead (think Hook):

1. Purpose:

- a. To draw reader into article
- b. To reveal theme/purpose of article

2. Variations:

- a. Anecdote
- b. Quote
- c. Word image
- d. Summation of who, what, where, when, why (news article)
- e. Summation of argument/premise of article (op-ed)

C. Body of Article

1. Material should be presented in organized fashion

- a. Chronologically
- b. Bullet points
- c. Order of importance:

1) Give all the important details, all the relevant facts and details that relate to your lead statement—who, what, why, when, where, how.

2) Follow up main facts with additional information, according to word count (here is where additional anecdotes, information about topic, people involved, quotes can be added).

2. Use principles of narrative prose:

- a. Six senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, touch emotion
- b. Action verbs, descriptive nouns
- c. Dialogue/quotes

3. Author should be an unseen narrator (unless a personal opinion/experience article).
4. Assume ignorance on part of reader—article **MUST** be self-explanatory to those who know nothing of subject (EX. New York City is well-known enough to need no further explanation, but if referring to Donetsk, article should reference this is a city in the Russian-majority eastern half of Ukraine).

D. Conclusion:

1. Article must give sense of finishing, not trailing off.
2. Variations:
 - a. Recap of leading statement or premise.
 - b. Final anecdote or quote
 - c. Statement of future vision, goals, developments relating to the article topic.

V. EDIT THE ARTICLE:

- A. Check grammar/prose/punctuation.
- B. Check all facts.
- C. Run finished article by subject of article (if possible)

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APPENDIX

LEAD EXAMPLES:

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ANECDOTE: *SINGING THROUGH TEARS IN ZAMBIA-ERIC HOKE:*

Another smoldering hot day in the Zambian bush. Seated in the dirt, a skinny tree my backrest, I stared down at my shoes. They were covered in grime from the dusty roads my feet had traveled each day. My hair was oily, my beard overgrown and itchy. I hadn't taken a hot shower in 3 weeks. The tension I felt only added to my discomfort.

Dozens of Zambians sat all around me on the packed earth of this burial grounds several kilometers into the wilderness from their community of scattered mud huts. We were mourning the death of a boy who'd died a few days earlier. A leg swelling disease had spread to his heart. Even though the village had a health clinic, lack of medicine and trained professionals had kept the boy from receiving proper treatment before the swelling disease took his life.

He was four years old.

QUOTE: *'IN GOD WE TRUST'—SO WHAT'S IN THE NAME?*

"It's their faith in God that's the problem with this country."

The well-dressed Indian businessman standing in a lengthening airport line just ahead of the BCM International ministry team was angry, embarrassed at the reception being offered his country's guests. A Mumbai Airport attendant had just shruggingly announced a transportation strike. It wasn't their responsibility to get passengers to a distant runway where their luggage was already boarding the plane. If a back-up shuttle didn't arrive soon, passengers would have to find their own way to the plane. A cab out on the street was the only suggestion offered.

"People believe everything's fate," the businessman amplified, "so there's no point in even trying to make change for the better."

WORD IMAGE: *LATIN AMERICAN CAMPUSES MEET JESUS CHRIST*

It was the worst of times for Medellin, Colombia. Pablo Escobar was still 'king of cocaine', ruling his narco-empire from a castle-fortress on the hills above Medellin. Violence lurked in every dark alley, and a hundred bucks would buy a man's death at the hand of a *sicario*, or professional assassin. The university campus had become a recruiting ground for the drug lords' paramilitary armies, Marxist guerrillas, and the *sicarios* themselves. A wrong word could—and frequently did—mean a slit throat or a bullet in the back.

COMBINATION: QUOTE/CHRONOLOGY: *"I JUST SAID YES!"-Lisa Biegert*

Bangladesh (*BCM World*) —

Ask BCM missionary Stan Tyson how he got involved with Bangladesh. His answer: "I just said 'yes' when God opened the door!"

In early 2012, Stan Tyson and his wife Mary Ann had flown from their home base in Pennsylvania, USA, to Bangladesh, to visit a daughter who works in that small Asian country. Beyond a family vacation, their only agenda was to hand-ferry back to the USA a copy of *In Step*

with the Master Teacher, BCM's children's ministry leadership training curriculum, newly translated in Bengali. Little did Stan know God had something much larger in mind!

SUMMATION OF WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY, HOW: *ORISSA BURNING: FAITH UNDER FIRE IN INDIA:*

On Christmas Day, 2007, across the planet, Christian families feasted, exchanged gifts, and celebrated the birth of their Savior. But in Orissa, India, Christians were running for their lives as mobs of radical Hindus looted and burned churches and homes. By the end of the holiday, thousands of Christian families were refugees, hundreds of churches destroyed.

Among them were 9 BCM churches with 243 BCM church families left homeless. When a Hindu radical climbing one church roof to pull down its cross fell to his death, BCM pastor, Dasarath Digal, and six church leaders were thrown in jail for his murder. BCM's Orissa district supervisor describes that day's ordeal:

SUMMATION OF WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY, HOW: *GOOD SAMARITANS STILL NEEDED IN THE UKRAINE'S WAR ZONES-LISA BIEGERT*

Ongoing conflict between Russia and the eastern European country of Ukraine has filled headlines around the world since Russia's takeover of Crimea in February, 2014. As always, those most affected by war are the smallest of citizens. BCM missionary Tymofiy Anokhin (Tima) and his wife, Natasha, work with an orphanage in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol. In the midst of this deadly, no-end-in-sight conflict, they are seeking to maintain normalcy and safety for the children in their care.

SUMMATION OF ARGUMENT/PREMISE: *IS DEMOCRACY ENOUGH?*

A news commentator threw out a question the other night in more of the endless analysis and rumination that has occupied our TV screens since there ceased to be sufficient combat scenes to fill 24 hours of cable news.

The question: Can an Islamic democracy work in Iraq?

SONG LYRICS: *WALKING WHERE JESUS WALKED:*

"I walked today where Jesus walked . . . Bethlehem . . . Galilee . . . Mount of Olives . . . I knelt today where Jesus knelt . . . Gethsemane . . . with Him at my side, I climbed the Hill of Calvary . . . I walked today where Jesus walked, and felt Him close to me."

Somewhere in my childhood, I'd heard the lyrics of this classic Bill Gaither hymn. But I'd forgotten them until I had the privilege of participating this spring as journalist and team member of BCM International's second Holy Land Tour.

CONCLUSIONS:

RECAP LEADING STATEMENT/PREMISE: *'IN GOD WE TRUST'—SO WHAT'S IN THE NAME?*

So if some would blame India's problems on faith practiced in the name of God, faith is also its only solution.

A living faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is sweeping the face of India with a fresh wind of change.

Transformation.
Salvation.

RECAP LEADING STATEMENT/PREMISE: *ON THE ROAD AGAIN!*

So when you are cruising down the Interstate at 70 miles an hour or just having a quiet time in your own peaceful home, take a moment to pray for your missionaries and Christian workers on the road, the water, or in the air as they carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of this world.

**COMBINATION QUOTE/RECAP LEADING STATEMENT/PREMISE:
*INTERRUPTION OR OPPORTUNITY?***

“It is so easy for us, so comfortable, to stay forever preaching,” says Jonás, “and to forget to take time for people. I have learned that we must make the most of every opportunity because we don’t know what that opportunity means—or if we will have another. Sometimes the Lord gives you a window of only five or 10 minutes to pick up this opportunity. If you do not take it, you will never know if someone did not come to God because of you.”

Today Jonás and Beth Menezes are using the experience gained in Manicoré to plant another church in Porto Velho, a city of a 1.5 million. Jonás has learned not to fret about life’s interruptions. After all, he says, who knows what opportunities they might bring!

QUOTE: *PRAYING FOR ‘LA VICTOIRE’ IN TOULOUSE, FRANCE*

A poignant episode at this year’s camp brings this reality home. Elizabeth was working with one small boy when he spoke up: “I just don’t know if God exists!”

Elizabeth took him to look out a window at the strong, green trees swaying outside and shared with the boy how God reveals Himself in His creation. She adds:

“France is one of the most beautiful countries I have ever seen. God has created this country. He has knit together each French person. And He has called you and I to intercede just like Abraham interceded for Lot’s family. We must continue to intercede for the one girl, for the one boy, and cry ‘*la victoire*’—victory—for that one soul saved from hell. Pray for all of France. And for us, that God may give us wisdom how to have victory.”

**STATEMENT FUTURE VISION, GOALS, DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO TOPIC:
*MAN’S ULTIMATUM BECOME GOD’S OPPORTUNITY IN SRI LANKA***

BCM Lanka’s vision for the future is to see churches planted in every district of Sri Lanka as well as to build a central retreat and camp facility that will facilitate leadership and theological training throughout Sri Lanka. An urgent need is finances. BCM missionary pastors currently receive less than \$100USD monthly and lack of funds limits expanding personnel.

A field goal for BCM Lanka is to raise \$3000 in monthly support (less than the average single family income in North America), which will supply basic living expenses for current BCM missionary pastors and the national director as well as ministry expenses of evangelistic outreach. If you are interested in taking on part of this on-going support or making a one-time donation, send your pledge to _____