

Needs of Christian Periodicals

Devotionals

- Must be new and fresh. No familiar thoughts on familiar biblical themes.
- Must be universal, memorable, and one with which readers can identify.
- Develop only one idea—no tangents.
- Do not sermonize. Devotional not preachy.
- Follow guidelines carefully.
- Avoid taboos. Know doctrine of magazine.
- Note translation used.

Personal Experience Stories

- See 2 Cor. 1:3-7; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rom. 8:28.
- Six essential elements:
 1. Have a clear theme/story line
 2. Reader identification
 3. Honesty
 4. Strong take-away
 5. Satisfactory ending (sensitivity)
 6. Use of fiction techniques
- Show don't tell.
- Avoid "I came to realize" format.
- Don't cover too long a time frame.
- Don't introduce too many characters.
- Don't write it too soon. Wait for perspective.
- Keep a spiritual journal.

Inspirational Articles

- Need a sharp focus (don't try to cover too much), and a clear picture of reader.
- Outline, plan, or structure article before you begin writing to avoid tangents.
- Inspire, don't browbeat or preach.
- Use anecdotes and illustrations.

Self-Help Articles

- Inventory rough moments in your life.
- Need a sharp focus. How are you going to help reader improve his life or solve a problem?
- Expand your knowledge. Interview others.
- Must have empathy for your reader.
- Do not condemn, show superiority, preach.
- Create reader identification - "I've been there."
- Give practical, workable solutions.

Marriage & Family Living Articles

- "Address real life situations" (Sandra Clopine).
- See "Self-help Articles" above.

Biblical Teaching Articles

- Limited market. Difficult to place.
- Avoid pat, simplistic answers.
- Must be theologically in tune with magazine.
- "Teach don't preach, love don't shove" (Joan Unger).
- "To avoid sounding preachy, include self in audience" (Ken Wilson).
- Avoid pointing a finger and using "you."

Fiction

- Must be believable.
- Must include 4 elements:
Character, Conflict, Crisis, Change
- Dialogue must be natural.

Profiles/As-Told-To Stories

- As-told-to story often best approach.
- Verify accuracy and secure permission.

Testimonies

- Begin in the beginning (Acts 26:9-11).
- Describe your encounter with Jesus (Acts 26:12-15).
- Clearly show the struggle (Acts 26: 16-18).
- Show turning point (Acts 26:19-20).
- Don't overlook difficulties you encountered (2 Cor. 4:8-9,11).
- Avoid happy ever after, I've arrived, ending (Rom. 7:15).
- Leave reader with hope (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 6:9-10).

Fillers

- Puzzles, jokes, little known facts . . .
- Many are devotionals minus printed prayer and Thought for the Day Scripture.
- Market often overstocked.

Humor

- Very saleable but difficult to write.
- Must be real enough for reader to relate and exaggerated enough to make him laugh.
- Write about common, everyday things.
- Don't try to be funny.
- Poke fun at self not at others.
- Keep it short (sentences and total length).

Poetry

- Highly competitive.
- Keep it short (under 20 lines).
- Less rhyming/structured poetry.
- Less poetry that requires time for study and reflection.
- Clear, straight-forward message.
- Wider market for poetic prose and prayers.
- Best market for seasonal.

Criteria for All Manuscripts:

- Benefit
Enrich
Relevant
Timely —Lee Roddy
- Avoid cliches, "Protestant Latin," redundancy, qualifiers, adverbs, wordiness.
- Title must grab reader.
- Read it aloud (if possible to others).
- Rewrite!

