

# 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.
- Seven essential elements:
  1. Clear focus
  2. Reader identification
  3. Honesty
  4. Use 4 C's of fiction: character, conflict, crisis, change
  5. Structure using scenes
  6. Include dialogue
  7. Strong take-away
- Keep a spiritual journal.
- Don't write it too soon. Wait for perspective.
- Show don't tell.
- Avoid "I came to realize" format.

## Inspirational Articles

- Need a sharp focus; don't try to cover too much.
- Know your audience and their needs.
- Outline, plan, or structure article before you begin writing to avoid tangents.
- Inspire; don't browbeat or preach.
- Use anecdotes and illustrations.

## Christian Living 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.
- 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

- BERT  
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!