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!

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