



GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND REVIEWING ARTICLES

By Kevin E. Lawson
CEJ Editor

The *Christian Education Journal* exists for specific purposes and reflects a general theological perspective. Those with an interest in writing or reviewing articles for the journal need to understand these purposes and theological position and be able to work within this framework.

PURPOSES FOR THE JOURNAL

The purpose of the *Christian Education Journal* is to strengthen the conception and practice of Christian education in church and parachurch settings through:

1. Encouraging reflection on the foundations of Christian education and implications for ministry practice
2. Exploring the integration and application of social science theory and research to educational ministry concerns
3. Fostering improved teaching in the field of Christian education at colleges and seminaries, equipping people for leadership in this field
4. Promoting the assessment of our changing cultural context and of contemporary educational ministry needs, models, and trends
5. Providing reviews of new books in the field of Christian education and other related disciplines that impact educational ministry.

SPCE STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Society of Professors in Christian Education organization has adopted the following statement of faith from the National Association of Evangelicals. Articles submitted for possible publication in the *Christian Education Journal* are expected to reflect these foundational theological commitments.

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

WRITING GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

We invite submissions of original research/writing on issues in the field of Christian education. Contributors do not need to be members of SPCE. All manuscripts should not have been published elsewhere unless specifically approved by the editor. Manuscripts should follow APA format with parenthetical references and limited use of endnotes. See the following volume for formatting details: American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, (5th ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author. Samples of APA reference formatting are available at the journal website: www.biola.edu/cej

ARTICLES: The preferred length of articles is between 2,500 and 6,000 words. Contributors should send their submissions to the editor (editor.cej@biola.edu) as Word documents. The author's name, address, and e-mail address should appear only on a cover sheet for the article. Authors should also include an abstract of the article (100 words or less). Before acceptance, submissions will be "masked" reviewed by appropriate referees. If accepted for publication, we reserve the right to edit for usage and style. Authors of accepted submissions will receive three *gratis* copies of the journal in which the article appears.

Types of articles desired include the following:

- Research articles:
 - Theological/Philosophical foundations and issues impacting Christian education
 - Historical perspectives on Christian education that shed light on current issues
 - Empirical research that furthers our understanding of sound practice
- Teaching/Preparing people for educational ministry leadership
- Assessment of congregational/parachurch ministry trends and needs
- Cultural analysis with implications for Christian education practice
- Response/Dialogue with issues or ideas in the broader field of religious education
- Reviews of contemporary ministry models in churches and/or parachurch organizations
- Professional reviews of research, with implications for educational ministry or teaching
- Abstracts of recent dissertations in the field of Christian education

In general, the following qualities are what we are looking for in articles we would publish:

1. The content of the article is clearly relevant to the field of Christian education, whether that be in church, parachurch, or higher education settings where we strive to equip our students to serve well in this vocation. Our general editorial policy is that articles present a position/perspective compatible with evangelical Protestant tradition. (See SPCE

Statement of Faith above.) Occasionally we will invite articles by authors outside this perspective to stimulate and challenge our theory and practice.

2. The article demonstrates both a breadth and depth of understanding of the issues it addresses. The person is knowledgeable and communicates this well.
3. The article explores its topic in new ways. It makes a genuine contribution to our understanding, not just reviewing or rehashing things that have been addressed in other publications.
4. The evidence for the positions taken in the article is sound and well organized (if it is a research article, see below).
5. The author develops reasonable implications for educational ministry practice (or for the preparation of others for educational ministry). We want to see how the issues addressed in the article make a difference for those seeking to carry out their ministries well. **This is a critical part of each article!**
6. The writing style of the article communicates well to the journal audience (e.g., Christian education faculty, students, thoughtful ministry practitioners).

NOTES: These are brief discussions of focused issues in the field of Christian education of interest to our readers and may be more personal, responsive, or reflective than regular research articles. Responses to previously published articles in *Christian Education Journal* are published in this section. “Notes” should normally not exceed 3,000 words, but style and submission guidelines are the same as for regular articles.

BOOK REVIEWS: Our desire is to publish reviews of new books within the field, and “the best” of books from other disciplines that relate to Christian education. Guidelines for developing book reviews are available at the journal website: www.biola.edu/cej

MINI-THEME ISSUES: We are open to proposals for the publication of a group of articles (4-6) focused on a theme as part of an issue of the journal. Proposals for mini-theme issues should be e-mailed to the journal editor for consideration: editor.cej@biola.edu

SERVING AS AN ARTICLE REVIEWER FOR THE JOURNAL

THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS FOR CEJ ARTICLES

The *Christian Education Journal* is a peer-reviewed academic journal. All articles submitted for possible publication will go through a three-stage review process:

Stage One: Article receives initial review by editor to see if it should be reviewed further (focus on topic, breadth/depth of writing, audience addressed)

Stage Two: Article is sent out to two “peer-reviewers” who critique the article for possible inclusion in the journal. Feedback is provided for revision; recommendation is made regarding possible publication.

Stage Three: If article is revised and resubmitted, it is checked to see if the author adequately addressed the issues/revisions identified by the reviewers.

An article that passes all three stages of review is then accepted for publication.

TYPES OF ARTICLES NEEDING REVIEW

The *Christian Education Journal* will be publishing articles that fit within the following categories. All but the last type will need qualified reviewers.

- Research articles:

 Theological/Philosophical foundations and issues impacting Christian education

 Historical perspectives on Christian education that shed light on current issues

 Empirical research that furthers our understanding of sound practice

- Teaching/Preparing people for educational ministry leadership

- Assessment of congregational/parachurch ministry trends and needs

- Cultural analysis with implications for Christian education practice

- Response/Dialogue with issues or ideas in the broader field of religious education

- Reviews of contemporary ministry models in churches and/or parachurch organizations

- Professional reviews of research, with implications for educational ministry or teaching

- Abstracts of recent dissertations in the field of Christian education

Those who serve as reviewers should identify the types of articles they are best equipped to evaluate, and the topics/content areas they have the background to review.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ARTICLE “PEER-REVIEWERS”

The following experience and skills equip a person well to serve as a “peer-reviewer.”

- Has published articles on the kinds of topics she/he will review

- Has previous study and current knowledge of the areas addressed in the article being reviewed (familiarity with current discussions)

- Has taught on the kinds of topics being addressed in the article

- Has personal experience with the topic/issues addressed in the article

- Affirms an evangelical theological commitment (See SPCE Statement of Faith above)

- Not necessarily a technical editor, but able to give feedback on how well someone is communicating his/her ideas.

- If the article presents empirical research, the reviewer needs to be experienced with the type of research conducted and able to evaluate the soundness of the research process, data analysis, and conclusions drawn from that data. (An empirical research review form is available to assist with this type of review.)

A person who agrees to review articles for the *Christian Education Journal* should be prepared to review the articles assigned and return reports *within four weeks* of receiving

them. Articles are normally sent one at a time for review. Prompt communication with the editor regarding availability or problems due to other work/personal demands is critical.

BENEFITS OF SERVING AS A "PEER-REVIEWER"

1. Most schools recognize service as a peer reviewer for an academic journal in the professor's discipline as a strong contribution within the field. This may carry some weight when the person applies for promotion and/or tenure.
2. Reviewing articles for an academic journal in your field keeps you abreast of new research and ideas.
3. It is a way to contribute to all of us who rely on the journal for ideas and information to strengthen our teaching, scholarship, and service.
4. Those who serve in this way and review a number of articles will be invited to meetings of the Christian Education Journal Advisory Board, which meets during the SPCE conference.

GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLE REVIEWS

Because of the variety of types of articles that will need to be reviewed there is no one set of evaluation standards that can be applied to all of them. In general, the following qualities are what we are looking for in articles we would like to publish:

1. The content of the article is clearly relevant to the field of Christian education, whether that be in church, parachurch, or higher education settings where we strive to equip our students to serve well in this vocation.
2. The article presents a position/perspective compatible with evangelical Protestant theological traditions. (See SPCE Statement of Faith)
3. The article demonstrates both a breadth and depth of understanding of the issues it addresses. The person is knowledgeable and communicates this well.
4. The article explores its topic in new ways. It makes a genuine contribution to our understanding, not just reviewing or rehashing things that have been addressed in other publications.
5. The evidence for the positions taken in the article is sound and well organized (if it is a research article, see below). In addition, it needs to show fair treatment of other positions where this is appropriate.
6. The author develops reasonable implications for educational ministry practice (or for the preparation of others for educational ministry). We want to see how the issues addressed in the article make a difference for those seeking to carry out their ministries well. **This is a critical part of each article!**
7. The writing style of the article communicates well to the journal audience (e.g., Christian education faculty, students, thoughtful ministry practitioners).

Empirical research articles need to be reviewed with particular issues in mind. A set of guidelines has been developed to assist with this review process.

INTERESTED IN SERVING AS AN ARTICLE REVIEWER?

All those interested in serving as "peer-reviewers" for the *Christian Education Journal* should e-mail the editor and submit both a vita and a cover letter explaining the types of articles and topics they are best equipped to review. Send this information (Word document format) to: editor.cej@biola.edu