

Church Bible Teaching Ministry

write to: PO Box 107 • Perry, Michigan 48872-0107 • USA

call: 517-625-7480 • **fax:** 517-625-7481

e-mail: info@cbtm.info

Dear Article-writing Friend,

Thank you for the article(s) that you have submitted to *Shelter in the Word or Servants' News*. We have not had time to read the article and study the subject enough to be certain that we want to publish it—or to write a detailed explanation of why we will not publish it.

Why does it take us so long to respond to articles? Every week, we receive between two and twenty articles intended for us to publish or distribute. The pace is gradually slowing down, and we are gradually enlisting more help, but we still have a scarcity of time to read and evaluate the articles.

Nevertheless, we do eventually read many of the articles we receive and actually print some of them!

In the hope that the overall quality of the articles we receive will improve, we have included a description of some of our main problems, and some suggested solutions:

We Received Many Articles on the Same Subject that Reach Different Conclusions

It is difficult to publish one article without reading all of the others. “The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him” (Prov 18:17). Some articles seem so Biblically based and sound until we read another one that uses some different scriptures or derives a different meaning from them.

We could publish **all** of them, but that would require a great amount of printing and postage, not to mention a great deal of time to read. We would rather study them ourselves, publish the one best article if possible, and if none represents the subject well, then work with the authors to make a new and better article.

Article Seems Correct, but Contains Too Much New Information at One Time

For a full explanation of this principle, see the article *Teaching Unpopular Truth to Skeptical People*, in the May 1996 *Servants' News*. It is very difficult for people to change too quickly. Our Savior did not tell His apostles everything at once in order that they be “able to bear it” (John 16:12).

Conclusions Not Really Supported from the Bible

Nearly every article we receive contains scripture quotes, and most of them have quite a few. But sometimes we find articles where the **minor points** are well established by Scripture, but the **main points** are mostly established from quotes of other “authorities” or simply by the writer’s own claims. Other times we receive articles with statements like “No Scripture tells us to...” and we can think of several Scriptures that say that very thing.

Another common form of Bible misuse is assigning a specific meaning to a verse and insisting that is the only true meaning of the original text. While there are many mistranslations in most Bibles, more evidence is needed than just one writer’s insistence that a text should read a certain way. If a doctrine is to be based on an uncommon translation of scripture, it is very important to show how the same expression appearing elsewhere is translated or to at least find some translator (even if obscure) who agrees with the uncommon translation.

Too Contentious

Some articles written to point out unbiblical practices among the Eternal’s people spend far too much time on the sins of other people or organizations. The reader is left feeling that the author was incredibly hurt by the individual or organization that he is writing against. Indeed, many people have been personally hurt or injured by friends or “ministers” in church groups. They may have lost all their friends, may not have been recognized for their service, may have been publicly slandered, etc.

Our Savior told us all of these things would come upon us when we follow Him. He asked for the forgiveness of the very men that put the nails in His body. Those who are to be teachers should recognize that it is a blessing to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake (Matt 5:10-12) and let the Eternal handle any offenses. **Those who aspire to teach must be mature enough to leave personal hurts out of their teaching.**

Too Authoritarian—Especially in Speculative Areas

Some articles have acceptable subject matter, but the style is as if the Eternal Himself were writing it when indeed He has not. This authoritarian style is even worse when used with speculative subjects, such as prophecy. (The ultimate disaster is when someone tells us they have “God’s true meaning” of a particular prophecy, then a few months later they send us a revised version.) We see much value in studying prophecy, but must remember that most examples of prophecies that were understood by someone in the Bible were understood by the Eternal’s direct revelation, not by

someone adding up numbers and analyzing symbols. We are especially against articles that leave the reader thinking that the author has special knowledge or connections with the Eternal and can deliver them from the “wrath to come.”

Too Hard to Read or Understand

We receive a few articles which are poorly hand-written or just too difficult to understand. If these people do have truth to share, they should ask some friends to help them write in an understandable way before submitting their article.

Please Keep Studying

We hope this letter will not discourage you in your studies. We now realize that we may not be able to thoroughly study everything that has been sent to us within our remaining lifetime. However, the Eternal has promised to guide each believer through His spirit. What He requires of you, he may not require of us, and vice versa. He wants each of us to grow in knowledge of Him, and will judge each in perfect righteousness.

We would like to make serious Bible research available to others even if we do not have time to study and publish it. Church Bible Teaching Ministry intends to add sections to their web sites for individual research papers. We do not have this working as of this writing, but we are collecting articles. The most helpful way is for you to send your article via email to info@cbtm.info. Mailing a diskette is also acceptable.

If you are not able to submit your article in electronic form, you may send us a brief description of your article and the means whereby people can directly obtain it from you. We will include that information on the web site instead. Please include the article title, the author’s name, a paragraph giving the subjects or a brief description, the number of pages, how to obtain it (your address, phone number and/or e-mail), and the cost of mailing if you want to be reimbursed. (To save money in the USA, ask the Post Office about “Media Mail” rates.)

If you are attempting to make a profit by selling religious literature, there are many other places where you can pay to advertise it. We do list some books and literature that are sold for more than their shipping, but only as we have sufficient knowledge of their contents. We do not guarantee to do this for everyone. We are much more likely to include access to articles if they are available for free. This means that people should be permitted to copy them in their entirety.

We reserve the right to completely refuse articles that we believe to be completely unbiblical, deliberately deceptive or harmful in a significant way.

If you do not want an article you have already sent to us posted on our web sites, please let us know. If you are concerned about receiving unsolicited or possibly harassing mail, we suggest that you use a post-office box or a mail-receiving service. Also, many local phone companies will, for a few dollars per month, assign you a second number that rings on the same line, but with a different ring sound. Two separate numbers make it easy to sort out calls about literature from personal calls. They also provide a means in the future to separately forward, separately apply voicemail or even separately delete each number.

May the Eternal bless you in your study and writing.

Sincerely,

Norman Edwards