

Newsworthiness

Newsworthiness refers to the importance of an article that is being considered for publication. Always consider your audience before writing your article or agreeing to report on any subject.

This concept should be applied by those submitting articles and information to *The Free Will Baptist*. We often receive article submissions that, while appropriate for the local church newsletter, are not relevant to the entire denomination. In order to be fair to our entire audience, we must restrict what we accept to what would be seen as important or of interest to people throughout the denomination, and not just in one church or small area.

For example, a minister's retirement or a groundbreaking for a new church building are major events that do not occur each and every year. A minister may have served at several different churches, thus making that an article of interest to many different people. A new church building could be of interest as well since it reflects growth on the part of our denomination and could serve as an encouragement and idea for other congregations.

However, almost all churches have fellowship dinners, fundraisers, retreats, and revival services. Therefore, while the facts surrounding these types of events might be of interest to the local congregation and appropriate for the local church newsletter, it is not necessarily relevant to the entire denomination. If every church having one of those such events were to report on it, our magazine would not have space to publish all the articles!

Another important concept to keep in mind is the "angle" of your articles. This is a concept that is especially employed by public relations specialists, and should be employed by churches not only for our magazine, but for local newspapers as well. While an article simply stating the menu of a benefit dinner and

how many were in attendance would not be of interest to anyone but the local congregation, an article on the person who benefits from the dinner might be of interest to many people in the denomination. For instance, suppose your church held a benefit dinner of a cancer patient. Instead of reporting simply on the dinner, report on that person's life and what that person has contributed to your church. Use the article as a way to help other churches see the importance of helping cancer patients within their own congregations. You may also be able to use the article as a way to encourage cancer patients to seek God's strength, peace, and comfort during their struggle.

Many churches and some denominational groups simply send photographs for us to publish. Photographs are important in order to make any publication more attractive. Only photographs that are close to the subject matter and are in focus reproduce well. It is also important to describe what is taking place in the photograph. Please do not simply send photographs of people eating or standing in a group without an article accompanying it.

Another way to get information concerning your church in our magazine is to advertise it beforehand. For example, if your church is having a special youth service, why not send in an advertisement to *The Free Will Baptist* inviting other churches to bring their youth? The same can be done for fundraisers, revival services, etc.

While we do not want to discourage churches from submitting articles to our magazine, we would like to improve our publication by making it more interesting to the larger audience. For this reason, we are trying to begin columns on different topics, and encourage more variety in what we print. Please keep these suggestions in mind when preparing future submissions to *The Free Will Baptist*.