

So you are interested in publishing an article in the *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*. Here are some suggestions for potential authors.

The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership (JACL) seeks to engage Christian leadership professionals in a forward-looking dialogue about how to practice servant leadership in the light of ongoing research taking place across a variety of denominational, cultural, and disciplinary environments.

Thus writing an article for the JACL is more than putting onto paper a stream of ideas as they come to a person. It is more than a set of observations or descriptions or prescriptions. Before the manuscript is ever accepted for the review process the editor pre-reads the manuscript to determine if the article matches the focus of the journal and has potential to be published. There is also a concern about the quality of the article. Here is what the editor looks for:

A. A central question, focus or thesis around which the article is built

- This central theme should be clearly stated early in the article.
- All the key terms should be defined.
- The scope of the article should be defined.
- Do not use your article to simply introduce the reader to the subject. Assume the reader knows the basic facts and focus your attention on arguing your thesis. Try to move beyond description to explanation and analysis.

B. A theoretical framework that is used to analyze the data

- The theory/methodology should be stated and important parts in it that will be discussed. This may involve citing authors and their works.
- When a theoretical issue is presented, both sides of it should be discussed and only then a statement of your own position and the reasons for that position. Avoid pat and simplistic answers. It is alright to hold your position firmly but be aware of the criticism of your position and the reasons why you continue to hold it.

C. A compelling presentation and adequate documentation of your data

- Give as much data as is needed to argue your point, but do not flood your article with data. A simple compilation of data is not an article. In other words an article is more than a simple description of something – it also includes an analysis of that data.

- Reference your sources carefully. APA style requires in-text references with a corresponding reference list in the end.
- Quotes need page numbers of the original sources.
- Use APA style in documenting your sources and in presenting the bibliography.

D. Specific conclusions and implications either for leadership practice or further study

- Be as specific as you can in drawing conclusions. Avoid broad sweeping generalizations that mean nothing in particular. For example, don't appeal to a general term such as "Christian character." If you use the term, give examples of the character qualities you have in mind.
- Note questions that may remain unanswered. Rarely does an article deal with a topic that can be completely or definitively answered within the eight to fifteen pages generally allowed. If you can do so, the problem is probably too trivial. Rather choose a significant question delimited enough to deal with adequately within the limits, discuss it and then note questions that remain.

E. Readability

- While all articles have to be research or theory –based they need to communicate to the leaders and practitioners not familiar with the language of statistics or technical research.
- Avoid technical jargon. Explain all technical terms carefully and illustrate them if appropriate.
- Test your writing on a friend that is not familiar with your professional expertise or denominational in-language. If s/he looks puzzled as you read it out to him or her you may have to say it in more common language.

Before submitting your article to the editor, take a look also at the [Guidelines for Authors](#) on the JACL website and review the [criteria](#) for the evaluation of manuscripts.

God bless you in your ministry of writing for Christian leaders.



Erich W. Baumgartner, Editor
Journal of Applied Christian Leadership
<http://www.andrews.edu/services/jacl/>