

## **“IT FILLS A SPACE”**

I have been reading church bulletins more six decades. I have served as editor of church bulletins for over five decades. At one time, the mailbox of the church where I preached received approximately 150 bulletins each week. I have literally seen almost everything there is to be seen in church bulletins. I once received a bulletin containing an article (actually, a “non-article”) that has prompted me to make a few observations (admittedly non-expert, and subjective in part) on the subject. I quote a few excerpts from said “non-article”:

One of the great “privileges” of being a minister is getting to write a bulletin article every week. [When you forget to write your article] . . . you run up to the nearest typewriter, pray for few mistakes, and start writing an article about writing articles which has little, if any significance, but at least it fills a space. It’s a lot like eating “Fruity Pebbles” for breakfast—little if any nutritional value, but at least it fills your tummy.

The writer quoted above thought he was being humorous, but tears would be more appropriate than laughter at his pitiful lines. Whose fault is it when bulletins contain anything of “little, if any significance”? It is the fault of preachers who are too lazy to make the mental effort and take the time to write anything to edify the church. The preacher quoted above need not have bothered; his readers would have been at least as well (maybe better) off if his space had been left blank.

The article from which I pulled the excerpts is, however, illustrative of much of the material in bulletins I have received over the years. So much of it is space-filler, and that is about all (at least the writer quoted above was honest about his grudging attitude toward a nuisance. So many bulletins contain little of merit, little to instruct, little to edify the soul—and they do so very unattractively. Some are even worse—teaching error and/or publicizing activities and events that brethren should be opposing with one voice rather than encouraging.

Like so many other things, a church bulletin can be a great tool for Truth and righteousness, or it can range anywhere from a colossal waste of time, paper, ink, and postage to being a tool to weaken and destroy the church. Here are some suggestions for bulletin editors:

1. Make the bulletin attractive—it represents the church of the Lord. Use of color and various type styles create eye appeal. However good the content may be, if readers don’t read it (because the vehicle turns them off) it will be useless.
2. Use it both as a teaching medium as well as a news medium.
3. Make sure that it teaches only the Truth (both in original and borrowed articles), that it publishes articles only faithful brethren have written, and that it publicizes only Scripturally authorized activities.

4. If you are not good at writing and layout skills, get help from those who are.
5. Give it the time and attention any worthwhile project deserves, and it will produce good fruit.

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**[Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, June 28, 2015, of which I was editor.]