



Reviewers' Guide

Thank you for agreeing to write a review for the *MB Herald*. Reviews are among the most difficult writing assignments to do well. They require writing skill, knowledge, and critical judgment. They provide an important service, however, and can lead to the enrichment of our readers' lives.

A good review should contain the following:

- **A brief description of the item being reviewed.** What is it about? What does it have to say on the topic? Is it primarily educational or entertainment? Who is the intended audience?
- **A sentence or paragraph identifying the author/artist/producer and their perspective.** It may be helpful to consult additional sources to gain an informed view of the author's context and experience.
- **An evaluation from a mature biblical perspective.** Don't be afraid to be critical, but try to be fair.
 - * What is the book's purpose?
 - * Are concepts clearly defined? Ideas well developed?
 - * Does the author aim for a balanced perspective or clearly betray a particular bias?
 - * On what authority does the author make his or her argument and observations?
 - * Does the reviewed item add something new to the conversation, present familiar arguments in a fresh way, or simply add to the volume of resources already existing?
 - * Your review may recommend a good book/CD/movie/TV show, point out strengths and limitations in a mediocre book/CD/movie/TV show, or warn readers against a book/CD/movie/TV show that has no merit.
- Comments on the book/CD/movie/TV show's significance within a larger theme.

- **Does the book raise an issue of great importance or could it be used as an example or starting point for an important discussion?** (e.g. Why are there no great contemporary Christian novels? Why are Christians listening to this type of music? What does Hollywood have to say about Christian themes in movies?) If used with discretion, this can be an important element in a review.

- Consider questions such as: How does the material relate to our conference and evangelical Anabaptist character? Does it meet certain needs that are especially evident among us? Does it suggest certain things that we as a church should be doing? Does it challenge our theological understanding? Do we have insights that surpass or can be used to critique the author's viewpoint?

- **Other information, if relevant.** Is this a reprint/re-release? Is it illustrated (well or poorly)? Are there maps, indexes, etc.?

Ultimately, your review should answer the question "is this a book/CD/movie/TV show worth reading/listening to/watching?" and, if not, what resource might be more helpful?

In all of the above, an awareness that the *MB Herald* is a communication tool of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Review specifications

Please identify yourself at the end of the review, (e.g. *Jan Smith is a member of Linden (Alta.) MB Church, or Jan Smith is a freelance writer from Sherwood Park, Alta.*). For our files, we would also appreciate an outline of your interests, experience, areas of expertise, and whether you wish to review more material, how often, and what kind. Include your mailing address and phone number.

Book specification: Title
Author (s)
(For unsolicited reviews, include publisher, year of publication)

CD specifications: Title
Artist(s)/Band name
(For unsolicited reviews, include music company, year of release)

Movie specifications: Title,
Director, year of release

TV show specifications: Title
Network, year of airing

Payment is usually the review book, CD, or DVD. However, if the reviewer already owns a copy, payment is \$25. Payment for a theatre movie review is \$25.

The bulk of the review (500–1,000 words) will be published online at www.mbherald.com.

Please include an additional 100-word introduction/teaser to the book for use in the print magazine. The teaser should grab the reader's attention with a provocative opening, provide a very brief evaluation of the overall merit of the reviewed item, and leave the reader wanting to learn more (by reading the full article online).

We reserve the right to edit your review according to our requirements and style guidelines.

When quoting Scripture, please use New International Version (2011). If using another translation, please indicate. We reserve the right to substitute NIV 2011 for another translation.

Use gender-inclusive language.

Use Canadian spelling. *Mennonite Brethren Herald* references the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, the Canadian Press Stylebook, and the Mennonite Publishing Network Supplement to the Chicago Manual of Style.

Please finish your review within a month of receiving your assignment, unless another deadline has been arranged.

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Mennonite Brethren Herald supports the MB Confession of Faith, available online at www.mbconf.ca.

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