

PROCEDURE FOR PRESENTING STUDY PAPERS

The increasing number of Bible study papers, articles, and doctrinal treatises being submitted to the ministry has made us aware of a need for a more consistent format or presentation.

It is surprising how difficult it can be to determine exactly what a person is trying to say. Oftentimes the main idea is buried somewhere in the middle of the paper, or it may be obscurely worded. Even when reading papers presented by experienced writers, it could be very useful to know exactly where to look in the paper for a simple statement of the thesis, the consequences of the concept if proved, the underlying assumptions, and the most important points.

It is for this reason we request all future doctrinal and Bible study papers be submitted in a standard format. The sample format below illustrates the format we prefer.

In addition, we have a couple of other suggestions to offer. Unless you are linguistically qualified, we suggest you avoid arguments based on linguistic evidence. If you cannot find a reputable translation to support your argument, it is probably unsupportable and may not be given credence by knowledgeable persons. Also, remember the failure to disprove a thesis *does not* constitute proof of the thesis.

Please feel free to share your research with us. We always like to hear from you, and let us encourage you that using this format will increase the possibilities for your work to be understood correctly.

SAMPLE FORMAT

TITLE:

SUBJECT:

AUTHOR:

THESIS: One paragraph stating your position or proposition.

CONSEQUENCES: A statement of importance of the thesis and its impact on existing beliefs, doctrines, or practices of the church.

ASSUMPTIONS: Sequentially numbered statements of relevant concepts you believe are agreed upon by all concerned.

SUPPORT: Sequentially numbered points of proof, evidence, or argument offered in *descending* order of importance—the strongest and most central point first.

SUMMARY: One page summary of the foregoing.

NOTES: Any further explanation you wish to offer including a discussion of anticipated objections to your presentation.

VERBAL PRESENTATION TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

If the Council wishes to hear a verbal presentation of your paper, we will follow these basic rules:

1. You will present your paper without interruption.
2. A time limit for this presentation will be agreed upon.
3. The Council members will then present their questions for you to answer or expand upon.
4. There will be a formal response to the paper.