

## Book Review for the Journal of Religious Leadership Submission Guidelines

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Thank you for working on a book review. Here are some considerations for you as you write your review:

- 1) Yes, we are serious about the word limit. Stay close to 800 words. Often a longer book review means that the writing is not crisp, and we know that our readers are interested in helpful information on whether or not to engage with this book further. Yes, it will get returned to you for you to shorten it if it is too long.
- 2) Use the following formatting guidelines as you prepare your review:
  - Garamond 12 point font, single line spaced, 1 inch margins, left justified, with single space between sentences
  - Include bibliographic information in the heading, all justified left, as in this example:  
**PILGRIMS AND PRIESTS: CHRISTIAN MISSION IN A POST-CHRISTIAN SOCIETY**  
BY: STEFAN PAAS  
LONDON: SCM PRESS, 2019  
257 PP. PAPERBACK  
ISBN 978-0-334-05877-9
  - The paragraph setting for first line (indentation) should be set to .5 inch (rather than using the tab key). Do not double space between paragraphs.
- 3) Consider your audience. Your readership are people who are teaching and/or engaged in religious leadership. They want to think theologically and critically about leadership theory and practice. Consider whether and how this book would be helpful in a classroom, a boardroom, or a congregation. It is ok to name this directly at the end of the review and say, “This would be a great book for introduction students to leadership” or “I would recommend this book for use with a church board but not in a classroom. While it is very practical, it does not try to present primary literature for critical engagement.”
- 4) The content of your review should engage these issues:
  - a. Descriptive work – what is the big argument?
  - b. Structure of the book – how is it laid out?
  - c. Analysis of content – what theories does it engage?
  - d. Audience – who would be helped most by this book?
- 5) We recommend that your book review be structured in this way:
  - a. First paragraph – introduce us to the book, the author(s), and the main argument of the book. What does this book intend to do/say?
  - b. Next paragraphs – Give us the structure and main points of the book. This is not evaluative work. This is letting the reader know what the author is attempting to say.
  - c. Final paragraph or two – This is where your voice emerges. You can let us know how this book would work/not work in your ecclesial context. You can pose questions you would want to answer. Finally, let us know where you would recommend this book would be helpful/useful in religious leadership.
- 6) We encourage you to engage theologically. Do remember that you are writing to a broad Christian audience, with readers from varying denominational, theological, and ecclesiological

perspectives and backgrounds. While doing this, you are helping all of us think about the work of religious leadership.

- 7) We do not shy away from critical engagement. In the midst of this, the question isn't our personal preferences – it is how does this author speak to the intended audience. The intended audience may not be your or your denomination/theology. That's ok, and it is ok to point that out. When we are critical, we want our comments to be more descriptive and analytical and not personal. We are not sycophantic, nor are we ad hominem. Engage critically without engaging negatively. Have an intellectual debate. And do not criticize personal preference. The question is – does this book serve the purpose it sets out to do?
- 8) Remember that we live in a web of relationships, and we definitely want to treat others as we would want to be treated.

Revised: January 2025