Stellenbosch Theological Journal (STJ)

13 April 2016

**RE: NEW SUBMISSION OF PREVIOUS ARTICLE**

“*Expressing the Voice of our Children and Youth: A plea for Renewal in Church Structures for Child and Youth Ministries Based on Tendencies Confirmed by Young People in the Presbytery in Wellington*”.

Dear Ms. H. Nienaber and Prof R. Vosloo

The feedback letter sent to us on 28 October 2015 has reference. We received the feedback from the reviewers with gratitude. Based on this feedback, the authors have decided to rework the document. This is therefore a new submission.

The title was changed to: “*Exploring the voices of children and youth: A plea for renewal in Church structures for Child and Youth Ministries*”. The table below summarises how the feedback was addressed in the new product.

Regards

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Comments from reviewers:** | **Authors’ response** |
| Title | The title is too long. / The title of the proposed article promises a renewal of Church structures for child and youth ministries within the Presbytery of Wellington (URCSA). | The article was rewritten and the title is changed. |
| Introduction | Introduction is too long. There is in the introduction not a clearly stated research question. The introduction should also include a summary of the structure of the article. | The introduction was reformulated and the research question was stated clearly. |
| Research Methodology | This whole research methodology section needs to be revised. What is your actual method and research design? How did you go about analysing the data you received? What is the basis for the type of questions you ask? The methodology should be explained in more detail. Why did you use these questions? What is the scientific motivation/criteria for the formulation of these questions? How did you conduct this research? The groups are too big to be focus groups? | We have changed the title and provided a clear description of the research questions and methodology.  |
| Academic writing | As noted above, the title of the article and also the empirical data collected could make this fundamental contribution but the manner in which it is written is unacceptable. I do not see the difference between this article and the minutes or report of a church policy document.  It has huge potential to contribute to the discipline but has to be re-written according to academic standards. The article does not meet the technical requirements, for example the font is throughout the article not according to the guidelines supplied. | The article was rewritten in an academic way. The font, line spacing and Bibliography is done according to the journal’s specifications. |
| Content | The arguments made in this paper are rather disjointed and incoherent. It requires more scientifically theological sources. The article has great potential but needs to be revised.You do not define children or youth in terms of age. Do you include this age segment also in your research?You give no evidence for the decline of the youth in the church. | We revisited the article as a whole and proper definitions, descriptions and sources were added.The discussion is aligned with the introduction and includes a problem statement, background (which describe the current state of affairs), findings and recommendations. |
| Data | The empirical data collected is rich but has not been recorded according to academic criterion. This is sad because this data is rich in its capacity to account for a good article. Why is there not any critical reflection on the data obtained? For each question you should not only give the raw data but also a critical analysis of the data. All the above-mentioned data has to be theologically analysed and coded. It cannot merely be listed and concluded. How are the conclusions made? What is the hermeneutical lens used?  | The data was analysed in a scientific manner, and an independent coder was utilised. The findings are presented in terms of the themes that emanated from this process. |
| Spelling and Grammar | Spelling and grammar errors-“Structures for child” should rather be structures for children- based on tendencies confirmed by young people” can be deleted- Voice – is there only one voice or should it rather be the plural “voices”, because it seems that there are different voices present among the children and youth?- Hendriks is spelled as Hendricks throughout the article. | The spelling and grammar errors throughout the article was corrected. |
| Sources | Most of the article is based on unpublished and relatively old sources for the topic being discussed. | This issue had been addressed and additional and more recent sources were worked into the argument. |
| Bibliography | Bibliography does not meet the requirements of the Harvard reference system. See the manuscript. | The bibliography is done according to the Harvard method and journal’s specifications. |