

JUDSON PRESS

PUBLISHERS SINCE 1824

BOOK PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

WHO WE ARE

Our History

Established in 1824 as the Baptist General Tract Society, **Judson Press** has been known by many names and has published a wide variety of resources. Under the name of the American Baptist Publication Society, the organization produced tracts, Bibles, Sunday school materials, books, and denominational resources. In selecting an imprint for ecumenical publishing, in 1922 the Publication Society registered the trademark **Judson Press** in honor of the missionary Adoniram Judson.

Since 2003 **Judson Press** has been the publishing ministry of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, located at the denominational headquarters in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia. As part of the American Baptist Churches USA, **Judson Press** seeks to provide Christ-centered leadership resources for the transformation of persons, congregations, communities, and cultures.

While intentionally producing practical resources for the church universal, **Judson Press** continues to honor our denominational identity, being passionate about contemporary social issues, including gender, racial, and environmental justice. Our resources are distributed nationally in local bookstores, on Amazon, and via our website (www.judsonpress.com).

Since the late 1970s, **Judson Press** has actively sought to publish resources for the African American church. Offering a diverse range of resources from early sermon collections such as *Best Black Sermons* to more recent titles such as *Pulpit & Politics: The Separation of*

Church & State in the Black Church by Marvin McMickle, **Judson Press** is a recognized leader in providing Christian resources of African American interest. In fact, *Publishers Weekly* has declared, “**Judson Press** has long been the publishing authority on the lived experience of African American Christianity.”

Our Place in the Industry

Judson Press is a *small to mid-sized, theologically moderate Christian publisher*, producing ten to twelve (10-12) titles each year. We have more than 300 titles in print, ranging from our classic best-seller for pastors, *The Star Book for Ministers*, to the latest volume in our new “Living Church” series, *Welcoming Community: Diversity That Works*.

We are a *traditional royalty press*, meaning that we take responsibility for the editorial development, design and production, and marketing the book. Our authors receive a royalty earned on sales of the book—a contracted percentage of the net revenues.

Finally, **Judson Press** is a *niche publisher*. We do not publish “everything” nor do we attempt to be all things to all people. Like most small publishers, we focus our energies on a specialized set of publishing categories, called *niches*. These are spaces we have carved out as our areas of expertise in the industry.

Judson Press’s primary niches are:

- **Practical resources for the church and leaders**
 - Pastoral & sermon helps
 - Ministry resources
 - Christian education & discipleship studies
 - Seasonal program resources
- **Multicultural books**
 - Church resources
 - Sermons and preaching helps
 - Inspirational and Christian living
- **Baptist history and identity**, especially for theologically moderate Baptists

Judson’s secondary niches include **devotional, inspirational, and Christian living** titles with a unique hook and a narrowed target audience.

What We Are NOT

- A book packager
- A book distributor
- A subsidy press or self-publisher
- Exclusively a Baptist publishing house

We Do NOT Publish

- Children’s books
- Curriculum (except for ABCUSA’s *Judson Bible Journeys for Adults*)
- Doctoral dissertations
- Gift books or poetry
- Fiction, memoir, or personal experience

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

1. **A compelling idea:** It's true that there is nothing new under the sun—including book ideas—but be passionate about your idea and be knowledgeable about the subject matter.
2. **A unique package:** The idea may be familiar, but approach it from a different angle or present the content in a different format.
3. **A clearly identified audience:** No book is for everyone, but every book is for someone. Identify your intended reader, including as appropriate gender, race, age, health, education, theological position.
4. **A good fit for Judson's program:** Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the place Judson Press holds in the industry and how your project suits our current publishing program.
5. **A proactive author:** Like all publishers today, Judson Press seeks an author who is committed to being a full partner in the marketing and promotion of the book—online and in person.
6. **Quality writing:** Finally, we are looking for books that are well written, with engaging style and solid biblical content. Be sure to match your writing voice to your reading audience.

Ingredients of a Judson Press Book Proposal

- **Résumé or curriculum vitae:** You are part of what makes your proposed book unique. What experience, education, or affiliations establish your credibility as its author?
- **Working title(s):** Ultimately, the final title will be selected by the publisher in light of marketing considerations, but a good working title catches the editor's eye and imagination. Feel free to include 3-6 alternate working titles as well!
- **Summary description:** *No more than* one paragraph of 3–5 sentences, clearly establishing the unique and compelling elements of the project.
- **Manuscript specifics:** Tell us details about the project, including:
 - What is the projected length of the final manuscript (word count or page count)?
 - When do you expect to complete the manuscript, if it isn't complete now?
 - What special design elements or features do you envision for the project (trim size, illustrations, graphics or pull quotes, etc.)?
- **Table of contents:** This should be annotated to provide a 1–3 sentence description of each chapter. *This is the most important element for the editor's consideration!*
- **Target audience:** Identify the demographic slice of Christian readership that you intend to reach with this book. Ideally, this audience should be accessible through mailing lists, niche magazines or newsletters, affinity groups, or other strategic promotional efforts.
- **Market analysis:** Identify the competing titles already on the market and provide a concise description of each, comparing and contrasting each existing resource with your proposed volume. *This is another key element in your proposal.*
 - At minimum, include the 3-4 best-selling books in your category *and* the 3-4 most closely related titles in your keyword search.
 - For each competing title, provide basic information (author, title, publisher, year of publication, pages) and a concise summary related to the writer's purpose and intended audience.
 - How is your proposed book unique and compelling in contrast?

- **Marketing plan:** Tell us how you are going to help promote your book, including as many of the following strategies as possible:
 - Contacts that you might tap for exposure or endorsement
 - media personalities (print, radio, television)
 - experts in the field (potential foreword writer, endorsers)
 - Related publications (newsletters, magazines, websites)
 - For your submission of articles that are excerpts or adaptations of the book’s content
 - For Judson’s purchase of display ads to accompany your article
 - Organizations or groups that might promote the book through their networks
 - Professional or academic organizations in which you hold membership
 - Affinity groups related to the book’s content or intended audience
 - Alumni groups, including Greek societies
 - Your own networks, personal, professional, and virtual
 - Your website, blog(s), social networking, etc., including statistics re: “friends,” “followers,” and “visitors”
 - Your speaking platform, including upcoming schedule with dates, locations, and expected attendees
 - See www.JudsonPress.com/for_authors.cfm for more marketing plan ideas. Be creative!
- **Sample content:** Send roughly *25 pages* of the manuscript, including an introductory chapter that establishes the rationale for the project as well as material that is representative of the majority of the book in both format and content. Do *not* send the complete manuscript.

Submit Queries & Proposals

1. **Electronically via e-mail: acquisitions@judsonpress.com**
 - “Cover” e-letter, including working title, summary, and your contact info
 - Attach proposal, résumé or CV, and sample content as Word documents
 - Confirm receipt with separate e-mail (no attachments)
2. **Hard copy via USPS**
 - Acquisitions Editor
 - Judson Press
 - P.O. Box 851
 - Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

OR via UPS/FedEx
 Acquisitions Editor
 Judson Press
 588 N Gulph Rd
 King of Prussia, PA 19406

A Good Query Letter

- Working title
- Summary paragraph
- Target audience
- Brief description of author
- Status of manuscript

NOTE: Please allow 3–6 months for the editorial review process. You may e-mail the editor after an interval of 3 months to inquire about the status of the project. Again, do *not* send the complete manuscript. **We do NOT accept telephone queries.**