

JUDSON PRESS

PUBLISHERS SINCE 1824

BOOK PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Updated November 2007

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 curriculum materials, books, and denominational resources. In the interest of selecting an imprint under which it could market books and supplies outside the denomination, 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 National Ministries, the Home Mission Society of the American Baptist Churches USA, located at the denominational headquarters in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, just 10 miles outside of Philadelphia. As part of National Ministries, Judson Press seeks to provide Christ-centered leadership resources for the transformation of persons, congregations, communities, and cultures.

While continuing to honor our long and distinguished history as a denominational publishing house, since 1922 Judson Press has intentionally sought to produce practical resources for the church universal. In keeping with our denominational identity, we are moderate in our theological position and passionate about contemporary social issues, including gender, racial, and environmental justice. Our resources are distributed nationally in local bookstores, Christian and secular, and via our website (www.judsonpress.com).

From as far back as 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 recent

titles such as *The Gospel Remix: Reaching the Hip Hop Generation* and *What to Expect When You're Accepted: An African American Christian's Guide to College*, Judson Press is considered by many to be a recognized leader in providing nonfiction Christian books 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."

What We Are Not

- A book packager
- A book distributor
- A subsidy or self-publishing company
- Exclusively a denominational publishing house

We Do NOT Publish

- Fiction
- Poetry
- Memoir or personal experience
- Doctoral dissertations
- Academic texts
- Curriculum
- Chapter books for children

Our Place in the Industry

Judson Press is a small to mid-sized Christian publisher, producing twelve to fourteen (12-14) 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 our latest inspirational volume, *Before the Thunder Rolls: Devotions for NASCAR Fans*.

We are a traditional royalty press, meaning that we absorb the costs (and risks) of 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 publisher’s 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 to medium-sized publishers, Judson Press focuses its energies on a specialized set of publishing categories, called *niches*. These are the spaces we have carved out as Judson’s areas of expertise in the industry. Our primary niches are the following:

- **Practical resources for the church and church leaders**
 - Pastoral and sermon helps
 - Small-group studies

- Discipleship
- Christian education (*not* curriculum)
- Seasonal program resources
- **Resources for African American Christians**
 - Church resources
 - Sermons and preaching helps
 - Inspirational
 - Self-help
- **Baptist history and identity**

Judson’s secondary niches include devotionals, general inspiration, multicultural picture books for children, and Christian living titles. However, in each of these secondary categories, we are looking for books that have a unique hook and a narrowed target audience—*not* titles intended for “all Christians” nor even “all Christian men” or “all Christian women.”

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 (e.g., in a less-common genre, for a different audience, in a new medium, with humor, etc.).
3. **A clearly identified audience:** No book is for everyone, but every book is for someone. Think about the target audience for your project, including consideration of gender, race, age, health, education, and 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:** Gone are the days when an author stays at home in introverted splendor. 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.
6. **Quality writing:** Finally, we are looking for books that are well written, with engaging style and some degree of sophistication. Be sure to consider the appropriateness of your writing voice to your reading audience.

Ingredients of a Judson Press Book Proposal

- **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.
- **Summary description:** This should be *no more than* one paragraph of 3–5 sentences, clearly establishing the unique and compelling elements of the project.

- **Target audience:** Identify the demographic slice of Christian readership that you intend to reach with this book.
- **Table of contents:** This should be annotated to provide a 1–3 sentence description of each chapter.
- **Market analysis:** Identify the competing titles already on the market—the best-selling and most closely related titles in your category or keyword search. Provide basic information on each (author, title, publisher, year of publication, pages), and compare and contrast your project with each competing title.
- **Marketing plan:** Tell us how you are going to help promote your book, including any of the following contacts that you might tap for exposure or endorsement:
 - media personalities (print, radio, television)
 - experts in the field (foreword writer, endorsers)
 - related publications (newsletters, magazines, websites)
 - professional or academic organizations
 - affinity groups
 - alumni groups, including Greek societies
- **Résumé or curriculum vitae:** You are part of what makes your proposed book unique. What experience, education, or affiliations establish your credibility as author of this book?
- **Sample content:** Do *not* send the complete manuscript, unless specifically requested by the editor. (The only exception to this rule is a children’s picture book.) Send roughly 25 pages of the manuscript, including an introductory chapter that establishes the rationale for the project and then material that is representative of the majority of the book in both format and content.

Ingredients of a Good Query Letter

- Working title
- Summary paragraph
- Target audience
- Brief description of author
- Status of 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 a separate e-mail, without attachments

2. Hard copy via USPS **or via UPS/FedEx**

Acquisitions Editor Judson Press P.O. Box 851 Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851	Acquisitions Editor Judson Press 588 N Gulph Rd King of Prussia, PA 19406
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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. We are *not* able to accept telephone queries. Again, do *not* send the complete manuscript. If you would like your proposal returned to you, include a SASE.

Most Wanted Projects

(updated regularly)

- New titles in the classic “Work of the Church” series
- New titles in the new “Star Book for Pastors” series
- Seasonal program resources for pastors and churches
 - Lent/Easter
 - Advent/Christmas
- Baptist identity resources
 - For new church members
 - For older children (school aged)
- Special-interest devotional books
 - Sports fans
 - Hobbyists
- Additional titles in the “African American Christian’s Guide ...” series
- Multicultural preaching and ministry resources
 - Hispanic
 - Asian American
 - Native American (American Indian)
 - Cross cultural