

# JUDSON PRESS

## PUBLISHERS SINCE 1824

### BOOK PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Updated January 2011

## 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 the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, located at the denominational headquarters in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, just 10 miles 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 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](http://www.judsonpress.com)).

Beginning in 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 *I'm a Piece of Work: Sisters Shaped by God* by Cynthia Hale, *Leading Your African American Church through Pastoral Transition* by Ralph Watkins, and *Deacons in Today's Black Baptist Church* by Marvin McMickle, 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
- Children's books

### Our Place in the Industry

Judson Press is a small to mid-sized 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 first volume

in our new “Living Church” series, *Making Friends, Making Disciples*.

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 smaller publishers, Judson Press focuses its energies on a specialized set of publishing categories, called *niches*. These are spaces we have carved out as Judson’s areas of expertise in the industry. Our primary niches are:

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

- Discipleship
- Christian education (*not* curriculum)
- Seasonal program resources
- **Multicultural books, for African American, Hispanics, and Asian American Christians**
  - Church resources
  - Sermons and preaching helps
  - Inspirational and Christian living
  - Self-help
- **Baptist history and identity**

Judson’s secondary niches include devotional, inspirational, 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 isolation. 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 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. 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.

- **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, or affinity groups.
- **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!*
- **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 (author, title, publisher, year of publication, pages). Compare and contrast your project with each competing title. This is another key element in your proposal.
- **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 (potential foreword writer, endorsers)
  - related publications (newsletters, magazines, websites)
  - professional or academic organizations
  - affinity groups
  - alumni groups, including Greek societies
  - your own web presence through website, blog(s), social networking, e-mail list, etc.
- **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. 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.

<p><b>Ingredients of a Good Query Letter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working title</li> <li>• Summary paragraph</li> <li>• Target audience</li> <li>• Brief description of author</li> <li>• Status of manuscript</li> </ul>
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<b>Submit Queries &amp; Proposals</b>	
<b>1. Electronically via e-mail: <a href="mailto:acquisitions@judsonpress.com">acquisitions@judsonpress.com</a></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Cover” e-letter, including working title, summary, and your contact info</li> <li>• Attach proposal, résumé or CV, and sample content as Word documents</li> <li>• Confirm receipt with a separate e-mail, without attachments</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Hard copy via USPS</b>	<b>or via UPS/FedEx</b>
Acquisitions Editor	Acquisitions Editor
Judson Press	Judson Press
P.O. Box 851	588 N Gulph Rd
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851	King of Prussia, PA 19406

**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

- New titles in the classic “Work of the Church” series
- New titles in the “Star Book for Ministers” series
- New titles in the new “Living Church” series
- Small-group study resources
  - With helps for leaders/facilitators
  - With questions for discussion
  - With action steps for participants
- Baptist identity resources
  - For new church members
  - For older children (school aged)
- Multicultural preaching and ministry resources
  - Hispanic
  - Asian American
  - Native American (American Indian)
  - Cross cultural