

FAQs – Getting Published via ChristianManuscriptSubmissions.com (CMS)

I often get the questions below about publication of my book (Losers Like Us – Redefining Discipleship After Epic Failure) Aug. 1, 2014 by David C Cook. Feel free to contact me (see footer) with questions or dialog.

What is christianmanuscriptsubmissions.com (CMS), and how did you find it?

It was God. I was a no-name with no agent to help, so my wife and I sought the Lord about publishing my book – either via self-publication or via a Christian publisher. I had been scanning the Writer’s Market Guide and Christian Writer’s Market Guide (both available online), and I found CMS. Created by a group of Christian publishers, it’s a secure website for submitting book proposals into a database; the publishers can search there for new authors and contact any they like.

Besides this website, do Christian publishers accept proposals submitted in other ways (like directly or via agents)?

Christian publishers can be flooded by proposals via mail, email, etc., so they urge writers (especially, I think, first-timers without agents) to submit via this site. I didn’t try submitting a proposal any other way, so I don’t know how they’d respond.

Does it “work”? That is, how many Christian publishers participate in using this site, and how do they use it?

The site itself provides a list of Christian publishers who use it (I don’t know of any who don’t). Whether it “works” – that is, how often they search the database and how often they contact an author – is up to them. For me, it did work.

Did you purchase both services (critiquing and editing) offered through the CMS website? Are they worth it?

Yes and yes! I purchased both, and I suggest you do too. If you do, you’ll get a professional publishing consultant who will help make your proposal more compelling and more attractive to publishers. Mine liked my proposal so much that she got approval from her consulting firm to give it a gold badge – the highest mark of quality, awarded to only about 1.5% of thousands of proposals they review annually, she said. This detail is important because that badge probably was my key to publication; I’m sure it caught the eye of David C Cook, a respected international publisher who knew what it meant. So get all the help you can to make your proposal as excellent as possible, in order to win this kind of positive attention.

What steps and timeframes were involved in getting your book discovered and published using the CMS site?

For me, the whole process took several years and included lots of prayer. The steps went something like this...

1. The writing: It took me about a year – pushing through distractions, lack of motivation, fear of self-exposure, writer’s block, and other challenges – to finish writing the manuscript, including lots of starts, stops, restarts, and rewrites.
2. The editing: It took about two more years for my wife – working around her full-time writing / editing job – to edit my manuscript and then for us to work through all of the edits (and my natural resistance to being edited) together.
3. The test readers: I gave my manuscript to several test readers, and implemented their best input.
4. The proposal: Following the steps on the CMS website, my wife and I prepared a proposal, got it critiqued and edited by one of CMS’s recommended publishing consultants, and then submitted it to the CMS database.
5. The waiting: There were months of waiting; then an email from Cook; then more months of waiting; then a contract.
6. The publishing: It took about another year for Cook to finish publication (editing, designing, promotion planning, etc.).

What are your best tips and suggestions on how to get discovered and published using CMS?

To compete with the deluge of other publication-seekers, make your manuscript and proposal the best you can. My tips:

1. Pray continuously that God will reveal his will, conform your will to his, and accomplish his desires (not yours).
2. Make sure your manuscript is finished, or nearly so – i.e., well written and rewritten, with polished sample chapters.
3. Get your manuscript edited by the best editor you can find or afford; my wife, a professional writer / editor, did mine.
4. When your manuscript is in good shape, go to the CMS site, <http://christianmanuscriptsubmissions.com/> (be sure to spell it correctly– including the final "s" before ".com" – or you may get an incorrect website with a similar name), and follow the instructions to create an initial draft of your book proposal, including your best sample chapters.
5. Using the site’s resources, hire a professional consultant to critique and edit your proposal; then implement the input.
6. Submit your finalized proposal to the site’s database (at a cost – see the website for pricing) for several months.
7. Decide how much (time, money, etc.) to invest. My proposal got no bites for nearly six months; if yours doesn’t either, you can pay to keep it in the database for longer, as many times as you like. The investment may or may not pay off.

How much does all of that cost, and how long does it take?

For current pricing and other details, consult the website itself; timelines vary, but remember that God is in control.