Ancient Faith Publishing

Manuscript Submission Guidelines

Thank you for considering Ancient Faith Publishing for your manuscript. We are a growing company with a small editorial staff, so we request that you review these guidelines thoroughly and follow them carefully. Our goal is to evaluate your submission as quickly and objectively as possible.

Mission

We publish only books by and for Orthodox Christians, and we are looking only for submissions that enhance our mission:

> ***Ancient Faith Ministries exists to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ through accessible and excellently crafted publications and creative media that evangelize, edify, educate, and engage, leading to a living experience of God through His Holy Orthodox Church.***

Important Notes for All Prospective Authors

Ancient Faith Publishing will not accept queries, proposals, manuscripts, or artwork generated by artificial intelligence (AI). Please see our attached addendum for more details regarding our AI use policy.

If your book contains extensive quotations from another author's copyrighted work that require permission for use (more than 500 words), it is your responsibility to obtain the necessary license from the publisher of the quoted work (or author, if not published by a publisher) and to pay any associated fees. This applies also to translations that are under copyright even if the source work is in the public domain. This requirement is standard practice in the publishing industry.

If you are a new convert to Orthodox Christianity, please wait to acquire some years of experience in the Faith before submitting a manuscript. In 1 Timothy 3:6, St. Paul warns against ordaining recent converts for their own sakes, but he goes on to explain that a waiting period is also for the sake of the whole Church. While Ancient Faith Ministries does not ordain anyone, publishing is part of the teaching ministry of the Church, and so we encourage the newly Orthodox to take the time to mature in the life of the Church before submitting a manuscript.

We are open to working with first-time authors who have a great idea. However, we do not have the resources to provide extensive editing for those whose writing skills are not yet of professional quality. The internet and your local library or bookstore are full of excellent advice for improving your writing, as well as tips on understanding the publishing industry.

If you feel you have a great nonfiction idea but lack the skill to do it justice, one option is to employ a developmental editor or ghostwriter.

Books for Adults

What We're Looking For

We are particularly interested in books about Orthodox spirituality that are suitable for laypeople; books on prayer, worship, the saints, and the church year; and books that address how to live out our Orthodox Faith in contemporary life.

As a general rule, we are not interested in collections of homilies or essays or in academic works. We are also unlikely to consider works of theology or biblical commentary by authors without the qualifications and/or proper credentials to write on these subjects, nor are we likely to consider works that focus heavily on an author's personal story (memoir). Books of this type are not usually of interest to our audience unless the author is very famous.

Please note that we are ***NOT*** a publisher of liturgical texts, i.e., works used in the conduct of church services. While we are unable to consider anything falling into this category, we may consider collections of prayers and other readings intended strictly for personal, devotional purposes.

Books We Are ***Unlikely*** to Consider

Fiction: <u>Ancient Faith Publishing is not reviewing proposals for adult fiction books at the present time</u>. This category includes fictionalized lives of saints. However, straight biography/hagiography falls under the category of nonfiction and will be considered.

Material that is available free elsewhere: We do not publish material that has previously appeared online or been distributed free in any format unless that format is affiliated with Ancient Faith Ministries (e.g., an AFM blog or podcast).

Self-published books: We are unable to consider republishing, reprinting, or distributing books that authors have already self-published. We encourage Orthodox authors to consider submitting their manuscripts to us before making the decision to self-publish.

"Crossover" books for the Christian market: Most of our readers are Orthodox (or working to become so) and are primarily interested in Orthodox materials. Many books on the market address Christian themes and have wide appeal in Protestant and Catholic circles, but comparatively few books draw on the immense wealth of our Orthodox Faith. This is the segment of the Christian book market in which we operate most effectively.

Logistics for All Adult Queries

We accept only email submissions. We will not accept, return, or respond to manuscripts, proposals, or queries sent by fax or regular mail.

We usually respond to queries within one to two weeks. Full proposals, if requested, will be considered by our editorial and marketing teams, and we usually respond within eight weeks. Your proposal must include a full draft manuscript of your book before it can be considered.

All proposals are subject to multiple levels of review within Ancient Faith Publishing, including a theological review by a priest or other recognized expert. Some proposals, depending on subject matter, may be submitted to one or more experts in the relevant field prior to acceptance. If you are uncertain if your proposal would pass this level of scrutiny, please consult with your priest before submitting.

Submission Procedures for Adult Books

Step 1. Please send first a brief (one-page) query letter describing your book and its compatibility with our mission. Include your qualifications for writing the book (preferably a resume or CV), the projected word count, and your schedule for completing the manuscript. Send this brief query in the body of the email.

Please also submit (as an email attachment) a letter from your priest or confessor confirming that you are a member in good standing of your parish, are free of scandal, and have a blessing to write on the selected topic. If you are a member of the clergy, this letter should come from your bishop.

Step 2. If we are interested in seeing more, we will request a professionally prepared book proposal, formatted according to the instructions below. **A completed, full manuscript is required, along with all other Elements of a Nonfiction Book Proposal described below**. Combine all the information in a single Word document and send as an email attachment, with a brief cover letter in the body of the email. Include the words "AFP Submission," along with your surname and the title of the book in the filename of your attachment

Formatting for Adult Book Proposals

- All materials should be in 12-point standard serif font (e.g., Times, Minion, Georgia, or Cambria) with 1 to 1-1/2-inch margins. All submissions must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or RTF format. Please do not send PDFs.
- Queries and the descriptive sections of proposals may be single-spaced, with space between paragraphs and clear section headings.
- The manuscript itself must be double-spaced. Each chapter should begin on a new page.

- Use the standard half-inch indentation at the beginning of each paragraph. Do not add an extra line space between paragraphs.
- Use the Page Break tool rather than extra returns to begin a new page.

Elements of a Nonfiction Book Proposal for Adult Books

- **Description:** In one or two paragraphs, describe the book, including its rationale, scope, word count, illustrations, tables, etc.

- **Audience:** Describe the projected audience for the book. List any similar titles currently available and explain how your book is unique, or can be differentiated from others in the Orthodox or adjacent Christian markets.

  Marketing: Describe your "platform," including your social media presence, speaking engagements, podcasts, videos, blogs, etc.—and what you will do to help us promote your book.

- **Contents:** Include the entire, completed manuscript of your book, including the Table of Contents.

Again, full adherence to these guidelines is necessary for us to properly evaluate your submission.

Books for Children and Young Adults (Ancient Faith Kids)

What We Are and Aren't Looking For

Ancient Faith Kids will not accept queries, proposals, manuscripts, videos, or artwork generated by artificial intelligence.

We are interested in board book, picture book, chapter book, and young adult fiction and nonfiction manuscripts.

Subject areas may include aspects of church life or history, lives of saints, prayer books, Bible stories, and fictional stories that show God at work in children's lives. All these stories should contain an Orthodox flavor, reflecting our particular traditions and worldview. Picture book manuscripts should be approximately 600–1,000 words (shorter for board books).

We are generally not interested in stories or manuscripts with general Christian appeal that could be published by the broader Christian publishing community.

Logistics for All Children's and Young Adult Queries

We accept only email submissions. We will not accept, return, or respond to manuscripts, proposals, or queries sent by fax or regular mail.

We usually respond to queries and proposals within four to six weeks. If we decide your project is something we are looking for and have the means to publish, we will perform a detailed review and advise you of our decision.

Submission Procedures for Children's and Young Adult Books

How exciting that you are working to create a story or text that might inspire Orthodox children in their faith! Here are a few guidelines that will help us evaluate your manuscript quickly and objectively. First off, make sure your manuscript is professionally constructed, following the formatting instructions listed below, and ready for review. Feel free to contact Jane Meyer with questions.

Please also submit a letter from your priest or confessor confirming that you are a member in good standing of your parish, are free of scandal, and have a blessing to write on the selected topic. If you are a member of the clergy, this letter should come from your bishop.

For Board or Picture Books

Please send the full manuscript along with a cover letter and proposal, including a description of your book and how it fits with our mission; a brief bio, mentioning any prior publications and your qualifications for writing the book; and specify the target age range and word count. Format the text as an ordinary manuscript; there is no need to make a dummy or include notes for illustration at this stage. If you are offering your own professional-quality illustrations with the manuscript, please send samples as separate graphic files (JPEG or TIFF, around 1 MB each).

Regarding Illustrations

It is not necessary to submit art along with a board book or picture book manuscript. If we decide to publish your book, we will be responsible for finding an illustrator. The exception to this is if the author is also an experienced professional illustrator and has personally illustrated the book.

For Manuscripts Longer than 1,000 Words

Please query first with a brief (one-page) query letter describing your book and how it fits with our mission. Include in this query a short bio, mentioning any prior publications and your qualifications for writing the book, and specify the target age range and word count. Send this brief query in the body of the email, along with the first ten pages of the manuscript. If we are interested in your project, we will request the full manuscript. The manuscript should be sent as a single Word attachment, with a brief cover letter in the body of the email.

For Artists

We are certainly interested in seeing your work! Please send an email describing your experience and qualifications to Jane Meyer's address below. You may include up to five samples as graphic files (around 1 MB each, please) or a link to your web portfolio.

Formatting for All Children's Book Proposals

- All materials should be in 12-point standard serif font with 1-inch margins. All submissions must be in Microsoft Word. Please do not send PDFs.
- Queries and the descriptive sections of proposals may be single-spaced, with space between paragraphs and clear section headings.
- Sample chapters must be double-spaced. Each chapter should begin on a new page, about a third of the way down the page.

Please take the time to follow our guidelines and polish your proposal until it squeaks!

Contact Info

Send all submissions via email. Please include the words "AFP submission," the title of your book, and your surname in your subject line.

- Adult book submissions:

  Marci Johnson, Managing Editor
  marcij@ancientfaith.com

- Young adult and children's book submissions (Ancient Faith Kids):

  Jane Meyer, Children's Acquisitions Editor
  jmeyer@ancientfaith.com

Addendum: Ancient Faith Publishing Policy Regarding Use of AI

Overarching Philosophy of AFM regarding AI

Ancient Faith Ministries, Inc. believes that only human beings are created in the image of God, and therefore, only human beings should be creating spiritual content for other human image-bearers. We also believe that only human minds and talents are necessary for creating work that, according to our mission statement, aims to "evangelize, edify, educate, and engage, leading to a living experience of God through His Holy Orthodox Church." We have used these beliefs to form our policy on the acceptable uses of AI in authors' proposed manuscripts that we will consider for publication. More importantly, our beliefs have also served to highlight the unacceptable uses of AI that would prevent us from publishing a manuscript. Because we recognize that faithful Orthodox Christians may hold differing opinions on the use of AI, our Publishing organization has detailed these acceptable vs. unacceptable uses below.

Acceptable Uses of AI in Book Manuscripts

Research: We may, under certain conditions, consider manuscripts that have used AI during the research portion of writing. We understand that AI can sometimes be useful in finding source material or background information. However, it is absolutely essential that the author locate the primary source information and verify statements, data, quotations, etc. provided by AI, which is frequently inaccurate, especially in its interpretation of material; therefore it is necessary to double-check all information it provides. We are seeing many examples of AI-generated answers to research questions being wrong.

Unacceptable Uses of AI in Book Manuscripts

Note that most uses of AI are unacceptable on Ancient Faith Publishing books. A few examples that we would consider the most egregious are discussed below.

Generative AI: We will not consider manuscripts that have used any sort of generative AI, which uses large language models (LLMs) to create original content based on its training data.

Formulating outlines for a book: We believe that an author should be able to generate an outline based on their knowledge of the content; therefore, we highly discourage use of AI to generate outlines for your book.

Developmental editing and copy editing: As publishers, we know that a great deal of original thought happens during the editing phases of writing, and we do not want to lose this necessary and creative part of the process. We will not consider manuscripts that have used AI for developmental and/or copyediting, where AI tools were actually used to organize text, correct, or suggest revisions for grammar, repetition, paragraph and chapter structure, transitions, dictionary, syntax, and/or style. We employ a team of professional,

highly trained editors who will work directly with the author to address such issues in your manuscript. We will not consider any proposal where AI has been used to supplant or replace the work of human editors.

AI Applications: We will not consider manuscripts generated by using AI chatbots and LLMs that generate text. Some examples are: ChatGPT (OpenAI), Claude (Anthropic), Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Grammarly AI, Perplexity AI, and any other AI-powered writing assistant, app, or software.

Submission Tips

Not only does the use of generative AI interfere with the creative work described above, it also has a style of its own that is often identifiable. Some well-known AI "tells" include:

- Overuse of very short sentences
- Frequent use of short, one-sentence paragraphs
- "Not this, but that" sentence construction
- Overuse of three-part sequences/lists within sentences and paragraphs
- Extensive repeated explanations of main points
- Overuse of summaries at the ends of paragraphs

These style choices (when the "choice" is made by humans) can be a part of effective writing, but their frequency and repetition as often seen in AI tools result in a product that reveals writing that is not human-generated. We do not want AFP books to sound alike, written in ways that reflect the average patterns of text that are fed into LLMs. Currently, we are able to easily spot most uses of AI in book manuscripts.

Copyright Considerations

Copyright is a highly complex and often contested issue in our court system. Ancient Faith Publishing cannot advise authors in this area. However, at this time only human-authored works are eligible for protection under US Copyright laws. For more information see https://www.copyright.gov/ai/ OR consult an attorney who specializes in intellectual property law.

Closing Comments

We are aware that AI is an evolving technology. However, even if the tools improve exponentially so that AI writing is difficult to identify, we remain committed to never using machines to create Orthodox content. We will continue to hire people whose God-given skills we trust and who have put in the time, the prayer, and the mental and spiritual effort to create a unique, individual manuscript.