

BOOKS-A-MILLION (2024)

I've heard from a number of people who want to write a book. Since I've written 25 books as of 2024, I have some experience at writing. Here is some of what I've learned. First of all, whether poetry, novels or inspirational writing, it will take creativity, discipline and diligence. Nothing happens right away. The writing phase takes me about six to nine months or longer. I have to *make time* for writing because there are so many excuses not to. I usually find the mornings are the best times for me. I set aside a few hours each day to create. I always ask the Holy Spirit to inspire and work through me. It is hard to get started, but once I start the ideas usually flow. You will need some type of overall outline to follow which will give direction to your work. Also, it would be great if you have a theme and idea that is unique and marketable. Ask yourself, "Why would someone want to buy this particular book?"

Before you start, you must consider this factor: Distribution: Once the book is written, how will you distribute it? The book can be magnificent, but if you have no way to get it out to people, no one will read it. I distribute my own books, so I am self-published. That way, I get most of the money. (I pay about \$2 a book) If you are published, most of the money will go to the publisher (90%?). I get my books printed through Color House Graphics, Inc. in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I find them the best for self-publishing and have used them for years.

In order to get published, (as opposed to self-published) you will have to mail, call or somehow connect with a publishing company. (Google Catholic/Christian and other? publishers) You can do this after you write the book, but I'd save you a lot of time and effort and try to connect with them **before** you write. You must try to sell your idea! Why would someone buy this book you intend to write? Publishers are money driven and they don't want to risk money on your work unless you have something, they feel, will sell. Can't blame them, right?

Send/tell the publisher your idea. (Research your theme first to make sure no one else has written a book about it. If they have, why is yours different? Why will it sell?) You will need to give them, not only the idea, but also some sample material from the yet to be written book (it better be good!) as well as why you think it is unique and will sell. *Market yourself to them!!!* If someone likes it, then start writing...and finish your work. If no one will publish it, you may not want to even write the book. Warning: Most people write a book, get a bunch printed and give them away to friends and family because no one will distribute them...

If you decide to write the book in advance, once you have written the book, you will need an editor to comb through it. He or she can correct spelling, grammar,

look at the flow and ask you questions about meaning. What you write may make sense to you, but it may not to the average reader. You must have logic, ease of understanding, and flow. This editing phase will take some time, but with computers and the Internet, it can all be done with your editor through email. Your editor doesn't have to live near you. I have had several editors. My former editor lives in California while my present editor lives in Houston. It is amazing that we can send the entire book back and forth instantaneously through email. This saves months of time. If you get published, the publisher may or may not do the editing for you as well as the advertising.

Once the book is written and edited, you are ready for publishing. Ask yourself, "Do I want to be self-published, or find someone to publish the book for me?" If you are self-published, you must have someone format the book and create a cover. You will then send it to a book printing company (Like Color House Graphics) who will print it **exactly as you deliver it to them**. Once you take delivery of your books from them, you must market and sell/distribute them yourself. This is the hard part. Also, you must store the books somewhere at your own cost, so don't print too many in the first printing. Perhaps 500? You are your own distributor. Not many people are able to market/distribute their own books successfully. That is why self-publishing is a tough road to go.

I have self-published all of my books. I have the necessary people to help me with the editing and production as well as a book company (Color House) that prints them for me at a good price. I have two places where I store them. I am able to distribute my books through my missions and television programs. I receive a high percentage of the proceeds from the books since I do it this way. Some time ago a book publisher approached me about publishing one of my books. They wanted a lifetime contract and they would have received a large percentage on every book sold. I politely declined. At this time getting published is not for me. However, self-publishing is not for everyone either. If you have the people and are able to warehouse the thousands of printed books and can market and distribute them, then I would recommend self-publishing. The advantage is that you will make a much higher percentage on every book. The disadvantage is that you will have to warehouse and sell all of your books on your own.

If you are an aspiring writer, the other way to go is to have your book published by some company. (See above about sending them your idea/outline/sample of your writing) Or, once the manuscript is written and edited, you have to make contact with various book companies of your choosing and send a copy of your manuscript to them. Then, you wait prayerfully, expectantly. If they believe your work is marketable and could turn a profit, they will come back to you with a contract offer and will publish your book. The advantage is they will do the cover

design, edit the book further and print the book for you. The publisher will warehouse the books, market them, and get your books into stores. The disadvantage is that the publisher will make a high percentage on every book sold. There is inexplicable joy in producing books and knowing your work is inspiring countless people. There is a lot of work involved, but it is well worth it!!
Dreams realized bring great joy.

Don't get discouraged because you don't have contacts or this sounds hard. Challenges Make Champions. I did it from scratch and so can you. If this vision is from God, you will be determined and not give up. God will open doors as you stay proactive. If it isn't from God, hey, you still produced something valuable and precious to you. You learned from what you wrote. All is not lost. You will never know until you try and try and try again. I applaud your desire. You will need to be very determined and get God given breaks.

Vision for Television?

Some see me on television and are inspired to do what I am doing. I applaud the aspiration, but know that nothing happens easily or quickly. "If the vision seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay." (Hab. 2:3) I received a call from a minister in California who saw my programs and felt God was calling him to reach out via television. He asked me how to do it. I'll share some of what I told him. Some of you may have a dream for television and I want to help you reach out.

First of all you must make sure the dream comes from God. Much like a vocation, you must discern, "Is this something I'm conjuring up? Or is this from God?" I've had a vision about television from day one of my ministry. It was a fire within that simply wouldn't go away. I wanted it to leave me, but it wouldn't. I finally had to act on it. The way I acted on it was, strangely, by writing books. By listening to the teaching of other ministers, I understood that I must "prepare for promotion." Writing books did a number of things for me. First, it expanded the breadth and width of my teachings. Secondly, the royalties from the books provided the income I would need to produce and air the television programs. The television industry is very expensive. If you are aspiring to media outreach, you will need monetary backing from somewhere.

You will need three things: 1) Programs/episodes: Production is expensive and takes a lot of creativity. 2) Financial backing: Television airtime is very expensive. You will need money and lots of it. It will take a year or years to start to break even. 3) Outlets: In order to air your programs, it takes favor from God to be accepted by stations and/or networks.

Along with my book/DVD/CD royalties, I have a group of committed partners and benefactors who faithfully help me with this outreach. These partners increase with every weekly airing. I can do nothing alone. I need everyone's help.

In order to get started, you will need a producer. You will need to develop contacts with stations and airtime brokers who purchase airtime. As you go forward trusting God, doors *will* open. I found this truth out: Fortune Favors the *Brave*. Remember what Jesus taught: Launch out into the deep for a catch! I'm glad I risked, but this isn't for everyone, for sure. God made a way for me, but nothing is easy and things take time. By Faith and *Patience* we inherit the promises.

I applaud you on your dream of writing/publishing a book/considering television and radio. God needs us to proclaim the Gospel to all. God will work through us. Nothing is easy. As I say, "Challenges Make Champions!" Press through the difficult moments and your dream will eventually become a reality. Don't give up when it is hard. Make sure your goal isn't to make a lot of money, but to add value to people. With the proper motivation, specific goals and good old fashioned tenacity, you will do great. Once your dream is birthed, you will have wonderful joy and God's favor. There is no joy like being right in the center of God's perfect will for your life. When you reach out and help people, it is all worth it. God bless you! Live with Passion! Fr. Cedric