Twitter Thread by Stephen D. Campbell, Dr. theol.



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I've gotten a few questions about this, so let me clarify and provide as much helpful information as this medium will allow.

To begin, both of my parents are MBA's and are assertive. They taught us four kids to be assertive. 1/x

> Many underestimate the generosity of (most) publishers. I probably got $10,000 worth of free books during my 4 years in Durham by request exam or review copies. Sometimes, I just emailed a publisher and said, "I need this book, but I can't afford it. Can you help me out?"
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> — Stephen D. Campbell, Dr. theol. (@the_OT_Campbell) December 13, 2020

Honestly, what's the worst a publisher can do, say no? If the worst that can happen is a rejection email (and believe me I've gotten ALOT), then it's pretty "safe" to at least ask.

But there were tricks that I learned about getting books from publishers. 2/x

The 1st was to request exam copies. I was a very part-time adjunct faculty for an online-only seminary in the UK. I designed two classes for them and requested books to consider as assigned reading for the classes. I still do this, since I'm full-time teaching/administrating. 3/x

The second was to become an approved/recognized reviewer for journals--it doesn't matter which ones. Thanks to a previous professor I'm a reviewer at the website for a research center. And through nothing but email, I'm a frequent reviewer for 3 journals (JESOT, JHS, RRT). 4/x

This is a helpful approach. When you know exactly where the review is going to be submitted and you know that the journal's review editor wants the review, then (in most cases) the review editor's job is to contact the publisher and make sure you get the book. That's it. 5/x

So...sometimes the work is focussed on finding the right journal, one that wants to publish your review. An easy entry might be to reach out to Reviews in Religion and Theology. 6/x

If you're a PhD student in Religion/Theology, and you want to review, send an email (attach a book review you've already written) to the ed. at RRT (rrt-vhi@st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk). They send a list to the reviewers every couple months with a long list of books to choose from. 7/x

What are journals looking for? It depends, but they'll tell you (usually on their websites). Usually 800-1000 words.

Some (like JHS) have no word limits, b/c they're online.

Some (like Vetus Testamentum) will happily publish 100 word reviews and 2,500 word review essays. 8/x

It's also very helpful to know a bit about the publishers. (I'm bound to leave some out, sorry.) Some are very generous, and some are not. Some will make you work for it, others don't ask for anything in return. Some need email, and others have an online form. 9/x

Zondervan: This one is easy. They've never, never turned me down. I think you could ask to get a book because you want to review it for your grandmother's Facebook page and she has 84 friends, and they'd say, "yes." 10/x

Crossway: Also very generous. But they want to know where the review will be published. Fair enough.

Fortress: Don't bother unless you get a review editor to get the book for you.

Routledge: I'm still waiting on them to reply to an email from 4 years ago. So I don't try. 11/x

Brill: Hahaha. Don't make me laugh. They won't toss a penny to a beggar. But maybe if your review editor contacts them. I once talked them into giving me a digital copy.

Yale: They've made me jump through some crazy hoops to get books. I've had luck getting exam copies. 12/x

Bloomsbury: I've had no luck getting review books or exam copies from them. They expect you to have a class with huge amounts of students before they'll send a copy.

IVP: Not sure. They don't publish in Germany, so I've been able to get some ebooks, but nothing in print. 13/x

Princeton UP: They are very generous. I like working with them.

Westminster/John Knox: Not generous. You can sometimes convince them to give you a temporary digital copy.

OUP/CUP: You better know where the review will be published. If you do, then you have a good chance. 14/x

Baker Academic: Very generous. They'll send you stuff with almost no questions asked as long as you know where the review will publish or be submitted.

Eerdmans: They are generous, but their generosity has limits of how many exam copies you can get in a year. 15/x

St. Vlad: Generous, but I've had to pay for shipping. They're more likely to send exam copies than review copies.

Lexham: Very generous.

SBL: haven't tried.

Eisenbrauns: They are a very small press and not super generous. You have to be submitting to a high level journal. 16/x

Gorgias: They are a very small press and not super generous. You have to be submitting to a high level journal. I've had luck with them, though.

Peter Lang: I don't bother asking anymore. They've always said no, unless it was the journal asking for me. 17/x

DeGruyter: They are soo generous. I've never been turned down.

Mohr Siebeck: Also VERY generous. I've never been denied a request.

V&R: Less generous, but I've had recent luck since my PhD was completed. I told them exactly where the review will go. 18/x

Harvard UP: I stopped trying.

Notre Dame UP: I stopped trying. I had luck once. But as I recall, they work very slowly.

Baylor Press: They are another small press that has to be careful with how many books they give away. Best to go through your review editor. 19/x

SUNY: Never had luck with them.

JPS: Never had luck with them either, unless the journal already had received the book from the publisher and the journal sent it to me.

Peeters: No luck there either. I suspect I'd have to go through the review editor. 20/x

What are publishers thinking about? Money mostly. I heard from a UP editor that it costs about $50,000 to publish a single monograph. They have to make that back somehow. To do that requires publicity. That's where we come in with our book reviews or assigned reading. 21/x

Smaller presses may reject you because they reserve their review copies for the top journals, b/c they're out of review copies, they don't ship abroad, they have small publicity budgets, you requested it in the wrong way, or b/c you haven't convinced them that it's worth it. 22/x

Fill out their form online or send a short email saying who you are and where the review will be submitted (or published). If I've gotten a "no" for a book I really needed, I've responded with a request for the best discount they can give me. 23/x

The publisher usually wants a review published within 6-9 months and they want you to send them a pdf of the published review. They send it to the author and may post a blurb to their website. 24/x

Don't get discouraged. Don't feel bad either. They budget for advertising. Some are larger than others and can afford to be generous. You may even begin to feel like you're friends with the publicists. You will definitely feel like you're part of something bigger than yourself.

Let me know if I missed anything. I'm also more than happy to answer questions.