Upstate SC American Christian Writers’ Chapter

Saturday, Nov. 10, 2012, Anderson Library

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Welcome! Subject: **How to Write a Query Letter**

**I. Definition**

A query letter is a one-page epistle geared to hook an editor or agent into asking for more of your manuscript (mss). Think of it as a written job interview. It’s your one chance to get a foot in the door.

What follows a successful query letter? The editor or agent will ask for a proposal or a synopsis and perhaps the first 50 pages of your mss, or the full article if you queried for an article.

**II. Parts of a Query Letter**

Always check the agent’s or publisher’s web site FIRST to target the right one and see what they want in your first contact with them and where/how to send it. It will generally include the following:

1) The basic info: title, genre, if completed and word count, your contact info

2) The hook or “elevator pitch”

3) The blurb or short synopsis

4) Your brief bio

**III. Industry Standards for all Mss Submissions**

Font: Times New Roman, 12 point

Double Spaced

Paragraph indent 0.5”

One space after punctuation

Mss Page Header: Title/last name/page number. Ex. *Summer of Deception/Martin – 1*

**IV. Difference between a Query Letter and a Cover Letter**

A cover letter is what goes on top of a longer proposal and sample chapters.

A query letter is a stand-alone letter that goes by itself to an editor or agent

**V. What Editors/Agents do not wish to see in a query letter**

**VI. Extra Tips !**

Do your homework first on their web site and follow their guidelines exactly

Make sure you have a faith thread if you’re targeting an inspirational line.

Be concise. Use words sparingly, but use all your space.

Have your letter proofread by another writer and polish, polish, polish!

It’s okay to submit simultaneously to several but tell them you’re doing so.

Keep a dated submission tracker record. Don’t let rejections discourage you!