

# “I Need Good Photos!”

by InterLit Staff

Images capture readers. Light, colors, shapes, focus, textures, subjects and backgrounds all play a part in arousing emotions. Strong visuals in a book or magazine arrest attention. Photographs are powerful, but so is good art. When should you use a photograph instead of, or in addition to, other artwork?

Use photographs to communicate *news*. If an article or book is timely and relevant, photographs will add to the reader’s sense that it is newsworthy.

Use photographs to bolster or heighten the reader’s sense of *reality*. Photos help readers see and share the experience of others. They show real people, locations and events.

Use photographs when you want readers to experience *history*. Photographs provide visual proof that an event happened, and that it happened to people in a particular time and place.

Use photographs to convey *intimacy*. Photographs capture emotions. They provide the opportunity to study a subject’s face in detail. Use photographs when you want readers to connect with a well-known figure or celebrity.

If the best option for your book or article is a photograph, where can you find one?

## Professional services

Commission a photographer and pay for the rights to use the image. This can be expensive, but allows your book to feature unique and original photographs. Find a professional who shares your vision for a particular book. The price for use of original photographs varies according to intended use, size of the image upon publication, number of photos purchased, expected print run, quality of the photo, difficulty of obtaining the image, and so on. Ask for referrals. A good directory of Christian photographers is available on the web at [christiansinphotojournalism.org](http://christiansinphotojournalism.org). Locate additional talent through secular web sites such as



A dramatic setting adds visual interest to this photograph.

[photographers.com](http://photographers.com) or with a search engine.

Work with commercial photo agencies. Prices, restrictions and licensing for use of their images vary widely. Some agencies allow use of images only as they appear on the cover of a book. In such cases, each time the image is used in a catalog or brochure, it must include the title and author name over the image, just as they appear on the book cover. Other photo sources allow print use but require additional permission for use of the image on other media, such as a web site. Understand the specific rights granted when you decide to use a particular photograph. Some popular commercial photo stock agency web sites

include: [blackstar.com](http://blackstar.com); [comstock.com](http://comstock.com); [coopstock.com](http://coopstock.com); [corbis.com](http://corbis.com); [eyewire.com](http://eyewire.com); [gettyone.com](http://gettyone.com); [images.com](http://images.com); [indexstock.com](http://indexstock.com); [mira.com](http://mira.com); [photodisc.com](http://photodisc.com); [picturequest.com](http://picturequest.com); [stockbyte.com](http://stockbyte.com); [stockphoto.com](http://stockphoto.com); and [zephyrimages.com](http://zephyrimages.com).

Some agencies specialize in particular regions or subjects. Examples are [fotoasia.com](http://fotoasia.com); [babystock.com](http://babystock.com); [militarystockphotos.com](http://militarystockphotos.com); and [panoramicimages.com](http://panoramicimages.com). Sports photographs are available at [empics.com](http://empics.com) and [allsportusa.allsport.com](http://allsportusa.allsport.com). For actors, singers and other celebrities try [mptv.net](http://mptv.net) or [celebritypictures.co.uk](http://celebritypictures.co.uk).

Most stock sites offer royalty-free collections. The photographs with this article came from such a collection. Sites to try are [hemera.com](http://hemera.com); [imagesource.com](http://imagesource.com); [novadecorp.com](http://novadecorp.com); [photoalto.com](http://photoalto.com); [photosphere.com](http://photosphere.com); [photospin.com](http://photospin.com); [picturesque.com](http://picturesque.com); [rubberball.com](http://rubberball.com); [stockbyte.com](http://stockbyte.com); [vividetails.com](http://vividetails.com); and [weststock.com](http://weststock.com).

Photographs from the Associated Press and other news sources may be preferable in certain cases. If a particular photograph of a person or event has been seen by a wide audience, that photo may enhance the marketability of a product that you want identified with that subject. Contact newspapers, magazines, and media associations. Also, visit sites like [archive.photos.com](http://archive.photos.com), [photoarchive.ap.org](http://photoarchive.ap.org), and [newscom.com](http://newscom.com).

What if you cannot afford to buy a collection or the rights for use of appropriate images? Where can you find free or inexpensive photographs?

### **Public sources**

If a specific product is required in a photograph, it may be possible to obtain one from the public relations office of the manufacturer, in exchange for the publicity the photo will generate for the firm.

Portraits are often available from celebrities. Head shots are also easy to obtain for the presidents and vice presidents of large companies and even ministries. Universities also have photographs of their professors, and publishers are happy to provide photographs of their authors in exchange for free publicity.

Government sources can be helpful. For instance, in the United States weather-related photographs are available at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration web site ([photolib.noaa.gov](http://photolib.noaa.gov)), and the site is linked to many other agencies. The United States Library of Congress web site ([uncle-sam.com/loc](http://uncle-sam.com/loc)) includes a few collections of historical photographs and American celebrities. Photos of specific places may be available for a nominal fee from offices promoting tourism for the region, or from the public relations departments of local cities.

Mission organizations and denominational headquarters may provide free or inexpensive photographs. Some Christian sources you may want to use include the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptists ([imb.org/Media/Photo/Downloads](http://imb.org/Media/Photo/Downloads)), the Jesus Film Project ([jpmedialibrary.org](http://jpmedialibrary.org)), the World Council of



*Closeups of faces create a sense of intimacy and familiarity.*

Churches ([wcc-coe.org/photo](http://wcc-coe.org/photo)), as well as *Worldwide Challenge* magazine ([wwcmagazine.org](http://wwcmagazine.org)).

### **Personal sources**

Ask authors to supply photographs to accompany their work. Perhaps friends and relatives have suitable shots. Or, take your own pictures. Maybe you and your staff would benefit from investing in a digital camera or other equipment. Whenever you make a purchase of this type, however, ensure that the equipment will pay for itself fairly quickly. Also, make certain that you can use it and maintain it effectively and at a low cost.

With personal sources, take care to use only quality images that add value to your final product.

### **Additional considerations**

If you use a web source for your photographs, make sure you obtain the images at the right resolution to get a quality reproduction in the final product. Images on the web can appear darker than they will look in print, so ensure you can properly judge whether the photograph will be suitable for your work.

If you are using a photograph for a book cover, imagine what it will look like with the text superimposed on the image. Can you picture the title of the book across the sky of the scene? Or is the picture so busy that the text will compete with the image, no matter where it is placed? Consult with your design team to get the right look.

Christian books demand the best presentation. Use free, inexpensive, and royalty-free sources, but do not limit your options. Look for the best photographs you can—and invest in future success.❖



*Images of events suggest relevance and newsworthiness.*