Welcome!

I’m so happy to be able to help you on this journey of publication. When I started my writing journey, I thought I’d be exclusively a novelist. That is, until my agent had a ministry and publisher interested in developing a devotional for moms. He emailed: “Mary, can you write a nonfiction proposal this weekend?” Without thinking, I responded with a yes, which was followed soon after by panic.

I’d seen nonfiction proposals before, and they looked terribly daunting. How could I do it?

Thankfully, I had a friend, speaker and author Leslie Wilson (www.lesliwilson.com) who graciously offered her proposals to me. Much of what I offer here is the result of her outrageous generosity. From the framework of her professional and well-written proposals, I had the necessary tools I needed to write my first proposal. By weekend’s end, I sent the proposal, which sold soon after and became the book Ordinary Mom, Extraordinary God. That fall of 2004, my agent also pestered me about writing a parenting book. Not feeling much like a parenting expert, I shot an email back after his 18th pesterling attempt. “The only parenting book I’d write is for those of us who don’t want to duplicate the homes we were raised in.”
“Write that book,” he said.

So, armed with my newfound knowledge of proposal writing, I wrote that proposal, which sold to WaterBrook and became *Building the Christian Family You Never Had*. One of the proposals I’ll give you today as an example is that proposal.

What is a proposal?

First, a great proposal is a tool that helps shape your book. A well-written proposal becomes a roadmap to write a well-thought-out-book.

Second, a proposal is primarily a sales tool. Consider it your best foot forward. It’s the document agents, editors, publication boards, and sales and marketing teams scrutinize to determine if they will represent or publish you. It’s your professional handshake on steroids. Therefore, it’s important you don’t skimp on your proposal.

Some authors feel writing a great proposal is a waste of time. I can assure you that a well-written proposal will greatly benefit you because:

1. You will learn more about your book through the proposal writing process.
2. You’ll quickly realize if the book is necessary in the market.
3. By the time you’re done writing it, if you lack passion for the subject, you can walk away, instead of investing in more time writing something that won’t come to fruition. (Side note: I’m absolutely convinced that passion is what sells a book to an agent or publisher. You must be absorbed and wildly happy about your idea. Passionless proposals and prose ends up on the slush pile.)
4. You will endear yourself to whoever receives the proposal because professional, well-written proposals stand out.
5. You will know you’ve done your best to be a ghost in the pub board meeting. Your proposal is putting you in the meeting. If you’ve anticipated every question a pub board might ask, and have adequately answered those questions, you’ll produce a favorable impression on that board.

I can’t guarantee that if you write proposals the way I’m showing you, you’ll be instantly published, but I can guarantee that you’ll get noticed. Consider what other industry professionals have said about my proposals:

Endorsements:
“I first met Mary DeMuth when she was a student in one of my sessions at a writers’ conference. She stood head and shoulders above the others at the conference because of one particular skill: Mary had an amazing ability to create strong, complete, and eye-catching proposals. Listen to what she has to say—she is as good as anyone in the business at crafting book proposals.”

-Chip MacGregor
Literary Agent
MacGregor Literary

“Mary knows how to write a proposal that gets an editor’s attention: well-organized, persuasive, and with the information I need to make a decision.”

Terry Glaspey
Director of Acquisitions and Development
Harvest House Publishers

“As a literary agent, I see a lot of proposals. Mary’s are top-notch—comprehensive, thoughtful, well-written, and professional. I’m proud to send them to the best publishers in the business.”

Beth Jusino, Literary Agent
Alive Communications

“Mary’s proposals include the straightforward facts that publishers need with a personable style that publishers want. Great research, great voice, great proposal. Mary does an excellent job selling herself without seeming to sell herself.”

Andy Meisenheimer, Zondervan Acquisitions Editor

“Mary’s book proposals reflect her intelligence, wit, and charm, as well as her high level of craftsmanship as a writer. And just as important, her concepts are fresh. She has no interest in covering the same ground that has been plowed already by other authors. That’s important to a book editor who is glassy-eyed from reading stacks of proposals.”

Ron Lee, senior editor,
WaterBrook Press

Are you ready to write a proposal that grabs that kind of attention? Let’s get started.

First things first: You need to know a few things before you start.
1. **Know your passion.** I’ve alluded to this earlier. A good book proposal emerges from a passionate idea. Examine yourself. Think about the topics you get passionate about when you talk to folks. Talk to others who know you well. Share your book idea and see if they catch your passion for it. It’s a huge undertaking to write a proposal, so be sure you have the passion to carry an entire book.

2. **Know your book.** What genre is your book? Where it would be shelved in a bookstore? How well do you know what the book will be about? Do you have access to good research, great interviews? How unique is your book? Will a pub board find it unique?

3. **Know your immediate audience.** The first audience of your proposal is actually the agent or publisher you’re querying. Find out everything you can about the agent or publisher. Do they specialize in the genre you’re writing? Do they take new authors? How many? Have you attended a writer’s conference and spoken directly to the editor or agent? What kinds of books are they looking for? Purchasing a market guide is a great first step. Analyzing books already represented or published is another great step. (If an agent already represents three mom authors, chances are he/she won’t want to take on another mom author.)

4. **Know the bookselling industry.** Do you know what is selling in the industry? What has oversold? What trends are up and coming? Go to bookstores and walk the aisles, sign up for newsletters and updates from the publishing industry, go to conferences, talk to booksellers. It’s absolutely imperative that you know what you’re getting into before you embark on this journey.

5. **Know yourself.** Writing a proposal is the first step in a very long journey. Do you have what it takes to count the cost of bringing a book to fruition? Can you take constructive criticism? Do you have the time it takes to not only write the book, but to edit it in a timely manner and promote it when it releases? Do you have a critique group to support and help you through the process? Author Jan Winebrenner says publishing a book “is like giving birth to an elephant—only more painful.” Are you ready for that?

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**I would like to thank author Jan Winebrenner for this section. She taught an excellent session on nonfiction proposals the summer of 2007 and I took copious notes. Her website is www.janwinebrenner.com.**

**Before you begin, I’d like to offer you some free and not-so-free resources that will help you further in your book proposal writing:**

**Industry:**

- *Publishers Weekly.* A great resource that shows you what is going on in the industry. The print magazine is costly, but you can sign up for PW Daily where you get a great dose of industry information every day. You can also opt to receive Religion Bookline, Children’s Bookshelf, and/or PW Comics Week. Here’s the link:
Publisher’s Lunch. Same idea as PW Daily. Get great industry information you can use in your proposals. Sign up here: [http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/lunch/subscribe.html](http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/lunch/subscribe.html)

- Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com are great places to find information about books. Keep in mind, though, that a sales rank is a fluid number and does not necessarily translate into hard sales numbers. However, you can get book descriptions and reader reactions here. There's a plethora of lists created by buyers that may be helpful as you research your topic or marketing analysis.


- LA Times bestseller list: [http://www.calendarlive.com/books/bestsellers/more/](http://www.calendarlive.com/books/bestsellers/more/)

If you write for the Christian market:

- CBA Retailers + Resources: [http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/ARDigital.htm](http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/ARDigital.htm)


- To receive a chapter a day from upcoming Zondervan titles in the Zondervan Breakfast Club (This will help you know the market well). [https://www.zondervan.com/Cultures/en-US/Registration/EMAS.htm?QueryStringSite=Zondervan](https://www.zondervan.com/Cultures/en-US/Registration/EMAS.htm?QueryStringSite=Zondervan)

Books:

1. *Book Proposals that Sell*, by Terry Whalin
2. *Formatting and Submitting Your Manuscript* by Jack and Glenda Neff and Don Prues
4. *Christian Writers Market Guide* by Sally Stuart

Here is a good, long list of other proposal books offered at Amazon. I haven’t read or used these, but if you’re looking for more, click here: [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_ss_b/002-4124903-3368065?initialSearch=1&url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=nonfiction+book+proposals](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_ss_b/002-4124903-3368065?initialSearch=1&url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=nonfiction+book+proposals)
Here we go:

Instead of giving you a lot of up front information, I’m going to walk you through an old proposal that sold. The following became the book *Building the Christian Family You Never Had* (WaterBrook, 2006). I’ll highlight areas I should’ve added and discuss how I wrote each section of the proposal. My comments will be in orange below.

First, you’ll want to have a cover page with the word count in the upper right hand corner, the title in the middle of the page, and your contact information on the lower right hand corner of the page. If you are agented, substitute your agent’s contact information.

Often times, folks will include a query letter with their submission. That’s a whole other type of writing, one that I’ll highlight in a different article. Typical format is:

Date  
Name  
Address

Editor or Agent’s Name  
Title  
Address

Dear Wonderful Agent:

1st Paragraph: Hook paragraph. This is a succinct pitch for the book, maybe 50 words.

2nd Paragraph: Further elaboration of the book, usually adding reader benefits

3rd Paragraph: Brief marketing analysis

4th Paragraph: Information about you as an author. Why are you qualified? What have you done?

5th Paragraph: An invitation. Would (name of publisher) be interested in reviewing TITLE OF BOOK?

Closing,  
Your Name and signature  
Enclosure: list them here.

Here is the first query I wrote, which eventually sold and became Ordinary Mom, Extraordinary God. Note: my contact information is on the left, so I didn’t list it in the body of the letter. It’s a great idea to develop a catchy, professional letterhead.
November 3, 2003

Ministry Name
Address

Dear Ministry that Wanted a Devotional:

Busy moms entrenched in the joy of professional motherhood need a touch from Jesus. They need a resource that will pull them deeper in their relationship with Him. With the current publishing emphasis on deepening our spiritual lives and living in light of eternity, stay at home moms are hungry for a devotional aimed at them—a devotional that seeks to ignite passion for Jesus Christ and His kingdom on the playing field of motherhood.

I have walked the stay at home road for eleven years now, and have yet to find a devotional that accomplishes this. With a passion for communicating the heart of Jesus toward mothers, I am endeavoring to write a Hearts at Home mom’s devotional book.

I am a weekly lifestyle columnist for Star Community Newspapers in Dallas, Texas (circulation 100,000). My pieces have appeared in Bon Appetit, Discipleship Journal, Dallas Seminary’s Kindred Spirit, Marriage Partnership, The WIN Informer, and The War Cry. I received an Honorable Mention in the 2002 Writer’s Digest writing contest. Chip MacGregor, my agent, is also representing a parenting book entitled Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent as well as two novels: Crushing Stone and Watching the Tree Limbs. In addition to freelancing, I am a stay at home mother of three school-aged children and the wife of a busy seminary student.

Would you be interested in discussing publication of a Hearts at Home mom’s devotional book with my agent, Chip MacGregor? I can have the completed manuscript to you by February 2004. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warmest Regards,

Mary E. DeMuth

Encl: bio, proposal, sample devotionals
Here is an example of one I wrote for a book entitled Beyond the Precipice of Risk:

February 28, 2005

Editor’s Name
Title
Address

Dear Mr. Editor

Everything’s extreme these days: sports, plastic surgery, remodels. Though Americans thrive on excessive novelty, many Christians sour on extreme faith. We’ll jump off cliffs into a churning sea before we’ll take a toe from the world of security to the world of risky faith. Why?

Beyond the Precipice of Risk: Living the Adventure of Risky Faith addresses this question, exploring why Christians settle for safe lethargy rather than take extreme leaps of faith. Part exploration of the whys, part impetus toward change, this book serves to wake up those who are tired of business-as-usual Christianity. The book addresses reasons why we don’t risk such as:

♦ The scandal of the hardened heart.
♦ The pitfall of our love of security.
♦ The trap of living for the applause of others.
♦ The addiction to happiness.
♦ The tendency to flee suffering at any cost.
♦ The propensity to live for an earthly kingdom.

Of the 15 or so risky faith titles currently available, none expose the reasons why we fail to live beyond the precipice of risk. None specifically address risk in the context of living with the Kingdom of God as one’s heartbeat. Few deal with risky faith from a postmodern perspective—one aimed at those tired of cliché and pat answers. With strong sales of books like Donald Miller’s Blue Like Jazz, Beyond the Precipice of Risk—replete with authenticity, truth and candor—stands to make a strong showing on the Christian living bookshelf.

I have three books coming out in the next year. Ordinary Mom, Extraordinary God (Harvest House with Hearts at Home) was released in February, Sister Freaks (Warner Faith) will be released this summer, and Pioneer Parenting: You Can Build the Christian Family You Didn’t Have Growing Up (WaterBrook) will be released February 2006. I have been a weekly columnist for Star Community Newspapers (Dallas, TX: circulation 100,000) for two years. I have been published in Dallas Theological Seminary’s Kindred Spirit, Woman’s Day, the Writer’s Information Network Informer, The War Cry, In Touch Magazine, The Answer, Discipleship Journal, Money Matters and Bon Appetit. Last year at Mount Hermon Christian Writer’s Conference, I received the Pacesetter Award.

Would WaterBrook be interested in contracting Beyond the Precipice of Risk? Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you through my agent, Beth Jusino at Alive Communications.

Warmly,

Mary E. DeMuth
Enc.
October 3, 2003

Publisher Name
Address

Dear Editor,

“Because I said so.” As parents, we’ve all heard our mother’s voices unwittingly catapult from our mouths, but an entire generation of new parents secretly dread mimicking how they were raised.

In today’s world full of broken homes and broken lives, multitudes of children are brought up by parents whose first thought is survival, not parenting. What happens when these children come to Christ and long to parent in a godly way? How will they overcome the obstacles of their non-Christian upbringing and plow new ground for second and third generations?

In Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent, I will address the unique issues of parents who didn’t grow up in godly homes—Christian parents who didn’t have Christian parents.

With real-life examples, quotes from parenting experts, and a healthy dose of humor, Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent addresses questions like:

♦ Why do I keep repeating the mistakes of my parents?
♦ How can I protect my children from the negative influences of their grandparents without poisoning their relationship?
♦ But what if I can’t emotionally leave my family and cleave to my new family?
♦ What strategies can I implement now, wherever I am in my parenting journey?

Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent addresses a neglected void in parenting books available in the CBA market. It is written with a fresh voice for a specific audience—an audience that is growing all the time, an audience of which I am a part.

I am a weekly lifestyle columnist for Star Community Newspapers in Dallas, Texas (circulation 100,000). My pieces have appeared in Bon Appetit, Discipleship Journal, Dallas Seminary’s Kindred Spirit, Marriage Partnership, The WIN Informer, and The War Cry. I received an Honorable Mention in the 2002 Writer’s Digest writing contest. I co-lead the Rockwall Christian Writer’s Group and am a member of the Dallas Christian Writer’s Guild, the Writer’s View and the Writer’s Information Network. This fall, I am on the faculty of the Greenville Christian Writers Conference. Chip MacGregor, my agent, is also promoting my first two novels Crushing Stone and Watching the Tree Limbs. In addition to freelancing, I am a mother of three school-aged children and the wife of a busy seminary student.

Would you be interested in discussing publication of Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent with my agent, Chip MacGregor? The book will be ready six months from today and will be approximately 60,000 words. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warmest Regards,

Mary E. DeMuth
Nuts and Bolts about Proposal Format:

You will want to add page numbers to the document. If you have Word, go to INSERT, then PAGE NUMBERS. To create a header, go to VIEW, then HEADER AND FOOTER. A box at the top of your document will appear. Type in your last name, then first name, then the title of the book. You can also add “proposal.” It should look like this:


You’ll notice this document you're reading has a header.

Use Times New Roman, 11 or 12 point font. One inch margins all around. ONLY ONE SPACE AFTER A PERIOD. Trust me on this. You'll show you’re way old school if you use two spaces. (History lesson: Two spaces were used during the ancient days of yore, before word processors, when folks jammed their fingers into typewriter keys. Because of the type of type, the best way to delineate the end of a sentence was to hit two spaces. Now that we live in the modern world, one space is enough because of the way word processors create type.)

To correct immediately, go to EDIT, then FIND, then FIND AND REPLACE. In the FIND box, hit two spaces. In the REPLACE box hit one space. Hit APPLY ALL. Now you've moved into the 21st Century! You can use this handy FIND AND REPLACE in many writer-friendly ways. If you've named a character George and then had an epiphany that his name should be Rico, just type George in the FIND and Rico in the REPLACE. Voila!

Also fun to note: you no longer have to count your words by either physically counting each word or estimating by page. Nope. Highlight the text you want to know the count for (or just keep it un-highlighted if you’d like to know the full count). Now go to TOOLS, then WORD COUNT.

Also, before you send anything out, go to TOOLS then SPELLING AND GRAMMAR. But remember that your word processing program won’t catch everything, particularly homophones. READ THROUGH YOUR SELECTION ONE MILLION TIMES BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT. And ask a friend, a good reader, and your dog (if she can read) to proof it before you hit SEND.

Spacing: The proposal portion will be single spaced, the sample chapters, double-spaced.

Now you’re ready to begin.
I. Overview

“I’m sick and tired of parenting books written by someone who came to Christ at age three. Where are the books written for me?”
—Dallas parent

I like to sprinkle the proposals with quotes from experts or potential readers.

Others start their proposals with a THESIS STATEMENT, a concise sentence that tells the editor or agent what the book will be about. It would be added at the very top of your proposal.

An entire generation of Christian parents struggles to instill Christian values in their children without the benefit of having seen it modeled in childhood. To date, although there are currently over 400 Christian parenting books in circulation, no books address this unique, but growing parenting issue. There are millions of Christian parents who grew up without Christian parents—people who became Christians in spite of their heritage—who will benefit from a sensitive and practical discussion of this subject. This briefly hooks the editor/agent, showing the need for the book as well as describing the book.

In Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent, I address this neglected gap in the Christian parenting bookshelf. The book is aimed at a specific audience—those who are plowing new ground, whose children will be second generation Christians. Unique issues face pioneer parents—issues like protecting children from negative grandparent influence while still preserving the relationship. I’ll talk about audience again, but it’s always nice to add it up top.

Through personal anecdotes, relevant quotes from parenting experts, and stories from parents living this reality, Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent seeks to offer encouragement, hope, and sound biblical advice to those struggling to pioneer a Christian heritage for their children. This is a value statement for the book. It shows how the book will directly influence the reader.

Even in an economic downturn, readers are still grabbing for Christian parenting books, their backlist titles successfully garnering sales for publishing houses. “Many
religion-oriented books on relationships have enviable staying power, remaining on backlists for decades and producing numerous offspring,” said Cindy Crosby in the June 30, 2003 Publishers Weekly. Note: here’s where I’ve used a Publisher’s Weekly quote. I received this one from PW Religion Bookline.

I have been writing and speaking about family issues since 1992. I am a family lifestyle columnist for a regional newspaper and have appeared in numerous well-known Christian and secular periodicals. My husband and I are pioneer parents of three children—Sophie, Aidan and Julia. A short summary of my personal qualifications, which will be highlighted in more detail later.

II. About the Book

“Our children give us the opportunity to become the parents we always wished we’d had.”
—Louise Hart


_Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent_ answers the doubts and fears of parents who don’t want to duplicate the homes in which they were raised. The book is unique because it marries coping with pain from the past with parenting children in the present. Think of it as _Changes that Heal_ meets _Parenting Isn’t for Cowards_. _This is a technique my friend Leslie Wilson uses well. It’s helpful for an editor to have something to frame your book around. Think of two books that encompass your book, preferably two distinct ones. The goal here is, perhaps, a little bit of humor._

It’s been said that parenting is caught, not taught. What happens, then, if positive, Christ-centered parenting has never been modeled for a new parent? When we brought our daughter Sophie home from the hospital, I stayed awake all night long, afraid that I wouldn’t know how to parent her in a way that would honor Christ. I had devoured popular Christian parenting books before she was born; I watched good parents as they loved and disciplined their children; I read magazine articles; I prayed. What I really needed, however, was a redemptive parenting book—one that addressed my unique fears as a pioneer parent. _Adding a personal story gives warmth to a proposal._

Pioneer parents face distinct issues, issues that are rarely discussed. They need a resource that highlights their unique struggles and offers honest life-meeting-theology advice. _I bring it back to the need._
DeMuth, Mary: Nonfiction Book Proposals

Who is the target audience for this book?

_Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent_ is aimed at Christian parents who did not have Christian parents—those people who became Christians despite their heritage and who yearn to establish a Christian heritage for their children. I should have been more specific here, particularly denoting age group. Today I’d say, “This book is targeted toward parents in their twenties and thirties who don’t want to duplicate the homes they were raised in.”

Why is there a need for this book?

“I know what I don’t want to do as a parent. The problem is, I don’t know what I do want to do.”
—Young Seattle mother

This quote ended up in the book. It’s a powerful one that clearly shows reader need.

First, pioneer parents need a forum to know they are not alone. They need to know their struggles are not unique to them:

- Having to shield children from the negative influence of grandparents without poisoning the relationship
- Encountering relatives who debate and defame Jesus to your children
- Wrestling between honoring your parents and setting boundaries
- Discovering that you’re repeating the mistakes of a previous generation
- Integrating the mountains of parenting advice with no early relational basis with which to integrate it
- Forgive your parents, your children, and yourself
- Dethroning your notion of the perfect parent

This also delineates the specific things the book will address. Editors need to see that you know the felt needs of your audience.

Second, pioneer parents want to be able to understand their upbringing in such a way that they can highlight the good things while eliminating the bad. The tendency for parents who were raised in chaotic or unloving homes is to focus solely on the negativity, forgetting the positive aspects. Since we often hear our parent’s voices fly from our mouths in the heat of a current parenting battle, it’s important to learn what to keep and what to ask God to change. In addition, the Bible speaks of leaving and cleaving. If parents never really emotionally leave their family of origin, they will not be able to cleave to their spouse. It’s been said that the best parents are the best couples. Couplehood is threatened if one or both spouses are still living for the approval of his/her
parents. Writing this paragraph actually helped me frame a chapter later in the
writing process. Plus, it’s upbeat, which is important in this difficult topic.

Third, pioneer parents want real-life parenting strategies—strategies that have
worked for other parents who had no earlier examples. This book will provide existing
and emerging parents a pragmatic tool kit rooted in grace-based parenting. It will explore
methods and motivations. It will focus on the role forgiveness plays in the re-formation
of a family. The more details you can give about how the book meets specific needs,
the better the proposal will grab attention.

Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent
accomplishes all three of these elements, providing empathy, insight, and pragmatic tools
to parent who have had little modeled for them growing up. Part authentic memoir,
poignant storytelling and helpful manual, this book offers all this with candor, humor,
and an engaging writing style. Be sure to summarize your thoughts.

Specific reader benefits include the following:

• A keeper book. Because the book is written along a time-line (past, present,
future), a parent can read the section he/she is currently struggling with. The
book, then, can be a reference to come back to several times. Although it can be
read through in one sitting, chances are the parent will keep it dog-eared,
returning to it as new parenting situations arise.
• “I am not alone.” So many people I’ve talked to about pioneering a different
parenting route feel like they’ve had to forge this journey alone. With examples
and anecdotes, both serious and humorous, these parents will feel validated.
• Insight. Many parents who struggle don’t realize the link between their past and
their present parenting situation. This book illuminates the connection, helping
readers uncover the why’s of their current parenting methods and reactions.
• Destiny. The first generation of Israelites did not enter the Promised Land. Why?
Because they still clung to Egypt and their way of life in slavery. It was the
second generation that entered. This book will help parents see the times they’ve
clung to the Egypt of their past and how they can lay foundations for their
children to become godly parents, thus ensuring a second and third generation of
Christian parents.
• Grace. The book will highlight the importance of looking at unsaved family
member’s condition rather than their conduct. Realizing their condition apart from
Jesus Christ will help the reader extend grace.

If you’re having a hard time determining benefits, rest in the power of community.
Talk to your spouse or your writer’s group about the book. Ask them to help you
figure out the ways your book will specifically benefit the reader.

Helpful features for today’s busy parents include the following:
• **Discussion questions.** The appendix features a helpful discussion guide that corresponds with each chapter. This can be the catalyst for a small group Bible study or a tool to help individual couples or single parents work through their current parenting struggles.

• **Real-life anecdotes.** Knowing we are on the verge of a post-modern mindset, especially in the new generation of Christian parents, the power of story cannot be underestimated. Stories gleaned from the author’s life as well as those who’ve walked a similar journey, will draw the post-modern reader into timeless truths.

• **Solid biblical foundations.** Without proper exegetical insight spun in such a way that invites a reader, the book would just be fluff. In order to pioneer a new journey, it must be paved on the rock of biblical truth.

• **An additional appendix** annotating helpful books, articles, web sites, radio programs, etc.

Look through other books like yours. I scoured parenting books and found the features I liked, and added them to my list of features. If you decide on including glossaries, appendixes, questions, or indexes, keep in mind these can be labor intensive. Don’t promise what you can’t produce. It’s not up to the book editor to produce those for you. Also keep in mind if you quote someone in your book, you need to document every quote. Footnote each one (ask your publisher what their specific style is). Make a copy of the copyright page as well as the page you found the quote on and place all in a file. This will help you when you write the back matter or end notes for the book.

I am a pioneer parenting expert, not because I have a few capital letters after my name, but because I have trudged through this bewildering matrix called parenting for eleven years now. I have had to explain why Memaw isn’t married to the man who lives with her. Together with my husband, we’ve had to listen to our parents’ and grandparents’ strong objections to our Jesus-inspired decisions—including moving our family to Europe to plant churches. We’ve had to mourn the fact that our parents don’t really know us and that hoping for their support is a vain pursuit. We’ve had to learn the balance of honoring them and setting appropriate boundaries. **Here I make my lack of expertise a positive thing. Find ways to do this in your proposal.**

We’ve understood the agony of Jesus’ statement, “For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household. He who loves his father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.” Matthew 10:35-38, emphasis mine. (Note: I finally know how to correctly write a verse. I’ve used the wrong dash here. It should read Matthew 10:35–38. To get the “en” dash here, go to INSERT, then SYMBOL, then SPECIAL CHARACTERS. Click on EN DASH. The smaller dash is for phone numbers. The double dash (usually Word morphs them together) is an EM dash, which is what you use when you’re adding to the writing—like right here.)
Very few authors link the above verses in a discussion of parenting—equating taking up a cross and parenting in a way that may infuriate the family of origin. Because I have lived that reality with my extended family, I can compassionately admonish those who walk a similar path with sensitivity, candor and grace. Shows my empathy and closeness to the subject. I have lived this journey!

**What series potential exists?**

Just as *The Power of a Praying Wife* (which sold just under 2.5 million copies) I found this in a *Religion Bookline* article morphed into several *The Power of a Praying* books (garnering more millions in sales), this book has similar potential. Possible spin off titles include:

- **Pioneer Marriage: Before Children**
- **Pioneer Parenting for Post-Moderns**
- **Pioneer Parenting—the Toddler Years**
- **Pioneer Parenting—the ‘Tween Years**
- **Pioneer Parenting—the Teenage Years**
- **Pioneer Parenting—Setting Your Children Free**
- **Pioneer Grandparenting—Establishing Traditions for the Next Generation**
- **Mentoring the Pioneer Parent**

This book, therefore, is a springboard for more time-specific marriage, parenting, and grandparenting books. Publishers want to form an ongoing relationship with an author. It’s important you’re able to show that you have other ideas in mind. You can even add completely different book ideas here.

**Alternative titles:**

- **Christian Parents Who Didn’t Have Christian Parents**
- **When You’ve had No Example**
- **Parenting Without the Blinders of the Past**

None of these became the title. The title was actually finalized through the sales and marketing department. Keep in mind that you don’t always keep your titles. I’ve kept three of the five titles in print right now. Spend some time with your writer’s group brainstorming alternative titles. I have one friend who is a genius at this. Whenever I need a title, I go to her.

**III. About the Market** I use roman numerals to delineate shifts; you can use letters or numbers...
Christian parenting and relationally based books are **top sellers**. Consider the following publishing phenomenons:

- James Dobson’s *Love for a Lifetime* (Multnomah, 1987), a gift book about marriage, has sold over 1.6 million copies. His latest parenting book, *Bringing up Boys* (Tyndale House 2001) has sold nearly 972,000 copies to date and continues to sell well from Tyndale’s backlist. All these statistics were gleaned from *Publisher’s Weekly* articles or its *Religion Bookline* articles.
- As stated earlier, Stormie Omartian’s *The Power of a Praying Wife* (Harvest House, 1998) has sold a staggering 2.5 million copies, with its accompanying parenting title *The Power of a Praying Parent* garnering over a million sales.
- Gary Smalley’s *The Five Love Languages* (Moody, 1992) has sold over 1.9 million copies and has a successful spin-off for parents.
- Willard Harley’s *His Needs, Her Needs* (Baker Book House, 1986) has sold over one million copies. His newest title, *His Needs, Her Needs for Parents*, published this September, has an initial printing of 30,000.
- Even lesser known authors are scoring big on parenting books. Karol Ladd’s *The Power of a Positive Mom* (Howard, 2001) has sold over 100,000 copies, prompting Howard to put $50,000 in print and radio advertising toward Ladd’s next book, *The Power of a Positive Wife*. Karol eventually endorsed this book!
- Zondervan has sold over 2.1 million copies in the Cloud and Townsend *Boundaries* product line.

The **potential readership** for a fresh perspective on parenting is not merely measured by book sales, although those figures are intrinsically high. Specialty or niche magazines targeting Christian relationships and parents also indicate the marketability of such merchandise:

- *Marriage Partnership*, where two of my articles have been featured, has a circulation of 50,000.
- *Christian Parenting Today*, a publication specifically targeting Christian parents, has a circulation of 90,000.
- *Today’s Christian Woman*, although non-specific to parenting, often runs relevant parenting articles targeted to Christian women. Its circulation is 250,000. This is an easy way to determine marketability in your niche. Find magazines dealing the general area of your topic. Find their circulations either in the masthead (a few pages into the magazine) or on the magazine’s website.

**Now I’d add website and blog traffic that deals with parenting issues.**

**Current trends** in Christian publishing show that relationally based books are selling well even from backlists. Consider the following comments from industry insiders:

- “Religion publishers and retailers can also sing the praises of relationships in a down-turned economy. Books on the topic continue to form the core of many publishing programs and provide bread-and-butter sales for bookstores. Many
religion-oriented books on relationships have enviable staying power, remaining on backlists for decades and producing numerous offspring.” Cindy Crosby, “Securing the Ties that Bind,” Publishers Weekly, 6/30/03. Another reason why my free daily subscription pays off!

- “Books that promise and deliver help are successful in a tight economy because they meet needs that might be more strongly felt in financial hardship.” John Constance, Harvest House. This came from a Religion Bookline article. I cut and pasted it into a folder earmarked for proposal research.
- “Any Christian who is growing in his or her faith has a strong desire to know what the Bible teaches about all of life, not just the ‘spiritual’ issues. That hunger definitely extends to relationships, especially marriage and parenting.” Craig Stoll, Book Buyer for Mardel.
- “We Americans tend to be pragmatic in our approach to religion and spirituality. We want a faith that works, one that helps us navigate the day-to-day. That’s why the subcategory of religious or spiritual self-help continues to be the backbone of so many publishing programs. Have a problem? If you are like many people, you’ll head to the bookstore for guidance before you talk to your priest, rabbi, imam or minister.” Lynn Garrett, “Religion Update: What’s Inside,” Publishers Weekly, 6/30/03. Notice how in this section, I pulled out important information and bolded it. This makes it easier on an editor’s or agent’s eyes. Another thing I would do today to break up large blocks of text in a proposal is bolding important information.

The potential markets for the sale of this book include:

- Christian bookstores, including lucrative mega-church bookstores (I recently attended a Church bookstore convention. This is definitely a growing market for Christian books.)
- Christian parenting classes held in local churches (I’d be more specific here. Which parenting classes? MOPS? Moms in Touch? Growing Kids God’s Way?)
- Web bookstore sales. A search on Christian parenting resulted in 878,000 sites, most of which are linked to Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, or Christianbook.com
- The possibility of establishing Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent workshops and conferences I would add websites, e-commerce sites and blog sites here.

IV. About the Competition

With over 400 Christian books currently in print on the subject of parenting, (I found this by putting “parenting” in a search box on www.cbd.com) parents have a wide array of resources from which to choose. Nearly every niche in the parenting market has been explored—single parenting, parenting when one spouse is not a believer, parenting ADHD children, parenting strong-willed children, parenting with prayer, parenting with
boundaries, parenting with grace, parenting God’s way, parenting adopted children, parenting the only child, parenting boys, parenting girls—yet parenting as a pioneer has not been specifically addressed. You want to show that there is a market for your book (400 books) but that yours is unique (my topic hadn’t been addressed).

There have been many well-written Christian books that explore baggage from a difficult upbringing. These, however, deal mostly with unique personal struggles and don’t specifically address how these struggles spill over into marriage or parenting:

This is the key element of a good nonfiction book proposal. Analyzing the competition, or what others call a competitive analysis. A few rules of thumb:

1. Don’t specifically leave out titles because they’re so big. Don’t be afraid of comparing your book to *Purpose-Driven Life* if your book somehow resembles it. Be sure to show how yours is unique without sounding like you’re bragging. For instance, don’t write, “Rick Warren’s book has sold a bajillion copies, but mine will sell more. Plus my ideas are far more revolutionary than his.” Don’t be arrogant! Don’t say, “I’m the next John Grisham,” either.

2. Truly discern how your book differs without being mean to the existing title. Praise the title you compare it to and be sure to show your unique angle.

3. If you can, read the books you’re comparing yours to. If not, you can find summaries online at Amazon or Barnes and Noble. It’s always better to provide your own summary when you can.

4. Work very hard on this section. Don’t expect an editor to know what books are out in the marketplace, but also be aware that he/she may be very aware. Be sure what you present is accurate and adequately presents each title.

- *Forgiving Our Parents—Forgiving Ourselves: Healing Adult Children with Dysfunctional Families* by Dr. David Stoop, Servant Publications, 1997. This book explores dysfunctional family patterns and helps the reader move toward forgiveness and healing. I should have added here: While a helpful manual, this book is dated and doesn’t specifically deal with parenting today. (I’ve learned a lot more about proposal writing since I wrote this one. One easy thing to do is find a book that does deal with your subject, but that is over 5 years old. You can then say there’s a need for a timely resource.)

- *God is Greater Than . . . Family Mess* by Joey Johnson, Winepress Publishing, 2002. This book addresses “generational bondage” in terms of Abraham’s family and correlates those principles with modern-day family issues. It focuses on understanding the impact of one’s dysfunctional family of origin as it helps the reader move toward his/her God-given destiny. My comparison statement should read: This self-published book deals more with destiny and personal goals than it does relating one’s healing to parenting today. *Pioneer Parenting* helps parents move beyond their pasts to parent well in the here and now.

Should have added: While *Pioneer Parenting* discusses dysfunctional families, the main thrust of the book is moving beyond the dysfunction so that parents can positively parent today.

- *Secrets of Your Family Tree: Healing for Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families* by Dave Carder, Moody Publishers, 1995. Unearths influences, relationships and events that made up one’s dysfunctional family. I would say something similar as above. Plus I’d add that this is an old resource.
- *Unlocking the Secrets of Your Childhood Memories* by Kevin Leman and Randy Carlson, Thomas Nelson, 2001. A humorous, yet serious look at childhood memories and how they relate to one’s life today. The book is mostly an exploration of the validity of “childhood memory theory.” I would add: *Pioneer Parenting* looks at how we can heal from past childhood trauma to be better able to parent today. It’s not merely an exploration of that trauma.

Two fairly recent books create the link between a difficult past and how it may affect marriage:

- *Relationships that Work (and Those That Don’t)* by H. Norman Wright, Gospel Light, 1998. Wright helps single readers who grew up in dysfunctional homes identify potential partners. This is a pre-marital book. I would add: Though *Pioneer Parenting* discusses marriage, its primary focus is helping parents change the way they parent.
- *Unclaimed Baggage: Dealing with the Past on Your Way to a Stronger Marriage* by Donald and Jan Frank, Nav Press, 2003. “There is a great need for a book that speaks candidly about how to deal with the less-than-perfect past lives couples bring into a new marriage or relationship,” said publicist Kathleen Campbell. Although this book does explore family of origin issues, its link is merely to marriage, not parenting. I did a little better here, showing *Pioneer Parenting’s* uniqueness.

Two books have been released in the past year that deal more specifically with in law and extended family difficulties:

- *What to Do When You Don’t Know What to Say to Your Own Family* by Mary Ann Froelich and PeggySue Wells, AMG Publishers, 2003. This book’s focus is how to encourage various extended family members. Should have added: While *Pioneer Parenting* discusses how we can protect our kids from the negative influence of family members, it is not the thrust of the book. It’s a book for parents who don’t want to duplicate the homes they were raised in, providing a much broader scope.
- *Inlaws, Outlaws and the Functional Family: A Real-World Guide to Resolving Family Issues* by Harry Jackson, Gospel Light, 2002. A humorous guide to creating a thriving family. Includes money issues, communication, sex, etc. I’d add something similar as I did above, that this parenting book covers more than just in-law relations.
The book closely resembling *Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent* is: 

You really want to hone this down. Show how several books are similar, but yours is different, followed by the one book that most closely resembles yours.

- *The Family You Want: How to Establish an Authentic Loving Home* by John Huffman, Christian Focus Public, 1978. Although this book identifies dysfunctional families and offers biblical advice for creating a new Christian family, it is outdated. A post-modern parent would not likely purchase a book written when he/she was three years old. I did a pretty good job here of showing why my book is different. It’s simply newer and far more relatable.

Though there are many Christian parenting books lining bookstore shelves, and they are bringing in needed revenue for Christian publishers and retailers, there is still a need for a book that comes alongside parents who had no parenting example. There is still a need for a parenting book that targets post-modern parents with a fresh voice. There is still a need for an authentic look at the difficult issues that face a pioneer parent. Be sure you summarize your findings, showing the significant felt-need your book will address.

V. About Promotion

Not only am I passionately dedicated to the craft of writing, but I also enjoy promoting what I’ve written. I understand the significance of the one-month launch window and will do everything I can to maximize that window. In addition, I will integrate promoting *Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent* into my lifestyle, making use of several venues:

I welcome the opportunity to speak to small and large conferences, retreats and workshops. I am comfortable speaking in any setting, intimate or large. Now, I would list the venues I’ve spoken in, probably followed by ministry-leader endorsements.

I will solicit blurbs from the following individuals: This is an important section. My list would look quite a bit different now, as I know more people in the industry. Be sure to connect the expert to the thing you’re writing about. An author specializing in model-car making may not be the right choice to provide an endorsement for your vegetarian cookbook.
Sandra Glahn, author of several books including *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage* and the CBA Bestseller and Christy Award finalist *Lethal Harvest*. Glahn teaches Christian Journalism and The Role of Women in Ministry at Dallas Theological Seminary and is Editor-in-chief of the seminary’s award-winning quarterly magazine, *Kindred Spirit*. Glahn has agreed to endorse *Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent* in *Kindred Spirit*, circulation 30,000. *Kindred Spirit* reaches well-known Christian leaders throughout the world, including all graduates of DTS. She is my writing mentor and friend. Be sure you ask these people beforehand! It’s nice to list some of the endorser’s accomplishments as well as their reach. Notice I highlighted Sandra’s magazine, *Kindred Spirit*. Not only did Mrs. Glahn endorse the book, but she provided an excerpt in the magazine, which reaches Christian leaders around the world.

- **SR Vassar**, popular youth speaker and co-teaching pastor at 8,600 member LakePointe Church in Rockwall, Texas. He, too, is a pioneer parent. He is our pastor and very good friend. It’s nice to show what you’re relationship is with the person.

- **Ginger Kolbaba**, Managing Editor *Marriage Partnership*. She’s been my editor on two full-length pieces. Knowing editors, not simply authors, can be a benefit too.

- **Dr. Linus Morris**, author of *The High Impact Church* and President of Christian Associates International, a European church-planting mission to post-moderns. We are missionaries for Christian Associates and have a good relationship with Dr. Morris. Ministry leaders you know are a good resource for endorsements.

- **Leslie Wilson**, speaker for Hearth Ministries, a women’s conference ministry targeting local churches in the Dallas area. Leslie is a noted speaker at local MOPS meetings. She founded the Rockwall Christian Writer’s Group, a writing group I now help co-lead. She’s the gal who helped me write my first proposal. She speaks 50 times a year and has a huge reach into the mommy market.

- **Paul Pettit**, author of *Dynamic Dads: Being a Hero to your Kids* (Tyndale, 2003) and *Congratulations, You’re Going to be a Dad* (Kregel, 2001) He is the Director of Spiritual Formation at Dallas Theological Seminary and was a former assistant to Chuck Swindoll. He is a member of the Rockwall Christian Writer’s Group, and has recently started *Dynamic Dads*—a ministry to fathers. At the beginning of my journey, it was important to connect with other parenting authors. Paul worked at the seminary my husband attended and went to our church.


- **Linda Nichols**, author of *Handyman* (Dell, 2000), *If I Gained the World* (Bethany, 2003), and *Not a Sparrow Falls* (Bethany, 2001, Finalist for Christy Award). She is the sister-in-law of one of my closest friends. Sometimes you need to find friends (sisters!) of friends. Be sure you secure permission first.

- **James Pence**, author of *Blind Sight* (Tyndale, 2003) and founder of Tuppence Creative Ministries. I manage and facilitate the Greenville Christian Writer’s
Conference with him. I met James through a writers conference. See how networking is a benefit!

Side note: Some folks secure endorsements before they write a book and add them to the proposal. I would rather suggest possible endorsements. I wouldn’t want someone to endorse something they haven’t read.

Other side note: Sad to say, but the bigger the name, the more it will get noticed.

Writing

Since my initial foray into publishing includes six years of desktop newsletter formatting as well as several paying graphic design jobs, I will offer to come alongside the publisher’s marketing team developing my own flyers, press releases, business cards with book information, bookmarks, postcards and promotional posters. I do this all the time.

I will craft and distribute press releases to the following newspapers: These were newspapers I had some sort of relationship with.

- The Dallas Morning News Religion Section—Dallas
- Star Community Newspapers—Dallas Metroplex (I am a weekly columnist for this conglomerate that reaches 100,000 readers.)
- The Issaquah Press—a suburb of Seattle
- The DFW Heritage—Dallas/Fort Worth
- The Seattle Times—Seattle

I intend to distribute press releases and/or short promotional pieces to the following churches and/or ministries: Fun side note: I ended up speaking on Family Life Today!

- LakePointe Church—Rockwall, Texas
- Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock—Little Rock, Arkansas
- Reunion Church—Dallas, Texas
- FamilyLife Today Radio Broadcast—Little Rock, Arkansas
- Focus on the Family—Colorado Springs, Colorado
- Northlake Christian Church—Bothell, Washington
- Hearts at Home Ministries—Normal, Illinois
- MOPS International—Denver, Colorado
- Hearth Ministries—Dallas, Texas
- First Baptist Church—Dallas, Texas
- Prestonwood Baptist Church—Plano, Texas
- Stonebriar Community Church—Frisco, Texas
- Insight for Living—Plano, Texas Here’s where your region comes into play. Try to scour your local resources/publications/ministries.
I will submit excerpts and/or articles relating to the book to the following publications: *This is a way you can expand your readership nationally.*

- *Marriage Partnership*
- *Today’s Christian Woman*
- *Christian Parenting Today*
- *Hearts at Home*
- *SpiritLed Woman*
- *Kindred Spirit*

I will arrange book signings in the following venues:

- LakePointe Church bookstore *Yep! It happened.*
- Greenville Christian Writers’ Conference *They didn’t have another conference.*
- Rowlett Public Library *I moved to France before it could happen.*
- Dallas Christian Writer’s Guild *Yep! It happened.*
- Dallas Theological Seminary Bookstore *Will eventually happen.*

**Making media appearances**

I will arrange and solicit phone interviews with the following media outlets: *I would do this differently now. (See my next proposal).* For this list, I found a list of major outlets on the Internet and then chose a few stations regionally. Now, I would simply list the stations I have a relationship with.

- WMCA 570 & 970—New York
- KFAX 1100—San Francisco
- KKLA 99.5 & 1240—Los Angeles
- KTLF 90.5—Colorado Springs
- WFAIX 1220—District of Columbia
- WMU 89.7 & 101.9—Miami
- WFCJ 93.7—Dayton
- KBVM 88.3—Portland
- WYFH 90.7—Charleston
- WWFJ 93.3—Atlanta
- WETN 88.1—Wheaton College
- KCBI 90.9—Dallas
- KLTY 94.1—Dallas
- WRXT 90.3 & 103.7—Roanoke
- KBLE 1050—Seattle
- KCMS 105.3—Seattle
- CBN—Virginia Beach
I am equally excited to participate in a publisher’s author/book signing tour, and will agree to bear partial expense in promoting my book in the United States and Western Europe. Well, one can always hope! No book tours as of yet...though I've had plenty blog tours!

**Web site promotion**

I will develop and maintain a web site that promotes *Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent*, in addition to my fiction titles and columns. This became www.pioneerparenting.blogspot.com. The web site will be eye-catching, useful, informative, inspirational, and will give the reader opportunity to share his/her comments and stories relating to the book. The site would list speaking engagements, links to other like-minded ministries, links to booksellers, and contact information. This has been a great way to meet with readers.

Now, I would include blog tour information. I have had a blog tour for every release.

**Giving copies to influential people**

Word of mouth sales, or buzz, is tantamount to a book’s success. With this in mind, I will give away 250 copies of the book to people of influence: I would highlight Malcom Gladwell’s findings here about word of mouth marketing from *The Tipping Point*.

- All the endorsement people, churches, media outlets and ministries listed above.
- Kevin Bailey, Manager, Broadcast Marketing and Product Selection for FamilyLife Today Radio broadcast. My relationship with Kevin is what led to my interview with Family Life!
- Dave McIlrath, Manager at New Life Ministries Dave put a plug and an article about my book to his 10,000-member email list.
- Carolyn Murray, Managing Editor for *The Answer*, (circulation 100,000) a ministry of the Promise Network.
- Daren Watkins, Editor for *The Rowlett Lakeshore Times* and several other local Dallas papers owned by *Star Community Newspapers* (circulation 100,000).
- Pacific Lutheran University *Scene*, my alma mater
- Our mailing list of nearly two-hundred people, including business leaders, authors, homemakers, pastors, ministry leaders, and missionaries around the globe. This is now a mailing list of 500, and perhaps the best way of getting the word out. I can’t send books out to this many people, but I can let them know via email that the book is out.
- The Rowlett Public Library I now live in another town and have joined “The Friends of the Library,” have spoken to the person in charge of having author signings and teaching, donated my books to the library, and made a donation to the building fund.
- The Issaquah Public Library
The Dallas County Library System I recently joined the Texas Library Association. I would certainly list my membership as an asset in the About the Author section.

Soliciting specialty venues

In addition to churches, ministries, and media outlets, I will also send promotional materials to American and European Christian counseling centers. I was planning to move to France when this released, which did happen. I had the opportunity to speak several times in churches in Europe.

VI. About the Author

I am passionate about helping parents discern how their past affects their present parenting, since that represents my own parenting journey. See how I bring it back to the book? I am equally passionate about introducing Jesus in a refreshing way to the next generation of post-modern parents. In addition, I am fully dedicated to the craft of writing. Having been a writer for over a decade, I write every day and spend both time and money on books and conferences. Besides my vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ, I cherish my husband Patrick and my three children Sophie, Aidan and Julia. They are the reason I write this book. Include some personal information, too.

My personal background

I became a Christian despite my agnostic background and have wrestled through parenting my children with a decidedly different worldview as my parents. Patrick and I have had to make some difficult decisions including instigating a cooling-off period for his parents who used to spend their visits with us in criticism and heated confrontation. We’ve had to limit our children’s exposure to my mother who is severely antagonistic toward Christianity. We’ve had to walk a paper-thin line between honoring our parents, yet protecting our children. This shows my unique qualifications to write this book. Be sure you highlight your own life experience that relates to the book you’re writing.

Although I have greatly benefited from books by Christian family giants like Dobson and Rainey, I’ve come away from their books frustrated. Because they grew up in stable Christian homes, they missed issues important to those of us who didn’t. Some of the issues they raise are universal—potty training, discipline, submission—but some are overlooked simply because the author’s experience has been limited. What is needed is a fresh voice—someone who has pioneered a new path. I bring it back to the subject of the book here.

Speaking/vocal background

I regularly teach women. I’ve had extensive experience in front of audiences both as a vocal performer and a speaker. In 1989, I graduated from Pacific Lutheran University
with a minor in Communications. Speaking/vocal performance include: Now that I have more speaking under my belt, I wouldn’t mention any of these engagements, particularly singing. Find your most important/significant speaking experiences and highlight them well. It’s better to have a few good ones than a smattering of mediocre ones (like I’ve listed here!).

- Vocal performances/worship teams—Baccalaureate, Issaquah High School; Maranatha Coffeehouse, Tacoma, WA; Puget Sound Christian Center, Tacoma, WA; Faith Fellowship, Silverdale, WA; Sunrise Christian Fellowship, Edmonds, WA; Trinity Valley Community Church, Palestine, TX; Creekside Bible Fellowship, Rowlett, TX; LakePointe Church, Rockwall, TX; LakePointe Women’s retreat, Rockwall, TX
- Valedictorian speaker, Issaquah High School, 1985
- MOPS facilitator, 1994
- Ladies Night Out Coordinator and Speaker, Faith Fellowship Church, 1994-1996
- Lessons from Nehemiah, Wednesday night 8-week series, Trinity Valley Community Church, spring 2000
- Survivor, Welcome to DTS. Wrote and acted in Seminary Wives in Ministry kickoff skit, Dallas Theological Seminary, August 2001
- Seminary Wives in Ministry Bible study leader, 2001-2002
- Eternal Perspective—Saving Room for Dessert and not just Mud Pies, Either, March 2003. “The Banquet” Women’s Conference with Woman of Faith speaker Thelma Wells
- You Can Write a Column, a presentation given to area elementary schools, Spring 2003
- Unlocking the Mysteries of the Query Letter—And You don’t even have to be Arthur Conan Doyle. Hour-long query letter presentation given in 2003 to:
  - Rockwall Christian Writers’ Group
  - Dallas Christian Writers’ Guild
  - Flower Mound Christian Writers
  - Greenville Christian Writers’ Conference
- LakePointe Church Bible study leader:
  - Eternal Perspective—an 11-week women’s Bible study. I wrote the 60-page study, and taught it in the fall/winter of 2002
  - 2 Corinthians—Pots of Clay in a Porcelain Perfect World. I wrote the 35-page study, winter/spring 2003
  - Women’s Topical Issues. I wrote 15 weekly studies, spring 2003—present

Writing background

I began my writing career by producing a subscriber-based newsletter entitled The Giving Home Journal. I followed that by writing home schooling materials for a local curriculum company and video copy for Siemens. For the next several years, I designed and edited three additional non-profit newsletters. Over the past eighteen months, I have completed two novels with a third one in progress, and am juggling three non-fiction proposals. I am a weekly family columnist for Star Community Newspapers. I have also had success with
well known Christian and secular magazines. Giving a short history of your publication journey helps editors and agents see longevity and tenacity.

Current projects

- *Crushing Stone* is a women’s literary fiction novel about a widow’s struggle to reconnect with her children after her husband is killed in a quarry accident in 1932 Ohio. Status: finished. Proposal and manuscript with agent Chip MacGregor. Chip was my agent at the time of this proposal. This book still hasn’t sold! Just goes to show, it’s a lot of work to get a book bought by a publisher!
- *Watching The Tree Limbs* is a contemporary southern novel about an abandoned child’s redemption in a small East Texas town during the late 1970s. Status: finished. Proposal and manuscript with agent Chip MacGregor. This one, along with its sequel did sell to NavPress. Hooray!
- *Two Peace* is a contemporary chick-lit novel about two unlikely women forging a tenuous friendship. Status: first fourteen chapters complete. This is one of the few times I have dropped a book. I got so tangled in the plot, I had to walk away. Frustrating.
- *Feed ‘Em, Don’t Weep—Cooking like a Chef Without Crying over the Onions* is a cookbook for those who want to foster hospitality and create great food without much hassle. Status: proposal stage. My agent laughs about this one. This certainly doesn’t fit into my “brand”!
- *Home is Where the Fridge Art is*, a compilation of my humorous family columns, is complete and I am currently developing a proposal. Never sold, but I used my columns to beef up *Ordinary Mom, Extraordinary God*. Just goes to show, nothing is really wasted.

Recent Freelance Successes This is unnecessary now, as I have books published, but this section is crucial if you are unpublished. Be sure to list your best, most recognizable publications. Don’t make the list exhaustive.

- I’ve written over 75 weekly columns for *Star Community Newspapers*, circulation 100,000, 2002—present. This is a really great way to get lots of publishing credits. And editors and agents love to see that you’ve consistently met a deadline. How did I get a column? By walking into our local newspaper office and handing the editor samples of the column he was “missing.” He liked them and hired me!
• “Taming the Money Monster,” The Answer (circulation 100,000), a division of Promise Network, Fall 2003.
• “Grandma Walker,” The War Cry, pending publication.
• “Five Hearts, One Hand,” Honorable Mention for Writer’s Digest 2002 Writing Contest. Any contest win or honor can be listed here.

Professional memberships

• Co-leader, Rockwall Christian Writers Group http://www.rcwg.blogspot.com/
• Faculty, The Greenville Christian Writers Conference, October 2003
• Member, Dallas Christian Writers Guild http://www.dallaschristianwritersguild.com/
• Member, Writers Information Network To join: http://www.christianwritersinfo.net/
• Member, The Writers View If you have no memberships, it’s time to make a change. There are many online groups that are free. Please, please join something. It’s better to write in community! To join The Writers View: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TheWritersView/. This is for published writers. If you’re unpublished and would love the same expertise, join The Writers View 2. You can click here for more information: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TWV2/

Editing and mentoring experience This is where you can highlight some of that obscurity work you’ve done. I edited those four novels for free, but they are valuable experience and editor might be interested in.

• Ministry Mentor, Dallas Theological Seminary’s Media Arts Internship, 2003—2004
• Editor of four novels
• Non-profit newsletter editor for five years
• Editor of several non-fiction articles, books and proposals

Educational and professional background

I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Pacific Lutheran University with a degree in English. I taught Literature and writing to both hormonal seventh graders and advance placement seniors. Since my children were born, I have opted to write from home. This year, however, I am working half to three quarter time on my freelance writing business. Show your degree and where you are currently in your writing career.

In Summary
DeMuth, Mary: Nonfiction Book Proposals

I am willing to meet with interested publishers and their marketing departments—anything that would help this book reach more families. I am a tenacious and prolific writer with a weekly column deadline and three novels slated for completion this year. I never miss a deadline, am eager to refine my writing through the editorial process, and enjoy promoting my work in innovative ways. It’s hard to brag about yourself, isn’t it? But here, end the proposal with a bang. Highlight your strengths. Leave ‘em hungry!

In my interaction with many frustrated parents, I know Pioneer Parenting: Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent meets a felt need in today’s society. I look forward to its success and ministry potential. Bring it home by showing the necessity for the book.

This part of the proposal is officially over. Whew! That’s a lot of work. There’s a little more to go. Next is a chapter by chapter synopsis. I usually keep mine very brief, but I’ve known other authors who have a clear format:

1. Quote for the chapter
2. A condensed anecdote
3. Followed by a statement (in future tense) about the chapter. “This chapter will help readers...”

Here is the one I wrote for this book:

Pioneer Parenting:
Confessions of a First Generation Christian Parent

Chapter Outline

Forward Pioneer parenting—an overview
Introduction Our pioneer parenting journey

Part One: Healing for the Past

Chapter One “I’m afraid of the boogey man.”
Realizing there is no safe place
Chapter Two “I'd rather pull the wool over my eyes.”
Telling the truth about your family of origin
Chapter Three “But my family was such a mess!”
Receiving God’s healing for past family trauma
Chapter Four “I WON’T become my parents!”
Resisting the urge to make inner vows
Chapter Five “What about the 491st time?”
Forgiving your parents—70x7 and beyond
Chapter Six “I thought there was no place like home.”
Chapter Seven
Leaving the nest, clinging to your spouse
“*But, my parents are driving me crazy.*”
Honoring your parents

Part Two: Help for the Present

Chapter Eight
“I just can’t do the parenting thing.”
Pioneer parenting with weakness

Chapter Nine
“*Just give me some parenting rules and be done with it.*”
Pioneer parenting from the inside out

Chapter Ten
“*Even when they’re whining?*”
Parenting with gratitude

Chapter Eleven
“*Meet Queen Patience and King Parenting Expert.*”
Dethroning the perfect parent

Chapter Twelve
“But I’m not a handyman.”
Establishing your own parenting tool kit

Chapter Thirteen
“*Oops, we did it again.*”
Forgiving yourself, forgiving your children

Chapter Fourteen
“But what if I screwed up?”
Don’t do as I did, but as God says

Chapter Fifteen
“A funny thing happened while raising my kids.”
Parenting with laughter

Chapter Sixteen
“*Why does Grandma have sleepovers with her boyfriend?*”
Protecting your children from the negative influence of grandparents without poisoning the relationship

Chapter Seventeen
“*Someone, please help us!*”
Seeking mentors

Part Three: Hope for the Future

Chapter Eighteen
“I can’t wipe the wilderness off my shoes.”
Integrating the Promised Land Principle

Chapter Nineteen
“The wolves are howling.”
Preparing children for the big, bad world

Chapter Twenty
“We’re in this together.”
Encouraging other pioneer parents

Chapter Twenty-one
“What now?”
Eternal Perspective Parenting

Appendix A
21 chapters of study questions, suitable for personal or group study

Appendix B
Helpful resources and support
Would I do this differently? Absolutely. I would highlight the specific thing I would teach in each chapter. You’ll see a better example in the next proposal.

After this, you would paste your stellar, amazing, shockingly good sample chapters. Usually three of them. The first three. You want to stun the editor with terrific writing, so please run your chapters through a critique group or some great editor friends before you paste them in the proposal. These will be double spaced, as opposed to the proposal text.

Other important things to include in the proposal that I didn’t include here:

- Status of the manuscript (how far are you?) Remember, you really don’t want to write the entire book before you write the proposal. Often, editors will shape the book the way they want it to go, and if you’ve already written the whole thing, you’ll face a lot of revisions. Also, in terms of cost benefit analysis, try not to write something unless you’re paid for it.
- Word count. You’ve probably included this on your first page. Most NF books run between 50,000 and 60,000 words.
- When you will have the manuscript completed. Be realistic about this. You don’t want to promise you’ll have the book completed in six months, if you can’t write that fast.
- Publicity. You’ll see a section about this in my next proposal.
And now, on to a recent proposal. This one hasn’t sold yet, so please don’t steal it! I’m trusting you, here. Cyber eyes are watching.

Word Count: 30,000

FROM GLASS HALF FULL TO OVERFLOWING
Fifteen Secrets for an Abundant Life

By Mary E. DeMuth
Words so beautiful they hurt

Agent Name
Agent Address
719-260-7080
Phone, email
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Working Title</strong></th>
<th>From Glass Half Full to Overflowing: Fifteen Secrets for an Abundant Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>Christian Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brand: “Words so beautiful they hurt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Manuscript</strong></td>
<td>30,000 words <em>(This is a differently-formatted book, so the word count is low.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>This book is aimed at harried Christian women between the ages of 20 and 50.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>About the Author</strong></td>
<td>Mary E. DeMuth is a missionary church-planter and a widely published author recognized for her spiritual depth. Her books include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Ordinary Mom, Extraordinary God</em> (non-fiction, Harvest House, 2005)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Building the Christian Family You Never Had</em> (non-fiction, WaterBrook, 2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Postmodern Parenting</em> (working title, Harvest House, summer 2007)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Watching the Tree Limbs</em> (NavPress, March 2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Wishing on Dandelions</em> (NavPress, September 2006) <em>(Usually, you would include sales numbers. I didn’t have accurate ones at the time.)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mary has been crafting prose since 1992, first as a newsletter editor, then as a freelance writer, followed by a fiction and nonfiction author. Mary’s articles have appeared in *Marriage Partnership, In Touch, HomeLife, Bon Appetit, Kindred Spirit, and Hearts at Home*. For two years she penned a lifestyle column for *Star Community Newspapers* in Dallas (circulation 100,000). In 2003, she won the Mount Hermon Christian Writers Conference’s Pacesetter Award. Mary has given dozens of media interviews, and has appeared or will appear on national media outlets like Family Life Today, Sirius Satellite Radio Network, and the Moody radio network. A thirty-nine-year-old mother of three, Mary lives with her husband Patrick in the South of France. *(3rd person)*
I. Overview

“I’ve become so accustomed to gritting my teeth through the day, plodding through the problems, that I’ve forgotten joy.” Mary DeMuth, in a life-changing conversation with her husband, Patrick.

Christian women live in a tired world where stress, worry and weariness assault us daily. As Christians, we call it a victory to make it through another day with a semblance of our relationship with Jesus intact. We aspire to become half-glass-full Christians—those who look positively on the world and their faith. But what if there is more? What if what Christians settle for—trudging through life in a joyless, mechanical pursuit of God—is far below God’s desire for us? What if His desire for His people is for something much higher—an abundant, glass-overflowing life?

This book was born out of a conversation with my husband Patrick. We argued about our lives as church planters in France. I’d lived there two years, utterly drained of vitality. We’d endured seemingly insurmountable stress: our children crying daily on their walks to school; our “sold” house in Texas going through foreclosure because a swindler “bought” it; our team leaders being disciplined and let go, leaving us with the responsibilities to rebuild a very broken team. After the first year, counselors diagnosed us both with post-traumatic stress disorder.

We survived another year, but by this time I was spent. “I will go home if you can’t be happy here,” my husband told me.

“What does happiness have to do with anything?” I asked. “There are people in the world starving. Others are martyred. Who am I to dare to want to be happy? This is my sacrifice to Jesus. Sure, I am not happy. Granted. But I am called to endure.”

“That’s not living, Mary,” Patrick told me. His words stopped my heroic sentences. At once, I realized I’d been living my life in Jesus with a poverty mentality—glass half empty. In my soul, I realized Jesus didn’t merely want me to move from a half-empty glass to a full one, but that He wanted to do something entirely different—to spill His infectious presence into my parched life in such a way that I would thrive, not merely survive. I chose to write this out more in story format than in a didactic way.
This book is a result of that quest. *From Glass Half Full to Overflowing* is a book about God’s surprising and practical abundance for everyday believers. Though not formulaic, the steps toward overflowing are simple to understand and implement. Rooted in the Bible, through the person of Jesus Christ, believers of every age will grasp the importance of a joy-based life.

Through personal stories and relevant quotes from other Christians on the journey, *From Glass Half Full to Overflowing* seeks to offer enlightenment, hope, and biblical truth to believers wrestling with a doldrums-based life.

**II. About the Book**

“We see what is possible: anyone and everyone is able to live a zestful life that spills out of the stereotyped containers that a sin-inhibited society provides. Such lives fuse spontaneity and purpose and green the desiccated landscape with meaning.” - Eugene H. Peterson, *Run with the Horses*

*From Glass Half Full to Overflowing* encourages believers who want to live a zestful life in Jesus, who are weary of formulaic ways of following Him. They’ve reached the end of their earthly ability to manufacture joy and want the deeper things of God. They’ve tired of gritting their teeth through life. I examine fifteen surprising ways women can experience abundance, including living for Jesus over reputation, understanding sacrifice’s beauty, resting even when it’s counterintuitive, and avoiding the comparison game. Each chapter is chock full of practical examples and scriptural truth.

**Why is there a need for this book?**

*So, friends, every day do something That won’t compute. Love the Lord. Love the world. Work for nothing. Love someone who does not deserve it Ask the questions that have no answers Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias Laugh. Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful Though you have considered all the facts Practice Resurrection Luci Shaw, The Crime of Living Cautiously*

First, believers and unbelievers alike are searching for the abundant, overflowing life, but few non-charismatic Christian authors address this subject. These health-and-wealth authors equate abundance with possessions, power, prestige, or health. But Jesus tells us that if we believe in Him and orient our lives with His, from our “innermost being will
flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38). Jesus speaks of abundance of spirit, not merely externals.

Second, the craziness of life prevents many people from drinking deeply of the abundance Jesus offers. This book, because it is short in format, will address a spiritual need without overwhelming the reader with length.

Third, many Christ-followers grow weary of catchy formulas and spiritual gimmicks. “We see authors moving away from formulaic, pat answers toward greater authenticity and away from a message that proclaims only what Christ wants to do for me to a message that proclaims what Christ wants to do through me to build the kingdom,” said Greg Daniel, W Publishing Group Executive Editor in Religion Bookline. This book, with its raw authenticity and gritty truth, helps believers grasp a kingdom mentality.

Fourth, many Christian women would describe themselves as positive people, glass-half-full individuals who still struggle with emptiness and meaning. They want more than a ho-hum life. This book doesn’t necessarily offer a way out of the pit, but a way through everyday life—a pattern of living that is expectant, waiting on Jesus to fill a half-full life to overflowing. In this way, From Glass Half Full to Overflowing illuminates the spiritual benefit of moving from mere optimism (glass half full) to biblical hope (overflowing).

Specific reader benefits include the following:

- An easy-to-read, pocket-sized format
- A book written for women by a woman
- A take on abundance that is not all about health, wealth and power
- I should probably have brainstormed more reader benefits.

Helpful features include:

- Discussion questions. The appendix features a discussion guide corresponding with each chapter. These questions can be the catalyst for an abundance discussion group.
- Stories. Woven throughout the book are real stories of folks experiencing the overflowing presence of Jesus.
- Biblical truth. Ripped from the headlines of Scripture, the reader will understand the biblically-based view of the abundant life (i.e., it’s not about worldly fame and wealth, but about richness of the spirit).
- An additional appendix annotating helpful books, articles, web sites, radio programs, etc.

What series potential exists?
Just as *The Power of a Praying Wife* (which sold just under 2.5 million copies) morphed into several *The Power of a Praying ___________* books (garnering more millions in sales), this book has similar potential. Possible spin off titles include:

*Glass Overflowing—*

- Marriage
- Parenting
- Relationships
- Ministry

**Alternative titles:**

- *Fifteen Secrets of Abundant Living*
- *The Pursuit of Abundance*
- *My Life Runneth Over*
- *Life Overflowing*
- *These came from my title-gifted friend. Everyone needs one!*

### III. About the Market

Books about deepening spiritual life are top sellers. Consider the following publishing phenomena:

- Of the top ten CBA marketplace hardbacks (as of the writing of this proposal), seven dealt specifically with evaluating and improving the Christian life, including the number one bestseller, *Captivating* by John and Stasi Eldridge.
- The success of small-format hardbacks can’t be ignored:
  - *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* by David Gregory
  - *The Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson
  - *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn **This relates to the format of the book.**
- Consider the surprising success of two runaway bestsellers, both of which have sold millions and deal specifically with improving spiritual life:
  - *The Purpose-Driven Life* by Rick Warren
  - *Your Best Life Now* by Joel Osteen **At the time of this writing, I didn’t have stats. I do now. I would add stats here.**

The potential readership for an authentic look at an overflowing walk with Jesus is not merely numbered by book sales. Consider the circulations of these popular CBA magazines:
• *Marriage Partnership*, where two of my articles have been featured, has a circulation of 50,000.
• *Christianity Today*, a widely read publication, has a readership of 315,000.
• *Today’s Christian Woman*, often runs spiritually-attuned articles targeted to Christian women. Its circulation is 250,000.

Current trends in Christian publishing show that books about deepened spirituality are selling well even from backlists. Consider the following comment:

• “We Americans tend to be pragmatic in our approach to religion and spirituality. We want a faith that works, one that helps us navigate the day-to-day. That’s why the subcategory of religious or spiritual self-help continues to be the backbone of so many publishing programs. Have a problem? If you are like many people, you’ll head to the bookstore for guidance before you talk to your priest, rabbi, imam or minister.” Lynn Garrett, “Religion Update: What’s Inside,” Publishers Weekly, 6/30/03. This is a bit dated. I would either not include it, or find a newer, more relevant article.

**IV. About the Competition**

With over 5000 Christian books addressing spirituality, why write another book? *Because Christians are longing for an abundant, overflowing life. They want real answers from an approachable author.*

**Two abundance books have sold well and are considered classics:**

• *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* by Hannah Whitall Smith, Hendrickson Publishers. From promotional materials: “Beloved for nearly a century and a half, this book has helped millions of believers experience deep spiritual assurance. Hannah Whitall Smith—herself acquainted with many grief’s and doubts—guides readers to rely not on the shifting sands of emotions but on the constant and unshakable faithfulness of God. Here indeed is the wonderful secret of the abundant life.” While it’s better to read each book and summarize each one in your own words, it is permissible to quote from publisher websites or Amazon. Though very important to not rely merely on emotion, my book touches on several different areas to move from glass half full to overflowing. Plus, it is directed at a postmodern audience. I did much better in this proposal showing how my book was unique.

• *The Master’s Indwelling: There is a Life of Abundance and Joy*, by Andrew Murray, Whitaker House. From promotional materials: “You’re living in Christ. But is He living in you? Has He swept and cleared out every cobweb in your life? Or are you tightly gripping the broom yourself? Is your Christian walk just a performance, an act that masks the emptiness inside? He’s called us to more than a game of charades. He’s invited us to taste the joy in the Christ-filled life. You’re
already in Christ; now let Him be in you. It’s time for The Master’s Indwelling.” Author Andrew Murray has penned many classics, including this addressing abundance as Jesus’ presence within. However, From Glass Half Full to Overflowing has a broader scope regarding abundance, that there are many nuances to walking with the joy and strength of Jesus, including living in anticipation, choosing to risk, resting, finding freedom from rules, and holding possessions loosely.

- It’s important to note that charismatic publishing houses produced both these classics, proving there is a yet-unexplored market niche for a book like this from a mainstream house.

One popular book equates abundance with healing from the past:

- The Healing Path: How the Hurts in Your Past Can Lead You to a More Abundant Life, by Dan Allender, WaterBrook, 2000. From promotional materials: “Psychologist Allender invites you to experience renewal based not on the resolution of your past hurts, but the use of them to receive God’s hope, healing, and happiness. You’ve suffered long enough—find redemption in Christ today.” Allender takes a psychological approach to abundance, equating an overflowing life with overcoming your past. From Glass Half Full to Overflowing approaches abundance from a myriad of angles, making it a more well-rounded approach to an overflowing life—angles like sacrifice, letting go, abandoning comparison, and understanding the importance of Jesus’ resurrection. This book is also written for women from a woman’s perspective.

Two Noteworthy books deal with abundance from a charismatic perspective:

- Your Best Life Now, by Joel Osteen, Hachette Book Group 2004, over 2 million sold. From promotional materials: “Through the ministry of Lakewood Church, Pastor Osteen has already helped millions of people advance down the road towards health, abundance, significance and success. Don’t miss this opportunity to let him lead you down the road to Your Best Life Now.” Osteen equates abundance with self-esteem and personal goals. He approaches life from a health and wealth mindset. From Glass Half Full to Overflowing, however, approaches abundance in a counter-cultural, self-denying way—that Jesus is the key to spiritual abundance, not dreams realized or material things gained, and it is written from a woman’s perspective.

- Life Overflowing, the Spiritual Walk of the Believer by T.D. Jakes, Bethany House, 2000. From promotional materials: “We were created to live so God could demonstrate His power through us. However, many of us turn to our own limited resources when dealing with people and situations. . . When you rely on the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to walk out each day, you will experience a life that’s ‘exceeding abundantly’ above all you could ask or think. And once you’ve tasted this overflowing life, you’ll never want to turn back!” Quite
different in scope from my book, this is a Bible study based on the book of Ephesians.

The books most closely resembling *From Glass Half Full to Overflowing* both in format and content are:

- *The Prayer of Jabez*, by Bruce Wilkinson, Multnomah, 2005. From promotional materials: “Do you want to be extravagantly blessed by God? Are you ready to reach for the extraordinary? To ask God for the abundant blessings He longs to give you? Let Bruce Wilkinson help you discover how the remarkable prayer of a little-known Bible hero can release God’s favor, power and protection.” This wildly successful bestseller addresses a particular obscure prayer from the Old Testament as the key to abundant blessings. *From Glass Half Full to Overflowing* instead tackles the topic of an overflowing, effusive life from several perspectives, utilizing Scripture from both the Old and New Testaments.

- *Secrets of the Vine*, by Bruce Wilkinson, Multnomah, 2006. From promotional materials: “In *Secrets of the Vine*, Bruce Wilkinson explores John 15 to show you how to make maximum impact for God. . . *Secrets of the Vine* will open your eyes to the Lord’s hand in your life and uncover surprising insights pointing you toward a new path of consequence for God’s glory.” Again, Wilkinson expertly focuses on joy and effectiveness through the lens of one book of the New Testament. *From Glass Half Full to Overflowing* seeks to reveal the secrets to abundance through the entirety of Scripture and surprising everyday stories. It’s important to note that both these books released several years ago, and were written by a man.

Though there are many spiritual growth books lining bookstore shelves, and they are bringing in needed revenue for Christian publishers and retailers, there is still a need for a woman-authored, smaller-format book that encourages a shift from merely living a glass half full life to an overflowing, joy-touched life. There is still a need for practical tome written by from a non-charismatic perspective that speaks truth to overloaded and uninspired Christian women looking for the abundance of Jesus in daily life.

V. About Promotion

Marketing Plan

Not only am I passionately dedicated to the craft of writing, but I also enjoy promoting what I’ve written. I understand the significance of the one-month launch window and will do everything I can to maximize that window. In addition, I will integrate promoting *From Glass Half Full to Overflowing* into my lifestyle, making use of several venues: See how I’ve used my past proposals here? Once you’ve written a great proposal, you can use the format and even some of the same words in upcoming proposals.
Speaking engagements

I welcome the opportunity to speak to small and large conferences, retreats and workshops. I am comfortable speaking in any setting, intimate or large. Some of the places I’ve spoken: Munich, Monaco, Vienna, Florence, Dallas, and Portland, OR. Now, I would highlight more specifically how/where I spoke.

Requesting endorsements

I will solicit endorsements from the following individuals:

- Mike Yorkey, co-author of the wildly successful Everyman’s Battle series.
- Michael Warren, Executive Story Consultant for Happy Days and Co-Creator and Executive Producer of Step by Step and Family Matters for ABC.
- Jan Winebrenner, author of Intimate Faith.
- Sandra Glahn, author of several books including Sexual Intimacy in Marriage and the CBA Bestseller and Christy Award finalist Lethal Harvest. Glahn teaches Journalism at Dallas Theological Seminary and is Editor-in-chief of the seminary’s award-winning quarterly magazine, Kindred Spirit.
- Tim Riter, author of Twelve Lies Husbands Tell Their Wives.

Publications

Since my initial foray into publishing includes six years of desktop newsletter formatting as well as several paying graphic design jobs, I will offer to come alongside the publisher’s marketing team developing my own flyers, press releases, business cards with book information, bookmarks, postcards and promotional posters.

I will craft and distribute press releases to the following newspapers:

- The Dallas Morning News Religion Section—Dallas
- Star Community Newspapers—Dallas (I was a weekly columnist for this conglomerate that reaches 100,000 readers.)
- The Issaquah Press—a suburb of Seattle
- The DFW Heritage—Dallas/Fort Worth
- The Seattle Times—Seattle
- The Riviera Times—Nice, France
- The Riviera Reporter—Nice, France Where I lived at the time of writing this proposal

Making media appearances
I have been a guest on the following media outlets, and look forward to continuing my relationship with them: Here’s where I’ve capitalized on my other publicity campaigns, showing editors who I already have a media relationship with.

- Family Life Today—Little Rock
- Christian Book Previews—San Jose
- WIN Informer—Bainbridge Island
- WBPI TV—Atlanta
- KCIS—Seattle
- WMBI—Chicago
- SIRIUS Satellite Radio Network
- KCBI—Dallas
- WTNE—Memphis
- WIBG—Philadelphia
- KTLF—Colorado Springs
- KDUV—Fresno
- WBCL—Fort Wayne
- KTIS—Minneapolis
- KOKF—Oklahoma City
- WAGF—Ft. Lauderdale
- CHRI—Ontario, Canada
- WMUZ—Detroit
- WPEO—Bloomington
- KJTY—Topeka
- 3ABN (International)
- WKTO—Orlando
- KNWS—Cedar Rapids
- KNKT—Albuquerque
- WFIL—Philadelphia
- KSLR—San Antonio
- KJSR—St. Louis

Publicity Campaigns

I am equally excited to participate in a publisher’s author/book signing tour, and will agree to bear partial expense in promoting my book in the United States and Western Europe.

Ben Laurro of Pure Publicity wrote this after a recent campaign for Building the Christian Family You Never Had: “This has been a dream campaign for us. In the several years I have assisted with publicity, I have come across few authors that have the humility, perseverance and willingness you have had to support their project - whenever we requested an article - you penned one within a couple hours.... We will continue to keep an eye out for opportunities for you to share your message and will forward you any outstanding requests that come in.” ([www.purepublicity.com](http://www.purepublicity.com)) It’s nice to show editors...
and pub boards (By the way, a pub board is a publication board committee, the committee that decides whether they'll buy your book or not) that you're a great client. Ask your publicist for a recommendation.

Rebeca Seitz of Glass Road PR, said this about the Watching the Tree Limbs publicity campaign: “We got some great media – and the fact that reviews are still coming in three months AFTER the book’s pub is a fabulous sign. . . Even with you all the way over in France, we had an exceptional campaign.” (www.glassroadpr.com)

**Website promotion This section is entirely new, and very important.**

In an April 2006 survey about which types of publicity and promotion sells books, the authors of the survey concluded, “The most effective way to promote a book, the survey found, was through the Internet, followed by coverage in trade magazines that report on an author’s particular field. Book signings were far down the list . . .” (source: raintoday.com)

With that in mind, I will promote From Glass Half Full to Overflowing on my website www.relevantprose.com (receives over 3000 hits a month), my main blog www.relevantblog.blogspot.com (receives over 5000 hits a month) and my new parenting blog www.pioneerparenting.blogspot.com. The Web site lists speaking engagements, links to booksellers, and contact information as well as writer helps.

Other publicity I’ve personally generated:

- Conducted two blog tours (targeted over two weeks, 15+ sites) I would update this now.
- Am an active Amazon Connect author Go here to sign up: https://www.amazon.com/connect
- Promoted books as a blogger at The Masters Artist blog (over 6000 hits a month http://tpr.typepad.com/themastersartist/)
- Gave novels away (through my novel publicist www.glassroadpr.com) to book club leaders throughout the United States and the world. This has proven to be a great way to get my novels into the hands of readers.

**Important memberships**

- Member of CAN, the Christian Author’s Network (http://www.christianauthorsnetwork.com), a marketing network of a select group of writers doing active promotion such as:
  - Targeted monthly ezines (to readers and retailers)
  - Cooperative book signings
  - Book clubs
  - Website promotion
  - Blog (I’ll be helping with this aspect of the cooperative).
DeMuth, Mary: Nonfiction Book Proposals

- I’m an active member of American Christian Fiction Writers who have over 1000 members. I’ll be teaching one of their continuing tracks at the ACFW conference this year. [http://www.acfw.com](http://www.acfw.com)
- I am a fully-participating member of The Writers View, a large group of writers across the world.
- I am a panelist of the newly-formed TWV2 (The Writers View 2) for new and upcoming authors.
- I am a contributing author to The Masters Artist Blog—a highly trafficked blog addressing Christianity and the arts. ([http://tpr.typepad.com/themastersartist/](http://tpr.typepad.com/themastersartist/))

**Other Avenues**

Having devoured several marketing books, I understand the power of buzz to sell books. Therefore, I’m careful to target my influencer copies to connectors, salesmen and mavens. This has been an effective strategy as evidenced by this recent email written by a fiction influencer:

“One of my friends so loved *Watching the Tree Limbs* that she wants to put it out for visitors who are going to be staying at the Christian Bed and Breakfast that they’re setting up. She only read it because I told her about it and now she’s telling her friends, etc. She wants to buy copies for people she knows back in Kentucky.” *It’s always great to show editors and agents that you are savvy to the ways of buzz and promotion.*

**VI. About the Author**

**Current Books**

- *Postmodern Parenting* (working title, Harvest House, slated to release Summer 2007). A different kind of parenting book for those who want to prepare their children well for the postmodern world outside their door.
- *Building the Christian Family You Never Had*, (WaterBrook, 2006). A book for those parents who don’t want to duplicate the homes they were raised in. **As I mentioned earlier, if I had the bookselling stats at the time of writing this, I would add them here.**
- *Watching the Tree Limbs* and *Wishing on Dandelions* (NavPress, both fiction released in 2006) Books about the redemptive hand of God in childhood sexual abuse.
Awards and Honors

- Received this review from Publishers Weekly (Side note: remember to italicize titles of magazines and books) for Watching the Tree Limbs: “Her characters are expertly drawn, and encompass meanness, evil, great kindness, and the confusion and quirks of generally good people who don’t know how to handle what life has given them. Christian themes are woven throughout as a natural expression of the characters and situation . . . [T]his book will appeal to many readers both as a thoughtful, powerful reflection on a difficult topic and as a compelling story.”

- Winner of Mount Hermon’s 2004 Pacesetter Award

Recent Speaking Opportunities

- Spoke to over 30 radio outlets for Building the Christian Family You Never Had.

Reader Feedback, Building the Christian Family You Never Had: I added the following section to show editors the real-life impact of one of my nonfiction books.

- “I am starting [the book] for a second time, and just ordered four copies so I can start handing them out! What a life-changing book. Truly!” Kari
- I wanted “to let you know what an important part your book played in my healing. I’d pick it up usually when I was at a standstill with my progress in counseling and God never failed to use it to shed new light on something. Sometimes it was one sentence that helped things click, or a new perspective, like considering how our parents were parented as we struggle with forgiveness. I did just that and it led to a huge breakthrough. So, I just wanted to say thank you for laboring over the words that went on those pages. They made a big difference in my life!” Lori
- “I am reading your wonderful book slowly. I usually tear through stuff, but my heart keeps aching as I read your stories. I can relate to your experience on many levels, so it has been slow going for me as I am processing your words and the implications for my life—especially in regard to forgiveness and what life looks like in the future with my parents and my in-laws. I have many friends that I will eventually buy it for. It is a fantastic work.” Kourtney
**Educational and professional background**

I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Pacific Lutheran University with a degree in English. I taught Literature and writing for two years. I am currently writing full time and helping my husband and our church-planting team start a church in Southern France.

**In Summary**

I am happy to meet with interested publishers and their marketing departments. I enjoy publicity and marketing via the web—anything that would help this book reach more folks with the simple message of abundance. I am a tenacious and prolific writer, having completed a novel and a nonfiction book this year. I never miss a deadline, am eager to refine my writing through the editorial process, and enjoy promoting my work in innovative ways.

In my interaction with many dissatisfied Christian women, I know From Glass Half Full to Overflowing meets a felt need in today’s society. I look forward to its success and ministry potential.

**Annotated Chapter Titles**

**Secret One: Avoid the Lot of Lot’s Wife**

Looking back can be a hindrance to abundance today. Mary shares several stories of how pining for the good old days of the past prevent abundant living in the present. This is a better summary than the first, but if you are a new author, I’d encourage you not to scrimp on this section. Add details, a full summary, and a list of stories or experts you will use.

**Secret Two: Acquire “Go For It” Spirituality**

Drawing on lessons from a ‘bisse,’ Mary shares the importance of digging pathways in the valleys of our lives for God to move through.

**Secret Three: Walk in Holy Anticipation**

Much of the joy of life lies in anticipation. Mary illuminates what living with holy expectation looks like, contrasted with a woe-is-me-everything-is-bad attitude.

**Secret Four: Live for Jesus instead of Your Reputation**
Living for our reputation can be counter-productive and draining. Mary discusses the joy of letting go of how others perceive us and holding onto Jesus’ opinion of us instead.

**Secret Five: Let Go of Micromanaging Your Relationship with Jesus**

Many who don’t live the abundant life spend a great deal of energy managing their Christianity, deciding what to focus on in the sanctification process instead of letting Jesus lead. Mary shares helpful advice and applicable stories of letting go, allowing Jesus full control of even our relationship with Him.

**Secret Six: Understand the Beauty of Selfless Sacrifice**

Abundance in our society seems to be about having more stuff and getting everything we’ve always wanted. Mary explores the counter-cultural path of self-denial as a way toward abundance.

**Secret Seven: Live Beyond the Precipice of Risk**

Many believe the myth that safety and security breed abundance. In contrast, it’s often those times we dare to step out beyond our comfort zones that we experience God’s overflowing life.

**Secret Eight: Heal from the Past to Live Abundantly Today**

Shackled from the pain of our past, we can’t experience the abundant life until we allow Jesus into the nooks and crannies of our pain.

**Secret Nine: Rest in God’s Capable Arms**

Frenetic activity typifies most Christian women. We equate abundance with activity. Mary shares how incorporating rest into our lives helps us experience more of Jesus.

**Secret Ten: Find Freedom from Rules-based Spirituality**

Many don’t experience abundance because of their legalistic pursuit of God. Mary uncovers the reasons for this and invites readers to embrace the freedom that is in Jesus.

**Secret Eleven: Seek and Grant Forgiveness**

Bitterness saps abundance. Mary shares her own journey of forgiveness and how forgiving others helped her experience God’s forgiveness and His abundance.
Secret Twelve: Hold Money and Possessions Loosely

Stuff can strangle our abundance. Mary shares the importance of holding money and possessions loosely, illuminating the joy of giving generously with the Kingdom of God in mind.

Secret Thirteen: Jump off the Comparison Bandwagon

Joy ebbs when we play the comparison game. Mary explores the secret of learning contentment in this compare-crazy world.

Secret Fourteen: Praise with a Heart of Gratitude

Grumbling and complaining eliminates the abundant life. Mary shows how learning to say thanks and cultivating an attitude of gratitude revolutionizes our daily perspectives.

Secret Fifteen: Grasp a Resurrection Mentality

Believing God can resurrect even the most difficult circumstances helps us live abundance tangibly. Mary shares stories of God’s surprising resurrections and how His power can transform even the most depressed life.

Conclusion: A New Way of Life

God wants to do even more than a half-full life. He wants to overflow us with His presence. Mary concludes the book by giving a charge to readers to dare to let Him invade every part of their lives.
Finished!

All right! We’re done. Take a deep breath. You can do this. Open up your document. Don’t let the cursor or the blank screen bother you. Just sit down and write. Use my proposals as a template. I wish you much success as you embark on this crazy adventure called nonfiction book writing!

With joy,

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Through writing and speaking, Mary is passionate about helping people approach God in such a way that they know His reality and His direct dealings with them every single day. She longs to see people so fully heal from tragedy that others would never know the tragedy happened. She helps others slow down long enough to realize how good life is.

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