

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- A book proposal should be written in third person. Please refer to yourself by either your first or last name (choose one and be consistent) or as “the author.” The Sample Chapters are the only exceptions.
- Take the time to write clearly, powerfully, and concisely. Longer is not better! (15 pages or less—excluding samples—is ideal.)
- Note: Delete all instructions when complete.

[Cover Page]

NEW BOOK PROPOSAL

Working Title

[*Title: Subtitle*]

Author

[Name, Title (if applicable)]

Brief Premise

[A one or two-sentence statement—ideally 75 words or less—of the book’s basic concept with a very strong hook. Hint: Identify the problem/felt need and explain how your book will provide the solution. If you have a stellar endorsement from a well-known author, include that here as well.]

Represented By

[Agent Name], Agent of Record for [Author Name]

[Agent Info]

[End Cover Page]

Overview

[Catchy introduction that summarizes the book’s content—essentially the Table of Contents in prose—with a focus on reader benefits. Use phrases such as “The book will...” and “Readers will...” Include author byline. About 350 words or less.]

Alternate Title Ideas

[List at least two or three alternate titles and subtitles, no repetition.]

Book Details

- **Category:** [Please use a line from the Christian Retail Sub list: <http://bisg.org/page/Religion>. If more than one applies, you can list up to two categories, but you cannot create a new category.]
- **Key Words:** [If readers look up words to find a book, what will lead them to yours?]
- **Proposed Format:** [Hardcover or Trade Paperback?]
- **Word Count:** ____ [A traditional trade book tends to be between 40,000 to 60,000 words with an average of 50,000. If you haven’t already completed the manuscript, take the average number of words in your sample chapters and multiply it by the number of chapters to get an estimated word count.]
- **Deadline:** ____ months after a signed contract [usually 3, 6, or 9 months. How soon can you finish the entire manuscript?]

Line Extension Possibilities

[Optional. List additional related products you want to create, such as a DVD, Leader’s Guide, Devotional. Or does this have potential to be a series of books? List those here.]

Target Audience

[Ideally, your reader descriptions may include demographic and psychographic information and their motivation to buy your book. Who are they and where can we find them? Does the primary purchaser differ from your primary reader?]

Primary:

Secondary:

Tertiary:

Purpose and Felt Need

[One brief paragraph for each.]

The **Felt Need** paragraph should explain why readers feel they need to read this book. Please note: The felt need is not why *you* feel they need to read the book; it is the problem readers are

already aware of and therefore are seeking a book to help them solve that problem. Questions to consider may include:

- What is the problem that provokes the need for this book in the reader's life? (This is the felt need.)
- What is the reader currently doing, if anything, to solve this problem?
- How will you as an author demonstrate empathy and authority regarding this problem? (This shows how you can write on the theme/topic.)
- Who does the reader want to become?
- What's at stake if the reader ignores this book?
- What will readers think, feel, and do after reading your book?

The **Purpose** paragraph should include your motivation for writing this book, what you hope to accomplish in the readers' lives through this book, and how you hope to solve the problem(s) they are facing in the felt need. How will readers come away changed?]

Reader Benefits

If readers in the target market purchase and read [*book title*], then they will...

[Bulleted list of 5 key benefits]

Current Interest

[Optional—Are there any reasons to believe people are more interested in this theme now than in the past? One or two brief paragraphs.]

Unique Angles

[Sometimes called Unique Selling Proposition or USB. How is your book different from other books on the market today? List 4-6 bullet points of what makes your book stand out above the crowd.]

Complementary Works

[What are the readers in your target audience reading right now? Where does your book fit in the current market? Three goals: 1.) Identify a gap in the current market, 2.) Prove there is an audience who will find your book interesting as demonstrated by similar successful books, and 3.) Make it clear how yours is different enough to compel those readers to buy it.

Briefly list and summarize **five** similar titles released in the last five years by traditional Christian publishers and explain why yours is different from each. Include 1.) title, author, publisher, and year of each book, 2.) one-sentence to summarize the comp title and how yours is similar, and 3.) one sentence to describe how your book is different and still needed.

Note: Exclude both self-published works and best-sellers. May include an introductory paragraph

that acknowledges the best-sellers on this topic, but do not list them as true comp titles.

Pro Tip: Search key words on Christianbook.com. Look at “Other Customers Also Purchased” and “Related Products.”

Include your five comp titles from the following publishers (in alphabetical order): B&H, Baker, Barbour, Bethany, Brazos, Broadleaf/Fortress Press, Broadstreet, Chosen, Crossway, David C. Cook, Eerdmans, FaithWords, Focus on the Family, Harvest House, InterVarsity Press, Iron Stream, Kregel, Moody, NavPress, P&R, Revell, Thomas Nelson, Tyndale, WaterBrook Multnomah, Worthy, Zondervan. Ideally, do not list more than one book from the same publisher; provide a snapshot of what multiple publishers are doing.]

Proposed Back Cover Copy

[Optional—include an endorsement and highlights from previous pages of this proposal. If this section is not absolutely stellar, then omit this section.

Sample formula:

- **Short, attention-getting headline.** Provide a short, engaging header statement that captures a primary message of the book and gets a purchaser’s attention (2–8 words).
- **The problem or felt need.** State the problem the book addresses so readers recognize an issue they or someone they know have and their immediate need for the book. (3-7 sentences).
- **Value statements/key selling points.** Create 3–5 bullet points that share the key promises of the book (solutions to problems, what readers will learn, how they will benefit, why the book is for a reader or someone they know, etc.).
- **Hopeful closer.** Provide a hopeful closing statement for the reader to see the end result of reading your book (1–2 sentences).]

About the Author

[Why you? Why are you the best person to write this book? Why will publishers be delighted to work with you? Please write up to two-thirds of a page double-spaced about your background and qualifications to write this book, explain what makes you an expert on your topic, etc. Make this section fun and interesting; let your personality shine! For additional tips, see “[The Very First Thing I look at in Your Book Proposal and Why](#)”]

Contact Information: Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone, E-mail

Publishing History

[Please list any books you’ve previously written (even if self-published), with sales figures; also list magazines or journals in which you’ve had articles published.]

Praise for the Author

[Optional, but *very* helpful. If you already have endorsements for this project or previous books, include them here.]

Author Platform and Promotion

[Please provide a bulleted list of professional/business associations, bloggers, conferences, or media contacts; include relevant data about the size of their platform. Please expand on how **you** (not your publisher) will use your professional associations and networks to specifically promote this book; prove you will be a good steward. Be sure to include specific **past, present, and future** examples of the suggestions below.

Example: The author is a writer and speaker of ___+ years who will actively promote [title] through:

- **Endorsers/Influencers.** Please list 10 of the most influential Christian authors and other Christian leaders you consider friends or acquaintances that you expect will be willing to endorse or promote your book, including a very brief byline and relevant platform information. How will they promote it? (To their email list, website, social media, stores, magazine/newsletter, church, business, etc.?) Are there other prominent people you would be willing to ask? Any dream endorsers with the help of a publisher? Will one of these be willing to write a Foreword?
- **Organizations/Ministries:** If you work for an organization, what is their reach? (i.e. their email list, and monthly/yearly page views) Are you connected with any ministries that would feature your book? How would they do that?
- **Personal and Professional Networks:** bloggers, associations, alumni, etc.
- **Speaking Engagements:** Such as regional and national conferences, ministries, etc. Give examples past, present, future. Include the title of your message and your best guess as to size of the audience. Who will invite you to speak when your book releases?
- **Website/blog:** Do you have a website and/or blog? How often do you update your site? What is your reach (monthly page views)? Prove you're growing.
- **Email List:** Do you have an email list (newsletters) and how many contacts do you have? How often you send an email and how are you growing your list? Publishers love to see that you already have a database of 3,000 to 5,000 names (or more) to whom you can market your book when it comes out.
- **Social Media, etc.:** presence on at least one platform (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, etc.) with clear evidence of engagement. How many followers and how often do you post? (Other ideas include your Amazon Author Central and Good Reads profile.) Tip: Pick two platforms and focus on those.
- **Podcasts.** A podcast with a growing audience, or frequent guest spots on others' podcasts. How many downloads/listeners/reviews? (Research possibilities at www.podcastguests.com or www.podmatch.com)
- **Media:** What media outlets (blog, magazine articles, radio, television, etc.) are already reaching your target audience most effectively? How might you join forces with that outlet? What is their reach?

- **Bulk Purchases.** Are you willing to purchase 1,000+ copies at a steep discount from the first print run? Are there resources (ministry, education, church, business, media) or stores (church, ministry, organization) that will purchase in bulk, perhaps for donors (as a gift) or for a special event?
- **Launch plans**
- *Other creative ideas?*

Chapter-by-Chapter Synopsis

[Write two or three sentences about each chapter, emphasizing the content focus and reader benefits of each chapter. Brief is best! Five lines or less, single spaced. Note: If your book includes more than 15 chapters (such as a devotional, for example), consider including a strict Table of Contents without chapter summaries. If desired, indicate that an Annotated Table of Contents is available upon request.]

Introduction:

Chapter 1: [Chapter Title]

In this chapter, readers will discover... Etc.

Chapter 2: [Chapter Title]

Future Book Ideas

[Optional. List any future books you would like to write along with a one sentence summary.]

Sample Chapters

The Introduction and Chapters ___ and ___ follow on pages ___ to ___.

[Include 4,000 to 6,000 words of polished sample writing from the book, not more than 7,500. Five-thousand words is the sweet spot. Including the Introduction and first chapter is recommended, then can be consecutive chapters or can choose a chapter from later in the manuscript if it best captures the heart of the book. (Note: Manuscript does not need to be complete.)

Writing Tip: In your Introduction, describe why readers bought the book, not why you wrote the book. Tell stories that are relatable to a variety of readers, demonstrating you know their felt needs and will provide answers. Ideally about 1,000 words long, keeping in mind that some readers skip it altogether; save any foundational details for chapter one.]