

Writing as a Ministry for God's Glory

Chapter 7 Marketing Your Written Works

by Kathy Collard Miller

For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand and I hope you will understand until the end.—2 Corinthians 1:13

Our potential readers won't have the joy of understanding what we've written unless we market it. Marketing means we make editors aware of our project. That's what this chapter is all about.

Breaking In

Appear professional is very important because the competition is strong. In order to be professional, we will need to buy printed stationary and business cards. Your local printer can help you with those. But that is only necessary if you don't have a computer that prints with many different kinds of fonts. Most of the time, you can design your own and print it out each time.

The Christian Writer's Market Guide

Market guides are like a writer's Bible: you can't get along without one. It is a book a writer uses to find the different markets for her writings. It has sections on publishers, magazines, greeting card companies, agents, writers' conferences, writers' groups, and editing services. It lists publishers and magazines' needs and any information you need to reach them, such as addresses, telephone numbers, etc. Search on the internet for this book and you'll find several ways to find it.

Sample Copies

Sample copies of magazines and publishers' catalogues are available, simply by writing and requesting them, and enclosing an SASE (self addressed stamped envelope). Sometimes there is a slight cost.

These copies help us evaluate that publisher's or magazine's style so that we can conform our writing to their needs. I suggest you subscribe to the magazines you want to concentrate on writing for. By reading online magazines and blogs, you can become familiar with the kind of writing they desire. Every opportunity has unique purposes, goals, and formats. It's important to do your research.

Writer's Guidelines

Another helpful resource is a magazine's and publisher's writer's guidelines. You can find them on their website.

Writers' Magazines

Magazines written with the purpose of instructing writers are essential for success. I highly

recommend you subscribe to at least one. They will give instruction and marketing information. Again use the internet to search for those.

Critique Groups

A critique group is a group of writers who meet regularly to offer suggestions and support for beginning and professional writers. Each one has its own flavor and methods. Some have the writer read their material out loud and participants offer suggestions. Others pass around copies of their manuscripts and have the participant make written comments.

As I mentioned before, I was a part of a critique group and it contributed to my growth as a writer and to my success. You don't need a published writer to be a part of the group necessarily in order for it to be helpful. Having someone's objective opinion as a reader is valuable enough to justify its value.

If you can't find a critique group in your area and can't form one yourself, you can choose to pay for a qualified person's critique through the critique services which are listed in *The Christian Writers Market Guide*.

Writers Seminars and Conferences

These seminars and conferences are held across the country and *The Christian Writers Market* has a complete list. Not only do you receive valuable instruction through the workshops, but you have opportunities to mingle and network with other writers and editors. That's crucial!

It is quite common for individual appointments to be available with editors. This is a wonderful opportunity to dialogue with an editor and show them your material.

Arrive at the conference prepared to give your idea for an article or book in one or two sentences so that even if you have an opportunity to talk even as you walk to a session, you'll concisely give your idea.

Also come with printed marketing materials like a query (for an article or a book) and/or book proposal.

When you know the publishing company the editors and publishers at the conference will represent, research on the internet the magazine, book publisher, greeting card company, etc, to know what they are interested in.

For instance, not every publisher publishes all genres. A publisher might not publish children's books. Or another doesn't publish a particular kind of fiction like graphic novels for teens. You want to know ahead of time so that you don't waste an appointment time trying to pitch an idea they will never accept.

Query Letter

This tool is used primarily for articles but it's also for books.

When I first started writing, I wrote down the dates of every Monday for six months on one piece of paper with a space after each one, with the goal of sending out a new query letter every Monday. I did that but before the six months could pass, I was too busy with assignments to continue sending out the query letters.

If that sounds like a reasonable expectation for you, or some variation of it, I'd highly recommend it.

Advantages Of A Query Letter

Here are the advantages of sending a query letter if a magazine or book publisher wants this kind of initial connection. Many do not and want the complete manuscript sent from the beginning. Do your internet research.

1. You may be able to sell the article before you write it.
2. You may receive a faster response from the editor than a complete manuscript.
3. A query is more efficient because you can send out simultaneously submitted query letters.

"Simultaneously submitted" means you can send out more than one query letter at a time to different magazine editors or publishing houses.

For a query letter, include:

- Proposed title
- Basic idea with 2-3 paragraphs explanation
- Your qualifications for writing
- Your writing credits. If you haven't been published before, don't even mention this part.
- Proposed word count of an article or number of pages for a book.
- Indicate whether it's a simultaneous submission
- e-mail contact information for responding

Here is a Sample Query letter which I used to get an article sold:

(date)

(Editor's Name), Editor

(Name of Magazine)

(Address)

Dear Mr./Ms. (Editor's name):

As a teacher/seminar leader on the topic of parenting for over ten years, I often come into contact with parents who have a hard time letting their children grow up. They often think they will release them when they turn eighteen. But actually "letting go" starts much earlier than that. I've recently written an article entitled, "Letting Go Starts Earlier Than You Think," and in it I will encourage parents to consider that positive parenting perspective.

First I'll talk about why we find it difficult to let go:

*It's a dangerous world.

*I know what happened to me when I was their age!

*But they won't do it right!

*Can I really trust God to watch over them?

*But I don't want them to be needy.

Then I give practical ideas with powerful anecdotes about how to release our children throughout their growing up years. Some of the points I'll cover include:

1. Acknowledge the disadvantages of holding on.
2. Allow them to make choices.
3. Give logical consequences for poor choices.
4. Provide an allowance.
5. Let them make mistakes.
6. Trust God to protect and guide our children.
7. Be comforted knowing they go through stages.

This article is about 1870 words. I am a freelance writer of over 1,000 articles, guest posts and my website blog posts. I'm also the author of over 50 books.

I look forward to hearing from you about my simultaneously submitted query.

Sincerely,

Kathy Collard Miller

KathyCollardMiller@gmail.com

Now, here is a "NO NO" QUERY LETTER:

Dear Editor:

I don't read your magazine but I know your readers will love the idea for my article. Besides, God told me to write this article and He gave me every word and I didn't even have to rewrite it.

Even though the market books say you prefer articles at 1500 words, this article is 3000 but because the words are from God I know you won't edit any out.

Please tell me immediately whether you plan to print my article. This will be my very first printed article and I'm so excited that I'm already telling everyone about my future article in your magazine.

God bless you!

What did that writer do wrong?

Book Proposal

Another marketing tool we have available to us is a book proposal. Because every publisher has varying components they want, be sure to do your research. But most of the time, this marketing tool includes:

1. *Cover Letter*: the beginning of your email briefly introduces yourself and your book idea along with your proposed title.

2. *Summary*: this is a double-spaced summary explaining your book idea, why it's unique from books already published on the same subject, and why it's needed by readers.

3. *Marketing angle*: the typical person or group of people you envision buying your book.

4. *Your qualifications or experience with the subject matter*. Indicate any training or schooling you've received. And include any titles or positions.

5. *Indicate your "platform."* Your platform includes the ways you are known to others through speaking and social media. Indicate how many followers or friends you have on various means of social media. Tell how many followers or hits you receive from your blog.

It is particularly important to indicate whether you speak publicly and professionally. Publishers are looking for writers who also speak because they know that person will be selling their book. If you are not currently speaking, you will need to make every effort to begin a speaking ministry.

6. *Writing credits*. Just like the query letter, if you aren't previously published, just omit this part.

7. *Indicate any ways you plan to market your book*. For instance, you might be a part of a ministry or organization which could publicize your book in their newsletter or through a mailing. Or maybe you have your own mailing list or newsletter that could make it available for sale. Having a listing of organizations that are interested in your topic is another attractive point to publishers.

8. *Proposed book length*. State the possible length in manuscript pages or word count.

9. *Outline*. An outline gives a 2-3 paragraph description of the contents of each chapter.

10. *2-3 Sample Chapters*. It is possible for a book proposal to be complete without the sample chapters but check in *The Christian Writers Market Guide* to find out what a publisher wants in a book proposal. Plus, a publisher's guidelines online.

Like the query letter, book proposals can be simultaneously sent; complete manuscripts can't be.

Manuscript Preparation

Here's a Sample format for the first page of your manuscript:

Name	Approximate Word Count
Address	Rights Offered
Telephone	Whether pictures are included

Title (Begin slightly below half page)
byline

(Begin text)

Heading for remaining pages:

Miller/(2-3 words of title) Page ____

Other style rules:

1. Allow at least one inch margins on sides, top and bottom.
2. Double space each line
3. Use one side of paper (if paper is used)
4. Indent the first line of the paragraph by .25

Offered Rights

Understanding the rights for an article is essential in marketing. Here are the options you have:

First Rights: Writer offers the newspaper or magazine the right to publish the article, story or poem the first time. All other rights belong to the writer.

Reprint (Second Serial) Rights: Gives a newspaper or magazine the right to print an article, poem or story after it has already appeared elsewhere.

All rights: Magazine or newspaper purchases article, poem or story and author no longer has right to use it again.

Simultaneous Rights: Articles and stories which are sold at the same time to publications which do not have overlapping circulations.

These days, blog posts are used on blogs but each one should be changed to some degree each time you offer it to other blogs.

Persistence! Persistence! Persistence!

Because much of our work will be rejected, we need to have persistence! It's difficult and discouraging to receive a rejection letter, but we should try to not take it personally. Most of the time, that rejection has nothing to do with our writing abilities or the topic, but the fact that the magazine or publisher doesn't need that material right now. It could even be because you wrote about marriage and the editor had a fight with his wife that morning! It's often a very subjective thing and yet we feel as if an editor has personally slapped us in the face. If we will persist and our writing is truly good, we will find a place for our article or book.

My book, *Your View of God...God's View of You* was rejected by 22 publishers. But my most recent rejection record was a book that was rejected by 43 publishers. And guess what? It was published in 1997 as *The Useful Proverbs*. It just had to find the right place.

Even rejection can bring other opportunities. Some time ago, I sent a book proposal to Accent Publications. I received it back but the editor said that they were looking for someone to write a women's Bible study series. Would I be interested? I certainly was. I sent off some ideas and they ended up publishing the twelve Bible studies in my Daughters of the King Bible study series. You never know when even a rejection will turn into an opportunity.

Today that women's Bible study series is being published by a different publisher: Elk Lake Publishing, Inc. It is continuing to have a long life.

I recently wrote an article about letting go of our children. You may remember we covered my query letter about it earlier this chapter. That idea was rejected several times. I finally submitted it to *Single Parents Magazine*, writing it from their slant of single parenting and it sold.

Commitment

Here's a poem that expresses my thoughts about commitment to God's call in my life:

I Would Love

I would love to take the time to knit a beautiful sweater
but I choose to fashion words together instead.

I would love to take the time to crochet a delicate doily
but I choose to weave words into a book instead.

I would love to take the time to cook a gourmet meal
but I choose to create a delicious article instead.

I would love to take the time to deepen my tan
but I choose to strengthen my writing skills instead.

I guess it's all a matter of priorities
and I choose to use my God-given writing talents primarily.
—Kathy Collard Miller

How about you? Are you willing to make the commitment, if God is truly calling you to this worthy goal of writing? God wants you to obey Him. Don't compare yourself to other writers, just obey what He wants you to do. Then you will find success and great pleasure. As the missionary said in Chariots of Fire: "When I run I feel His pleasure." For me, "When I write, I feel His pleasure." I hope you'll find the same thing.

Kathy Collard Miller is the author of over 50 books and can be reached through www.KathyCollardMiller.com. Her books are available on amazon.com. She is also a speaker who has spoken in over 30 US States and 8 foreign countries. As a lay counselor, she meets frequently with those looking for greater sanctification.

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