

AN INTERVIEW WITH DEBRA L. BUTTERFIELD

By:

TANNIA E. ORTIZ-LOPES

<http://timewithtannia.tripod.com>



About the Author: Debra Butterfield runs her own business as a freelance writer and proofreader. Her desire to write began in high school; her writing career didn't begin until she was 45. She has two adult children and two grandchildren and resides in Missouri with her teenage son, Nathan. She is a member of the Jerry B. Jenkins' Christian Writers Guild.

She is the owner of Proof Plus Editorial Services, located at 3609 Gene Field Rd., B3 St. Joseph, Mo 64506 Tel. 816-752-2171 (www.proofplus.biz)

Tell us about yourself.

I'm very much a homebody—perhaps that's because for the first 17 years of my adult life I moved every four years. I've lived on the east coast and as far west as Hawaii and many states in between as well as in Germany. I'm content to stay home now, though someday I'd like to take my children and grandchildren to see Europe.

My work experience is as varied as my locations are. I've wanted to be a writer since I was in high school, but didn't start working at it until 25 years later. I served in the Marine Corps, did factory work and held many clerical positions. In 1998, Focus on the Family hired me as a secretary for their advertising department. They promoted to an account services position in 1999, and in 2001 I made a lateral move to a junior copywriter position. When I left the organization in 2005, I was a project manager.

I moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, with my youngest son in 2005. We love it here. It's a much smaller town than Colorado Springs; life happens slowly here rather than the frenetic pace of the big city. The weather is more to my liking as well. I have two adult children as well, and two small grandchildren. My oldest is still in Colorado Springs; my only daughter moved to St. Joseph in 2006.

You were living in Germany during the fall of the Berlin Wall. Did this historic event impact your life?

Not at all. I loved living in Germany; so much of it reminded me of where I grew up in Nebraska. Many of our military friends visited Berlin and brought back a piece of the wall, but we never made the trip. Now, Desert Shield and Desert Storm impacted our lives in ways those in the States never experienced. My kids rode the bus to school and every morning before it was allowed to enter the base, it was searched for bombs. We had to be very aware that bombs could be planted on our car wherever we went. The threat of terrorism struck us long before 9/11.

Considering the quality of education of the military dependents' schools, why did you choose to home-school your children?

We returned stateside from Germany in late August 1991. I wasn't impressed with public schools and wanted to give my children more Christian input and values in their education. We felt they'd get a better education through home schooling than they could get in public schools.

How did your work experience at Focus on the Family and at *The Voice for All Nations Magazine* influence your decision to create your own professional editorial business?

It was a tremendous influence. I had been working in advertising for nearly seven years and I felt confident that I could make a success of an editorial business of my own.

Tell us about your business Proof Plus Editorial Services (www.proofplus.biz).

I provide proofreading, writing and editing services for anyone who needs it. I specialize in working for small businesses and authors because I know they don't always have the ample budgets that big corporations have. My rates are very reasonable and always negotiable.

The cover of your book, Help! includes three elements of nature which could be compared with human emotions: rocks, raging clean water, and green plants. Rocks are a symbol for strength and security. Green plants represent hope. Raging waters could be interpreted as turmoil and cleansing. Do you agree with this analogy? To a certain degree, yes. **Share with us your insight in choosing the book cover.**

My oldest son is a photographer, so from the start I knew I wanted to use one of his pictures for the cover. I chose this particular picture because it represents part of our journey through life. The river is our life, and like any river, we have smooth calm places, and we have rapids, the crises that come our way. Water also represents cleansing and healing (e.g. Naaman washed in the Jordan River and was healed of leprosy). It is difficult to see, but there are actually plants growing along these raging waters—hope in the midst of turmoil. Putting it all together, you’re navigating the rapids, but in this book you can find hope, cleansing, peace and healing for the crisis you are facing.

Incest is an increasing problem worldwide. How did you discover the situation and deal with it?

The abuse occurring in my family came to light because my daughter had the courage to tell me what was happening. Like any mom, I didn’t want to believe my husband could be doing such a thing. He lied about it when he was confronted. Unfortunately, it took my daughter’s attempted suicide for the truth to come out.

On Day 28 – Know God – of your book, Help!, you referred your reader to the Gospel of John 14. What strength did you gather from this chapter that helped you with the healing process?

I can’t begin to tell you how many times I recited John 14:1a to myself. “Let not your heart be troubled.” He says it twice! (Vs 27.) For me, this chapter is one of reassurance. Jesus is leaving, but he assures his disciples that he won’t leave them orphaned. He’s sending a Helper. Even though I had many friends in town, I had no immediate family there. I felt alone and was very afraid. I clung to this chapter because it assured me that I wasn’t alone, that God was right there with me and he wasn’t going to leave me. He was going to take care of everything.

How can that message be a point of refuge for those facing incest?

There are so many unknowns in the case of incest. What’s going to happen to my daughter? Will she ever recover from this? Will my husband go to jail? For how long? How will I manage financially? How will I manage as a single parent? The list goes on and on. John 14 and 15 give a detailed picture of the intimate relationship God desires to

have with us. We can take refuge in his love and care for us and know that despite all the unknowns at the moment, the Trinity is watching over us.

How can your book, *Help! My Husband Has Sexually Abused Our Daughter*, be a healing vehicle for other families struggling with similar situations.

My book was designed specifically to be a tool for healing. *Help!* covers the emotional journey a mom experiences—shock, denial, anger, etc.—and gives advice about how to deal with that emotion. It also offers practical guidance for the various issues that arise such as court proceedings, helping your other children deal with the trauma, and how to help your daughter heal. It is a devotional to be read in conjunction with the Psalms and encourages mothers to trust in God and look to him for total healing.

How long have you been doing your sexual abuse presentation? What is a typical parent's reaction to your talk? Can you share a story with us?

I started giving abuse prevention presentations in May 2007. The moms who are dealing with abuse have often said they are so glad to have someone else to talk to that has been through this. It is encouraging to them to find another mother who is willing to speak out on this issue.

One social worker stated, after hearing my daughter's testimony, that she suddenly realized the trauma I experienced. I'm certain that it has given her a better understanding of the women she works with.

Where can our readers purchase your book?

Purchase *Help!* from my publisher at www.booklocker.com or online at Amazon or Barnes & Noble.

How can they contact you?

They can contact me at my personal website; www.DebraLButterfield.com, or via e-mail at deb@DebraLButterfield.com

A word of advice for parents to help them prevent molestation or sexual abuse of their children.

Read my article on abuse prevention (www.debralbutterfield.com/DLBSexAbuse1.htm) and put a plan into action.



Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés, author of *The Window to my soul, My Walk with Jesus* (ISBN 0975393359, 2004 Tate Publishing www.tatepublishing.com) is a writer by profession, a mother by choice, and a wife by the covenant of marriage.

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Book Review

Help! My Husband Has Sexually Abused Our Daughter

Help! My Husband Has Sexually Abused Our Daughter by Debra L. Butterfield is a book of reflection and healing while going through turmoil of emotions and family issues.

Debra chose the Book of Psalms as her path to find comfort and deepen her relationship with God. Every day start with the reading of five recommended psalms to help the reader to relax and be prepared to walk in her shoes for more than a mile. You will get a close look at her story, understand the lesson learned, a recommended course of action, and end the devotion with a personal prayer. You will experience Deb's emotions and ride the rollercoaster of her family during this journey of faith and total surrender to the Father's plan for our lives.

I recommend this book for individuals and families who are dealing with problems of incest and/or sexual molestation. The book is written in a very personal language which makes it easier to read and understand without judging those involved in this type of situation. It is a great tool for counselors working with Christian patients who need the assurance of God's loving arms around them in such a time like this.

"He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps" (Psalm 40:2)



Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopes, author of *The Window to my soul, My Walk with Jesus* (ISBN 0975393359, 2004 Tate Publishing www.tatepublishing.com) is a writer by profession, a mother by choice, and a wife by the covenant of marriage.

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