

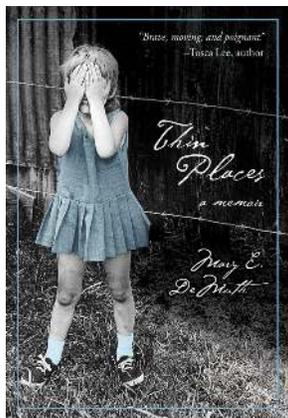
NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Critically Acclaimed Author Shares Personal Story of Abuse, Healing & Hope Literary author Mary DeMuth pens memoir to help others find freedom

Grand Rapids, Mich., Jan. 06, 2009 – Every two minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted and of the millions of sexual abuse and rape victims, 15 percent are under the age of 12, according to a 2007 study by the U.S. Department of Justice. Critically acclaimed author Mary DeMuth is among the millions of adults who are victims of childhood rape and are living with the emotional scars of the haunting abuse.



DeMuth bravely shares her painful story in her new memoir, *Thin Places* (February 2010). Repeatedly raped by two neighborhood boys at a young age, DeMuth details her traumatic and disturbing childhood in the memoir. Raised in a broken home, she lost her biological father when she was ten and was stripped of her innocence growing up in an unstable environment where drugs were commonplace.

But *Thin Places* is about hope and healing more than it is about the traumatic events of DeMuth's childhood. According to DeMuth, thin places are "snatches of time, moments really, when we sense God intersecting our world in tangible, unmistakable ways." When she encountered the true love of Jesus at a Young Life

camp in high school, DeMuth's life trajectory changed. God reassembled the pieces of her emotionally fragile self, which initiated true healing and peace.

"Folks may wonder why I've spent all this time looking back," says DeMuth, "dredging up what God sees of my story, what my eyes see. Jesus says truth sets people free. This is my way of doing that—of telling the stark truth on the page so others can be set free."

DeMuth's desire is to see readers set free from their family secrets. In light of that, she's started a blog for readers to anonymously share their family secrets. Since the blog launched in February 2009, over 200 survivors have emailed their family secrets for DeMuth to anonymously post, and the blog was featured on *Christianity Today's* blog, *Her.meneutics*. For more information, visit: <http://blog.myfamilysecrets.org>.

"*Thin Places* offers a poignant look at the development of a well-known Christian writer," says *Christian Retailing*, and author Tosca Lee calls *Thin Places*, "brave, moving and poignant."

Writing is a cathartic experience for DeMuth, and remnants from her past influence her books. They are infused into her nonfiction parenting advice as well as her fictional characters and plots. Her literary fiction features gritty story lines and touches on the dark subject of abuse. Her first novel, *Watching the Tree Limbs*, featured a 9-year-old girl who was raped by a neighborhood bully, and the Defiance Texas Trilogy examines the emotional pain that results from the disappearance of a young girl in Texas. DeMuth talks about these writing projects in *Thin Places*. "Writing [*Watching the Tree Limbs*] is a thin place where I see God's desire to heal me," says DeMuth, "and I understand that He loves me no matter what emotions I express."

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The cover of *Thin Places* is an actual photo of DeMuth taken by her father at age five.

About Mary DeMuth

Author and speaker Mary DeMuth helps people turn their trials to triumph. Her books include *Ordinary Mom, Extraordinary God*; *Building the Christian Family You Never Had*; *Watching the Tree Limbs*; *Wishing on Dandelions*; *Authentic Parenting in a Postmodern Culture* and the first two books in the Defiance, Texas Trilogy: *Daisy Chain* and *A Slow Burn*.

National media regularly seek Mary's candid ability to connect with their listeners. Her radio appearances include *FamilyLife Today*, *Moody Midday Connection*, *Point of View* and *U.S.A. Radio Network* and is frequently featured on Chuck Colson's *BreakPoint*. She has published articles in *In Touch*, *HomeLife*, *Writer's Digest* and *The Writer*.

Mary lives with her husband Patrick and their three children in Texas. Find out more at www.marydemuth.com.

About *Thin Places*

Thin Places: A Memoir

By Mary DeMuth

Zondervan

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About Zondervan

Zondervan is the world's leading Christian publisher of books whose authors are noted for their excellence in the craft of writing as well as their worthy contribution to the ongoing global evangelical conversation. The works published by Zondervan not only confirm readers' faith and understanding, they also challenge and stretch readers' thinking. For more than 75 years, Zondervan has delivered transformational Christian experiences through general, ministry and academic resources by influential leaders and emerging voices and been honored with more Christian Book Awards than any other publisher. Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan publishes bestselling [books](#), [audio](#), [video](#), [curriculum](#), [software](#) and [digital](#) products in such categories as biblical [languages](#) and [studies](#), [biography](#), [business](#), [contemporary issues](#), [counseling](#), [cultural](#), [devotional](#), [evangelism](#), [family](#), [fiction](#), [history](#), [inspiration](#), [leadership](#), [ministry](#), [pastoral](#), [personal development](#), [prayer](#), [philosophy](#), [reference](#), [relationships](#), [textbooks](#), [theology](#), [youth](#) and [more](#). Zondervan resources are sold worldwide through retail stores, online and by Zondervan [ChurchSource](#) and are translated into nearly 200 languages in more than 60 countries. Visit Zondervan Books on the Internet at www.zondervan.com/books.

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Possible Interview Questions for Mary DeMuth Author of *Thin Places: A Memoir*

1. Your childhood was extremely painful. How has being a victim of childhood rape affected your adult life? How did you work through the pain?
2. Why are you open and willing to share your painful story?
3. Even though your childhood was traumatic, you seem to have an extremely positive outlook on life. How did you work through the events of your childhood and find hope and healing?
4. How is your story typical? How is your life and perspective different from other abuse victims?
5. What advice can you give to readers who are victims of abuse and are struggling with shame and anger?
6. Tell me about your website, *My Family Secrets*. What do you hope to accomplish with that site? How has the response been? Which secret stands out to you?
7. What is your hope for people who share their secrets anonymously on the site?
8. Many memoirists wait until their parents are deceased to write their memories. Why did you write *Thin Places* now?
9. What do you hope people will come away with after they've read *Thin Places*?

**To schedule an interview with Mary DeMuth, contact Robin Geelhoed
at 616.698.3345 or robin.geelhoed@zondervan.com**

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Endorsements for *Thin Places: A Memoir* By Mary DeMuth

"Brave, moving, and poignant. An important story, honestly and beautifully told, of pain transformed into hope. The world is in great need of courageous voices like DeMuth's."

—Tosca Lee, author of Christy-award finalist *Demon: A Memoir* and *Havah: The Story of Eve*

"This gifted memoirist writes like a woman at the well: *Thin Places* reads like rivers of living water. With her incantatory language, Mary DeMuth describes both the burden of suffering and the weightlessness of redemption. If you're carrying past wounds, read this book. It will change your life."

—Sibella Giorello, Christy-award-winning novelist

"Author Mary DeMuth has lived up to readers' expectations of exquisite writing from an exceptional author. She has also opened herself and allowed readers to see inside—all the hurts, disappointments, violations—in order to escort the readers on a painfully joyful journey to healing. A rare memoir from one of the best writers of our time!"

—Kathi Macias, author of more than thirty books, including *Beyond Me* and *Mothers of the Bible Speak to Mothers of Today*

"When I get my official copy of *Thin Places*, I'm thinking of having it bound in a gold-embossed bonded-leather cover with gilded page edges. Yes, it's that much of a treasure to be cherished for a lifetime of reading. I'm tempted to request a zipper for its custom binding. That would symbolize DeMuth's success at unlocking and interlacing her innermost story and soul with the Scriptures in a way that opens us all to the thickness of 'thin.'"

—Leonard Sweet, Drew University, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, www.sermons.com

"Of the many gifts God has lavished on Mary DeMuth, one I admire most is her courage to go to the raw places and help us look for God's presence there. In this unflinching look at her own story, DeMuth offers us vulnerability and hope that God is relentless in his love even when we doubt it the most."

—Catherine Claire Larson, author of *As We Forgive: Stories of Reconciliation from Rwanda* and senior writer and editor for *BreakPoint*

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Mary's memoir is real and raw and beautifully written. She shows the ugliness of humanity and the beauty of redemption. I laughed, and I cried, and it made me want to be a better writer. *Thin Places* will be put in my waiting room to help others find hope and see that Jesus loves and God is present, even in the loneliest and most horrific circumstances."

—Leslie Vernick, LCSW, licensed counselor and international speaker, author of *The Emotionally Destructive Relationship*

"*Thin Places* is strong medicine for every reader who ever felt hopelessly damaged or desperately inadequate. Mary DeMuth shows the way back to innocence and wonder. There are too few books like this, too few authors so courageous."

—Kathleen Popa, author of *To Dance in the Desert*

"With brutal honesty, Mary paints a vivid picture of the cruel blows life delivers to all of us. But her ability to shine light on what God does through pain and difficulty is a revelation of his infinite love and grace. *Thin Places* reminded me that beauty really does come from ashes. I'm not the same after reading this book."

—Tom Davis, CEO, Children's HopeChest, and author of *Red Letters: Living a Faith that Bleeds*

"In *Thin Places*, Mary DeMuth gently takes your fingers in her hand and guides them across the breathtaking mosaic that is her life. I felt every sharp edge, each rough and aching path, and marveled at the startling beauty of her brokenness. Savor this book."

—Claudia Mair Burney, author of *Zora and Nicky: A Novel in Black and White*

For more information on Mary DeMuth or to schedule an interview with Mary, contact Robin Geelhoed at 616.698.3345 or robin.geelhoed@zondervan.com

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