



# *Dipping the Quill*

*Writing News from Author J.D. Winger*

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Boy, does two months go by fast!

It seems I sent out my last newsletter to you two weeks ago; not two months ago. I guess the old saying of “Time flies when you’re having fun” applies to writing as well. It isn’t always easy to become an accomplished writer, but it can sure be fun, if you let it. Too often, aspiring authors buy-in to the belief that:

- If they can only get published, or
- If they can only see their name on a byline, or
- If they can only land a publishing contract, they’ll become rich and famous and everything will be perfect.

If that’s you, here’s a reality check. Few authors today can quit their day jobs and devote themselves full-time to writing. Writing is an absolute career choice. For most of us, writing is not a ticket to financial freedom, independence, and glory. In semi-retirement, I still write for a living. I don’t make a living from my Christian writing—and never expect to. I earn my living as a consultant in the defense and aerospace industries, helping businesses navigate the often confusing world of government acquisitions. Do my Christian values and ethics play a role in my “day job”? You bet. I’ll climb down from my soapbox now and get to my writing news, as promised. I’ll end with this thought; my Christian writing is an *investment in eternity*. It is repayment for God’s gift of the writing talent He gave me.

This year started off with a bang. Subscribers to my website and social media instances continue increasing each week. This is a tremendous source of blessing and encouragement as I don't consider myself even worthy of being called a *nobody* in the writing world, yet. My approach to "growing my tribe" as I've learned it's called is to focus on quality rather than quantity. An example, I can purchase Twitter™ followers and Facebook™ friends, but for what purpose. While these larger numbers look impressive in a book proposal, in reality, they seldom translate to book sales. I much prefer to focus on a family of followers who align with my faith, my lifestyle, and support my desire to further God's kingdom.

In February, I learned a verse study I wrote was accepted for an upcoming compilation book being published by my friends, the Kauffman family, at Lighthouse Bible Studies. Entitled *Effective and Fervent*, it shares a powerful message on the power of our prayers. I also learned I am headed to successive shoulder surgeries in the coming months. Gratefully, they only operate on one shoulder at a time. Am certain I'll need help around the ranch, but I can still type one-handed Lord. I can still work for your glory.

March began in Spartanburg, SC at the Carolina Christian Writers Conference (CCWC). My writing coach, mentor, and friend Mrs. Linda Gilden is the conference director. I felt I was among friends. During this two-day event, I met writing friends gained in the past two years for the first time. Mrs. Edie Melson of The Write Conversation (one of my favorite learning blogs) and Mrs. Lori Hatcher, Editor of *Reach Out Columbia* magazine. I also met Ms. Katy Kauffman, co-editor of *Refresh Bible Study* magazine, her mom and dad; and so many others. I spent time with the sweet lady I affectionately refer to as my "writing Mom", Ms. Gerry Wakeland. We all need an encourager like Ms. Gerry to help us find our path in Christian writing.

My “take-aways” from this conference were the new skills and gained knowledge, wonderful feedback from representatives across the publishing industry, and encouragement to continue on this journey. If you don’t leave full of zeal and a desire to go home and write more, submit more, and reach more, then I have to wonder why you attended.

My greatest blessing came not from the encouragement I received, but encouraging others. As *new* as I am to Christian writing, I met writers with whom I could share my lessons learned, wisdom, and knowledge with; encouraging them to learn, engage, and grow in their craft. I left this conference feeling satisfied; I accomplished something. I made investments in eternity this weekend with many of the CCWC’s attendees, both faculty and participants.

An article I hope to publish soon, *A Miracle in the Mud*, won first place in the unpublished articles category. When I reflect upon the fact that my writing coach is the “Queen of Articles”, I pray my efforts reflect her investments in me. Thank you Ms. Linda. I want to extend a special thank you to my new writing friend, Ms. Dalene Parker, the contest director, who blessed me with her kindness and encouragement.



Where does my writing go in the coming months? I’ll leave that up to God; it’s His plan.

*God’s blessings...*



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