



# *Dipping the Quill*

*Writing News from Author J.D. Winger*

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Ready or not, here comes fall.

After a summer of almost no discernable rain and too many days with heat indices over one hundred, I'm ready for fall to arrive. It's been a long, dry summer this year. I've spent the last two months recovering from a shoulder surgery, with one more to come next year. My mind told me I would have time to get lots of writing done. I hoped to stay two months ahead on my blog posts and get at least one new book proposal out in the marketplace. None of those things happened, yet.

Instead, I spent almost seven weeks with my dominant left arm in a sling. This left me struggling to type with one hand, which in reality meant two fingers. I spent so much time correcting typing mistakes that I would forget what I had wanted to type most of the time. Everything took longer, and I found myself way more frustrated with my recovery than expected. While I still can't start strengthening, only stretching for another five weeks, I'm starting to see light at the end of this long tunnel. At least I can type with two hands again.

In the past couple of months, more articles were published and others are forthcoming. I'm not getting paid for these, but am gaining name recognition and learning to work with a number of exceptional editors, helping me to become a better writer. I'm also gaining valuable industry experience, which is worth more than a few dollars. I could never afford to get the education I'm receiving through my efforts.

Another wonderful blessing is that I've been receiving invitations to "guest blog" on other authors' blogs. As our *Around the Cross-Dubya* blog posts have gained in popularity, other noted authors have asked me to contribute to their blogs. I've humbly accepted a few invitations, but requested they do me the honor of guest blogging on mine. The advantages include more exposure for both me and my colleagues. Their followers are exposed to me, and I expose my dedicated followers to them. I'm sure I'll be getting the better end of that deal. Then again, they'll get to meet some of the greatest fans and supporters any writer could ever dream of—you guys and gals.

Without names, I've been collecting data on my website and social media presence since the first of the year. My purpose is twofold. One is to show my platform growth to prospective publishers (that's becoming more important than ever it seems). The other is to help me identify any trends or areas where I could improve my performance. For example, I noticed I accept lots of new friend/follower requests on social media. However, very few of those were moving from being a "number" to becoming a contributor to my social media efforts. As a result, I've started looking at social media interactions with my followers and friends; and if they are not taking part in conversations or contributing to help others in my tribe, then I place them on a "watch list." After a month of no interaction with me, then I unfriend/unfollow them. I am certain they are fine, upstanding people; and I wish them nothing but the best, but I don't want to take up precious follower space by someone who belongs but does not contribute.

To give an update on my book writing and publishing efforts, I learned my manuscript for *The Chrysalis of Christ* has made it through the Pubs Board and to the final selection stage with a noted publisher. A final decision remains to be made. My latest effort, with the working title of *What Love Does*, is nearing completion. Wanted to have it completed, and the proposal

sent out in July, but my recovery has set me back a little. I'm using the extra time to reconsider publishing strategies; and while I still plan to follow a traditional publishing route, I am considering seeking agent representation. This isn't because I'm not confident of my book getting published one day; it's more a matter of "economies of scale."

The Christian publishing industry remains a strong marketplace. Yet, fewer traditional publishers allow unsolicited book proposals. This means an un-represented writer has a much smaller audience to look at their work. Smaller publishing houses offer some advantages, but being able to cast a larger net (submit more proposals to more places) through a literary agent who believes in your writing is enticing. A truism I've come to accept, through lots of prayer and contemplation this year, is that eighty-five percent of anything is better than one hundred percent of nothing.

I'll close by thanking you for all your prayers, blog comments, and sharing. I humbly ask for your continued prayers for my writing and efforts to bring God glory. I also want you to know I'm always available to pray with and for you.

*God's blessings...*



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