



Dipping the Quill

Writing News from Author J.D. Wininger

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I don't know your preference, but whenever I hear "I've got good news and bad news", I always want the bad news first. I think it's because I like to end conversations on a positive. With that said, I bet you can guess what's coming next.

Surprise, or maybe not, it's bad news. As much as I hoped *The Chrysalis of Christ* would be published soon, it isn't yet the case. Last week I learned that although my manuscript had made it a long way down the path toward selection and publishing, the publisher selected the other finalist. I took this news with a great sense of peace. Disappointed? Of course. Yet I prayed for the manuscript selected; that it touches many hearts and brings great glory to God.

I intently listened to the acquisitions editor who believed in my book enough to present it to her Publications Board. Realizing how she fought for its selection, a sense of great peace with their decision overwhelmed me. I heard that still small voice reminding me that working with this publisher was my plan and not God's. It also reminded me I'm writing for His glory and not my own. And so, the journey continues. Even with the news she delivered, the acquisitions editor ended our conversation with a glimmer of hope and an encouraging word. She ended by encouraging me to seek agent representation and assuring me my book is worth being published.

It was surreal as I've been praying about seeking literary agent representation throughout the summer. I was hesitant to seek representation when just starting out; knowing I had much to learn and needed to grow to understand my strengths, weaknesses, and the publishing world

more. Having never been impetuous, or inclined to make quick decisions, I've taken my time and created a short-list of potential agents to query. In my mind, "Eighty-five percent of something is better than one hundred percent of nothing."

Literary agents receive fifteen percent commission of an author's proceeds from a book they represent. That might seem like a lot, especially to a new author who feels "it's my book, I did all the writing", but in reality it's a small pittance. One thing I've learned about the publishing industry these past few years is that only a select few authors ever earn a living from their published works. In fact, they pay most traditionally published authors an average of one dollar for each book sold. So, if I make \$0.85 or \$1.00 per book, it's not keeping me from driving a Ferrari instead of my pickup truck.

Smart authors recognize they pay literary agents for several things needed to become successful. Agent representation helps ensure authors execute publishing contracts benefitting the author in the long run. An agent's experience in understanding market and publishing trends is most valuable. Great value also comes from an agent's integrity. All authors need their egos stroked now and again. If paying someone fifteen percent to represent me, I want them to have enough integrity to tell me my baby is ugly and I need to do more. I expect an agent to be honest and forthright.

The most important items agent representation brings are their knowledge and networking abilities. The publishing world is deep and sometimes treacherous to navigate alone. Unrepresented authors have very few avenues to pursue traditional publication. Leveraging their knowledge and network, agents can cast a much larger net over the publishing industry to generate interest in publishing a manuscript. Each of these benefits far exceeds the small fee they get when your book sells.

My next step? Pick myself up. Dust off my hat and move forward. Rejection is an everyday experience for writers. Successful ones recognize this and learn how to grow from each rejection. I plan to update my book proposal, submit query letters to those agents I wish to consider, and continue writing for God's glory. Looking at all I've accomplished in my Christian writing this year, I'm humbled to see how God is using me to help others in their journey of faith. My goal remains to bring Him glory, not me.

Recovery from shoulder surgery is going well, but it's a long road. I type with both hands again, that's progress. God continues bringing me new ideas to write about and I'm finishing up a two-month stint of business writing, which funds the ranch and my Christian writing pursuits. It's time to roll up my sleeves, pour myself more coffee, and get back to work.

I'll close by thanking you for all your prayers, blog comments, and sharing; humbly asking for your continued prayers. Please also consider inviting your friends and family to follow me on social media and subscribe to my *Around the Cross-Dubya* blog. Those agents and publishers love seeing a large platform.

Diane and I send each of you special blessings for a wonderful Thanksgiving and a joy-filled Merry Christmas with family and friends this year.

God's Blessings...



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