



Dipping the Quill

Writing News from Author J.D. Winger

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Like most, the New Year brings with it new challenges and lots of new opportunities. I'm not sure what new things—challenge or opportunity—await, but I pray each day God prepares me to meet them.

Carryover activities from last year will take up most of this year's first quarter. I consider them prep work for the coming harvest later this year; as God wills. Work on *It's What Love Does* continues to prove challenging. The challenge is on my part; as prioritizing writing time has taken a back seat. I've "stolen" from my writing time to help friends and neighbors, perform consulting work to pay the bills, work calving season, and prioritizing my family over the holidays. I needed perhaps a part of it as I decompressed a bit after a manuscript rejection.

When I look back at 2019, I see far more positives than negatives in my Christian writing career. Like most, I suspect we focus on the negative more than we should. The key is to be like a baseball pitcher who serves up a home run ball. We must shake it off, learn from the experience, and go right after the next batter with our best pitch. The adage I've held to my entire life continues as a truism, "Winners never quit; Quitters never win!"

This year is starting off with a focus on three key writing goals. First is platform growth. As the Christian publishing industry is ever changing, there are some fundamentals that remain static. One of those is an author's platform. My social media efforts continue to yield good results, but require "care and feeding" to maintain them. One area I want to focus on is gaining

subscribers to my Around the Cross-Dubya blog and this newsletter. I thank God for each amazing subscriber who reads, engages with, and supports my writing efforts. Industry trends show traditional publishers are less interested in how many social media followers, friends, and other connections you have. Today, they want to know how many email addresses you have in your website's subscription list. As I work on growing subscribers, I would welcome any ideas on giveaways or other ways I can add new subscribers.

My next focus area is getting agent representation. I've compiled a lot of data; and created a shortlist of just a few superb individuals that I feel led to engage with. There are many amazing folks out there, but I've been prayerfully reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating. I'm less concerned with finding an agent with great connections and more interested in landing with one who will keep the main thing, the main thing.

Last, I want to continue growing in my craft to become the Christian writer God wants me to be. "Award-winning", "best-selling", "compelling", or any words others use are meaningless if God doesn't use the words "effective" or "impactful." To achieve this goal, I have learned the only comparison that matters is how I measure up against my previous self. To get better, we must work to improve all areas of our writing selves. Without inspiration, my words are meaningless. Without skill in crafting the story, my words are ineffective.

Between pursuing these writing goals, I'll attend at least one major Christian writer's conference (BRMCWC is on my radar) and support my writer's group. I'll continue seeking publication of articles and Bible studies; along with weekly blog posts. A new venture is my weekly appearance on the growing #PJNET (www.patriotjournalist.com) program each Thursday evening at 09:30pm Eastern time. This thirty-minute spot gives me the opportunity to chat with friends, discuss happenings in my writing and ranch life, and reflect from a godly

perspective on events and happenings impacting the world around us. I hope to see you there soon.

I want to close by thanking each of you for all of your wonderful support. Your prayers and words of encouragement are the fuel that keeps me moving on the path forward. With your support and God's guidance, we will together make a tremendous impact for His kingdom. Please encourage your friends and family who might enjoy my writing to look and consider subscribing to become a member of our "Family of Faith." Until next time, remember I'm praying for you always; and look forward to hearing from you whenever.

God's Blessings...



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