

FOCUS: TO CHOOSE A CHRISTIAN PUBLISHER OR NOT

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As a Christian writer and literary minister, I have been inclined on more than one occasion to select a Christian printer or publishing house when preparing my work for distribution. In my mind I find myself thinking, "Well, I'm a Christian writer. I want my work to be blessed, and protected under the anointing of the Lord. Therefore, I will choose a Christian printer who is like minded, and has an earnest desire to see the gospel preached in print to the world." With that being said, I published my first book through a Christian publishing company thinking that was the only alternative for a "Christian writer like me."

Well, after the contract was signed, my book printed and distributed, God began to speak to my heart like never before. He said, "Daughter, I am pleased with your work. You have indeed glorified me and exalted my name. I have called my people to be light in dark places, beacons of hope in times of hopelessness." This may not sound like much, but the last sentence has stuck with me.

I began thinking of Genesis 1:2-4, when God speaks of the creation and the formation of heaven and earth. It reads, "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. God saw the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness." NIV

That scripture began to bring me a great deal of revelation. Sure, I could have searched other scriptures on "light," but God sent me to "this" particular one.

So often, as Christians, we find ourselves sticking with others who are "like minded." Don't misunderstand, the word of God says - in so many words, "What fellowship does light have with darkness other than to have light over take evil with good." It is his will. However, I believe God is telling us to also be light in places overridden by darkness.

In Genesis 1, God enters the deep - the dark place, and his presence hovered over the waters. This world we live in is our dark place, and the water represents our territory as Christians. We must remember that God gave us the dominion or authority - through him - to make great changes in this world. The presence of God consecrated or sanctified everything it came in contact with. As a result, light had no choice but to rise. Our writing is consecrated through him if he indeed inspired us to write. Our books have power! Their presence in a secular bookstore has power! The words he has given us to put on paper have power! The presence of the Lord demands change!

We should pray over our books, have our pastors lay hands on our books not only for their success, but pray that the lives of those who purchase and or read our work - whether Christian fiction, non-fiction, or poetry, etc. - be transformed according to the will of God. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light. God saw the light was good and he separated the light from darkness." We have the authority to say, "God let my book be light to those in darkness." In that way, it is pleasing to God.

So I say to you - pray! And if the Lord commands, send your Christian book to a non-Christian publisher. Let them read it. Let them assist you with preparing it for publication, and ultimately distribution. Your book can plant a "Godly" seed in their lives if they are "unsaved" just by having them help you with the preparation of it. If the bookstore you solicit is not a Christian bookstore, then pray that your book draws unbelievers or those seeking more of the Lord. This is what the phrase, "Let your light shine," means when you hear it over the pulpit or in bible study lessons at church. It does not mean to show off! It means to let the God inside you rise!

Sometimes, Christians take Christianity to the extreme by looking exclusively for Christian businesses and publishers, marketing primarily to Christians, choosing Christian bookstores to display our work, or participating only in Christian literary events, etc.

I did it before God gave me clarity.

This type of thinking paints a narrow picture of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Although Jesus was exclusively for God, he used his light to be inclusive of everyone - without EVER compromising. (But that's another Christian literary topic.)

Sometimes, we have to go back to the basics. The word of God is quite simple really. Our analytical minds complicate his word. Always remember Matthew 28:18, as God caused me to remember: "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always,

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to the very end of the age.”

No matter how well I write, sing, paint, draw, teach, preach, or how high I climb on the ladder of man’s success, I am first and foremost obligated to this great commission set forth by Christ. Without this understanding, everything I do has no true meaning. Our gifts and talents are subject to being light in dark places and beacons of hope to the hopeless.

In true ministry, it’s never about personal success. I succeed when the body succeeds.

To God be the glory! Peace be with you.
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