

NOVEMBER 2022

For whoever has [a teachable heart], to him *more* [understanding] will be given; and whoever does not have [a yearning for truth], even what he has will be taken away from him.”

MARK 4:25 (Amplified)

Dear Friends,

Once again, our hearts are filled with gratitude for your faithful giving! We deeply appreciate every financial contribution, no matter how small.

In October I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Christian Legal Society conference in Newport Beach in California. Ligia put together a beautiful exhibition table where many attendees came to show their interest in AI. David Nammo and his team did an excellent job – the speakers were outstanding and the workshops diverse and highly instructive. CLS is one of our most valuable strategic partners and we are planning several collaborative initiatives.

Many of you will recall the invaluable work that our former board member, Roger Sherrard, did in Albania. Roger not only assisted with the initial drafting of the Albanian constitution but, because of his efforts the independence of the judiciary in Albania was greatly advanced. After the CLS conference I travelled to Seattle, Washington to visit Roger and his dear wife Katoo. Although Roger is suffering poor health, it was a joy and delight to spend time with them and share many memories.

While in Seattle, I also managed to spend time with John Johnson – John worked with Sam Ericsson at AI for a while during the 1990's. In his true courageous style, John travelled to Moldova earlier this year. With introductions and connections made by our Professor Aliona Cara, John took six containers of food into Odessa in the Ukraine! John, thank you for doing what the rest of us didn't have the courage or means to do – you are a true hero of our network!

From Seattle I travelled to Austin, Texas to visit Bobby Ericsson, the widow of our founder Sam Ericsson. What a delight it was to see Bobby! Although she has been hugely debilitated by Parkinson disease, she is still as full as joy and enthusiasm as ever before – Bobby even took me to a country music concert! She asked me to pass her best greetings to everyone she knows. After visiting Bobby and their daughter Monica Welsh, I felt hugely inspired to carry on the mission of this amazing organization Sam started in 30 years ago! We will be starting a CaringBridge page for Bobby and will let you have the details soon.

I first met Benjamin Bull in 2009 at an Alliance Defending Freedom Summit in Hawaii. Ben's founding vision for ADF International has always been an inspiration and a model to me! Ben and his wife Lynda invited me to their lovely lake house in Maine. Ben is the Executive Director of the National Centre on Sexual Exploitation. We were able to share our strategic visions for our respective organisations with each other and cast vision on our collaboration.

Sadly, the Advocates Africa conference planned for early November in Uganda had to be postponed due to the outbreak of Ebola in the country. We salute the Ugandan Christian Lawyers Fellowship for their hard work and look forward to attending the conference on the rescheduled dates.

This past weekend our dear friends, Romi Kobayashi and Peggy Lereche, took Ligia and me to the Museum of the Bible in Washington D C. What an experience – if you ever get the opportunity to see the museum, don't hesitate to visit it!

Only one day in the museum unfortunately just allows for a cursory observation of the many themes and displays but I was deeply moved by the “*Impact of the Bible*” section! It firstly examines the impact of the Bible on the founding and culture of America, then looks at 21 areas (categories) of the impact of the Bible worldwide, and finally looks at the Bible today.

Seen in such a compressed fashion, I realized that there has been nothing else that has impacted the world more than the Word of God – I am completely unable to imagine what the world would have been without it! Human rights, family, work, government, health, education, literature, languages, music, justice, time and calendar, compassion, art – through the ages the Bible has had a bearing on all of these!

Robert Friedman writes in *The LIFE Millennium* (1998) that the single most important event which shaped human progress in the last 1000 years was **Gutenberg’s printing of the Bible**. It ranks above profound events such as Columbus’s voyage, Martin Luther’s Ninety-Five theses and the Industrial Revolution!

One of the quotes in the museum that got my attention was that of George Whitefield, (1739) “*I love those that thunder out the Word..... the Christian world is in a deep sleep. Nothing but a loud voice can awaken them out of it!*” Whitefield was an Anglican cleric and evangelist who was one of the founders of Methodism and the evangelical movement.

When I read this quote, I was wondering whether we can say that the Word of God is still in our day a loud voice that awakens the Christian world out of its deep sleep? Has the truth of the Word not been so distortedly interpreted and diluted in our day, that we are even hesitant of quoting it for fear of being politically incorrect?

In Matthew 13 we read the account of Jesus explaining to his disciples why he uses parables (stories) to explain things. “¹¹ *Jesus replied to them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹² **For whoever has [spiritual wisdom because he is receptive to God’s word], to him more will be given, and he will be richly and abundantly supplied; but whoever does not have [spiritual wisdom because he has devalued God’s word], even what he has will be taken away from him.**”*

On the one hand Jesus promises to those who are perceptive to God’s word that more will be given, that he will be richly and abundantly supplied. On the other hand, He promises that from someone who has devalued God’s word, even what he has will be taken away! Other translations speak of those who have ignored or disregarded His blessings and gifts or who does not have a longing / yearning after the truth.

Let us be a people who yearn after, long for and value God’s word of truth!

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie

President and CEO, Advocates International



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