

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

#422

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will begin with an article I read years ago in an aviation magazine. I'm sorry I can't remember which magazine it was to document the story. It told of a salesman receiving a phone call from an elderly gentleman ordering a brand new Piper Saratoga. Recognizing that the voice came from someone who was elderly, the salesman asked if the man was a pilot? "Yes" was the response. Then he asked if the man had ever owned an airplane before? "Yes, as a matter of fact I just sold my Boeing 747". At this point it seems obvious that the salesman was being scammed. We are familiar with scam calls, but how many people do you know who have owned a Boeing 747? Fortunately, however, the salesman was not lazy, kept an open mind, did his research, and made the sale.

The rest of the story can be easily verified. The elderly man on the phone was the late Arthur Allen Jones. He was the eccentric multi-millionaire who invented the Nautilus exercise machines. His company employed 900 people and was grossing \$400 million annually. His private airstrip is known as Jumbolair Aviation Estates and is 7 miles northeast of Ocala, Fla. The main paved runway is 7,550 feet long. A separate lighted grass runway is 3,600 feet long. Jones logged over 30,000 hours as a pilot. He died of natural causes at his home Aug. 28, 2007 at 80 years of age.

Jones owned several jumbo jets and used them to transport wild animals. In the 1960's he directed the syndicated television series "Wild Cargo". His television film "Operation Elephant" aired on CBS in 1970. His private zoo includes one 500 lb. gorilla named Mickey, 63 jumbo bush elephants, over 200 crocodiles and 400 alligators. One crocodile is named "Gomick" after an Australian television clown. Gomick is 17 feet long and weighs 1,700 lbs. Behind his mansion are four rare giant Galapagos tortoises.

The point is that wild and incredible stories sometimes need to be investigated. When some women reported to the apostles, for example, that Jesus was risen from the dead **"they did not believe the women, because their words seemed like nonsense" (Lk. 24:11)**. Fortunately Peter and John ran to the tomb, investigated the claim, and discovered that what the women said was true (John 20:1-9).

It is not at all unusual for unbelievers to change when they take time to investigate. Lee Strobel, for example, was an ardent atheist and hard nosed legal editor for the Chicago Tribune. When his wife became a Christian he launched into an 18 month investigation to prove her wrong. It resulted, however, in his own conversion. He said: *"To be an atheist I would have to swim upstream against this torrent of evidence pointing toward the truth of Jesus Christ. And I couldn't do that. I was trained in journalism and law to respond to truth."*

Strobel is now an outspoken defender of the Christian faith. He has written a series of books based on evidence (viz. *The Case for Christ, The Case for Hope, The Case for Miracles, The Case for Heaven, Etc.*)

Another similar story involves the conversion of J. Warner Wallace. Wallace is famous as a cold case detective in Los Angeles. Cold cases involve murders because there is no statute of limitations on murder. As a homicide detective, Wallace has investigated a number of high-profile cold-case murders. Wikipedia notes: "His cases have been featured on *Dateline* (NBC) and *North*

Mission Road (truTV). As a founding member of the Torrance Police Department Cold-Case Homicide Unit, Wallace earned the Sustained Superiority Award from the South Bay Police and Fire Medal of Valor committee. He also won the 2015 California Peace Officer Association COPSWEST Award for best solved cold case.” Wallace has never lost a case in court!

Wallace was a confirmed atheist until he was 35 year old. At that time he began to investigate Christ using the same investigative techniques he used successfully as a detective. Now he too is an outspoken defender of the Christian faith. His books also reflect his dependence upon evidence: (viz. *Cold Case Christianity*; *God’s Crime Scene*; *Person of Interest*; *Alive, A Cold Case Approach to the Resurrection, Etc.*)

Please consider again this quote from the late C.S. Lewis. He noted: “*Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.*”

The airplane salesman received a handsome commission for taking time to investigate a claim that seemed to be outrageous. You and I, however, can receive an eternal reward for taking time to investigate the evidence for Christ.

I love you,
Grandpa Boyce