

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest Grandchild,

In today's letter I want to share two insights, in particular, that I received from the book "*Eternity in Their Hearts*" by Don Richardson.

Don is one of my favorite authors. The first book I read of his was "Peace Child". It is about mission work he did in Irian Jaya with the Sawi people. They are a small cannibalistic headhunting tribe that glorifies duplicity. When Don told them that Judas was a close disciple who betrayed Jesus with a kiss, Judas immediately became their hero. That pagan tribe glorified duplicity and treachery. Even among the twisted values of this pagan tribe, however, there was a tradition that enabled Don to communicate the Gospel. It was the "Peace Child".

One day as a war was raging between two Sawi villages, a man named Kaiyo sent his only son named Biakadon, across the field of battle and the fighting stopped. His enemy, Mahor, embraced Biakadon, and accepted him as a "peace child". The enemy warriors laid hands on the peace child and pledged no more violence against their enemies as long as the peace child lived. At that point, Don recognized their tradition as the bridge he was seeking to tell them about Jesus. He explained that Jesus was the "Tarop Tim Kodon" (the ultimate Peace Child). Judas was no longer a hero, for the ultimate sin in the minds of these pagan people was to kill the peace child. The book sold about a half million copies and has been translated into 27 languages. The Reader's Digest featured this story in their book of the month selection and distributed 30 million copies. The story was also made into a movie that is available in 26 different languages. I mention this to emphasize that Don is a scholar who has been widely read, and whose integrity has been tested. When he was in Joplin some time ago, I had the privilege of eating lunch with him and even imposed on him to autograph my copy of his book *Secrets of the Koran*.

Now to his book, "*Eternity in Their Hearts*". This phrase comes from Ecclesiastes 3:11 which states that God has set "Eternity in the hearts of men". There is a God shaped vacuum in the human heart that only God can fill. Don writes about 25 people groups, like the Sawi, whose religious traditions reveal historical roots reaching back to Noah and the flood.

I learned many things from this book that I had never known before, but the following two lessons seem to stand out from the others.

First, I learned that the One True God of the Bible is known throughout the world by many different names not mentioned in the Bible. The Bible itself, of course, has many different names for God. In the Bible He is called God, Lord, Creator, God Most High, I Am, Jehovah, Jehovah - Rohi, Jehovah - Shammah, Jehovah - Rapha, Jehovah - Jireh, Etc. Since there is only One True God, however, His worshipers were not confused by these different names. For example, for the first 13 chapters of the Bible God is consistently known by the Hebrew name "elohiym" which is translated as "God" in our English Bibles. In chapter 14, however, we are told that Abram paid tithes to the

priest of “elyown” (God Most High). Abram was not confused by this different name for God, however, for he knew there was only One True God regardless of what you called Him.

As we have mentioned before, all the peoples of the earth are descendants of Noah and his three sons. The genealogy of Noah’s family, and how they scattered throughout the world, is recorded in Genesis chapter 10, and is called “The Table of Nations”.

One example from Don’t book regarding a different name for the true God comes from the Santal Tribe of India. They call Him “Thakur-Jiu”, which means “Genuine God”. Many years before, when their ancestors migrated into India, they came to worship demon spirits and lost all contact with Jehovah. Their sages, however, had oral traditions reminding them of the distant past when they worshiped Jehovah, the Genuine God, or “Thakur-Jiu”. In 1867 two missionaries, Lars Skrefsrud and Hans Borreson, stumbled on this truth while learning the Santal language. Instead of preaching about Jehovah, they wisely referred to Him as Thakur-Jiu. When the Santal people understood that “Thakur-Jiu” sent His Son to be their Savior, they were overjoyed. A revival broke out and at one point the missionaries were baptizing an average of 80 people per day.

While in China I found that the further back you go in Chinese history, the fewer the gods. If you go back far enough, there was only one God. He was the Creator of all things and the Chinese call Him “Shang Ti”. In Korea this One True God is called “Hananim”. In the Central African Republic He is called “Koro”. In Ethiopia He is called “Magano”. The Inca people called Him “Viracocha”. Etc. Since all these people groups came from Noah, they all at one time knew and worshiped the God of the Bible. While the concept of the One True God is universal, the names given to Him around the world are different. Richardson’s book helped me to be more understanding of people all over the world who have lost contact with the One True God. It is obviously wiser when teaching them to use their name for the One True God.

Lesson # 2 involves the evidence of supernatural visions given by God to people in our own generation. It is with some reluctance that I tell you about these visions. The Bible is the Word of God and is all we need for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). We do not need any further revelation from God in order to be saved. At the same time, Don Richardson presents convincing evidence that God does give visions today, just as He did to Cornelius many years ago. These visions do not add to the Gospel in any way, but merely direct sincere seekers to men who can tell them about the One True God.

In Acts 10 and 11 we are told of a Gentile Centurion named Cornelius who received a vision from God. In the vision an angel instructed him to send to Joppa for a man named Simon Peter who would tell him how to be saved. The angel did not preach the Gospel to Cornelius, that privilege was reserved for Peter. The vision, however, did instruct Cornelius on how to find Peter. As a point of interest, it was at Joppa that Jonah ran away from his responsibility to preach to gentiles (Jonah 1:3).

Let me share with you another story from Richardson’s book. My good friend, Dr. Garland Bare, provides corroborating evidence that the story is true. The story involves William Marcus

Young. He was a veteran missionary to Asia. His family, and the family of Dr. Bare, worked together. At any rate, our story involves a prophet named Pu Chan from the Wa Tribe. This was a group of headhunting pagans who worshiped the demon spirits. Their name for the One True God was "Siyeh". Their tribe had a long standing tradition that some day a "white brother with a copy of the lost book" would come to tell them about Siyeh. Pu Chan received a vision that the long awaited white man was near. He saddled a pony and told his disciples that Siyeh would guide this pony to the white man with the lost book. That pony led his amazed disciples over approximately 200 miles of mountain trails to the city of Kengtung. Then it turned into the gate of a mission compound and went straight for a well. It was there that these Wa disciples found a white man named William Marcus Young digging for water. They asked him if he had a book from the One True God. When he said yes, they fell at his feet and said: *"This pony is saddled especially for you. Our people are all waiting. Fetch the book! We must be on our way"*

Nelda Widlund, the granddaughter of William Marcus Young told this story to Richardson in person. Our friends in the Morse family confirm that the Lisu Tribe also has similar stories regarding a lost book and the One True God.

I have continually stressed the importance of being willing to search for truth and follow the evidence. Certainly we need to "try the spirits" and be cautious, for the devil himself sometimes appears as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). But the longer I live the more I am convinced by evidence that God still manifests Himself in supernatural ways in our own generation.

PRAYING FOR WISDOM

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does." (James 1:5-8)

The story is told about a man who read in the Bible: **"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours"** (Mk. 11:24). He prayed that God would give him the ability to fly like a bird and proceeded to demonstrate his faith by getting a ladder and climbing to the top of a very big barn. Just before he leaped, however, he looked down and saw a bird hopping along the ground. When the bird took off and began to fly God gave this man some wisdom. If God wanted him to fly like a bird, he didn't need a ladder or a big barn.

As you pray for and experience the supernatural, please pray for wisdom.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce