

**LETTERS FROM GRANDPA**  
**# 33**

Dearest Grandchild,

Today, let us reflect upon this verse of Scripture: **“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.” (1 Cor 1:21).** Perhaps today’s letter will help you have a better understanding of preaching.

The book of Acts reminds us that Paul came to Corinth after preaching in Athens. Their patron saint was Athena, the goddess of wisdom. Scholars from all over the world gathered in Athens to discuss and debate man’s latest discoveries.

To the Corinthians Paul explained a very simple concept. The world in it’s wisdom cannot find God. Therefore, the way to find God was not discovered, it was revealed. That’s why Jesus came to earth. Since God is invisible, He had to be explained. This is precisely why God became incarnate in Jesus. In Jesus God is made known (Jn. 1:18). In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in a body (Col. 2:9).

I just finished reading a book by Dr. Garland Bare that helps make this message more relevant in my own life.. He graciously allowed me to have an electronic copy, even though the manuscript is still being edited and is not yet in print.

Dr. Bare spent much of his life surrounded by unbelievers. Most of us are so isolated from non-Christians that we may not be able to relate to, or understand the world in which they live. Here are a couple of stories from the book that help me to understand how intelligent people can search in vain to find God, but clearly see him when the Gospel is preached.

First, let us consider the case of Saeng Pua, who was a notorious robber and murderer in the mountains of Asia. When missionaries came into his area he felt their message would threaten his livelihood and therefore did everything he could to disrupt the preaching of the gospel. One day, as Dr. Bare was preaching in the village of Nam Mong , Saeng Pua came to understand the reality of the One True God. His hardened heart was softened by the love of Christ. When he realized that all of his crimes could be forgiven, he was baptized into Christ. He manifested his repentance by returning to his first wife and supporting the women throughout the villages by whom he had children. He even went from village to village asking forgiveness from those whom he had wronged. He even became a leader of the church in his home village. Though he never learned to read or write, he insisted that his children go to school and did everything he could to convert others to his new way of life.

Next, let us consider the story of a young man named Tip who was born to a poor family in Lamphang. This is the second largest city in Northern Thailand. The city is famous for its Buddhist

temples and highly educated monks. Tip had a thirst for knowledge but couldn't go to school because he couldn't afford money for a uniform. He did, however, go to the Buddhist temple regularly with his parents. While there he would sit cross-legged with his palms pressed together in the *wai* position of prayer. He wanted to learn about God and asked many questions of the abbot. Unfortunately, he got no answers. The abbot directed him to a holy hermit who lived in a cave above Phayao Lake. The long journey provided only more disappointment. The "holy man" turned out to be a cranky old man who berated Tip for looking for answers beyond what the abbot had told him. The old man did however, tell him about the Buddhist temples in Mandalay. Surely the priests there could answer all of his questions.

After weeks of walking he finally came to the golden spires of Mandalay. Since he could speak no Burmese he had to find a translator. Unfortunately, the Burmese monks there didn't answer his questions and treated him with amused disdain. Disillusioned and discouraged he journeyed back to Thailand, got married, and became a rice farmer.

That was when Tip, the sincere seeker came in contact with Saeng Pua, the converted criminal. To Tip's amazement, the former outlaw apologized for all the mischief he had caused their village and told them what little he knew about Jesus. He volunteered to go get Grandfather Gao who could read the "Book" and tell them how they too could be forgiven. With great joy Tip was baptized into Christ. At last he had found what he had been looking for all of his life.

As we have already pointed out, however, he did not discover God on his own. The reality of God was revealed to him through preaching.

Jesus said that we can understand the nature of a religion by its fruit. (Matt. 7:16). Here is a quote from Charles Darwin that was in a previous letter, but is worth repeating. Christianity does produce good fruit. When Darwin returned to England and heard some speak disparagingly of Christianity, he rebuffed these critics of Christ with these words: *"They forget, or will not remember, that human sacrifices, and the power of an idolatrous priesthood—a system of profligacy unparalleled in any other part of the world—infanticide a consequence of that system—bloody wars, where the conquerors spared neither women nor children—that all these have been abolished; and that dishonesty, intemperance, and licentiousness have been greatly reduced by the introduction of Christianity. In a voyager to forget these things is base ingratitude; for should he chance to be at the point of shipwreck on some unknown coast, he will most devoutly pray that the lesson of the missionary may have extended thus far."* (Journals of Research by Charles Darwin p. 414.)

## WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Just as Saeng Pua was a notorious sinner and Tip was a notorious seeker, there are many today just like them. Take, for example, the story of Nicky Cruz. He was born in Puerto Rico to parents who practiced "brujeria", which is the Spanish word for "witchcraft". At age 15 he was sent to live with his brother in New York. He ran away and began living on the streets. He joined a street gang called the Mau-Maus and in about six months became their leader.

When Cruz met a preacher named David Wilkerson he slapped him in the face and threatened to kill him. On their second meeting he did the same thing. Then Wilkerson rented a boxing arena for an evangelistic outreach and sent a bus to pick up the Mau-Maus. Cruz came and began to feel guilty for all the things he had done and began to pray. When Wilkerson asked the Mau-Maus to take up the collection, Cruz led the effort. Resisting the temptation to flee with the money, Cruz and a number of his gang members surrendered to Christ. To demonstrate the reality of their repentance they took their bricks, handguns, and knives to the police station and turned them in.

Nicky, as you probably know, became a world famous evangelist. If you have time, watch this brief video of his testimony. It is less than five minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROiFr8knqBY>

Now let us consider the testimony of a notorious seeker. His name is Lee Strobel. Here is a video of his testimony that is less than 3 minutes.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLWMc\\_8ymeE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLWMc_8ymeE)

Both the sinner and the seeker are famous. Their testimonies and books can be easily accessible.

You have the advantage of coming from a Christian family and have been exposed to preaching all of your lives. The next time you go to church and are listening to a boring sermon, remember that somewhere in the world lost people could listen to the same sermon and be saved for all eternity.

Thanks for taking time to read this letter.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce