



ICLD NEWSLETTER

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Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God ~ Romans 10:17

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THE STORY OF THE OTHER WISE MAN

Donna Doft, ICLD Volunteer

Have you ever heard the story of “The Other Wise Man”? It is a short story written by Henry Van Dyke (who also wrote the words to “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”). It was published in 1902 in a book of his short stories called *The Blue Flower*.

I love this story, partly because my mother read it to our family every year on Christmas Eve. But I also love it for the truths that it conveys in such a heartfelt way. The story is fictional, but it is based on the Bible and conveys in a powerful way the meaning of Christ’s words in Matthew 25 when speaking to the sheep and the goats. Please indulge me as I try to summarize the story here.

Artaban had planned to journey with the other wise men to seek and worship the great king that was to be born in Israel as predicted by the prophets, whose writings they had access to. They had seen his star and agreed to meet at a specific location to caravan across the desert together. Artaban had sold all that he owned to purchase three jewels as his gift to the newborn king: a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl.

On his way to meet the other magi, Artaban came across an elderly Hebrew man on the road at the outskirts of Babylon. The man was dying, and Artaban was torn between stopping to help him and to continue on his journey to meet his companions. His heart won out, and Artaban spent the night caring for the man. In their conversation, Artaban told the man that he was heading toward Jerusalem in search of the one who was to be born King of the Jews and great Prince and Deliverer of all men. The old man told him that the Hebrew scriptures predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, not Jerusalem, and blessed him on his journey.

Because Artaban had spent so many hours caring for the old man, by the time he reached the designated meeting place, his companions had already set out across the desert. Artaban could not follow them without provisions and animals to carry them. So, in order to purchase what he needed, he was forced to sell the sapphire, part of his gift for the King.

Because of the delay, Artaban reached Bethlehem three days later than the other Wise Men, and the little family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus had already fled to Egypt. A young mother with a baby of her own told him this, as well as about the strangers from the East who had visited the family. While they were speaking, there was a clamor in the streets, and soldiers were coming to kill all of the male babies. Artaban stood in the doorway and told the soldier who

had come that he was alone in that place and held out the ruby as payment for him to leave.

Now Artaban was even more torn because he had not only given away another portion of his gift for the king, but he had also lied in order to save a life. But the young mother spoke the Aaronic blessing over him for saving her child.

Years passed as Artaban continued to seek the King. A Hebrew scholar told him not to look for him among the rich and powerful, but among the poor and lowly. So he did. And he helped all that he found who were in need.

Thirty-three years later, Artaban found himself again in Jerusalem, as he had been several times before, but this time there was something different. There seemed to be a great commotion in the streets, and when he asked about it he was told that the one that the people had hoped was the Messiah was about to be crucified. Artaban thought, perhaps this was the one he had been seeking for so many years. Perhaps he was in time to save him by offering his last gift, the pearl, as a ransom for his life.

But then, a young woman from his own country rushed to him, begging for him to save her from “worse than death” because she was being sold into slavery to pay for her deceased father’s debts. Once again Artaban felt the old conflict between helping someone in need or using his gift in worship to the King. But he knew there was only one thing he could do—he gave the pearl as the girl’s ransom.

While they were standing together near a building, there was a great earthquake, and a tile from the roof fell and hit Artaban on the temple. As he lay dying, he heard a voice speaking to him. Artaban answered, “Not so, my Lord! For when saw I thee hungry and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw I thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? When saw I thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? Three-and-thirty years have I looked for thee; but I have never seen thy face, nor ministered to thee, my King.”

The voice came again. This time it said, “*Verily I say unto thee, Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me.*”

The story ends with these words: “His journey was ended. His treasurers were accepted. The Other Wise Man had found the King.”

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The Gift of Giving

This is the time of year that many people think about giving to non-profit organizations for the tax credits that they can receive. Some don't care about getting the credit, especially if they don't have enough income to pay taxes. Either way, Christmas is a time that seems to open many people's hearts to giving. God gave the best Gift of all, and we can give as He provides. One of the things I love about ICLD is the fact that there are no paid employees. Except for necessary expenses to maintain our building, every dollar that comes in goes to the mission of "spreading gospel literature to the world." Everything—the Bibles and Christian resources that we send—as well as the funds to send them, come from donations by people like you and me. As we give, we get to be part of the Great Commission of preaching the gospel to the whole world and teaching people how to be Jesus' disciples (Matthew 28: 18-20). If God puts it in your heart, please consider sending a gift to help spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

Besides monetary donations, ICLD can use good Christian literature, especially teaching materials, Bible handbooks, atlases, commentaries, theological studies, Sunday school curricula, teaching and sermon CDs and DVDs, and any other helpful materials for those in the developing countries we send to who really need good teaching. If you have any of these that you are no longer using, please consider donating them as well. We will make good use of them.

Short-term Mission Resources

If you are planning to go on a short-term mission to other countries, we would love for you to take along some resources that we could provide for you to distribute during your trip. It would be great to get these materials into the hands of people who really need them. In addition, we can refer you to another great organization that provides audio resources for short-term mission trips.

Long-time Volunteers



Gordon Kanten, who turned 95 on November 18, has been volunteering for ICLD for 32 years. Marge Erickson, who will be 97 on New Year's Eve, has been volunteering for ICLD for 26 years. We are grateful for their faithful service for these many years—and hopefully for years to come!

Nigeria Ministry

Some of the needs in the field are overwhelming, and heartbreaking. We are flooded with requests from Nigeria and have recently had the opportunity to send jumbo boxes in containers provided by other resources, at a much reduced price than sending individual boxes. The requests continue to come, as seen from the following excerpts.



A pastor in Kwara State, Nigeria:
"Thanks for the books and other materials given to support our ministry. May Thy Living Jesus Christ continue to provide for the Gospel work, on behalf of me and other Pastors that we share the materials. We promised to use the books for propagation of the Good News."

An evangelist in Anambra State, Nigeria: "We wish to express our profound gratitude and appreciation for the support you have been giving to our ministry, through your prayer and supply of Christian literature. We have been enriched tremendously. Visitors to our libraries are equally strengthened and enriched."

An evangelist in Edo State, Nigeria: "People are living in distress in a village in Eastern Edo State. When I visited the village, I was stunned to see the children living in there, picked food from the refuse dumps to fill their empty stomachs. I was wept and I decided to live the village and promised to come back to offer them some sort of help, because I felt their sorrow and also, I believed wholeheartedly that God is the father and defender of the poor." He explains that his children helped him to take food, clothing and medical treatment to them, as well as paying for shelters for those with no place to stay. "That the veil of their idolatry was removed absolutely from the hearts and minds. A real touch of God came over them, and they felt the love and goodness influenced by God is powerful and wonderful. They come down to His salvation. . . . We are unable to provide the desperately needed for all of them, which is the Holy Bibles and other materials."

ICLD MISSION STATEMENT

A Christian organization spreading Gospel literature to the world.

ICLD's Mailing Contacts

Bring to ICLD Office (Wed. & Fri. mornings):

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