



Letter from the President



Dr. Bill Jones

Undergraduate
Graduate School
Seminary & School of Missions
Ben Lippen School
89.7 WMHK
New Life 91.9

7435 Monticello Road
P.O. Box 3122
Columbia, SC 29230-3122
803.754.4100
800.777.2227
803.786.4209 Fax

www.ciu.edu

Aunt Ruby's Socks and the Incomparable Gift

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Dear friends of CIU,

"A

nd what did you get from Aunt Ruby?" I dreaded that question from my sister every Christmas.

I loved my Aunt Ruby. However, her frugal ways were just too much for a young boy to understand. You see, after Uncle Paul passed away, he left behind his socks. Lots of socks. Some had holes in them. Some were mismatched. A pair of those socks became my annual Christmas present from Aunt Ruby.

Receiving used socks for Christmas was bad enough. The pain was compounded by Aunt Ruby's gift to my sister every year – silver dollars! Not just one silver dollar a year, but a silver dollar for each year of my sister's age! By the time she was 16, my sister was getting rich. And she would rub it in. She would giggle in delight as she slowly counted out her silver dollars in front of me. Apparently Uncle Paul didn't leave behind any women's socks.

I've long since gotten over the envy and jealousy toward my sister that used to well up inside me every Christmas. God has replaced it with the true meaning of the holiday. When He forgave me nearly 30 years ago, I began to understand

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that even the best gift on earth cannot compare to the incarnate gift from heaven, sent to fulfill the will of His Father:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

These days I have the privilege of serving as president of a university where, in one sense, it is Christmas every day. That's because at Columbia International University, we have over 15,000 alumni who are taking the message of Christmas — the Word made flesh — to over 150 nations, 365 days a year. And every year we send more laborers into the harvest who are equipped with a biblical worldview.

For example, there's Meredith, a graduate of our Middle Eastern Studies program who teaches English to Kurdish people in a normally closed country. Or Troy, who leads teams of humanitarian and medical workers in remote villages of Central Asia. Both of these CIU graduates are using their skills to open doors for the message of Christ. Here in the States there are many CIU alumni, such as Bob. He works in the business world each day, sharing the love and forgiveness of Christ with co-workers, while using his CIU training to lead a prison ministry and teach Bible studies at his church.

If you have provided prayers and finances to the work of Columbia

International University, you have helped equip many to get the message of Christmas to those who are without God's love and forgiveness.

Thank you for doing so.
What a privilege it is to partner with you!
Your continued support for CIU is greatly appreciated.

This Christmas, if you receive a gift that's just not exactly what you wanted (like Aunt Ruby's socks), or if you are materially blessed beyond your expectations, remember the incomparable gift of God:

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:23)

On behalf of my wife Debby, and the entire CIU family, may God richly bless you this Christmas season and always.

Psalm 67:1-2,



William H. Jones
President



Columbia International University

"To know Him and to make Him known"