

# Columbia International University

To Know Him And To Make Him Known



## *A Christmas Lesson In Faith Giving*

*December 2006*

### **Dear friends of CIU,**

The Christmas season brings back wonderful memories for many of us. I will always remember Christmas 1963 when I learned a valuable lesson in faith giving. That lesson happened during my freshman year at CIU, and it set the pace for the years that followed.

From the time I was young, giving to the Lord's work has been a part of my life. My godly parents were great models of giving, and they insisted that I give regularly as a child. So, I took my pennies to Sunday school, always tried to put something in the church offering, and gave occasionally to a mission project. However, my giving was not systematic, it certainly wasn't sacrificial, and it required little or no faith.

When I started at CIU, the cost of college, though much lower than it is now, was still a big "tab" for me and my family. I took a job immediately, working in the school kitchen for 50 cents an hour. The money I earned, however, did not come to me; it was deducted from my school bill. So, practically speaking, there was no way I could tithe my income. The only way I could give money to anything was to use part of the gifts I would occasionally receive from relatives in birthday cards. I felt I was "off the hook" when it came to giving since I had no income.

Then Dr. Oswald J. Smith spoke at a CIU chapel and challenged us with the idea of "faith promise" giving. "It's simply trusting God to give you what you don't have, so you can give it back to Him," he said. I decided to prayerfully do that. I asked the Lord to provide me with \$30 to give to the CIU student mission project. For me that was a large amount, representing 60 hours of labor. I told no one but the Lord about this.

**“ I have received and given numerous gifts at Christmastime . . . But God's provision of \$30 in 1963 I will never forget. ”**

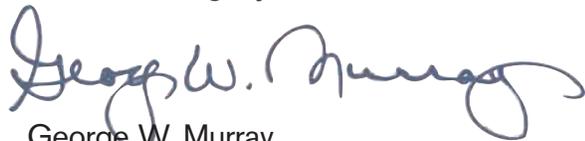
# President's Letter

That same year I was the volunteer youth pastor of a small church largely composed of low-income families. Just before Christmas, my youth group secretly decided to give me a Christmas present. They ended up in a big argument, because the girls wanted to give me one thing, and the boys wanted to give me something else. Their compromise was to give me a cash gift, which they did one Sunday evening in a soiled envelope that was heavy with coins and one dollar bills. When I got to my dorm room that night I opened the envelope and counted the money. It was exactly \$30! I put the money back in the envelope and with great joy dropped it off the next day at the student missions office.

I have received and given numerous gifts at Christmastime over the years, most of which I have forgotten. But God's provision of \$30 in 1963 I will never forget. That was the beginning of a 40-year period of giving adventures!

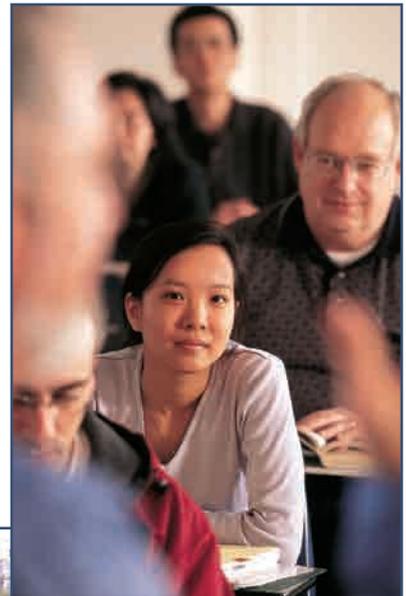
Christmas is a time of remembering God's greatest gift to us, and in gratitude to follow His example. As we approach the end of the year, may I challenge you to consider faith giving? Ask God to give you what you don't have, so you can give it back to Him. Your gift may go to your church, or to a local outreach ministry, or to a missions project. Let me also challenge you to consider a "faith" gift to CIU's Annual Fund. Your gift will help fund our ongoing vision to train men and women to know God deeply and to share Him effectively with a needy world.

Yours for His glory,



George W. Murray  
President

Your gift to the CIU  
Annual Fund at work



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