

Dear Cardus Friend,

When I wake up in the morning and hit the shower, grab a coffee, eat my cereal, and read the day's headlines I rarely think about the ideas, the institutions, and the books that have formed my habits, behaviours and way of viewing the day ahead. Do you?

Let's dissect that stack of ideas that, over time, forms your cultural habits, social patterns, and political structures. When you think of all the organizations and people you interact with that make you who you are, *what do you think of?*

For me, and I imagine for most of you, there is a worldview that coheres all this messy business together. This view of the world, with the good news of history, is what sets us on a course to know what is Good and True and Beautiful.

On the other hand there is a lot of competition for ideas out there today—in-your-face ideas that often show up on the front page of newspapers or your Facebook conversations or in very cool, impressive advertisements. For me this competition of ideas resides in my own heart. But it also captures a broader public dialogue that shapes who we are as people and how we form the next generation. This competition of ideas shapes our institutions, how we worship, how we educate, and how we do business.

Cardus is deep in the middle of this competition of ideas, the networks that advance these ideas and the institutions slowly embodied around these ideas. We argue and illustrate that 2,000 years of Christian thought *can* and *does* make a contribution to today's dialogue and the decisions in our public square.

A friend recently characterized Cardus as a bridge between knowledge and power. I wondered if that is really the case, and what good comes of it. I do think I can answer these questions with cautious optimism. Cardus *really does* change and influence how people think, and often these people are those who have significant influence and authority to impact our world. May I give a few examples?

- Cardus conducted the largest ever representative North American study on independent schools, finding that graduates accomplish public education goals better than public school graduates. They are salt of the earth people who make remarkable contributions to their local communities. This study is being talked about all over North America!
- Calgary City Soul is a powerful case study demonstrating the interconnectedness between neighborhood faith groups and the City. Calgary's city staff have directly used Cardus's recommendations to improve Calgary's guiding city plans. What a model for other cities!
- In a post-Christian era, a cohesive understanding of faith in everyday life is no less than the most important foundational aspect of authentic Christian practice. This is why we "do" *Comment* magazine. We are excited for December, when we will announce as *Comment's* next editor one of the most winsome and accomplished Christian authors and teachers in the world.

I am sure that you have come to know about the passion and enthusiasm that Cardus employs every day in our work. Yet we also experience the brokenness and suffering in this world. In July of this year my son Kenton died. My family lost our son and Cardus lost their boy. For a time Cardus formed into a community grieving the loss of life and wondering for the meaning of it. We have learned in this time that suffering often lies just under our daily human interaction. Cardus speaks to and listens to thousands of people in this country. Sometimes we must listen for their suffering.

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A few years ago I wrote that tackling the mission of Cardus gets me up in the morning. I'm often motivated by a desire to reach toward our mission, to have influence and to be a faithful presence in our culture. The Cardus staff and our Board of Directors are an inspiring team. We tread lightly but firmly; we are nimble and able to move good ideas ahead.

None of this would be possible without your support for Cardus. We're close to meeting our budget for the year and have kept costs below our board-approved targets. We work hard to steward your investment in our work, because we care about the future of our countries and believe that our rich Christian heritage has much to say about public life in North America.

We believe in institutions! Charitable institutions rely on the generosity of those who understand that this is an investment in building blocks of productivity, of exchange, of creating, and building of the common good. This investment makes an impact in the Kingdom of God.

Please participate in work of Cardus with a gift of \$100, \$500 or \$1000. Each and every gift enables Cardus to purposely and vibrantly engage our culture through the influence of two thousand years of Christian social thought.

Thank you for your prayers, words of encouragement and financial support.

Sincerely,



Michael Van Pelt
President

