

The Most Important Thing

Taken from Ronald L. Dart's Sermon Notes

If you only had a short time to tell someone about God, what would you tell him? What is the most important thing to know about God?

In a way, we may think we don't know much about God. But when we have to choose among the things we know in order to tell someone about God, we find we know a great deal that is very important. But if we think very long about this, we are likely to find that some of the things we know about God are contradictory. And that suggests that we may have taken a wrong turn.

There are things we can know about God and things that are unknowable for us. So naturally, we busy ourselves about the secret things, create dogma around them and decide who is a Christian and who is not on the basis of things we cannot know. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34).

A little humility might be helpful as we try to answer this question. "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am JEHOVAH which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness. In the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

So God himself says that the important things to know about him have to do with his Character. He exercises: lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness.

These are not merely the things God is, they are the things he does, he exercises. This is really a lot.

- Lovingkindness implies affection
- Judgment implies wisdom and firmness
- Righteousness implies standards and the existence of standards suggests that he is not whimsical, that

he can be depended on to be constant.

If a person can come to understand and believe these simple things about God, a lot of bad ideas will never gain a foothold with him. For example, if someone argues that God did away with his Law, he is saying that God will change

continued on page 5 . . .

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Most Important Thing

From Ronald L. Dart's notes	1
Together We Can Make A Difference!	1
Unity, Not Uniformity	
By Ken Swiger.	2
Ronald L. Dart's Prayer for Unity	2
2015 CEM Feast of Tabernacles	3
July Reading Program	3
Mr. Dart Health Update ..	3
Personal Evangelism – Let Born to Win Help	4
Website and Social Media Update	4
Truth, Doctrine, and Policy	
From Ronald L. Dart's notes	5

Together We Can Make A Difference! . . .

Never in the history of man have such awesome tools been available to reach people with the Gospel—the printing press, radio, television, and now the Internet. *Born to Win* is reaching people in Fiji, Norway, England, Australia, Jamaica, Columbia, and the Ukraine, with our weekly live-streamed Sabbath services. Our social media efforts are increasing with encouraging numbers. While fears of terrorist attacks loom, we're seeing a breakdown in our society and loss of freedoms. God has opened these most effective doors to warn our hurting, crime-ridden world as Christ's return approaches. These productive tools to get the Gospel out require purchasing equipment and time. Every dollar you give makes a difference—to you and to *Born to Win*. You're laying up treasures in heaven. This is a joint effort and we need your help.

Unity, Not Uniformity

By Ken Swiger

The basketball team for Small-Town U was warming up when the spectators in the gym came alive with shouting and cheering as the Big-Town State team hit the floor. They were resplendent in their colorful uniforms. Each player dressed alike, the only difference between them being the numbers on their uniforms.

The Small-Town U players noticed their appearance, but were not dismayed. They were not concerned about the lack of uniforms; they were okay with the gym shorts and matching t-shirts that were the only outfits the little school could afford for their fledgling program.

As the game began, the Big-Town State players made a couple of slam dunks. The crowd roared its approval. The players who scored celebrated loudly and talked trash to their opponents. But when a missed “Alley-Oop” pass left the Big-Town State forward looking foolish, he blasted his team mate with abuse and cursing.

Small-Town took it all in stride and settled in and worked their game plan, which resulted in consistent scoring. The game went on and the Small-Town players

were consistent and scored effectively. But things did not go as well for the Big-Town State team. Each player seemed determined to get their hands on the ball and passed up chances to pass the ball to an open team mate.

Each time a grandstand play failed to result in points the State players became angrier and more frustrated. At first the crowd blamed the referees for the way they were calling the game. But as the team members’ attitudes became increasingly negative and hostile toward each other, the crowd began to boo the Big-Town State team.

When the time expired on the clock, the Small-Town U team had prevailed and won the game.

What was the difference in the game? The Big-Town State team had *uniformity*; that is they all looked alike and conformed to an accepted norm. But the Small-Town U team had *unity*; they functioned as a team. They had a common goal and worked toward the goal, unconcerned about personal achievement and glory.

May God grant us the character to seek unity of purpose and spirit, and the understanding that conformity of appearance is not what brings his children together in true unity.

Ronald L. Dart’s Prayer for Unity

Our Father in Heaven, our Great Creator,
We covenant with You and with one another that we will do our best to work for a unity of the spirit among Your people.
We will not put down our brothers.
We will speak evil of no man.
We will not proselytize.
Rather we will do our best to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the world by whatever means You put in our hands.
Those of us who say “Amen” to this prayer commit ourselves to the gentleness of Jesus, to finding the lost sheep and carrying them gently back to You.
We will not argue with them. We will be gentle to all men.
We will be patient, and we will teach in meekness.
We will trust You to bring about the unity of the spirit, which must not be hindered by any boundaries that we or other men may erect.
We make this commitment and this promise before You to keep as best we can, and we ask Your strength in helping us do it.
In Jesus’ name, Amen.

2015 CEM Feast of Tabernacles

The CEM 2014 Feast of Tabernacles at the Green Acres Baptist Church Retreat was a wonderful Feast of rejoicing and fellowship. We planned to go back to Green Acres in 2015; however, their Children's Ministry always has their annual meeting on the first weekend in October. They asked us to change the date of the Feast and we asked them to change the date of their meeting—no compromise was reached. The bottom line is that our 2015 Feast of Tabernacles needed a new location and God has blessed us with a terrific facility.

This year's CEM Feast will be celebrated at the Bella Vista Resort on Lake Palestine. Some of you may remember this as the former Church of God International property. The church building there serves our needs so well—stage, meeting rooms, YEA rooms, kitchen, a boat ramp, and places to swim and fish.

2015 is a special year for CEM. Christian Educational Ministries was incorporated in November of 1995 and we will celebrate our 20 year anniversary at the Feast even though it will be a bit early.

This year we anticipate lively YEA classes and adult seminars. We plan to offer breakfast and lunch this year just like last year—that was so enjoyable and offered so many opportunities for fellowship. We are scheduling a fishing tournament and youth activities as well as our usual activities:

- Pie and Ice Cream Social
- Picnic
- Family Dance and Talent Show
- Praise and Worship Sing-Along

There are many options for housing from hotels, bed & breakfasts, camping facilities, and RV parks. We have access to discounts on many facilities in the area.

Volunteers as always are needed. We need musicians, song leaders, seminar speakers, YEA teachers, activity leaders, food service help and much, much more. This is an excellent opportunity to share your gifts with others and get to know your brothers and sisters in Christ.

You do *not* need to register to attend but it does help us plan if you do. Check out our website and/or the CEM Feast of Tabernacles Facebook page for details or call Linda Benton at 1-903-839-9300 or 1-888-Bible-44 for information about the Feast, housing, or to register. We look forward to rejoicing with you at this Feast.

July Reading Program

Jul 1: Obadiah; Psalms 82-83
Jul 2: 2 Kings 1-4
Jul 3: 2 Kings 5-8
Jul 4: 2 Kings 9-11
Jul 5: 2 Kings 12-13; 2 Chronicles 24
Jul 6: 2 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 25
Jul 7: Jonah
Jul 8: 2 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 26
Jul 9: Isaiah 1-4
Jul 10: Isaiah 5-8
Jul 11: Amos 1-5
Jul 12: Amos 6-9
Jul 13: 2 Chronicles 27; Isaiah 9-12
Jul 14: Micah 1-7
Jul 15: 2 Chronicles 28; 2 Kings 16-17
Jul 16: Isaiah 13-17
Jul 17: Isaiah 18-22
Jul 18: Isaiah 23-27
Jul 19: 2 Kings 18:1-8; 2 Chronicles 29-31; Ps 48
Jul 20: Hosea 1-7
Jul 21: Hosea 8-14
Jul 22: Isaiah 28-30
Jul 23: Isaiah 31-34
Jul 24: Isaiah 35-36
Jul 25: Isaiah 37-39; Psalm 76
Jul 26: Isaiah 40-43
Jul 27: Isaiah 44-48
Jul 28: 2 Kings 18:9-19:37; Psalms 46/80/135
Jul 29: Isaiah 49-53
Jul 30: Isaiah 54-58
Jul 31: Isaiah 59-63

Mr. Dart Health Update

Improvements in Mr. Dart's health have been encouraging. You may have seen him wearing white gloves at precious Feasts. This was because he has coetaneous T cell lymphoma—a rare type of skin cancer. He's had this for over 20 years and his dermatologists say their patients rarely die of this. He recently had a small spot on his thigh that had progressed to another stage. So 15 radiation treatments were given and cleared that up. Ron seemed to have few if any side effects from that. Fluid did accumulate around his heart and his cardiologist prescribed a diuretic, a portable oxygen tank, and told him to come back in six months. Yesterday and today he waked up cheerful, conversational, and said he felt much better. We greatly appreciate your prayers and ask you to continue praying for his complete recovery.

Personal Evangelism – Let *Born to Win* Help

Part of personal evangelism is being prepared to answer questions. CEM and the *Born to Win* radio ministry can help you. Order the *FREE* CDs that are offered in every newsletter, on Facebook, and on our website, then share them. One of our listeners orders the CDs and shares them in nursing homes that he visits. Use them to strengthen your own faith. We also have *FREE* literature and Bible studies that give you the wherewithal to help others. You can order multiple copies of these *FREE* of charge. (Donations for shipping costs are always appreciated.) Literature you will find helpful to spread the Good News of salvation and God's coming Kingdom are listed below. Order by phone, email, website, Facebook, or the enclosed card. You can also go to www.borntowin.net and

download your own copies of these articles:

Which Of The Ten Commandments Did Jesus Repeal?

Basic Christianity, The Opening Gambit

Is There Really A Hell Fire?

Are We Living In The Last Days?

Law Or Grace?

The Tracks Of The Devil

Why Do You Believe What You Believe? *Updated*

Christian Holy Days Bible Study *Updated*

Could Christ Return Tonight?

Is There Life After Divorce?

The New Islamic Empire *Updated*

The New Testament Sabbath Day *Updated*

The Christian Woman *Updated*

Which Old Testament Laws Apply For Today?

Why Study The Bible? Bible Study *Updated*

Website and Social Media Update

Exciting things are happening with our online exposure and social media outreach. A newly designed website w downloadabe PDF files including the church hymnal, and so much more. Let us hear from you when you can't log on or if the website is down or if you experience other website problems. We can only fix what we know about.

One of the most common problems is that your old CEM website bookmark no longer works. When you can't log on from your bookmark, type in www.borntowin.net and hit enter. It should take you to the new site and you can reset your bookmark.

In about three months time, our social media post reach numbers have soared from around 400 to over 20,000.

We have Facebook pages for CEM, *Born to Win*, Ronald L. Dart and a *Born to Win* Facebook prayer group.

We are interacting daily with our faithful Facebook followers, and friends. We post daily inspirational scripture graphics, the daily radio program links, information about upcoming Sabbath and Holy Day events, articles written by Mr. Dart, videos . . . and much more.

You can help share the Gospel by simply 'liking' us on Facebook and 'liking' and 'sharing' our posts with your friends. Work with us to share the Word.

If you have suggestions, contact Christina Groves via the Facebook page messaging system or at christina@borntowin.net.

The Most Important Thing
continued from page 1 . . .

his standards. Some arguments about covenants suggest that God will go back on his word. Some people believe that God will stop loving them when they have made a mistake. They take the chastisement of God as rejection.

The curious thing about man is that we become quite sure of things about God that we really can't know, while we are doubtful about the things we can know.

But back to the question, if you only had a short time to tell someone about God, what would you tell him? Jeremiah had a good start on it: “. . . But let him

who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:24 NKJV). If you can nail these principles down, you can safely conclude that anything that seems to contradict these basics has to be a misunderstanding—something you can resolve later.

One of the best ways to learn about the character and personality of God is in the study of Jesus Christ who came to reveal God, his Father. Order your *FREE* copy of this memorable sermon from Ronald L. Dart and we want you to be aware of your opportunity to order the new Gospel of Mark CD series this month.

Truth, Doctrine, and Policy

Taken from article written by Ronald L. Dart

It is sad but true that Christian people aren't always the best influence on one another. Along with the marvelous teachings of Jesus, we often pick up some very bad ideas from our churches and organizations. One of the worst of these ideas, all too common in churches, is that *our* church is the sole repository of “God's Truth.” An arrogant assumption. And even when we begin to grow out of the idea, we still become easily confused because of the legacy it leaves.

Over the years, many of us have failed to make a distinction between three very important things: truth, doctrine, and policy. We thought our policies were doctrine, and we thought our doctrines were the truth. Unfortunately, this simple misunderstanding lingers and is confusing the work of the church.

What is the difference between truth, doctrine, and policy? Start with Pilate's question: What is truth?

God's Word is truth. Truth is, and always will be. Truth is a great monolith, impervious and harder than diamond. We cannot create truth or modify it. It is that stone cut out without hands that breaks everything else in pieces. To consider yourself a defender of the truth is the ultimate conceit. The truth needs no defense, but rather is our defender, our Rock. Truth is the way things are, not the way we think they are or wish they could be. All of us stand humbled in the presence of truth.

Doctrine, on the other hand, is not “the Truth.” Doctrine is our best approximation of the truth. It is what we have decided to teach and therefore *doctrine is*

man made. No human being, nor any church, can claim to have discovered perfect truth. As long as we are human, we can make mistakes, and it is patently wrong not to acknowledge the fallibility in our doctrines. The number of changes we have had to make in our teachings over time is witness to our imperfection and fallibility in doctrine.

Then there is *policy*. Policy is not even doctrine, but is defined as “a definite course of action adopted for the sake of expediency or facility.” Policy includes the rules by which we govern ourselves and carry on our business. It is good that we use biblical precedence for our policy, but it is crucial that we not confuse policy with doctrine. Take church governance, for example. There is simply not enough hard biblical teaching on church government to make good doctrine. What we do, then, is make policy based on biblical precedent. We should never make the mistake of assuming that these policies are doctrines, much less the Truth. Jesus seems to have left his disciples wide latitude in their policies—including the much vexed topic of church government. The Sabbath and the festivals are doctrine. Church governance is policy.

If the churches could just get this one distinction straight, it would go a long way toward reducing the tensions and even enmities that seem to grow like weeds in the fellowship of God's people. If a man disagrees with you on doctrine or policy, you do not have to think of him a heretic or a rebel. If you do think of him that way, it is mute evidence that you have elevated your

continued on page 6 . . .

Truth, Doctrine, and Policy
continued from page 5. . .

policies and doctrines to the level of truth.

A church, be it large or small, has every right to establish its doctrinal and policy structure. Without agreement on the basics, confusion is sure to result. If the church in question is clear on its published doctrines and policies, a person may differ but still decide to work within those doctrines and policies for the greater good. But the church should be patient enough to embrace those who, while disagreeing in some aspects, still are willing to work responsibly within the framework the church has spelled out (see Romans 14).

The question is whether or not a congregation will allow freedom of conscience. In other words, if I am not persuaded by one of your 24 published doctrines, can we work together? Can we discuss and work around our differences while we grow together into a better understanding of the truth? Maybe, you just have too many doctrines.

When it comes to the question of policy, any organized effort has to have policies that are understood and agreed upon or the work will dissolve. But if your policies are too many and too inflexible, then the organization will be too brittle to adapt. If your policies are seen as doctrine and your doctrine as truth, then you turn your brethren into rebels and heretics.

Years ago when forming another church organization, we fretted over questions of church government while we were forming our constitution and by-laws. We had not yet made the break with the old line of thought that our policies had to be doctrine and our doctrine had to be the truth. What slowly became clear to us was that our constitution and by-laws were not an attempt to govern the church of God, but to govern a Texas non-profit corporation. Then our policies were merely our rules, not God's Laws. Since we were not all there was to the church, a person could be a member of God's church and not observe our rules. It seems simple enough now, but it was a major shift in thinking at the time.

Church organizations that are even now struggling over their rules would benefit by declaring that they are not attempting to rule the church, but merely to govern the corporation. Then a person who disagrees with policy can still be a member of the church as long as he works within the policy. Since no claim of divine privilege is made for policy, one is not deemed to be rebellious

because he disagrees with policy and tries to change it. Since no claim of Eternal Truth is made for our doctrines, then a person who disagrees with one or more of them need not be considered a heretic. Who knows, he may be the harbinger of a better understanding. It is the arrogance of assuming your doctrines are the Truth that is the greatest barrier to growth in understanding.

We may also have failed to grasp one of the most important aspects of church policy. Policy comes from the same root as politics. Just as the church is a divine organism, it is also a *political* organism. The failure to recognize that simple fact has led to mischief in the church. While some of us hold ourselves aloof from politics, and look with disdain on those who "politic" in the church, those who practice politics can and will take the church away from us. We have seen, in recent memory, a shocking illustration of how true that is.

Politics is nothing more than the art of persuasion. It involves communication with people, persuading them as to the right courses of policy and action. It involves pointing out the errors and the results of bad policies.

We tend to shy away from this because it involves confrontation and the airing of disagreements. So we allow the noisemakers among us to set the agenda. The people who are willing to make a stink to get their way end up controlling the church. It is far better to confront attitudes than to let them fester. It is better to air disagreements than to paper them over and let them tear the church apart later. It falls strangely on the ears, but when Jesus told the disciples: "Go to your brother," He was giving instructions on how church politics should work.

This tends to be a little noisy and uncomfortable, but it forms a part of what I call "the background noise of freedom." Jesus Christ has granted to his church a great degree of liberty. We must not use this liberty for an occasion to the flesh, nor must we crush it in the name of uniformity. Growth is a noisy, sometimes messy, business. But we will grow or we will perish.

Born to Win

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.