

Living to Win

August 15, 2006
Volume 11, Number 8
Christian Educational Ministries

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

Beauty and Power to Love

Sometimes, important ideas come from unexpected sources. This one came from an architect named Catesby Leigh, a Roman Catholic who had been provoked by an article on church architecture by yet another author. I have no idea what prompted me to read an article on church architecture, but having started, I couldn't put it down. The author wrote very well, pulled no punches, and hit on something that has been nagging at my mind for some time. He got me in the first paragraph:

It's no secret that the state of religious architecture in America is bad. Really bad. The American idea of inevitable progress runs into a brick wall when we compare the quality of our architectural output a century ago with the stuff we are building now.

Leigh set out to discuss the answer, and I will return to his argument, but first, I need to get this idea on the table. Nearly every form of art, music, and beauty has been degraded in the past 100 years. To me, his complaint about architecture was only one facet of a massive societal change. Something has happened.

Something has changed. Something has gone out of our lives and, frankly, I am worried that we'll never get it back.

I think what we have sacrificed on the altar of modernity is love. And having lost the power to love, men have lost the power to create beauty, for beauty arises from love. In his book, *Love and Will*, Rollo May observed that when men lose the power to love, they substitute power over. I have every reason to believe that May got that exactly right. It is evident everywhere in our world, and nowhere is it more evident than in the way men treat women. Women have gone from being objects of love to being sex objects, and women have participated in the terrible deed. There is no beauty in it. There is *only lust*. It is reflected in the way young women dress – someone dubbed it “slutwear.” Beauty is not the object. Sex is the object.

There is a terrible irony that has arisen from the women's movement. They were worried about becoming sex objects. But in sacrificing beauty, they sacrificed love and were left with sex alone.

It seems to me that there are two sources of beauty, the creator and the lover. I heard someone say recently that the creation of the universe was an act of love, and I find it easy to believe. T. R. Fehrenbach, in *Lone Star*, remarked that the earliest white men to see West Texas saw no beauty in it. It was a land “hard on horses and hell on women.” Now that we can tour the country in air conditioned comfort, we can see how beautiful hard country can be. Even the back-packer knows he doesn't have to make his living off this land, so he can look and love.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. You may see an old woman walking with a cane. To you, she is just a faded flower. But to the man who loves her, she is the very exemplar of beauty.

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For Your Convenience

To serve you better and save you time and trouble, CEM is making the Automated Clearing House (ACH) available to our donors. If you are interested in using this service and making automatic monthly contributions to CEM, please contact Larry Watkins at lsw@cemnetwork.com or call 1-888-BIBLE-44.

Your Help Is Needed!

Most of us don't give much thought to our safety as we go to church. Such is not the case everywhere in the world. You may have never heard of the Benin Republic, much less know where it is. But to a group of faithful and dedicated Christians, it is home. Michael Porter and his wife Stella live and serve God in Benin. This Republic is located in West Africa perpendicular to the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, bordered on the north by Burkina Faso and Niger, on the east by Nigeria, and on the west by Togo.

Because the Porters profess Christianity, their house has been burned, their church destroyed, and have been attacked by machete-wielding villagers. Stella was so badly cut in the head and abdomen that she almost died.

Over the years, the Porters have planted numerous Sabbath-observing churches in Benin and Nigeria and baptized a number of people. They've been fighting a lifetime of voodoo and witchcraft. In fact, the machete attack came as a result of the confession of a voodoo priest.

Thanks to Margaret-Dyer Foster and brethren of the Bermuda church, the group in Benin has received some support, but not nearly enough. CEM has been working with the group in Benin for more than a year, providing materials, etc. They have started the *Born to Win* program in Contonou, Benin, a city of about 450,000. As the work grows, so do the needs. CEM is establishing a fund to help support the work the Porters and those who work with them are doing in Benin. If you would like to help, please send your contributions to CEM and note that it is for the work in Benin. Together, we can make a difference, even in a far away place like Benin.

Another Fantastic Summer Camp

Christian Educational Ministries' 11th annual YEA Summer Camp returned to Wewoka, Oklahoma during the last week of June. Thirty-six campers from 12 different states came to participate in numerous activities and Bible studies.

Activities included water skiing, tubing, basketball, volleyball, swimming, horseback riding, mountain biking, archery, and group initiatives. Evening entertainment included a hamburger cookout, pool party, game night, the always hilarious and entertaining Fun Show, and two dances. The Wacky Olympics and annual volleyball tournament were big hits.

After breakfast each day, a mixed cabin Bible study was held on the theme of *Who Do YOU Say Jesus Is?* Campers were encouraged to

form a closer personal relationship with Christ as they studied Jesus as their Creator, Savior, Brother, Healer, and King. Thanks to Paula Hughes, and everyone who contributed to writing those lessons. After lunch, group Bible studies on various related topics were led by Paula Hughes, Beth Meese, Chris and Lisa Gregor, and Larry Watkins. A "Camp Huddle" was held at the close of each day to discuss the events of the day, sing praise and worship songs, and close with a prayer of thanksgiving.

If you are interested in attending summer camp next year, contact Larry Watkins at lsw@cemnetwork.com or write CEM, P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791. The 2007 Summer Camp is presently scheduled for June 24-July 1. We hope to see you there!



Radio Update

Peoria, IL
WOAM 1350 AM
Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Atlanta, GA
WAEC 860 AM
M-F 5:30 a.m.
Sat & Sun 6:00 a.m.

Nacogdoches, TX
KSEA 860 AM
M-F 5:30 p.m.
Sunday 7:30 a.m.

**High River,
Alberta, Canada**
CHRB 1140 AM
Sunday 5:30 p.m.

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The *Song of Solomon* is a marvelous love poem, but many have wondered why it is in the Bible at all. It doesn't seem to speak of God, but of human love. I think it is there because human love is of a piece with the love of God. A man who can no longer love a good woman will probably find it difficult to love God.

The thing about the *Song of Solomon* is that we have two lovers who are absolutely besotted with one another, and everything around them becomes beautiful. Take this short verse for example:

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes. Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir (Song of Songs 1:15-17 KJV).

They could make love in the grass or under a tent, but they have created a house with aromatic woods. *Every sense* is assaulted with beauty. Why? Because they are in love. By the way, have you noticed that the expression, "to make love" has all but disappeared from the lexicon? Now, it is "having sex." Songs used to speak of making love. And the music that grew out of that sentiment was often beautiful. Now songs are about "having sex," and they have rhythm and little else. There is not much that could be called "beauty."

The reason for this should be obvious. Love and beauty are inexorably bound together. Rollo May was right. When men lose

the power to love, they substitute power over – i.e., authoritarianism. It is what lies at the root of wife abuse and child abuse. It has always been a problem for some men and some women, but now it has become the pattern of a whole society. It has been led by the universities, followed by the schools, and love is no longer the thing. Sex has been put in the place of love. And what used to be love has become a sequence of power plays. On both sides.

In the process, utility has been exalted over beauty, and that is what Catesby Leigh was moaning about. I used to marvel, driving through Europe, at the incredible cathedrals I saw there. I wondered at the cost and the labor that had gone into them. It cost far more in human terms to build those churches then than it would today with the machinery we have – assuming, of course, that anyone cared to build anything like that.

But Catesby Leigh cited an example that made me stop and think. Speaking of an earlier time in American history, he spoke of how Chicago's Polish immigrants, toiling away in the stockyards and steel mills, dug into their meager savings to build fine baroque churches modeled on Polish prototypes from the 17th and 18th centuries. The magnificence is what mattered, not its supposed social origin.

I guess I had thought that it was the mandarins of the earlier centuries that mandated those churches. But here, Polish immigrants dug deep in their pockets and it was they who financed these great churches. Why? I may be wrong, but I think it was from

love of God. Bach could labor over a magnificent piece of music for the glory of God. Why can't an architect design a magnificent church for the love of God? All this took me back to the book of Psalms, and I found this:

One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, **To behold the beauty of the LORD**, And to inquire in His temple (Psalm 27:4 NKJV).

I don't know what people make of this, the people to whom beauty is not important. What is important to them is what works. Utilitarianism. Contrast that with beholding the beauty of the Lord, with being able to enquire of him. There is so much that I would want to know.

Viktor Frankl gave me a new and valuable insight on this. He told of a day when he and others were marching out to their place of labor for the day. They were prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp:

Hiding his mouth behind his upturned collar, the man marching next to me whispered suddenly: "if our wives could see us now! I do hope they are better off in their camps and don't know what is happening to us. . ." A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life, I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth – that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which men can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human

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poetry in human thought and belief have to impart: the salvation of man is through love and in love. I understood how a man who has nothing left in this world, still may know bliss, be it only for a brief moment, in the contemplation of his beloved. In a position of utter desolation, when man cannot express himself in positive action, when his only achievement may consist in enduring his sufferings in the right way – an honorable way – in such a position man can, through loving contemplation of the image he carries out his beloved, achieve fulfillment. For the first time in my life I was able to understand the meaning of the words, “the Angels are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory.

It is a blessing to mankind that this great man survived to tell his story. It is the survivors of the concentration camps who have told their stories and helped us understand both the depths of the evil of man, and also the power of love to help man endure.

There is so much more to say, but I don't have room for it here. I'd like to send you a recording of a radio program titled, *Beauty and the Power to Love*. It's *FREE* and you can have a cassette tape or a CD of the program just by checking the box on the enclosed card and sending it back to us. And thanks for your ongoing interest in the *Born to Win* program. We are beginning to make a difference.

With God's ongoing blessings for you and yours,

Ronald L. Dart

In Memory

Christian Educational Ministries gratefully acknowledges the generous donations made in memory of Okemah Epperson of Texarkana, TX, Lee Creech of Cincinnati, OH, and Herb Magoon of Castle Rock, CO. We extend our deepest sympathies to these families who have lost such dear loved ones. They will be greatly missed by all of us. Our prayers are with each of these families.

Calendar of Events

Chattanooga, TN 2006 Feast of Tabernacles - October 6-14 at the Chattanooga Convention Center. Everyone is invited! Preregistration is not required, but if you haven't ordered your preregistration packet, you're missing out on a lot of valuable information that will make your Feast better from start to finish. Among the things included are: maps; housing information; places to eat; places to visit for fun, education, history, and relaxation; valuable coupons to save you money; activities CEM will provide; sermons; seminars; YEA classes; and more. Don't miss out on the greatest Feast ever. Call 1-888-BIBLE-44 or preregister at www.borntowin.net.

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Statement of Cash Flows
For the Three Months Ended
April 30, 2006

Receipts:	
Contributions	\$314137
CEM Bookstore	28907
Interest Income	6727
	\$349771
Expenses:	
A/V Supplies	\$ 8911
Rent	9474
Office & Adm. Expenses	7726
Mailing Expenses	4916
Postage	18064
Printing	10979
Radio Expenses	164876
Telephone & Utilities	2267
Youth Ministries	10198
CEM Bookstore	6454
Foreign Operations	1611
Conference Expenses	282
Employee Benefits	24121
Wages & Payroll Taxes	93946
Total Operating Expenses	363825
Decrease in Fund Balance	(\$ 14054)

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at CEM**

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PO Box 560
Whitehouse, Texas 75791
phone: 1-888-BIBLE-44
fax: 903.509.1139
e-mail: adm@cemnetwork.com
website: www.borntowin.net
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