

Living to Win

December 15, 2007
Volume 12, Number 12
Christian Educational Ministries

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

A Christian Failure

“Last fall, the University of Delaware required 7000 students living in dormitories to attend training sessions, floor meetings, and ‘one on one discussions’ about the university’s approved views on politics, race, sexuality, diversity, and environmentalism.”

This statement astonished me. Since when are universities, centers of learning, scholarship, “training” students on the “university’s approved views.” Does this mean that views the university doesn’t approve are not welcome? What if I am working on a degree in architecture? Why do I have to hear the university’s views on sexuality?

What is going on there (I should say “was” going on, because the university abandoned the program after it became the focus of considerable dissent and bad publicity), is the inevitable result of the loss of any objective moral standards of conduct. Christians may hold views on issues that are consonant with their belief system. When you take away any basis for morality, you have to replace it with something—an ersatz religion moves in to take its place.

It was a long time ago when I first read George Will writing about

our “Civil Religion.” It was then a new idea to me, but I am coming to understand it more as it emerges. The civil religion is, quite naturally, in competition with Christianity, which it sees as a rival. Judaism and Christianity had this sort of rivalry at different times in their history, but Christians and Jews, at least in this country, have reached something of an understanding. Christianity and Islam have this rivalry, big time. And as Christianity is systematically driven from the university and the public square, a vacuum is left which is filled by a different faith, a different “ism.”

The name being attached to this new civil religion is secularism, and it is nowhere near as tolerant as Christianity. Christians, believing fervently in liberty, are quite willing for people to believe or disbelieve. But secularism is showing an intolerant streak which, I think, was unsuspected by many.

Intellectuals, who naturally infest universities, are now casting about

for ways to restore some set of values for students. The problem is, they have little objective basis for these values. At least Christians have the Bible, which they see as a revelation from God of right and wrong values and conduct. Intellectual secularists seem to have as a primary value that there is no God and no need to take account of his instructions. Never mind that the Bible has a long history of human experience behind it, whatever you may think about Divine revelation.

While I was pondering all this, I came across a four year old op-ed piece by John Leo—*Splitting Society, not Hairs*. I found it interesting to look again at this editorial after some time had passed. At the time of writing, a lot of people were still in denial about the deep rift that was developing in society at large. “The more polarized American society becomes,” Leo wrote, “the more we see intellectuals explaining that this polarization isn’t real—it’s just the swordplay of media and political elites.”

Some claim that the stridency today arises from “attention

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Your Support Is Making a Difference

Dear Mr. Dart, Thank you so much for your wonderful preaching of God’s Word. I enjoy and am growing from your teaching. . . We wanted to ask you to please stay with us. You are a refreshing drink of water spiritually. AK

Read to Your Children—They Love It!

By Allie Dart

Do you enjoy watching M*A*S*H reruns on television? If so, did you see the program where a group of little children focused their big dark eyes on Colonel Potter as he read to them in English from an army field manual? This is interesting because those little Korean children couldn't understand a word Potter was reading, yet they were eager listeners. Why?

Kids love for adults to read to them. There's something about a parent reading a story to a child that does more than make the day for the child, bond him to his parents, or provide a forerunner to a good night of sleep.

Most parents are aware of how TV diverts children from playing and other physical activities, and unless it is kept in check, it can rob children of learning the value and importance of reading, which they usually learn from watching their family read. An encouraging report in the November 5th *Washington Times* showed: "The new census report found that more parents were reading to their young children. For instance, in 1994, 48 percent of children age 1 and 2 were read to at least seven times a week; in 2004, this number jumped to 53 percent. Reading with children is fun and one of the best ways to help prepare them for school."

Bread is called the "staff of life." The same as bread is an essential food, reading well is essential to education and a successful life. The following are some ways parents can encourage their children to read:

- Read aloud to your child to help him learn the language of books and to enjoy reading.
- As a family, talk about books and make reading a shared, enjoyable activity.
- Have a range of reading material available: both fiction and nonfiction, a kids' translation of the Bible, and biblically and character oriented reading materials. CEM provides a full curriculum of age appropriate Bible lesson books in five age groups for three to 20 year olds. Go to our website at www.borntowin.net to check out sample lessons for each age group.
- Listen to your child read every day.
- Give books as presents.
- Discuss the meaning of words and books you read.
- Take your child on regular visits to the library and show him or her how to check out books.

We're told that we are what we think. What we put into our minds shapes our thinking. Make a daily investment in your children's future by reading worthwhile books to them and encouraging good reading habits. Make reading a shared, enjoyable activity in your home. It will pay great dividends.

In Memory

CEM gratefully accepts the generous donation made in memory of Lois Kubena of Houston, TX, Allie Dart's sister who passed away October 19, 2007. Lois will be greatly missed.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to her husband, Travis, and son, Rodney.

Also a generous donation was made in memory of Jim Ross on the anniversary of his death.

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grabbing strategies” adopted by the news media, pundits, academics, and other advocates. According to Robert Samuelson, “This would not seem to account for the upsurge of bitterness and angry rhetoric, though the appearance of two polarizing presidents in succession is clearly a factor.”

Ah yes, Clinton and Bush, polarizing presidents. I don’t think so. I think Samuelson is confusing cause and effect. Both presidents were as accommodating as you will find. Clinton tried triangulation, moving to the center, to get things done. Bush worked well with Democrats in Texas. And it was long after Leo wrote this that Bush vetoed his first bill. The polarization was in the country at large. What we saw with Clinton and Bush (and in Congress) was merely a manifestation of the divisions.

John Leo was not convinced, even then: “Is this really so? If polarization is essentially confined to a small numbers of actors clashing swords in front of klieg lights, why do polls show that the number of centrists and swing votes are dwindling?” Even then, he saw the political center in this country getting narrower and narrower. Today, the center is like a balance beam. One misstep and you are on the floor. But that imagery may be misleading. Actually, there seems to be a widening gap, sparsely populated, between the left and the right.

I learned something in reading this piece that had heretofore escaped my notice. Leo shone a light on the cause of all this. The growing polarization in the country

“pits secularists against religious people. In the 2000 senate race in New York, two-thirds of secularists voted for Hillary Clinton and two thirds of religious people voted for Rick Lazio. This kind of split showed up in House races around the country in 2000.” Furthermore, he cites a Pew study showing “that the most religious states vote Republican, the least religious go Democratic.

It is too easy to confuse cause and effect here. The Democratic party isn’t causing secularism any more than the Republican party is causing religion. Something else is going on. It is happening largely because of “the increased prominence of secularists within the Democratic party and the party’s resulting antagonism toward traditional values.”

I thought that was interesting in view of a remark by Thomas Sowell: “In reality, Democrats are the only good reason to vote Republican.” Among my Christian friends, their political alliance is beginning to be ABD: Anything But Democrat. They aren’t that happy with Republicans, but far left Democrats are beginning to scare them.

John Leo’s evaluation of this is illuminating: “The Republicans became the traditionalist party almost by default— it had less to do with Republican efforts than the impact of secular progressives on the Democratic party. Many secularists in the Republican party are leaving to vote Democratic. The most intensely religious Democrats are heading the other way.” Most prominent among the latter group is Senator Joe Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew.

I don’t know if John Leo understood at the time some of the implications of what he was writing. To me, looking back four years, it seems apparent that the significant cause of the polarization in the country is the developing attempt of secular progressives to convert the country to their faith. Christians, being by religious bent more tolerant, have found themselves being crowded out of the public square. Some are beginning to wake up and realize that we also have an obligation to convert the country to our faith.

So don’t look for the national divide to be healed by any new leader we elect. What a Christian has to look for is a leader with backbone. Accommodation is not really an option in this brave new world. It is a shame it took President Bush so long to realize this.

None of this is new. It has emerged in societies before ours, and the results have not been encouraging. Paul saw this pattern in Roman society, as the rot was becoming more apparent. Even the prophet Hosea so very long ago, presented this Word from God: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame” (Hosea 4:6-7).

What worries me about Christians is, some of us have compromised ourselves by abandoning the Law of God. Really. Not

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a few Protestant denominations teach freely that the Old Testament is no longer operative. Others teach that the Law was abolished. What some don't seem to understand is that the New Testament presumes the Law of the Old Testament. In dismissing the Law of God, those Christian teachers find themselves in the same bind as the universities. They end up inventing standards of conduct on a subjective basis as, "What would Jesus do?"

The Christian faith was built on an objective basis of right and wrong. It was firmly founded on revealed law. It was in the objective realization of sin that the need for a Savior became apparent. Men aren't convicted of sin on the basis of human standards of conduct.

We are not as far down this road as Israel was when Hosea wrote those words, but we are on that road. Even though there are still a few standing in the gap, fewer and fewer people are listening. And not nearly enough Christians are standing up to be counted and equipping ourselves with the tools of persuasion to change hearts and turn them to God. Can we still win? It's what we are here for.

I had a great deal more to say about this in a recent radio program. I would like to send you a *FREE* CD of that program titled, *A Christian Failure*. Just check the box on the enclosed card and return it in the envelope we have provided.

Yours, with a hope of creating more active Christians,

Ronald L. Dart

PS. That CD really is *FREE*, but we could use your support about now. We have been very aggressive in radio time for many months, but the special offering which made that possible has been used up. So, we are settling back into a normal pattern of expenditure, to wait for God to provide more resources for getting these important programs into the homes of more people. Your help will make a difference, now more than ever.

Calendar of Events

Winter Family Tournament, Lexington, KY, December 21-24, 2007 at the fabulous Griffin Gate Marriott Hotel. Flat rate of \$50/night, but you must mention that you're with the Church of God. There will be sermons by Ronald Dart, Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, Guy Swenson, Bill Jacobs, and others. Seminars, youth classes, a rally, activities, and a basketball tournament will provide a great weekend for all ages.

Memorial Day Weekend Retreat, Paris Landing State Park, Buchanan, TN, May 23-26, 2008 will include sermons by Ronald Dart, inspirational and educational seminars, YEA classes, opening night fellowship with finger foods, Pie and Ice Cream Social, Hamburger Cookout, Family Dance, etc. Double rooms \$67.50, parlor rooms \$50 (kitchenettes adjoining sleeping rooms). Call 1-800-250-8614 for reservations, and use CEM's group number 3355. Everyone is welcome for a spiritually uplifting weekend.

Christian Educational Ministries

Statement of Cash Flows For the Three Months Ended October 31, 2007

Receipts:	
Contributions	\$327818
CEM Bookstore	26055
Interest Income	2400
	<u>\$356273</u>

Expenses:	
A/V Supplies	\$ 6579
Rents	9474
Office & Adm. Expenses	4125
Mailing Expenses	7149
Postage	18402
Printing	12662
Radio Expenses	208027
Telephone & Utilities	3082
Youth Ministries	3916
CEM Bookstore	4316
Foreign Operations	2015
Conference Expenses	2420
Employee Benefits	28843
Wages & Payroll Taxes	104913

Total Operating Expenses	413503
Decrease in Fund Balance	<u>(\$57230)</u>

2007 Feast of Tabernacles Statement of Operations

Total Offering	\$58594
Total Expenses	52528
Fund Increase	<u>\$ 6066</u>

Christian Educational Ministries

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