

The Cheap Road to Glory

By Ronald L. Dart

We used to frequent a little sandwich shop at lunch time—even driving out of our way to go there. We didn't go for the ambience—there wasn't any. It was just a simple storefront operation with a butcher's display case for meat, a few plastic-topped tables, a Formica counter and some wooden stools. In the corner was a television set perpetually tuned to the cable sports network.

Everything was there for you to see. You could select your meat and watch it sliced. You could kibitz as lettuce was shredded and mayonnaise was slathered on fresh, yeasty bread. You could even remind them you didn't want onions in case they forgot. Everything was taken care of personally by the owner and his wife.

And then they sold out and moved to Florida. There should have been no problem. After all, he trained the fellow who bought his shop for at least three to four weeks before he left. And anyone can make a good sandwich, right? Wrong!

Everything looked more or less the same, but the day the original owner and his wife disappeared, so did the excellence. Meanwhile, the television set had been switched from sports to religion, and on the wall by the door a plaque had appeared claiming, "Jesus is Lord." Now I know nothing of the religion of the previous owner. He was a nice guy and he made a great corned beef and Swiss on rye.

I knew little more of the religion of the new owner, but I did know he *was* religious. What puzzled me was the coincidence between the appearance of religion and the disappearance of quality.

What was the owner thinking, I wondered. Did he suppose that Christ would bless his business because he put Jesus' name on the wall? Was he using the divine name as a sort of amulet or talisman to guarantee success? Was he putting up Jesus' name like others put up horseshoes, four leaf clovers, rabbits' feet, and the first dollar they earned?

Or did he expect Christians to patronize his shop only because he was a Christian? Maybe it was like being a member of a lodge. If I put up my buffalo horns, all fellow Buffaloes will eat at my place instead of eating with that "Elk" across the street.

Or is it possible that he put up the name of Jesus, *then didn't try as hard?* There can be little doubt that many people have

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When Should A Person Start Tithing? . . .

As soon as a person learns the truth about tithing, he or she is responsible for acting on that truth. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It only makes you free if you obey it. Far too many people are in poverty today because they do not obey the truths of the Bible. God holds us accountable for what he reveals to us. Kids should be inspired to obey God in every aspect of their lives. If they get an allowance or have a part-time job, that money is *increase*. God commands us to tithe (give him back ten percent of our increase). Kids need to learn the truth, but equally as important, they need to learn to live it. Get your kids on the right path today. They need to experience that obedience equals blessings. This one thing can make a difference now and a big one when they become an adult.

Old School Summer Camp 2016

By Brandy Webb

It all started in April at our women's conference because of my daughter, Jazmyn. I took her with me to the women's conference, and she took one look at the facilities and quickly begged Wes to plan a summer camp for kids and teens. It didn't take much persuasion, since Wes is such a big kid at heart, and Old School Summer Camp 2016 became a plan. It was "old school" as in no cell phones for the children. We wanted them to socialize and have fun.

However, who plans a summer camp in six weeks? Wes White, Jeff Reed, and Linda Benton did, with some help from others. I was one of the counselors and got the opportunity to teach the teens YEA classes.

The camp was held at Timberline Camp in Lindale, Texas. The facilities were awesome. There were lots of dorms available. In fact, there were other camps going on at the same time. They have ga-ga ball pits, sand volleyball courts, basketball, swimming pool, small lake, zip-line and more.

Our day started at 7:00 a.m. and didn't end until 10:00 p.m. Let's just say, I'm still recuperating. Five days of non-stop fun and activities plus lots of walking made me realize I'm not a kid anymore. I have a year to get in better shape for next year's camp.

Our kids, 21 total, were able to ride a zip-line, practice archery skills, target shoot, enjoy a blow-up water slide, and climb a water slide in the lake. We enjoyed fireworks, great devotionals, inspiring YEA classes, fun silly songs, making new friends, and the outdoors. I have to say for a camp planned in just six

weeks, it was a success! Thanks largely to the kids, counselors, music providers, YEA lessons provided, and especially the staff at Timberline. There are no words that could fully describe how awesome Timberline's staff was. They made my job as a counselor easy, and the children loved them. They ensured all the activities were fun and enjoyable. They even memorized the kids' names, and called them by name when they saw us walking to various places.

So, what did I learn at camp? I kept going back to the Scripture that says be like a little child in Matthew 18:3, in order to enter God's Kingdom. Well, hanging out with kids and teens gave me a glimpse of what that means. It means to be joyful, full of energy, enthusiastic, living in the moment and forgetting things in the past, being quick to forgive, and not worrying about the future. They were so alive and not weighted down with worries. Yes, I know they don't have the same responsibilities as an adult, but seriously, aren't we told to enjoy life (Ecclesiastes 3:12), enjoy the fruits of our labor (Ecclesiastes 3:13), and not to worry (Matthew 6:25)? Well, spending time as a camp counselor showed me that if I were to try to practice these traits, I may have more expendable energy physically and spiritually.

I really enjoyed camp this year. It was our "Beta" version, a learning experience, but thankfully it was a positive learning experience. Plus, we had awesome weather. I think it was the first time in a long time that it didn't rain for an entire week. I know that the kids are already looking forward to next year's sun, fun, and games, at camp 2017.

The Man Who Went Down to the Sea

By Ronald L. Dart

One day a man followed a river down to the sea and sat for a while watching the water flow into it. Being a thoughtful sort of person, he looked at it a while and considered that the river had always run to the sea, sometimes in great flood. And yet the level of the sea never rose beyond modest daily fluctuations that had nothing to do with the river.

He wondered why that was, and finally concluded there was only one answer. Somehow the water from the sea made it back up the river and ran down to the sea

again. He added this to another observation. The wind came from the north, then the east, then the south and then from the north again. The wind did the same thing the water did. It went around in great circles. And then the sun went down in the west every day, but it didn't come back up in the west. It came back up in the east.

So the sun must also go around in great circles. From endless repetitions of family history, he knew that generations of men came and went, but the land

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Let the Children Come

By Cynthia Saladin

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14 NIV).

Do we do this? Do we actively bid the little children to come unto Jesus Christ and to have a personal relationship with him that grows as they are growing emotionally, physically, and mentally? Oh, I hope so, because Jesus Christ has made this statement in the form of a command: “Let them come, ask them to come, don’t hinder them.” Sometimes we get all caught up in preaching the Gospel to all the world, but neglect to consider that our children are part of that world. Talk about personal evangelism! The opportunity is there, waiting for us to bring it to fruition.

Think of it! Little children have none of the defenses that adults throw up against accepting the Word of God. They don’t have any of the distrust that they will learn to have later. They are innocent and completely without the cynicism that can impede the faith of an adult. Therefore, they can trust God with their whole heart and mind and soul! Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want that same dependence, trust, and wholehearted devotion from adults. Doesn’t it make sense to allow a child to grow up into that relationship, never having known any other way?

Christian Educational Ministries has developed, and continues to develop, lessons and teachers’ guides aimed at bidding our children to come to truly know Jesus Christ. Lessons can be done each week in your home church, with special lessons for the Holy Days, and lessons specifically written for the Feast of Tabernacles. With age-appropriate lessons, children aged 5 to 19 explore topics pertinent to them. Whether you use these lessons in your own home, in your local church, or in classes at the Feast, our youth can discuss these topics in an environment where they can share their frustrations, difficulties, and concerns with other youth who may be experiencing the same things. The interactive style in the lesson plans provides the opportunity for these ages to learn about daily life as a Christian from each other, guided by the teacher(s).

Because the activities are interactive, the classes are fun! The students are eager to come to class. How immensely rewarding to see students arriving for class 30 minutes before class starts, pushing through the crowds of people to come stand impatiently outside the doors.

The internal motivation to learn of God, the eagerness and desire to be in class talking about God—aren’t these the things we want from adults? Why aren’t we doing more to encourage these reactions from our youth? The YEA lessons and accompanying REACH activities are age-appropriate and engaging, designed to teach our young people memorable and helpful biblical truths.

Beyond what benefits the youth can experience in the classes themselves, the classes also provide a springboard for the organization of youth activities, like perhaps a visit to a local nursing home, a teen dance, a beach party, or a skating party. The combination of class and these activities encourages friendships that are stronger and longer lasting than the friendships our children may develop with children their age outside of the church. The foundation of Jesus Christ provides a link that our youngsters feel and recognize. It’s a strong tie to the things of God. It’s a strong encouragement to continue to keep God’s Sabbath and Feasts; our children want to go to church on Sabbath or the Feast to go to classes and to see their friends again. Our church family and friends, whether local or long-distance, can also provide a strong support network when our youth are facing the distractions and temptations in their everyday life.

The benefits of a youth program, including a Sabbath school, are so extensive. CEM has designed their resources to help adults become more proficient in teaching youth. Sometimes teachers’ guides and lesson plans can be overwhelming, especially when the desire to teach is there, but the previous experience is not. To that end, CEM has developed a format that is easy to read and fairly straightforward, to help with preparation and teaching. If you need YEA Sabbath school lessons, holy day lessons, or Feast of Tabernacles lessons, please contact CEM. Check out the free REACH activities that supplement the YEA lessons too.

Christian Educational Ministries is committed to providing solid, Scripture-based materials to help us teach our children about Jesus Christ, so that he will be a very real and important part of their everyday life. Our youth are not only the future of the church, but they are also our most valuable resource. We must teach our children to know and love God and his ways. We must impress God’s ways on our children, talking about them as we “sit

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at home and when [we] walk along the road, when [we] lie down and when [we] get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). We want our children to avoid the pitfalls in life as much as possible, to seek God with their whole hearts, and to share their faith with people around them. While we’re busy planning to take the Gospel to the world, we must not ever forget that our children were truly, in the fullest sense of the word, “Born to Win!” Ask for your FREE copy of the YEA manual, ‘Save Your Children.’



The YEA program also provides lessons for special events such as Summer Camp, Memorial Day Weekend Retreats, Winter Family Weekends and always for the annual *Feast of Tabernacles*. The YEA books for the 2016 Feast of Tabernacles are:

- Beginners - “What Will You Bee”
- Primaries - “Friends Forever”
- Juniors - “Stay on Course”
- Intermediates - “A Higher Calling”
- Senior Teens - “A True Friend”

Call us by September 15th at 1-888-BIBLE-44 to order copies for your family, church group, or Feast site this year. Bulk prices are available.

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remained the same. And he realized that man works and works and works, but in the end, nothing much comes of it. Man, too, runs around in circles and goes nowhere.

The man called himself the Preacher, and he wrote his thoughts down for his children. It was, for his kids, a kind of attitude adjustment, a getting of things in perspective. And so, when I need an attitude adjustment, I like to read the Preacher’s book. You have a copy of it yourself. The Book of Ecclesiastes—in your Bible. Give it another read in a modern translation and let it adjust your perspective on the world. Order Ronald L. Dart’s Weekend Bible Study series on Ecclesiastes for additional insight and inspiration.

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reduced the name of Jesus to a sort of good luck charm. But think about it for a moment. Does a St. Anthony on the dashboard give you a reduction in your car insurance rate? Seriously, if it makes any difference, shouldn’t insurance companies be able to determine that? They have the odds figured on drivers of different ages, drivers who don’t drink, drivers who don’t smoke, and even the difference between male and female drivers. It really ought to be simple for an insurance company to determine that cars with St. Anthony on the dashboard have fewer accidents and they should give you a lower rate.

Everyone knows that good luck charms, amulets, and even saints, don’t relieve you of the responsibility of defensive driving. St. Anthony is no substitute for paying attention to the road, and he will do nothing to reduce the alcohol in your blood when you’ve had too much to drink.

Maybe merchants use the name of Jesus to instill confidence in their customers. After all, no man would put Jesus’ name on the wall of his store and then shortchange me at the cash register, would he? Surely I can *trust* these people, after all, they’re *Christian!*

I wonder if that’s why I kept going to my dentist. It seemed he and everyone on his staff were busy praising the Lord. Instead of Muzak, he had tapes of religious music with guitars, drums, and a nice rhythm for dancing. Some of the music was “Christian romance” with a young lady singing songs to Jesus as though he were her lover. I assumed that the reason he charged such high prices was because he was such a good dentist. If he had not been such a good Christian, I might have assumed he was profiteering and gone to another dentist!

And then one day I called for an appointment only to hear a recording telling me that the dentist’s phone had been disconnected. I checked around and learned that he had left town after being sued for overcharging an elderly client who couldn’t speak English.

Now, I have no business judging that dentist. I have little doubt that if I could hear his side of the story, it would cast things in quite a different light. But in my town there is an 80-year old Muslim gentleman sporting \$16,000 worth of bridgework who believes he was swindled by a Christian.

It isn’t that Christians don’t try to live up to Jesus’ name and to his teachings. But as long as we are human,

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we are bound to fail from time to time. Why should we drag down the reputation of Jesus along with our own? How to rightly honor God is no deep hidden secret. Jesus was quite explicit about the subject. But if it is easily understood, it is not so easily done.

After all, how hard is it to put on a lapel pin that says “Jesus First.” Is it really all that difficult to wear a cross on a necklace or on your bracelet alongside your other little charms? Does it take a lot of effort to put a bumper sticker on the back of your car that says “Honk If You Love Jesus”? How difficult is it to take a spray can and paint Jesus’ name on the side of a barn or a railway overpass alongside “Bobby Loves Sue,” “Class of 2005,” and various other items of graffiti? One would think some people are determined to reduce the Gospel to the level of “*Kilroy was here.*”

The Third Commandment states quite simply, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”

Normally, when you think about someone breaking the Third Commandment, you think of a steelworker who drops his one and only hammer from the 23rd floor of a construction project. Or a golfer who has just driven his last golf ball into the water hole off the 17th tee.

Who is the last person you heard break the Third Commandment? Would it shock you if I suggested that it might have been a *clergyman*? Take, for example, a minister who writes a letter to his parishioners telling them something plainly contrary to biblical teaching, who then signs his letter “In Jesus’ name.” Would that minister have taken Jesus’ name in vain? What about a church full of people who put up a sign saying “Jesus is Lord,” and then decline to *do* the simple things that Jesus commanded?

And what about all those Christians who close their prayer “In Jesus’ name,” without ever giving a thought to what the phrase means?

Unfortunately, too many Christians have not moved very far from their old superstitions. They substitute a plaque saying “Jesus is Lord” for the old horseshoe that used to be over the door, and they wear a cross where they used to carry a rabbit’s foot. They even substitute the name of Jesus for the old magic words, insisting that the *pronunciation* of the name carries some mystical impact.

There are more ways to bend the Third Commandment than you have ever imagined. For

example, consider again the phrase, “Jesus is Lord,” so liberally sprinkled about our society on business cards, stationery, the yellow pages, the walls of business establishments, and even on the door of a plumber’s van. What’s behind all this? Is there some biblical basis for this practice?

The idea probably originated from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. He told them, “Wherefore I give you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

How did Paul mean that? As a sort of talisman, magic word, or password? It is plain from the way many people use this phrase that they see it as a sort of shibboleth. It’s almost as if the phrase were the religious equivalent of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

But there’s a troubling aspect to this. Do you suppose the devil has ever read that Scripture? Since he is a liar and the father of liars, do you think it would trouble his conscience to use the phrase, “Jesus is Lord,” if it helped him to further his ends?

And what am I to conclude if a man parrots the phrase, “Jesus is Lord,” and then cheats his neighbor at business? Did Jesus himself acknowledge that it would be possible for people to call him Lord and refuse to be obedient to him? Indeed, Jesus stated plainly, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Jesus plainly acknowledges the possibility that some could call him “Lord” while totally ignoring his teachings. In the Sermon on the Mount, the most fundamental of Jesus’ teachings, he told his disciples, “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 7:21).

Obviously the phrase, “Jesus is Lord” is no password into the Kingdom of heaven. It can be counterfeited. But does Jesus acknowledge who the counterfeiter are? Interestingly enough, you don’t find irreligious people using that kind of terminology. Nor are the people who do these things merely nominal Christians. They are people involved in religious works.

Jesus continued: “Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I *never knew you*, depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22-23).

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How on earth is that possible? How could a person claim to teach in Jesus' name, cast out demons in his name, and do many wonderful works, and *still be unknown* to Christ? The answer is found in that last little phrase, "Depart from me, ye that work *iniquity*." Iniquity simply means "lawlessness." The Greek word is *anomia*—the Greek word for "law" with a negative prefix: "non-law."

"But I'm not a lawless person," we might insist. But a Christian who does not obey God's Law is a *lawless* Christian! Jesus is *not* his Lord unless he does what Jesus says to do.

But it is *so much easier* to just shout, "Praise the Lord!" It is so much easier to place a little plaque on the wall that says, "Jesus is Lord." We can even have quite a bit of fun with lively music, shouting hallelujahs and "Glory to God!" We smile with amused toleration at the Buddhists who set prayer wheels to be turned by the wind and water and yet are we doing any better?

Before Jesus' warning, he told his disciples (still in the Sermon on the Mount), "Enter ye in at the strait [narrow] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life and *few* there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

When his disciples had listened to him for some time, they began to get the picture. One of them asked him, "*Lord, are there few that be saved?*" And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you will seek to enter and *shall not be able*" (Luke 13:24).

Many religious people think that this is talking to people outside the church. Since they are inside the church, then it clearly can't refer to them. Jesus continued, "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in your presence, and you have taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all you *workers of iniquity*."

These are religious people! These are churchgoers! And notice once again the word *iniquity*—lawlessness. What Jesus is saying, if you can receive it, is that any religious worker who says that Jesus is Lord, and teaches that Christ's Law is abolished is a liar!

Is Jesus *really* our Lord? The ultimate test lies in whether you are going to *do* what Jesus commands. There is no cheap road to glory.

Try this on for size. "You have heard that it has been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:38-39). Is Jesus *really* your Lord?

Or how about "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:3, 4). Is Jesus *really* your Lord?

And how do you stand on this one: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19).

Is Jesus *really* your Lord? If you really do want to confess that Jesus is *your* Lord, then accept this challenge: See how many times in the next week you can say, "Jesus is Lord" *without using any words*. It's a lot tougher than you think.

Memory Scriptures

Topic: Joy

Psalms 118:24

Luke 15:7

Philippians 4:4

James 1:2-4

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

1 Peter 1:7-9

Psalms 5:11-12

Psalms 47:1

Isaiah 12:6

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