

Beauty and the Power to Love

By Ronald L. Dart

Sometimes important ideas come from unexpected places. I came across an article in the journal, *First Things*, by architect, Catesby Leigh. Leigh is a Roman Catholic. He'd been provoked by an article on church architecture by another architect and I have no idea what would have prompted me of all people to read an article on church architecture. But, having picked it up and read the first paragraph, I couldn't put it down. The author wrote very well. He pulled no punches and he hit on something that has been nagging at my mind for quite a long time. He got me in the first paragraph. He said, "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." Nothing high flown about his rhetoric—he just called it bad, really bad, and he speaks of the stuff we're building now.

Nearly every form of art, music, and beauty has become seriously degraded in the past 100 years. To me, his complaint about architecture was only one facet of a massive societal change that has been going on for a long time and, particularly, has accelerated in the past 50 years. There's been a terrible fading of beauty. Something has happened; something has changed. Something has gone out of our lives and, frankly, I'm worried that we will never get it back. I think we have sacrificed love on the altar of modernism. Having lost the power to love, men have lost the power to create beauty, for beauty arises from love. I heard someone say recently that the creation of the universe was an act of love. I'll never forget a phrase out of Rollo May's book, *Love and Will*. He said, "When men lose the power to love, they substitute power over." And, in this last 50 years, women have gone from being objects of love to sex objects. Women have participated in the terrible

deed and there's no beauty in it—there is only lust. It's reflected in the way young women dress. Someone dubbed it "slut wear." Beauty is not the object. Sex is the object. There's a terrible irony that arose from the women's movement. Women were worried about becoming sex objects and didn't want to be looked at that way. But somehow they've sacrificed beauty and love, and there's nothing left but sex.

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How to Achieve Financial Success. . .

Born To Win should soon have a new, interestingly written booklet by Ron Dart available. It will be titled: *The Key to Financial Success*. The Apostle John said, "I would above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospereth." Ron shared with the Apostle John the desire for your economic success. This booklet is written from that perspective. You need to read it. You can reserve your copy now. Just remember it may be a few weeks before it is available. Thank you for your support. Your gifts are especially needed and appreciated at this time to get the Gospel out more powerfully. We at BTW are very grateful for every offering no matter how small or large.

Love is Good

By David Havir III

If you go shopping at all this time of year, you can't help but be bombarded by reminders of love. Heart-shaped candies, balloons, stuffed animals, greeting cards—it is all right there at your fingertips! What does the Bible say? We are commanded to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This holiday should be perfect for that! Or is it?

To be honest, I'm not here to get into a discussion about whether or not we should or shouldn't observe Valentine's Day. You can do the research and discover the pagan origins on your own. For some people, the connection to paganism is enough to throw out doing anything special on that day. Others would argue that we all do things on a daily basis that have connections to paganism. I can see both sides of that argument.

Let's put that aside for now and look at this another way. The Bible talks about seeking counsel from our elders. Well, I have a lesson that I learned from an elder that is very dear to me. . . my grandmother. Unfortunately, my father's mother passed away a few years ago. But she is definitely not forgotten.

I had a very good relationship with Gram. When my parents would occasionally go out of town on work trips, my grandmother would fly in from Pennsylvania to watch my brother and me. We attended most of my early Feasts of Tabernacles with her. I want to take a minute to share one particular lesson with you that I learned from her.

Whenever events like her birthday or Mother's Day appeared on the calendar, Gram was insistent that we not make it a big deal. I'm sure there are lots of people who feel the same way. In fact, as I get older, I can understand why people might want to ignore their birthdays.

However, that wasn't what she was talking about. When someone would say something about Mother's Day, I remember she would always reply, "Every day is Mother's Day." When I was younger, I remember thinking: Gram sounds a little greedy! Was I supposed to get her a gift or a card every day? I couldn't afford that.

As I got older, I realized that wasn't what she was talking about. Gram wasn't talking about receiving gifts daily; Gram was saying that the best way to honor her was to show her love and respect to her all the time.

But who wants to do that? That seems like a lot of work! It is far easier to ignore or be rude to people daily and make up for it on special "Hallmark holidays." Do we fall into this trap? I know I have. And I'd be willing to bet you have too. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the grand gesture, with making someone feel loved. But, next time, before you do that, maybe take a minute to make sure that you are doing it for the right reasons. Take a minute to make sure that we are all treating each other with kindness and respect on a daily basis.

Who Should We Love?

By Mardy Cobb

"Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Our world has rejected its Creator and abandoned its Redeemer. The foundation of our world was set the moment Adam and Eve followed Satan in the Garden of Eden, instead of following God. Since then, God has continued to reach into our world with a loving hand to offer redemption. Few people have

responded. Why? Because our world is filled with the wrong things: "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Of course, we should expect that because we know the god of this world is Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4).

If we follow Christ, we cannot love this world. This world is filled with hate toward our Father in heaven. And this world is only temporary. Everything and everyone in this world passes away. The only things that continue are those who belong to God. Let's make sure we love our Father in heaven and our Elder Brother Jesus Christ above all. May we always belong to them.

By Ken Lewis

The election process for the 45th president of the United States is complete. The new president began his administration on January 20th, 2017. Once again, the United States demonstrated to the world a peaceful transference of power. Along with the presidency, the House of Representatives and the Senate have a stronger Republican presence. This election will even affect the Judicial Branch of the government as appointments for the Supreme Court are made.

This new Republican government will be completely opposite from the first Democratic Obama administration of eight years ago; but make no mistake, it will be a continuation of the same laws, rules, and systems our founding fathers established. This is a unique time as one administration ends and another begins. This is a time of transition.

President Donald Trump has a team of qualified people working on the transition. Each team member has assignments. These assignments are being called “notebooks.” The notebooks contain procedures and policies necessary to complete the transition in an orderly manner. They contain the collective work on policies of transition for a department or an office. They will become the roadmap for the transition and the policies for governing the nation.

In the biblical view, a “notebook” could be compared to a mansion. An office of responsibility in the Kingdom of God will likewise only be given to the best-qualified people. Thankfully, we have a Savior who

will help us into that Kingdom. You have talents and you are expected to use them or they will be taken away. What will your notebook look like? Or should I ask, how are you building your mansion?

“In my Father’s house are many Mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go and prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

Jesus Christ is gathering his transition team. It will become the Bride of Jesus Christ. This will be a unique time as all the kingdoms of mankind begin to end, and the Kingdom of God begins. This will be a time of real transition. It will include all people who have inherited eternal life at his return. . . and all willing humanity in his Kingdom on Earth.

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10).

At that time, there will be a new government without the failings of mankind. Jesus Christ will be “King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the government will be upon his shoulders.”

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Born to Win/CEM 2016 Accomplishments

This is a quick overview of the work *Born to Win* and CEM did with God’s help in 2016.

	Statistics for 2016	% Increase over 2015	Statistics for 2016	% Increase over 2015
			www.borntowin.net	
			Unique Visitors	54773 43%
			Number of Visits	179361 32%
			Pages Viewed	498085 18%
			Countries Reached	190 same
			Facebook*	
			Likes	3056 56%
			Weekly Reach***	18300 2011%
			*Social Media Manager started March 2015	
			*** Weekly Reach was 867 in March 2015	
Total Items Shipped	55648	6%		
% of Shipments That Were Free	94%	same		
Total New Listeners	705	35%		
Bookstore Orders	3421	14%		
Current Radio Stations	50	4%		

Tribute to Ronald L. Dart



We here at CEM want to take a moment to remember our founder, Ronald L. Dart. The anniversary of his passing was this past month. We greatly miss his wisdom and knowledge. However, we are very thankful for the messages, books, and articles that he has provided for us. His material is timeless, and we will continue to make them available to any and all.

We came across a poem written to Mr. Dart by long-time listener, Rob Embers, that we would like to share with you:

The Scattered Flock

I have a friend I've never known.
He does not write, he does not call,
Or visit me when I'm alone,
Nor keep my picture on his wall.

This friend of mine does not live near,
And yet I've come to look for him,
When two or more are gathered here,
To listen to his voice again.

He seems to know my Father well,
As if he were a family friend.
For when he's speaking I can tell,
How near my Father he has been.

My friend has never seen my face,
But he will open when I knock.
For he received my Father's grace,
And I am of his Father's flock.

Beauty and the Power to Love
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It seems to me that there are two sources of beauty. One is the Creator and the other is the lover. I was reading a book called *Lone Star*, by T. R. Ferenbach. He was talking about West Texas in the early days. West Texas, for the settler, the farmer, the cattleman, the first people going there, was a hard country. They did not see the beauty in West Texas that we see as we drive through today in our SUVs. To the pioneers, it was just hard country, nothing pretty about it. Now that we can tour the country in relative comfort (even when backpacking, we can get back to our Jeep), we can now see how beautiful hard country can be. Beauty, in that way, is in the eye of the beholder. It's in the one who loves it. Someone who has the time, the capacity, the feeling for it, can look at this rugged, rough, hard country and say how beautiful it is. You may see an old woman walking along the street with a cane. To you she's just a faded flower, an old crone. But to the man who loves her, she is still the very exemplar of beauty. And that's what I mean about the beauty that is created by the Creator and the beauty that is created in the eye of the lover.

The Song of Solomon is a marvelous love poem, but many have wondered why it's in the Bible. It doesn't seem to speak of God. It's two people, in love, very excited about one another, very obsessed with one another's bodies. It speaks of human love. I think the Song of Solomon 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 very difficult, maybe impossible, to love God because of something that has gone wrong inside of him. In the Song of Solomon we have two lovers who are absolutely besotted with one another and everything around them becomes beautiful. Take this short verse from the first chapter of the Song of Songs: "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." They could make love in the grass, they could make love under a tent, but they'd created a house with aromatic woods and things that are beautiful all around them. Every sense is filled with beauty for lovers.

Have you noticed how the expression "to make love" has all but disappeared from the lexicon. Now

people say, "We're having sex," not, "We're making love." Songs used to speak of making love and the music that grew out of that era and that sentiment was often very beautiful. Now songs are about having sex. They have rhythm and very little else. There's not much that can be called beauty in modern music. The reason for this should be obvious if you think about it. Love and beauty are inexorably bound together. Rollo May was right: "When men lose the power to love, they substitute power over." In other words, they become authoritarian. It's what lies at the root of wife abuse and child abuse. It has always been a problem for some men and some women that, in losing the power to love—when the love goes out of their lives—they abuse one another and, worst of all, they abuse children. But now it's become the pattern of an entire society. Led by universities, followed by the schools, love is no longer the thing. Sex has been put in place of love and what used to be love has become a sequence of power plays on both sides. As a result, utility has been exalted over beauty.

Partly, this is what Catesby Leigh was moaning about. I used to marvel while driving through Europe at the incredible cathedrals I saw there. I wondered at the cost and the labor that went into them. It cost far more in human terms to build those churches then, than it would today with the machinery we have. We can just throw them up. Assuming, of course, that anyone today would care 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, of the immigrants who came from Europe and various places and settled, he spoke of Chicago's Polish immigrants toiling away in the stockyards and steel mills, who dug into their meager savings to build fine Baroque churches modeled on Polish prototypes from the 17th and 18th centuries. Later he said, "The magnificence is what matters, not its supposed social origin." I thought it was the mandarins of an earlier century, who mandated these churches, but it was the Polish immigrants—the little people—who dug deep in their pockets, and it was they who financed these great churches. Why would they do a thing like that? I may be wrong, but I think it was from love of God. If Bach could labor over a magnificent piece of music for the glory of God ("The Saint Matthew Passion" comes to mind), why can't an architect design a magnificent church for the love of

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God? And why can't ordinary laboring people build it for the love of God?

As I was working my way through this idea, the 27th Psalm came to mind. The psalmist said, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; 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." To behold the beauty of the Lord—Solomon's Temple was a gorgeous edifice. It probably would not have been terribly impressive by modern standards, but there was gold everywhere, the symmetry was there. Solomon's Temple was a well-constructed, beautiful building. The psalmist entered and, in looking at the Temple and the beauty of the Temple, he looked beyond it to the beauty of the Lord himself. "One thing I have desired of the Lord is that I would dwell in the house of the Lord forever, to behold the beauty of the Lord himself, and to inquire in his Temple." The Psalmist wanted to be able to get answers to all those questions that bedevil us in this life; to be able to get the answers about the origin of the universe: the extent of it; what's actually going on; how stars were made and how they die. He wanted to get a complete set of facts and to go beyond to the philosophy and to be able to understand the love of God that led to the creation of the universe as we see it.

Imagine all the days of eternity to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire of him. I don't know what people to whom beauty is not important would make of this. For some people, what is important to them is what works and there is a name for it: it's called utilitarianism. But to behold the beauty of the Lord, to be able to inquire of him—that's a whole different thing.

The author Viktor Frankl gave me a new and valuable insight on this in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. I recommend the book very highly. Viktor Frankl was a German psychiatrist; he was Jewish. He was taken, like so many other Jews, to a concentration camp, and he often had to get up in the dark of the morning, in cold, cold weather and march out with the other prisoners to dig ditches, or do whatever manual labor they assigned him. One cold morning when they were walking, his partner came alongside him, hid his mouth behind his upturned collar, and whispered

suddenly, "If our wives could see us now. I do hope they're better off in their camps and don't know what is happening to us." Viktor Frankl said, "That brought thoughts of my own wife to mind. As we stumbled on for miles, slipping on icy spots, supporting one another time and again, dragging one another up and onward, nothing was said, but we both knew. Each of us was thinking about his wife. Occasionally I looked at the sky where the stars were fading and the pink light of the morning was beginning to spread behind a dark bank of clouds, but my mind clung to my wife's image, imagining it with an uncanny acuteness. I heard her answering me, I saw her smile, her frank and encouraging look. Real or not, her look was then more luminous than the sun that was beginning to rise."

Isn't it fascinating how a man in that kind of extreme circumstance would be held up by his love for his wife and her love for him? He went on to say, "A thought transfixed me. For the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is said in the 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 poetry and 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. Think about it. "The ultimate and highest goal," he said, "to which men can aspire is to love and to be loved." And somehow Viktor Frankl made a connection between the love that he had with his wife, a transcendent love between the two of them, and the love of God.

This is an inspiring story. You need to hear the rest of it. To receive your *FREE* copy of this message return the enclosed order form, email us at adm@borntowin.net, or call 1-888-BIBLE-44.

Born to Win

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