

Living to Win

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Personal from. . . *Ronald L. Dart*

Why False Prophets Succeed

I recently heard a story of a small church group that was splintered by disagreement over doctrine. I'm not suggesting by the title of this piece that the people concerned are false prophets, or even that they are necessarily wrong. But when the results are the fragmentation of a church, something is wrong somewhere. Why do people allow themselves to be polarized and their church to be fractured over issues that are either minor or that people of good will should easily resolve?

That such things will happen is a given. Jesus Himself said that false prophets would show signs and wonders aiming to seduce those who would listen to them (Mark 13:22). Peter was quite specific on the subject, saying, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1).

There is no getting around the certainty of these warnings. The false teachers are said to be "among you," that is to say they will be a part

of the Church. So we would do well to pay close attention both to the warnings and the manifestation of the truth of those warnings as they play out among us.

What motivates false prophets? Paul, in his farewell to the Ephesian elders, sees it in very simple terms: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

The objective of false prophets and teachers of whatever stripe is, and always has been, power. Money may be a factor, but money is just another kind of power. In the end, the goal is the influence and control of the minds of men. Even when a would-be leader is motivated by self aggrandizement, there is no success for him without the response of other people. This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians, "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them" (Galatians 4:17).

It is an odd way to put it, but it is clear enough. They want to cut you out of the herd (exclude you) so that you can admire and esteem (affect) them.

If the motives of the false

prophet are simple, the motives of those who listen to them are more complex. Why would anyone allow himself to be used this way? The answer is deeply rooted in the wants and needs of the people who listen. The truth is that a false prophet cannot succeed unless he touches a chord in the hearts of a set of people. As God said through Jeremiah, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priest bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so" (Jeremiah 5:30-31). False prophets and false teachers succeed because they offer people something they want.

Those who desire a following have little difficulty in finding an issue, and the issue itself is of little importance. The people who decide to follow on the issue may do so for a variety of reasons. The only thing they have in common is that they

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want to do something or quit doing something, and the issue gives them the excuse they need. Sometimes the issue is simply boredom. If you are tired of your church, why not split from it?

I can't escape the words of Jeremiah who said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). If there is a way to deceive ourselves we will find it. If God's way makes us uncomfortable, there will always be an excuse ready at hand to get away from it. If we have trouble finding a reason, sooner or later, a false prophet will come along and provide one. The only thing you can be sure of is that the apparent reason (say, a new doctrine) will have little or nothing to do with the real reason.

Why does God allow false prophets to deceive people? It would be easy for Him to stop it. There may be a clue in a statement by Paul: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Corinthians 11:19). Inevitably, there are people who follow the teachings of Christ for the wrong reasons. They say all the right things, but their hearts are not right. Paul seems to be saying that allowing heresies is part of God's plan to separate the sheep from the goats.

Years ago a study was done in Canada to determine if the wolf population was the cause of a decline in the herds of caribou. Studies showed that wolves lived most of the year on rodents and small animals. They only killed caribou during the big migrations, and then they tended to kill the weakest and sickest of the caribou herds. The truth turned out to be that the wolves served, not to weaken the herds of caribou, but to strengthen them by culling out the weakest and sickliest of the herds.

I have said all that to say this: Jesus made it plain that there would be many, not few, false prophets in the world. He said we would know them, not by their arguments, but by their fruits. When a theological argument is driving a wedge between brothers, there is reason to question the motives of those involved. But the motives that need the most careful examination are not those of the false teacher. We already know what he wants. The motives you need to question are your own. What is it that you really want? What are the real issues that concern you? Are you being honest with yourself, your brethren, or with God? It is not fair to let your brethren believe that you are dissatisfied with, say, the Church calendar, when the real problem lies elsewhere.

When David found himself at odds with God, there was one thing he never forgot – honesty. In his most heartfelt prayer, he told God, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Psalm 51:6).

If you ever find yourself in one of these doctrinal crossfires, or if you are being tempted irrationally to leave the faith, try this prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). If you ask this in sincerity, you can count on an answer. God will help you see yourself and will give you the strength to do something about it.

People who are conned by a false prophet are losers, and they have no one but themselves to blame. The wolves cull out the

weakest of the herd, not the winners. And one of the prime traits of a winner is honesty.

Never forget, you were born to win.

Ronald L. Dart

Can God Read Your Mind?

Does God know every thought in a man's mind. Is He more than a mind reader? Most mind readers do not pretend to know everything in your mind all the time. They only claim to be able to discern some of your thoughts and that with great difficulty. How about God? Is it possible He does not *want* to know everything that goes in that can of worms we call the human mind?

Unfortunately, men tend to make God out to be what we think we want Him to be without ever considering the implications. To say that God is omniscient, all knowing is to imply that God cannot bar certain knowledge from His mind. To say that He is omnipresent is not to allow that there are places God would not choose to be.

There is an answer to all this and it is discussed in depth in an audio presentation by Ronald Dart titled, "The Mind Reader." To receive a *free* cassette tape of this mind expanding message, just check the box on the enclosed return card and send it back to us. The tape is free and without obligation, but any contribution you can send to help will be greatly appreciated.

Filling Your Harvest Basket

I have heard the Feast of Tabernacles referred to as a vacation at various times over the past years. I recently evaluated this statement and started to critically think about how the Feast is or is not like a vacation. The main difference I came up with besides the more obvious was the aspect of service toward others. Most of the time when my family has had occasion to take a vacation we have generally taken full advantage of the service of others whether it be at a restaurant, entertainment venue, beach or shopping area. This was great because this was the purpose of our trip or vacation. It was for personal enjoyment and entertainment solely, plus a little rejuvenation. I can tell you I wasn't spending a lot of time figuring out how I was going to serve others when I woke up in the morning.

God requires the Feast of Tabernacles for those who know to keep it. Its hallmark is worship and rejoicing before the Lord at His appointed place and season. Part of how we truly rejoice before the Lord encompasses being thankful for the gifts we have been given and sharing those blessings or gifts both spiritual and physical with others while we are at the Feast.

In this spirit, the Festival Association was developed as a service body so that those who had a desire to give both physically and spiritually in ministry and service could do so in their area of talent. If you have not volunteered to help the Festival Association in organizing and carrying out the wonderful Feast of Tabernacles, please do so. You can check the website at www.cemnetwork.com and e-mail any of the Festival Association board members directly to serve on their teams. If you don't have computer access please call me at 281-419-9104 and let me know how you would like to help.

If you are not ready to make a more formal commitment to service ministry in the Festival Association, I would ask you to look for a way that you can show your thanks to God for what you have been blessed with and do it in the form of actual physical, financial or spiritual service to another. Fill your fall harvest basket at the Feast of Tabernacles by filling someone else's life with your service. Please especially remember *our* widows, orphans and children. They need us more than ever.

Steve Clouthier, D.C.
Chairman, Festival Association

Calendar Of Events

July 20th - Chicago, Illinois **Christian Renewal Conference**

Ronald L. Dart will be conducting a Christian Renewal Conference in Chicago, Illinois, on Saturday, July 20th and Sunday July 21st. It will be held at the Oakbrook Park District Shelter and Conference Facility, 1300 Forrest Gate Rd, in Oakbrook, IL. The CRC will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday and 9:30 a.m. on Sunday. For more information please contact either Trisha Svehla, (630) 968-6153 or Laureen Blissard, (630) 416-7715 or check the website at www.WhereCOG.org/cogdg.

August 2nd - Brisbane, Australia **Christian Renewal Conference**

Ronald L. Dart will be speaking in Australia for a Christian Renewal Conference at the Watson Park Conference Centre on the northern outskirts of Brisbane. The CRC will begin Friday evening, 8:00 p.m. and go through Sunday afternoon, August 4th. For more information, please contact Geoff Robertson at Christian Educational Service, Inc. by e-mailing to info@cesa.org.au.

Daily Radio

The *Born to Win* broadcast can be heard daily on these stations:

- Huntsville, Alabama**
3:30 p.m. daily - WBXR 1140 AM
- Montgomery, Alabama**
8:30 a.m. daily - WAPZ 1250 AM
- Jonesboro, Arkansas**
6:30 p.m. daily - KBTM 1230 AM
- Little Rock, Arkansas**
5:30 p.m. daily - KAAV 1090 AM
- Oakdale, California**
1:00 p.m. daily - KCBC 770 AM
- Denver, Colorado**
5:00 a.m. daily - KLT 670 AM
- Pensacola, Florida**
7:00 a.m. daily - WASG 550 AM
7:00 a.m. daily - WZNO 1230 AM
- Atlanta, Georgia**
10:30 a.m. daily - WGKA 1190 AM
- Augusta, Georgia**
5:30 p.m. & 10:45 p.m. daily
WFAM 1050 AM
- Morrow, Georgia**
7:30 a.m. & 7 p.m. daily
WSSA 1570 AM
- Kansas City, Kansas**
4:00 p.m. daily - KCNW 1380 AM
- Richmond, Kentucky**
12:30 p.m. daily - WCBR 1110 AM
- Gretna, Louisiana**
4:30 a.m. daily - WLNO 1060 AM
- Denton, Maryland**
8:30 a.m. & 3:00 p.m. daily
WKDI 840 AM
- Jackson, Mississippi**
7:00 a.m. daily - WTWZ 1120 AM
- Omaha, Nebraska**
3:30 p.m. daily - KLNG 1560 AM
- Buffalo, New York**
4:30 a.m. daily - WDCX 99.5 FM
- Asheville, North Carolina**
4:00 p.m. daily - WSKY 1230 AM
- Mount Olive, North Carolina**
11:00 a.m. daily - WDJS 1430 AM
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**
4:30 p.m. daily - WWNL 1080 AM
- Anderson, South Carolina**
9:00 a.m. daily - WRIX 1020 AM
- Charleston, South Carolina**
4:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. daily
WZJY 1480 AM
- Greenville, South Carolina**
4:30 p.m. daily - WELP 1360 AM
- Chattanooga, Tennessee**
5:00 p.m. daily - WLMR 1450 AM
- Knoxville, Tennessee**
5:00 p.m. daily - WITA 1490 AM

Last Call For YEA Feast Books!

Kids, teenagers, parents, grandparents, churches and Feast sites take notice! YEA's goal is to turn every child and teenager into a winner. Action packed, biblically correct 2002 YEA Feast books have never been better. Teaching kids the Word of God has never been easier or more exciting.

Young people want lessons that are relevant. Issues kids face in their daily lives are addressed in a fun, effective way for five different age groups. Every book has a theme running through each full color YEA lesson ensuring it will long be remembered. Make the 2002 Feast of Tabernacles a true celebration as you turn the hearts of the children to the Father.

Orders will be accepted for the YEA Feast books through July 31st. To order, call 1-888-BIBLE 44.

Daily Radio

The *Born to Win* broadcast can be heard daily on these stations:

- Dallas, Texas**
10:30 a.m. daily - KSKY 660 AM
 - Jacksonville, Texas**
5:30 p.m. daily - KLJT 102.3 FM
 - Ephrata, Washington**
6:00 a.m. Monday - Saturday
KTRW 970 AM
- The following stations
broadcast daily at 2:30 p.m.
- Ephrata, Washington**
KTAC 93.9 FM
 - Moses Lake, Washington**
KGER 95.9 FM
 - Pasco, Washington**
KGDN 101.3 FM
 - Spokane, Washington**
KSPO 106.5 FM
 - Wenatchee, Washington**
KTBI 810 AM
 - Yakima, Washington**
KYAK 930 AM



Tune in for the latest
weekly broadcast.

July 13 - July 19
Christian Origins 57

July 20 - July 26
Christian Origins 58

July 27 - August 2
Program #400

August 3 - August 9
Christian Origins 59

August 10 - August 16
Christian Origins 60

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