

Living to Win

September 15, 2002
Volume 7, Number 9
Christian Educational Ministries

Personal from. . . *Ronald L. Dart*

A Letter From Prison

I got a letter this week from a prisoner in West Texas. He is serving a life sentence and had only just gotten himself a New Testament and had begun reading when he happened to hear the *Born to Win* program. This is what he wrote to me:

Hello, sir. You don't know me but about a week and a half ago I was going up and down on the radio dial and I caught some of your program—Born to Win. Listen, I don't know why it made me stop and listen to what you were saying, coz up until recently I didn't even have a Bible, religion didn't interest me, but some of the things you were saying moved me. I'm 43 years old and I'm doing an aggravated life sentence. And to be honest with you I am sort of tired of this life. It's obvious that this road I chose, of drugs and women and money wasn't the right one. I won't sit here and tell you that I'm a Christian coz I'm not. But I'd like to be. But I'm not sure if God will accept me. Still I want to ask for a Bible study, if you could send me one please. I've asked Jesus as best I can to come into my life and

change me into whatever he wants, coz I've made a mess out of it. But I don't know if He has or what I'm supposed to do. The Christians here are always arguing with each other and they are always trying to be so—I don't know how to say it—like they're better than me. Besides, they don't even acknowledge me.

So I picked up a New Testament Bible and started reading, then I heard your program. Wow. What you say makes a lot of sense. And more than anything, I want Jesus in my heart. I don't want to live like I've been living. Can you tell me what to do please and please sir, can I have a Bible study. Well I don't know if you'll even receive or read this letter, but if you don't answer will still listen to your program at 5:30 every day and God bless you.

Ramon A.

This letter touched me in a profound way. It was not just that he liked my program and it had helped him. That was gratifying. But what really got to me was the remark about the Christians who were always arguing with each other and who didn't have the time of day for him. That hit awfully

close to home. I had to tell him when I wrote back that it is the same on the outside. Christians are so preoccupied with themselves that they, who once turned the world upside down, no longer seem willing to grab hold of it.

Remember Jesus? Do you recall the man who ate with publicans and sinners? The man who was roundly criticized for the people He associated with? And do you recall His reply? "Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:30-32).

I doubt that Ramon has come to that scripture yet, but when he does, it will probably confuse him. It shouldn't. He should be able to see that Jesus set an example and not all Christians, perhaps very few

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Christians follow it. The problem the world faces when it encounters Christianity is not the New Testament. It is the people who claim the faith and then don't live it. When the human mind encounters conflicting authorities, one would think it would set out to find out which authority is right, but that is not the usual response. The normal response to conflicting authority is confusion, and the world at large is confused about Christianity. The world is confused because the Bible says one thing and Christians do another.

Ramon's letter suggests two very important things to me. One is that Christians should stop bickering. *Christianity is not an argument.* It is a way of life. I confess that there was a time when I loved to debate biblical issues. The cut and thrust of argument was great fun, and the "gotcha" of demonstrating the failure of the other man's argument was quite satisfying. It was until one day I really grasped the significance of something Paul said: "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Timothy 2:23-26).

The servant of the Lord must not strive. Those words almost came off the page at me, because that was precisely what I had been doing. I was sitting around arguing

with other Christians about what this or that scripture might mean, when the sick and dying world out there didn't even know the life saving information that nearly every Christian of nearly every stripe agrees on.

An old friend of mine used to say that if the Devil can't get at you any other way, he will waste your time. Too many Christians are wasting time arguing with one another when we could be taking the indisputable words of Jesus to people who have never heard them.

It reminded me of a comment by the wizard in J. R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit." He said to his little band that what they needed was a warrior to take on the dragon (usually a symbol of the Devil). Unfortunately, he continued, all the warriors were busy in other lands fighting one another. And one wonders if all the energy expended by Christians in arguing with one another were redirected against the Dragon, what a difference we could make.

The second thing Ramon's letter suggested to me was that if we are to do any good in the world, we are going to have to go as Jesus did to the sick and needy, and we are going to have to go to them where they are. And where they are is not in church.

One of the strongest statements Jesus ever made about the difference between those who inherit the kingdom and those who don't is found in the third parable of Matthew 25 (verses 31-46). When the son of man comes in all of His glory, He is going to separate men into two groups like a shepherd would

divide the sheep from the goats. And the defining difference in these two groups had to do with the way they treated their fellow man. "Come, you who are blessed by my Father;" He said, "take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

It isn't so much that we have to go volunteer to work in a soup kitchen, although that is a good and generous thing to do. More important than that is how you encounter the world at every turn of your life. The Good Samaritan of Jesus parable did not encounter the wounded man in a hospital but by the road side. Think about what Ramon said about the Christians in his prison: "They don't even acknowledge me."

There is something truly ironic about men in prison taking a holier than thou attitude toward another convict. But it is a parable of what happens every day among those of us who have the blessing of our freedom. Paul wrote to Titus concerning people just like us. He told him to remind us to be subject to our local governments, and to be ready for every good work. Not only that, but he said Titus should put it in mind "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."

Why? Because we are not better than they: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, dis-

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obedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

And what made the difference in our lives? Our own goodness? Our own righteousness? Hardly. “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done*, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

And Paul finished his admonition to Titus by saying: “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (Titus 3:1-8).

It may come as a surprise to some, but good works, being a blessing in your community and among the people you encounter, is one of the most powerful tools of evangelism we will ever find.

After reading Ramon’s letter a curious passage from Ecclesiastes came to mind: “Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take warning. The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom” (Ecclesiastes 4:13-14).

One wonders. Are we able to take a warning from God? Or would we brush it off because it came from prison?

Ronald L. Dart

How should Christians think about Jews?

The history of the relationship between Jews and Christians has been long and painful. The New Testament tells it was the Jews who demanded Jesus’ crucifixion when the Roman Governor wanted to let Him go. In the very earliest years of the faith, the primary persecutors of the new faith were members of the Jewish religious establishment.

But in the centuries that followed, after Christianity became an established religion, Christians paid that back many times over in the shedding of innocent Jewish blood. Anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism have been among the most virulent evils on the planet, culminating in the Holocaust - which, while it was hardly a Christian phenomenon, found fertile ground in Christian nations.

In recent years, there have been improved relations between Christians and Jews, and it may be time to take a fresh look from a Christian perspective. Not long ago, a number of Jewish scholars published a document discussing how Jews might look at Christianity, and it goes a long way toward clarifying some old misunderstandings.

Ronald Dart discusses this document and responds from a Christian perspective in a brand new audio tape presentation titled, “Jews and Christians.” To receive a *free* cassette tape of this presentation, just check the box on the enclosed card and send it back in the envelope provided. Remember, the tape is free and there is no obligation.

SEX HAS A PRICE TAG!

CEM has an overstock in the award winning video by renowned teen speaker and author, Pam Stenzel. Her new, updated video “Sex has a Price Tag 2000” takes a hard look at the consequences of sexual activity outside a monogamous lifetime commitment. Pam tackles the tough issues of pre-marital sex, directed especially at teens, with candor, insight and humor. You can have this video at the special price of only \$12.95, including postage. Order your copy now, while the supply lasts.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDED JULY 31, 2002

RECEIPTS	
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$246305.79
CEM BOOKSTORE	9475.31
SUMMER CAMP TUITION & SCHOLARSHIPS	14502.00
INTEREST INCOME	1351.25
	\$271364.35
EXPENSES:	
A/V SUPPLIES	\$ 6095.22
RENTS	9527.74
OFFICE & ADM. EXPENSES	1788.00
MAILING EXPENSES	8610.58
POSTAGE	17790.69
PRINTING	13109.40
RADIO EXPENSES	133647.35
TELEPHONE & UTILITIES	2595.11
YOUTH MINISTRIES	6346.33
SUMMER CAMP EXPENSES	16129.15
CONFERENCES	844.48
CEM BOOKSTORE	953.62
COMPUTER & WEB EXPENSES	2289.25
FOREIGN OPERATIONS	5088.75
EQUIPMENT	1625.00
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	10331.77
WAGES & PAYROLL TAXES	78140.82
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 314913.26
DECREASE IN FUND BALANCE	<u>(\$ 43548.91)</u>

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 - KAAZ 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 a.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

Calendar Of Events

September 16th - Destin, Florida Day of Atonement Services

Ronald L. Dart will be speaking in Destin, Florida for services on the Day of Atonement, Monday, September 16th, at 1:30 pm at the Destin Community Center, 101 Stahlman Ave. Contact Gary or Shirley George at (850) 837-0485 for information or directions.

September 20th to 28th - Niceville, Florida Feast of Tabernacles

All services are held at the Okaloosa Walton Community College. September 20th meeting begins at 7:30 p.m., September 28th meeting begins at 11:00 a.m., all other days begin at 10:45 a.m.

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.**

September 14 - September 20
Christian Origins 65

September 21 - September 27
Christian Origins 66

September 28 - October 4
Christian Origins 67

October 5 - October 11
Christian Origins 68

October 12 - October 18
Christian Origins 69

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