

Personal from. . . *Ronald L. Dart*

Nine things you should consider before giving to a ministry or a church

Any religious organization, be it a television ministry or a local church, depends on donations to survive. And so they all engage in some kind of fund raising effort to make ends meet. They use all kinds of things to raise money from direct mail to bake sales. It may seem a shame, (I don't think this requirement of God "is a shame.") in a way, but money is merely a tool that enables a church or ministry to do their necessary work.

A few years ago, I had reason to research the fund raising methods of a wide range of ministries and what I found was appalling. Only a few ministries took a straightforward, honest approach by telling their readers and listeners what they wanted to do and that they needed their support to do it. The rest engaged in various gimmicks and tricks to meet their budgets. The television ministries were the worst because they have to raise the most money. A few were downright dishonest or unethical.

As a result of my research, I came up with nine things you ought to think about before writing a check or giving to a ministry or a church.

1. Has the ministry made a positive difference in your life? If the ministry has helped you, then you can be sure it has helped others as well. You should make some effort to support that ministry. If the ministry means nothing to you, if it has not encouraged or lifted you, if it has not opened your eyes to God and the Bible, then there is no reason to give. Nor is there any reason for you to continue receiving material from that ministry. Ask them to remove your name from their mailing list. Don't waste their resources.
2. Retain control of your charitable giving. Don't give to a ministry on the assumption that they will give to yet another charity. When you do this, every organization in the chain has overhead costs that will reduce the amount that actually gets to the person(s) you're wanting to help. If you want to give to an orphanage, find one and contribute directly. There is a technique sometimes used in religious fund raising that, while it may be legal, is less than ethical. One large ministry

needed to raise 18 million dollars a year to meet its overall budget for television and other services. That meant they needed to raise 1.5 million dollars a month. One month I got a letter from them saying that they had budgeted \$100,000 for an orphanage in Haiti. The letter included pictures and heart-rending appeals.

Do you think that if I had sent \$100 to that ministry, that all the money would have gone to the orphanage? Not at all. Six dollars and 66 cents would have gone to the orphanage and the rest to the TV ministry. Maybe. You also have to trust the ministry to do what they said they would do. Not long ago, investigations showed that several ministries were using the same orphanage to raise money, but the orphanage was only

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getting a fraction of what they raised. When you give to a ministry, realize that you are supporting that ministry and little or nothing else. That is okay as long as the ministry is honest with you.

3. The ministry should teach the truth. This should go without saying, but it often doesn't. Luke tells the story of Paul's work in Berea and he says of those people, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Don't just swallow what you are told. Look into the scriptures and see if it is true. Look for simplicity and clarity. Murky answers to your questions should cause you to pause.

Is it a ministry that speaks with clarity to issues secular and religious without jargon and "church talk." Look for simplicity. If it takes a convoluted 32 page document to explain what could be said in two pages, you are dealing with someone who either doesn't think clearly or who is dishonest.

4. The ministry should freely disclose how funds are spent. You don't need to know details about office supplies, but they should disclose broad categories. Pay special attention to the percentage of their income that goes to each category. Notice how much of the budget goes to the stated purpose of the ministry and how much to peripheral issues. If the ministry does not publish a financial statement, feel free to ask for one. If a ministry won't provide at least a broad outline of

expenses, you should feel free to not give to that ministry.

5. The ministry should demonstrate integrity. Honest disclosure of expenditures and policies are a start. Straight answers to your questions are a good follow up.
6. The ministry should be relevant. It should deal in realities. Its teachings from the Bible should offer some life application. Someone said of youth ministry, "Good programming is all about relevance. If we refuse to change with the times, we're throwing our kids into the cracks of irrelevance. Truth is that kids will arrange their schedules around and even pay for *relevant* programs. The short test for relevance is, if it doesn't make a difference in the kids everyday life, it isn't relevant."

Does the ministry actually make a difference in your life? Does it lift you? Do you feel better or worse after listening? Do you gain a sense of direction for living, a greater sense of meaning to life? Does the ministry help the lonely feel connected? Does it support the weak? Does the ministry lift you and help you to be what God wants you to be? A ministry that is relevant deserves your support.

7. There should be some reason to believe that God is working through this ministry, and not just from what the ministry tells you about themselves. Nearly any ministry trying to raise money will trumpet all their good works. But the best evidence of what they are doing is what you see with your own eyes.
8. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Are you

using the services of the ministry in question? If so, then you should give something back. If you don't feel you can support the ministry, then cancel any subscriptions or mailings from it. Don't let yourself be a sponge. Don't feel your contribution is too small to make. God is able to take the smallest offering and make something of it. Remember the widow's mite (Mark 12:42 ff). Giving is an important part of living before God, and we should always make an effort to be generous within our means. Speaking of giving, Paul said: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Corinthians 8:12).

9. Give yourself to God first. Then remember that your gifts to a godly ministry are gifts to God.

Paul wrote of the Macedonian Christians: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and

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unto us by the will of God.”
(2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

It is far too easy to make a disconnect between giving to an organization and giving to God. Pray before giving and ask for God’s guidance and blessings on your giving - to bless what you give. Always think of your giving in terms of a gift to God for His work that He is doing here on earth.

CEM is a ministry that depends on the generosity of people like you. We will do our best to be good stewards of what God gives us to work with, and we will always try to be worthy of your confidence and support.

Ronald L. Dart

CEM Festival 2003 is Moving!

After some serious negotiating, CEM has booked the Emerald Coast Conference Center for the 2003 festival. We have enjoyed and appreciated the Arts Center, but the new Conference Center looks like it was designed for our kind of festival. We will have ample rooms for YEA and seminars, all under one roof with the main meeting hall, and plenty of parking.

The new convention center is located at 1250 Miracle Strip Parkway, SE, in Ft. Walton Beach. And those people who stay in Destin won’t have to cross the Midway Bridge.

**Make plans to join us
for Festival 2003!**

2003 - What Lies Ahead?

In all the years of the cold war, we may have been frightened, but we didn’t really think the United States and Russia would ever fight a nuclear war. Regardless of all the political rhetoric, we knew neither country could win. The reason we were not that worried is simple enough: We were confident that the leaders of both countries were sane.

We don’t often think of how dependent we are on the sanity of the people around us. We live in a nation chock full of guns, and yet it never occurred to us that we needed to keep our heads down when we gassed up our car. We assumed that even the most wicked criminals needed a motive to start shooting people. Now we know better.

The thing that is different in 2003 is that we are dealing with wicked people whose motives cannot be considered sane by anyone’s definition. What does this mean for us and our country in the year ahead? To receive a *free* cassette tape of a sermon on this theme delivered recently in San Antonio, Texas, just check the box on the enclosed card and return it to us. The title is “2003, What Lies Ahead?” The tape is free for the asking.

CEM Internships Available

CEM is prepared to offer three to six month internships to qualified applicants. Work will involve the entire gamut of tasks performed in the office from making tapes, to stuffing envelopes, to data entry, to letter answering, to research for CEM publications and broadcasts. Since wages will be low, applicants should be financially able to handle their own transportation to and from Tyler and to maintain themselves while here.

Serious enquiries should be accompanied by a resume and addressed to CEM, attention Ronald Dart.

Radio Update

**Please note the following
new stations:**

Mooresville, NC
WHIP 1350 AM
Sunday at 6:00 p.m.

San Antonio, TX*
WOAI 1200 AM
Sunday at 5:30 a.m. &
Sunday at 11:30 p.m.

Portland, OR
KKPZ 1330 AM
Daily at 12:30 p.m.
& 6:00 p.m.

*50,000 Watt Clear Channel Station

Daily Radio

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

- Birmingham, Alabama**
11:15 a.m. daily - WDJC 850 AM
- Huntsville, Alabama**
3:30 p.m. daily - WBXR 1140 AM
- Mobile, Alabama**
9:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. daily
WMOB 1360 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. & 5:15 a.m. daily
KAAY 1090 AM
- Oakdale, California**
1:00 p.m. daily - KCBC 770 AM
- Denver, Colorado**
5:00 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. daily
KLT 670 AM
- Deland, Florida**
6:00 a.m. & 4:00 p.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
- Portland, Oregon**
12:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. daily
KKPZ 1330 AM
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**
4:30 p.m. daily - WWNL 1080 AM
- Anderson, South Carolina**
9:00 a.m. daily - WRIX 1020 AM

Calendar Of Events

January 18th - Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas **Meet The Teacher**

The North Texas Church of God is sponsoring a "Meet the Teacher" in Fort Worth at the Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, 2200 Oak Hill Rd, in Fort Worth. The meeting will begin at 2:00 in the afternoon. For more information, please contact Ralph Collins at 817.246.1874 or by e-mail at RALPHANDBECKY@aol.com or call Faye Brown at the CEM office 1 888-BIBLE 44 or e-mail faye@cemnetwork.com.

Daily Radio

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

- 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 - WITA1490 AM
- Dallas, Texas**
10:30 a.m. daily - KSKY 660 AM
- The following stations
broadcast daily at 2:30 p.m.**
- Moses Lake, Washington**
KTAC 93.9 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.**

January 11 - January 17

Abortion War

January 18 - January 24

Christian Origins 79

January 25 - January 31

Christian Origins 80

February 1 - February 7

Jews and Christians

February 8 - February 14

Christian Origins 81

February 15 - February 21

Christian Origins 82

Christian Educational Ministries



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