

Living to Win

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Personal from. . . *Ronald L. Dart*

War and the Christian

I got a letter from a reader a few days ago taking me to task for what she perceived as my “agreement” with this war. “I don’t understand,” she said, “as Christians we should be taking the Gospel to other nations, not bombs.”

The logic of that statement is unassailable. And yet, it leaves some important questions unanswered. Can a Christian take up arms against another person or even another nation? Surely not. And yet, if we take that reply to its logical conclusion, it would mean that no Christian could ever be a police officer. Can a Christian be responsible for the death of another human being? Surely not, but taken again to its logical conclusion, it would mean that no Christian could ever serve on a jury for a capital crime. The Christian duty to love our enemies, to forgive transgressions, to be merciful and kind, taken to extreme, would mean we could not even serve on a jury that would send a man to jail.

Most people who call themselves Christian intuitively know that these extreme positions don’t

work, but not many could tell you why. Thousands of Christians serve in both law enforcement and the military with a clear conscience. Are they wrong? Are they misguided? What is it that they don’t understand? Or, if they are right, is it that those on the other side of the question don’t understand?

One thing is certain. No one can argue that God is a pacifist. The scriptures on this are well known and plentiful. (I deal with many of them in a message we are offering with this month’s newsletter.) But there is a common assumption that God’s expectation of Christians is different from His expectations of godly men and women in the Old Testament.

There are a couple of important points to make about that. One, God hasn’t changed from eternity. He is the same as He was 14 billion years ago when He said “let there be light” and initiated the Big Bang (see James 1:17, Hebrews 13:8, etc.). A God with perfect character isn’t likely to change that character like a suit of clothes.

Does that God countenance

the use of force, *even deadly force* in some circumstances? If you have read your Bible, you know He does, but consider this example:

Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and *I will kill you with the sword*; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless (Exodus 22:22-24).

Not only is God not a pacifist, He is particularly prone to anger with those who oppress the weak and helpless in a society. I know this may not sound like the God

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you think you know. I can't help that. This is the God of the Bible, take Him or leave Him. But don't try to make Him over into what you want Him to be.

Did you notice that God didn't say He would kill them with lightning, hail, flood, or earthquake? He said He would kill them with the *sword*. In the Bible, the sword is the sign of the military and the law enforcement power of the state. And it is a sign of war.

The prophet Jeremiah spoke of it in those terms, and in terms that raise the hair on the back of your neck when you look at the locations in terms of today's fighting. You may not be aware of the origins of the name "Palestine." It is an English variant of the name of an ancient people, the Philistines. The Philistines were the first Palestinians. Substitute "Palestinian" for Philistine in the following passage, look up the geographical references and see where it takes you.

Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the {Palestinians}, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the {Palestinians}, the remnant of the country of Caphtor. Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself? O thou sword of the LORD, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea

shore? there hath he appointed it. (Jeremiah 47:4-7)

The sword which God had appointed against the Palestinians of old time was in the hand of Israel. Specifically for a while in the hands of David who said, "Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight" (Psalm 144:1). When you read the context of the psalm, you will see that it was David's responsibility to protect his people, to oppose "the hurtful sword" so they could live in peace that led to much of his fighting.

Yes, things are different in the New Testament from the old, but consider this question. Why would the moral and ethical standards required of a righteous man change from one testament to the other? Actually, they don't, but the reasons for this are quite different from what you may suppose.

Space won't permit me to give a full exposition of this here, but let me send you a cassette tape of a presentation that will provide the answers. The title is "War and the Christian" and you can receive a free cassette tape of the message by simply checking the box on the enclosed card and sending it back to us in the envelope we have provided. The tape is *free*.

Thanks for being a friend, and keep in touch. And don't forget to pray for our men and women overseas defending liberty.

Watching God's hand at work,

Ronald L. Dart

Radio Update

Please note the following new stations:

San Francisco, CA

KDIA 1640 AM
Monday - Friday
12:03 p.m. & 11:30 p.m.

Pekin, IL

WVEL 1140 AM
Saturday at 8:00 a.m.

Snow Hill, NC

WAGO 88.7 FM
Sunday at 7:00 a.m.



Tune in for the latest weekly broadcast.

April 12 - April 18
Christian Origins 87

April 19 - April 25
Christian Origins 88

April 26 - May 2
Christian Origins 89

May 3 - May 9
Christian Origins 90

May 10 - May 16
Christian Origins 91



Attention All Children and Teenagers: We Need your Help!

Plans are already in the works for the very best ever Youth Day at the 2003 Feast of Tabernacles. If you would like to participate in this year's Youth Day program, please contact Billy Richardson. My contact information is: wilyd82@bellsouth.net, 5026 Fairbrook Ave., Memphis, TN 38118-2527, or 901-366-5781.

We are specifically looking for several speakers/presenters. If you feel that you can give a short (pre-written) presentation with expression and enthusiasm contact me immediately. We have a place for you and would like to send you a script as soon as possible. This will allow you to memorize your presentation prior to the Feast while minimizing rehearsal time once you arrive in Destin/Ft. Walton Beach. We'll do our part to prevent rehearsal time from eating into your fun and family time and worship services. Coaching will also be provided to ensure that you'll be proud of the job you do on Youth Day. We do ask that you make a commitment to being at the Feast in Fort Walton Beach, attending rehearsals, and participating in the Youth Day program. Talk it over with your parents and ask if they will stand behind your commitment. If they will, let me know as soon as possible that you would like to be a part of Youth Day 2003.

We are also looking for musically talented children and teens who would like to use their talents to praise God during the Youth Day presentation. If you have a special gift for singing, or if you can play a musical instrument with skill, and would enjoy participating, please contact me. Your talents are needed! We expect to have a wonderful group of kids this year and we want our program to be even more fun and exciting than ever before.

- Billy Richardson

SUMMER CAMP 2003

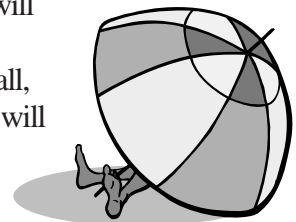
The time for summer camp is upon us once again. This year's summer camp will be held from June 22 to June 29 and will again be held at Camp Wewoka Woods, near Wewoka, Oklahoma. We will be sending out a letter to all who are on our teen mailing list, but if you or a teen you know are not on our list, be sure to call, write or e-mail to lsw@cemnetwork.com to ask about information for camp.

The tuition fee will remain at \$250. We do not want this to place a financial burden on anyone, causing them to be unable to attend. So we have established a special camp scholarship fund and request that anyone who can and would like to help sponsor a deserving young person to come to camp, make a special contribution to this camp scholarship fund. This special donation will still be tax deductible, but will be used exclusively for helping a young person come to camp.

Summer camp will be open to all teens who have reached their thirteenth birthday by the time camp ends and who have not yet reached their nineteenth birthday. Summer Camp 2003 is open to all teens, regardless of their church affiliation, or that of their parents.

We will have water skiing and tubing, swimming, horseback riding, group initiatives, volleyball and basketball, not to mention the dances and the annual funshow. Also, back by popular demand, we will continue the swing dance classes this year and even more!

If you know of someone who you think would enjoy camp, be sure to tell them to call, write or e-mail for an application. Please spread the word, so that all who want to attend will know about camp. And if you are able, please help a deserving young person come to camp by making a small donation to the camp scholarship fund.



A New Hymnal for the Churches of God

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD,
all ye lands.

Serve the LORD with gladness:
come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the LORD he is God:
it is he that hath made us,
and not we ourselves;
we are his people, and the sheep
of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise:
be thankful unto him, and bless
his name.

For the LORD is good; his mercy
is everlasting;
and his truth endureth to all
generations.

This is the 100th Psalm, and may have been set to music almost as often as the 23rd Psalm. Like no other, it calls on us to come before God singing with gladness, praise, blessing and thanksgiving. How on earth could we ever do justice to the praise of God without song? Why on earth would we want to?

Down through the ages, men and women have been moved by the pages of the Bible and by way it has touched their lives. Thankfully, many of these have also had the gift of music and have been able to share with the ages the way the Bible has touched them. Not everything they have written has stood the test of time, nor should it have. But all churches need a book of hymns that reflect the truth of the Bible and the artistry of great composition. They need to touch the heart, to move the spirit, to encourage us in our time of deepest need, to exalt us in the times of our greatest joy.

CEM is now ready to publish a hymnal especially for the churches of God. We took a hymnal we had produced before, removed some hymns and added others. Thanks to the work of a devoted band of volunteers, coupled with no small blessing from God, we are now ready to go to press and we need your help.

CEM will have to take the financial risk of producing this new songbook and we need to have some idea of how many to print. For that reason, we want to ask those of you who want this hymnal to order early and, if possible, to pay early. We are not pricing this hymnal to make money, but we are going to try not to lose very much. The hymnal is top quality. Those of you who are familiar with the navy blue hardback will know what I mean. This book is being produced to the same specifi-

cations, including 100 year paper. Our original publication of the old hymnal was some eight years ago, and they have held up amazingly well.

We can't offer any bulk discounts for the book right now, because we are paring the initial price to the bone. For those who prepay, the new hymnal will be only \$9.95. For those who pre-order but don't pay until we are ready to deliver, the price will be \$10.95. The price for later delivery will be \$11.95. Expected delivery date will be July 1. I wish we could give it to you free, but we don't have the resources for that.

This new hymnal will be a fine addition to your home and worship services. We hope later to provide taped accompaniment for the songs so you can sing and learn them at home. Order now. Just fill in the order form on the back of the enclosed card and rush it back to us.

Calendar Of Events

May 10th - Springfield, Missouri **Meet the Teacher**

Ronald L. Dart will be conducting a "Meet the Teacher" session on Saturday, May 10, in Springfield, Missouri, at the LampLighter Inn, 2820 N Glenstone, in the Missouri Room, and will begin at 1:00 in the afternoon. For more information, please contact Mike or Gloria Anderson at 417-833-0977 or Mg50andy@cs.com. You may also contact Larry Watkins at the CEM office at 1-888-BIBLE-44 or e-mail him at lsw@cemnetwork.com.

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