

Personal from. . . *Ronald L. Dart*

It's In Your Genes

It is always refreshing when science catches up with common sense. For a long time, specialists of one stripe or another argued that what makes us who we are happened as a result of heredity. Or they argued that it is all a matter of environment, of learned behavior. At the same time, I think most of us intuitively believed that it was a matter of heredity, environment and experience that shaped our character.

Now, with the human genome project making enormous progress, we are learning that common sense evaluation was pretty much on the mark. Matt Ridley, writing in *Time* magazine (June 2, 2003), summarizes the emerging story and it is a fascinating tale indeed. In his article titled, "What makes you who you are," he writes, "This is a new understanding of the fundamental building blocks of life based on the discovery that genes are not immutable things handed down from our parents like Moses' stone tablets, but are active participants in our lives, designed to take their cues from everything that happens to us from the moment of our conception."

I can almost hear someone saying, "So?" And I understand the

reaction. But what this can mean to parents, educators, and healthcare workers may turn out to be as profound as Matt Ridley thinks it is. For one thing, it means that the actions of moms and dads are crucial in the early life of a child.

I carried a mistaken assumption about language for example. It is plain that humans are the only creatures capable of a complex language. I assumed that it was the size and function of the brain that made the difference along with lips, tongue and palate. It turns out that there are genes that, as Ridley puts it, "open and close a window during which the learning of a language takes place. But just having the gene is not enough. If a child is not exposed to a lot of spoken language during the critical learning period, he or she will always struggle with speech."

It's funny, but when the facts start coming down, a lot of things start coming together. Intuition will tell you that a gabby family produces gabby children, but now we know that there is a set of genes that make that possible. Scientists have long understood that close interaction with a child in its early years has

an effect on basic intelligence. Then when you understand that the intelligence is measured in very large part by verbal skills, that starts making even more sense. And it is a very small step from that to realizing that a single mother trying to raise a child by herself is at a disadvantage for conversation in the home is necessarily limited.

So human beings are genetically predisposed to speech, but it seems there is a window during which it is designed to take place. And just as we are predisposed genetically to speech, I think we will also find that man is genetically predisposed to religion—that is, man is hard wired to look for God. And one suspects that there is a window during which that predisposition is strongest. And I have no doubt that is why God

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tells parents, “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:7 NIV).

Thomas Lickona, writing in his book, “Raising Good Children” observes: Children “learn to make choices by having choices. Because they don’t become problem solvers unless they have a chance to rely on their own resources and solve their own problems. Because the ultimate goal of all our parenting is not to control our children but to help them become mature adults who can make their own decisions and lead their own lives.”

But once again, there is a window in which problem solving

skills are developed. And it makes the way we interact with our kids crucial when they are in that window of opportunity. I think science will find that men are genetically predisposed to learn an ethical system of behavior but that ethical system must be learned from parents and family.

Matt Ridley opined that “theologians may develop a whole new theory of free will based on the observation that learning expands our capacity to choose our own path.” He may be right. It wouldn’t be the first time that science forced theologians to rethink some things they thought were written in stone. It wasn’t that the Bible was wrong, but that theologians were wrong about the Bible. It has happened before and it will happen again.

Choice is a powerful recurring theme in the Bible, and all science is doing is uncovering the mechanism by which that takes place. “This day

I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19 NIV).

We have a choice. Some theologians have known this for a very long time. Perhaps science will now help the rest to catch up.

There is much more to be said on this subject, and I developed the theme in a recent presentation titled, “It’s in Your Genes.” You can have a *free* cassette tape of the message by simply checking the box on the enclosed card. There is no charge for the tape because it is paid for by friends and supporters of CEM and the *Born to Win* program. So send the card back to us right away. And keep in touch.

Watching and waiting,
Ronald L. Dart

NEW AND IMPROVED!

That’s a claim often made for many products. But – in the case of the Youth Education Adventures program planned for the Feast of Tabernacles 2003 in Ft. Walton Beach – it’s a claim that is certainly true!

Food, Fun, and Fellowship in the Faith is new for 2003. These discussion groups for senior teens and young collegians (ages 15 to 20) will focus on the place of young people in God’s Church and how they can become more actively involved in the Church. These two special gatherings will be held on Saturday night, October 11 and on Friday night, October 17. They will be hosted by Senior Teens YEA instructors Chris and Lisa Gregor. The first session will be a get-acquainted meeting, with pizza and activities in addition to the group discussion. Be sure to mark these dates for your teens on your Feast calendar!

YEA classes are *improved* for 2003. The lessons for all age levels are designed specifically for the Feast. Every lesson is interactive, relevant, age-appropriate, and taught from full-color lesson books. All of these YEA lessons are filled with action, fun, and excitement. Each day’s lessons emphasize celebrating the Feast as participants learn to know and love God and Christ. The active learning incorporated in each lesson is an adventure that involves everyone. Interactive learning not only helps our youth learn – it helps them develop healthy self-concepts and helps them get along better with others.

Christian Educational Ministries is strongly committed to its youth ministry, and our YEA lessons and activities are highlights of the year. YEA is an important part of *Building Tomorrow’s Church Today*. Join us in spreading our youth ministry, for “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD” (Psalm. 127:3).

So not only is YEA “New and Improved” for 2003 – but satisfaction is guaranteed!

~ Anchor Your Kids For College ~

Too often when Christian young people go off to college they lose their faith in God. Parents may feel good about their son or daughter, because he is a “good church kid” and he packed his Bible to take with him. When he moves into the dorm, suddenly new ideas are thrown at him from his new friends, roommates, and professors. He’s not prepared for this, and doubts about God and creation begin spinning through his head.

College students are constantly encountering conflicting beliefs and values. Are they prepared for this onslaught? Have we really given our kids an anchor that will hold them inextricably to Christ come what may? A quick answer from the parents might be, “Of course we have. My kid has gone to church since birth. She’s never missed a summer camp since she has been old enough to attend. I’ve bought plane tickets and sent her to every church lock-in within a thousand miles.”

Then the youth worker might say, “I’ve provided our kids with sports events and taken them camping. Our lock-ins have been the best anywhere. They stay up all night long and really bond with one another. I know how important relationships are to teenagers and I’ve made sure they’ve had every opportunity to make friends and maintain lasting relationships. Our kids love lock-ins above every other church activity.” But one might ask, “Where is the anchor to Christ?”

“I’ve seen it over and over again. A college freshman arrives on campus confident in his faith, but is quickly plunged into crisis because

his Christian foundation was inextricably tied to his youth group experience” (*Group Magazine* 2/3/2003).

All too often churches, parents and youth workers make the mistake of creating a strong group loyalty. Falling in love with their youth group, summer camp, lock-ins, retreats, speech clubs, youth publications, or whatever it may be won’t carry a young person through the doubts created by collegiate friends and faculty. When our kids leave home they enter an entirely different world. Their ties to youth groups, summer camp, activities, and lock-ins aren’t enough to keep them anchored to Christ. Then what will? And what can we do to prevent our kids from losing their faith when they leave the nest?

God gave Israel a stern warning that this could happen along with instructions on how to prevent it. “But beware that your hearts do not turn from God to worship other gods. For if you do, the anger of the Lord will be hot against you, and he will shut the heavens – there will be no rain and no harvest, and you will quickly perish from the good land the Lord has given you. So keep these commandments carefully in mind. Tie them to your hand to remind you to obey them, and tie them to your forehead between your eyes! Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting at home, before breakfast! Write them upon the doors of your houses and upon your gates, so that as long as there is sky above the earth, you and your children will enjoy the good life awaiting you in the land the Lord has promised you” (Deuteronomy 11: 16-21 TLB).

To prevent young people’s hearts

from turning from God, parents must start early, be goal driven and practice the instructions God gave to Israel. As good as memorizing scriptures is, it’s not enough for today’s young people. Proof texting is not enough. Kids must learn how to think biblically – and that means they must know how to understand scripture in varying circumstances and contexts. A good family activity for teaching your kids to think critically about biblical truths might include debating creation vs evolution. Before your kids are old enough to go to college have such family debates. You will learn a lot about what your kids understand and don’t understand. And your kids will learn to think critically about biblical truths. They will be much better prepared for what will be thrown at them when they go to college.

Children must be taught from the earliest age to have a greater love for God than anything else in this world, including a church organization or church activities. This love must anchor them to Christ regardless of what may come. “The antidote to all this is an owned faith. Early on, kids need to be aware that they’re part of the larger body of Christ and that their faith doesn’t depend on their home church” (ibid). Their love for Christ must be unconditional and lasting. Help your kids to fall in love with Christ rather than ancillary church activities. Summer camp, lock-ins, youth publications, and Christian youth activities of all kinds are good. But they are not enough if they don’t inextricably bind the loyalty and love of every young person to Jesus Christ.

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**
9:30 a.m. & 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
- Little Rock, Arkansas**
5:30 p.m. & 5:15 a.m. daily
KAAY 1090 AM
- San Francisco, California**
2:03 p.m. & 11:30 p.m. daily
KDIA 1640 AM
- 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
WYND 1310 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**
9:00 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. daily
WFAM 1050 AM
- Kansas City, Kansas**
6:30 a.m. & 4:00 p.m. daily
KCNW 1380 AM
- London, Kentucky**
12:00 noon daily - WGWM 980 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
- Portland, Oregon**
12:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. daily
KKPZ 1330 AM
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**
4:30 p.m. & 12:30 p.m. daily
WWNL 1080 AM

Calendar Of Events

July 19th - 20th - Christian Renewal Conference, Chicago Illinois

There will be a Christian Renewal Conference in Chicago, IL from July 19 through July 20th. Speakers include Ronald L. Dart, Ken Svehla, and David Havir. For more information see the CEM website at www.cemnetwork.com, or call Faye Brown at 1-888-BIBLE 44.

Daily Radio

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

- Anderson, South Carolina**
9:00 a.m. daily - WRIX 1020 AM
- Charleston, South Carolina**
7:30 a.m. & 7:30 p.m. daily
WZJY 1480 AM
- Greenville, South Carolina**
11:30 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. daily
WELP 1360 AM
- Chattanooga, Tennessee**
5:00 p.m. daily - WLMR 1450 AM
- Knoxville, Tennessee**
7:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. daily
WITA 1490 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.

July 19 - July 25

Christian Holidays 1

July 26 - August 1

Christian Holidays 2

August 2 - August 8

Christian Holidays 3

August 9 - August 15

Christian Holidays 4

August 16 - August 22

Christian Holidays 5

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