

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

How Jesus Saves

It has been a while since I have seen a roadside sign trumpeting “Jesus Saves.” I saw one painted on the side of a barn somewhere along Route 66 back when people still drove to California. I recall there was one high on top of a church in downtown Los Angeles. I have been a believer in Jesus as long as I can remember, and I surely consider myself a Christian, but I still wonder a little when I see one of those signs.

What I wonder about is the message these signs convey to the *non-Christian* folks who see them. Jesus saves from *what*? Jesus saves *for* what? I don’t mean to criticize the signs, because they aren’t intended to convey the entire Christian faith. And perhaps to a person whose life is coming apart, they are beacons that show there just might be another, better way.

What started me thinking about this was the fine book by David Aikman, “A Man of Faith, The Spiritual Journey of George W. Bush.” And it is profoundly clear that for President Bush, becoming a Christian has been a long spiritual journey, not a single event. There have been people in the history of

faith who have had a Damascus Road experience. Most don’t. But because of the jargon used by so many religious people, not a few attempt to describe their conversion as a light from heaven, a moment that turned them around. In many cases, though, that one moment in their life was a long time coming and has still not ended.

What I found fascinating, and encouraging, is that while George Bush has described himself as having “accepted Christ as his personal Savior,” and as being born again, the President and the White House have stopped using those terms. No, I don’t object to the terms. What is encouraging to me is the *reason* they stopped.

They made the change to get away from the *jargon* that Christian people are accustomed to using among themselves and

which is meaningless to outsiders. I don’t know who encouraged them to do that, but I thank him or her.

Christians have long hindered their efforts by hiding their faith behind slogans like “Jesus Saves,” and by not explaining to people what that means.

For George Bush, there were many important moments. One was when the well-known evangelist Arthur Blessitt, whose claim to fame came from carrying a cross around the world, explained personal salvation to him. Another was time spent with Billy Graham. But no one really knows, perhaps not even George Bush himself, when the real turn came. Perhaps that is because the turn itself was so subtle and so early that no one noticed where it was leading. Not even George Bush.

But all of Bush’s closest friends believe that the moment he changed from an “Assenting Believer” to a *follower* of Christ was his conversation with Billy

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Born to Win in your area...

Many of the *Born to Win* programs are sponsored locally by a church, a person, or a group of individuals. If you would like to make a difference in your community with the *Born to Win* broadcast, talk with your church or friends who may be willing to help. Then call Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44 for information on sponsoring the *Born to Win* program in your community. Together, you can make a difference!



As I begin this article it is 80 degrees outside, so it must be time once again to begin planning for summer camp. This year's summer camp will be held at Camp Wewoka Woods, near Wewoka, Oklahoma from June 26 to July 3. We will send 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 lsw@cemnetwork.com to request information about camp.

The tuition fee remains at only \$250. But, we also recognize that not everyone can afford to attend camp, so a special camp scholarship fund has been established. Anyone who would like to help sponsor a deserving young person to attend camp can make a contribution to this fund. This special donation will still be tax deductible, but will be used exclusively for helping a young person come to camp.

Summer camp is open to all teens who will be 13 by the time camp ends and who have not yet turned 19. Summer camp is open to all teens, regardless of their church affiliation, or that of their parents.

Activities include water skiing and tubing, swimming, horseback riding, group initiatives, ultimate frisbee, arts & crafts, volleyball and basketball, as well as dances and the annual camp fun show. Each year we try to add something new and we plan to continue that this year. We always have our daily cabin Bible studies and group studies, as well as the "huddle" to close the day.

If you know someone you think would enjoy camp, be sure to ask 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 donation to the camp scholarship fund.

Back in Action

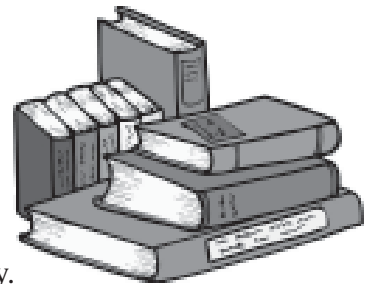
A book review by Allie Dart

This is an inspiring true story of the first amputee to return to active command in Iraq. Captain David Rozelle tells his personal, gripping story from being deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom, to the fateful day four months later when a land mine tore off his right foot.

As you read this book, you gain first-hand knowledge of the war in Iraq and appreciation for what our soldiers are willing to do for our country. You will relive the excruciating pain Captain Rozelle experienced on his road to recovery. You'll gain respect for his determination and courage as he falls, badly hurts his stump, yet keeps on trying. After so long a period on morphine, he became addicted, yet he realized this was one more challenge he had to meet head-on and overcome.

On his road to recovery, thoughtless kids followed Rozelle down the street saying, "Hey, look at that freak with no foot . . . wow!" Or, "Look, it's that one-legged freak." As brave as this soldier was, these remarks cut deeply. These mean and inconsiderate kids had no appreciation for the sacrifice he had personally made for their own freedom.

This book takes you with Rozelle as he, his wife Kim, and their six day old baby boy meet President Bush and tour Air Force One. You see the Captain gain a new sense of purpose as he learns to walk, run, swim, ride a bike, and ski with his prosthesis. Even though there is some unseemly language in this book, young and old alike will also be inspired to overcome all adversity. Captain Rozelle said, "As an amputee, I was proud to stand each day and give their (soldiers returning from Iraq) briefings. It was a good testimony to each of them that the U.S. cavalryman can and will overcome all adversity."



Jesus Saves

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Graham. Aikman describes an assenting believer as one who agrees with the Christian faith and at some level expresses assent to it. I fear that describes the religion of too many who consider themselves Christians. They are mere "believers." They are not followers.

But what really struck me about Bush's spiritual journey, was that his moment of *real change* came entirely on its own. And it didn't come out of nowhere. It came from lifelong reading of the Bible, a remarkable persistence in pursuing Bible study alone and with a community Bible study group. Like water wears away a stone, the persistent reading of the Bible sooner or later will wear a hole in a man's conscience.

The most dramatic moment for Bush came after a night when he and his friends had entirely too much to drink. He woke with a terrible hangover and wasn't able to complete his run. He made a decision while he was running to never drink again, and apparently has followed up on that decision. David Aikman describes the result this way:

"Every day for several years, his mind and spirit had been absorbing Christian truths from the Bible. But now, unencumbered by old, strong, alcohol induced habits, he was free to live out those truths far more powerfully than he must originally have imagined possible."

The change was revolutionary, and I think that is what so many Christians are trying to tell you when they say that "Jesus Saves." Their lives were coming apart and

the decision, not merely to believe in Jesus, but to *follow* Him, turned their lives around. George Bush himself said: "When you turn your heart and your life over to Christ, when you accept Christ as the Savior, it changes your heart, it changes your *life*. And that's what happened to me." Yes, and it has happened to a lot of people.

The fact is, evangelists don't save people. God does that. And it is rarely a singular experience that does the trick. All evangelists can do is call your attention to God and the reason why your life isn't working. It is a long road, along which the Spirit of God steers us, to bring us to the place where we finally make the big change.

And what, exactly, is that change? It is the moment when we make Jesus Christ our Master, and the Lord of our life. It is the day He becomes our Rabbi, our Teacher. It is the time when we begin to hang on His words and to direct our choices by those words.

Salvation is a miracle, but it is not magic. You get the impression that it is magic to hear some people talk. "Just give your hand to the preacher and your heart to the Lord and you are saved." "Being saved means you will spend eternity in heaven instead of hell."

I'm sorry. It's not quite that simple, and Jesus told you it was not. When you give your hand to the preacher and join the church, you become an assenting believer. But when you make Jesus your Master, the process of salvation really begins.

That's why I recently presented a message titled, "How

**Christian Educational
Ministries**

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Three Months Ended
January 31, 2005

Receipts:	
Contributions	\$376355.62
CEM Bookstore	29810.09
Youth Ministry	1730.00
Interest Income	2345.73
	<u>\$410241.44</u>
Expenses:	
A/V Supplies	\$ 9383.72
Rents	10116.30
Computer Operations	2354.80
Office & Adm. Expenses	1803.92
Mailing Expenses	4941.58
Postage	21744.35
Printing	15434.96
Radio Expenses	143620.83
Telephone & Utilities	2279.14
Youth Ministries	6070.33
Conferences	385.58
CEM Bookstore	7841.43
Foreign Operations	2011.11
Website Maintenance	3825.29
Employee Benefits	11740.55
Wages & Payroll Taxes	81652.66
Total Operating Expenses	<u>325206.55</u>
Increase in Fund Balance	<u>\$85034.89</u>

Jesus Saves." I'd like to send you a *FREE* cassette tape of the message. Just check the box on the enclosed card and return it to us.

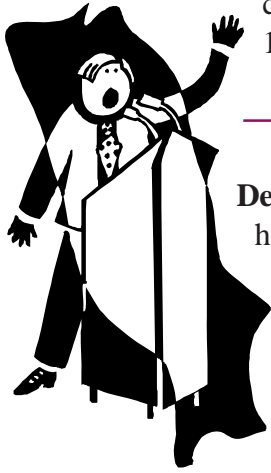
Sincerely, and talking about Jesus,

Ronald L. Dart

P.S. That tape cassette is free, but if you can make a contribution to prevent us having to charge for it, we would be more than grateful. We can tell more people, "*How Jesus Saves.*" But don't let this keep you from requesting the tape. We are serious when we say it is free.

Calendar of Events

Austin, Texas - You are invited to hear Ronald L. Dart, the voice of the *Born to Win* broadcast, March 19, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. at the Austin Church of God, which meets at the Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Church, 3315 El Salido Parkway, Cedar Park, Texas. For further information please contact Mark Gully at 512-586-4670, or www.austinchurchofgod.org or CEM at 1-888- BIBLE 44. There will be refreshments served before and after services.



Destin, Florida - You are invited to attend the Spring Mini-Feast during the spring holy days, April 22-24, 2005 at the Seascape Resort Conference Center in Destin. Ronald L. Dart is scheduled to speak as follows: April 22, 7:00 p.m. - Passover service; April 23, 2:00 p.m. - Sabbath Service; April 23, 7:00 p.m. - Night to be Much Observed; and April 24, 2:00 p.m. - First Day of Unleavened Bread. The highlights of the Feast will be inspiration, edification, and great fellowship. For more information, call Gary or Shirley George at (850) 837-0485.



Family Bible Retreat

You are invited to join us for a Family Bible Retreat sponsored by CEM over the Memorial Day weekend at the Bel Arco Resort, Bull Shoals, AR. It begins Friday evening, May 27, and ends at noon May 30, 2005. Bring your entire family for a full schedule of sermons, seminars, workshops, YEA classes, delightful activities, and adventure. Ronald L. Dart will enlighten, inspire, and delight you with God's Word. Other outstanding speakers will be heard as well. Reasonably priced accommodations at the Bel Arco Resort are limited, so call toll free today 866-236-2726 to reserve your room and tell them you're with CEM. For information on an RV park and other accommodations in the area, call Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44 or check out our website at www.cemnetwork.com.

Christian Educational Ministries



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