

# Living to Win

January 15, 2006  
Volume 11, Number 1  
Christian Educational Ministries

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

## Before the Beginning

Let's think the unthinkable for a moment. We all know that "*In the beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was *in the beginning* with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

What I want us to think about is the time *before* the beginning, and that is no simple matter. In the beginning, the Word already *was*. What I want to examine is, what was there *before* the beginning?

Now, stretch your imagination as far as it will go. Theologians draw the distinction that God is the only *uncreated* being. We have an image of God in our minds, so let's call out that image and place it in, for want of a better term, space. We have our God alone, the only light that exists in what would otherwise be total darkness, with nothing for God to see, because nothing has been created yet.

How long do we suppose that God would have been content to allow that state to continue before He said to Himself, "I think I will create something"? Not long, you say. But here is the problem. No matter when God made the decision to create something, there was an eternity of time before that.

If you are getting a sinking feeling in your stomach when you try to imagine all this, good for you. You probably should. This picture just doesn't work, does it? It makes no sense at all. It may not make sense because it is just over our heads. Or, it may not make sense because it isn't *true*. Accepting the limitations of our minds, because we have no choice but to accept them, it is still certainly not true that God stood alone in the dark for the eternity that existed before He created anything.

So what *was* true? Well, there was a beginning, that is true, and on this both science and the Bible agree. John not only tells us that God and the Word coexisted at the very beginning, but he goes a step beyond that. Of the Word, he says,

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

So whatever we can know about the time *before* the beginning, there was nothing and no one created before the beginning. There was not even time as we know it, because that is also where *time* began. Steven Hawking refers to that moment of beginning as "the singularity" (his term for what others call "the Big Bang") and concludes that it is impossible to look beyond the singularity – the moment when the universe came into being and began its expansion. The reason is that all science can do is look at what is. Before the singularity, there was nothing. Nothing except God, that is, and a lonely God at that.

But wait. There were angels, weren't there? Yes, but angels are created beings. What about the time before angels? How long was that?

*continued on page 3. . .*

## How is CEM Financed?

CEM is supported by the tithes and offerings of dedicated people like you. They want to hear the *Born to Win* broadcast on more and more stations across this nation. They have a passion to see lives changed and anchored to Christ. They want to help children and teenagers learn more about God, His Son Jesus Christ, and keep them in the faith. Our donors believe in what we're doing and we thank God for them. Without their help, we couldn't do the job. Would you like to join this faithful group of supporters and play a key role in changing lives? We invite you to share in the joy of participating on a regular basis in Christian Educational Ministries.

## Family Retreat Memorial Day Weekend, May 26-29, 2006 Paris Landing State Park

By Skip Martin

Come join us over the Memorial Day weekend for lots of food, fun, and fellowship at the Paris Landing State Park, in Paris, Tennessee. Oh yes, the food will be a rich spiritual feast with great physical food as well.

Special YEA books with exciting, action-packed, relevant lessons or seminars will be provided for students from the ages of three to 20. YEA Classes and Seminars will be held Saturday, Sunday, and Monday mornings. Spiritually enhancing and life changing seminars for adults will be conducted at the same time as the YEA Classes/Seminars.

We know your journey may be long and tiring. You and the kids will be hungry. So join us when you arrive on Friday night for sandwiches and refreshments provided by CEM. We want to shake your hand, give you a big hug, hear what you've been up to, help you get oriented, and make you feel welcome. A cookout is planned for Saturday and/or Sunday night, also provided by CEM. Other activities for the whole family are in the planning stages. Paris Landing has a *FREE* musical concert on most Saturday nights, but the 2006 schedule isn't complete. If there is no Saturday night concert, we hope to have our own.

Beautiful Paris Landing State Park is located on the banks of the Kentucky Lake in Tennessee (about 30 miles from Clarksville, TN). Check out the link below and whet your appetite for this exceptional weekend retreat. We took these pictures on our planning trip so you would be able to tell how lovely the area is.

Affordable rooms are only \$75 per night. But it gets better. If we use at least 50 rooms, they will give us a \$10 per night discount. Help us spread the word. Each room has two double beds, a small balcony, and a great view! This place is popular, so make your reservations as soon as possible. Our group reservation number is 3043. Paris Landing's reservation number is 1-800-250-8614.

We need your help to make this retreat all that you want it to be. We're asking for volunteers for teaching YEA Classes, cooking, helping with activities, etc. If you have some experience, or just the "wanna helps," let us know. You can email me at [smartin400@sbcglobal.net](mailto:smartin400@sbcglobal.net). Paris Landing State Park: <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/parks/ParisLanding/>. Pictures of Paris Landing: <http://groups.msn.com/CEMMemorialDayFamilyFellowshipWeekend/shoebox.msnw>.

### Christian Educational Ministries

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

Receipts:	
Contributions	\$353555
CEM Bookstore	21227
Interest Income	4196
	\$378978

Expenses:	
A/V Supplies	\$ 7640
Rent	9474
Office & Adm. Expenses	1204
Mailing Expenses	4738
Postage	18317
Printing	16756
Radio Expenses	157881
Telephone & Utilities	1809
Youth Ministries	4989
CEM Bookstore	2444
Foreign Operations	2013
Website Maintenance	1069
Employee Benefits	12738
Wages & Payroll Taxes	90183

Total Operating Expenses	331255
Increase in Fund Balance	\$ 47723

### Feast of Tabernacles Statement of Operations

Total Offering	\$54022
Total Expenses	48257
Fund Increase	\$ 5765

### *In Memory*

Christian Educational  
Ministries gratefully  
acknowledges the generous  
donation made in memory of  
LaVerne Gartner  
of Minot, ND  
who passed away in  
November 2005.  
He will be greatly missed  
by his wife, Valerie,  
and friends and loved ones.

*Before the Beginning  
continued from page 1 . . .*

There is one short passage in the Bible where the throne room of the universe is described. That room is populated by one on the throne, by four living creatures, and by 24 elders. How long had they been there? Were they created, and if so when? The answer is simple: we don't know. It is not revealed. (See Revelation 4:1-11.)

Most of this is beyond our ken, but the idea of God being alone begins to wear a little thin. Heaven is populated by a lot of beings. One of them is God. Where did the others come from? Had they, too, always existed, or were they created?

This chapter ends with this song: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (verse 11).

"You have created all things." That means that there was a beginning where God acted to create, and there was nothing else before that time.

Before we get completely lost out here in space, let's clarify one issue. When we speak of God, simply, we usually mean the One Jesus called, "My Father." Paul spoke of that One as "God the Father." But there is a major crisis in our picture later in that first chapter of John. "He (the Word) was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:2,3).

Immediately we are presented with not one, but two beings. The Word was God, but it was also

with God So God was not alone after all. John opens this up further when he plainly identifies the Word as Creator. Then he adds: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (v.14).

There's a lot in that short verse, but two things become clear. In John, the Word is Jesus Christ who came in the flesh, and He came from the Father. Therefore Jesus, the Word, is Himself God. Getting confused?

There are two who are called God in this place. The second of the two was the One who created all things. Therefore, God was not alone from eternity. Amazingly, we have looked beyond Hawking's singularity. We have looked beyond the beginning and come to understand *something*.

It is still mind boggling, because now we have two alone in the dark. But let's do some more stretching of the imagination. Whatever we may conclude about the universe, science and the Bible agree that planet earth had a beginning and that it will have an end. We can study the rocks and conclude that the earth has not always been here, and science tells us an approximate age. Not only that, be it known, from the laws of science and from the Bible, that our sun will eventually die and we will all die with it. From all this, I conclude that the earth is merely a project in a much bigger world than we can imagine.

Not only is the earth merely a project, so is the universe. There was a time when it didn't exist, and there will be a time in the

future when the last star burns out and all is dark again. Here is something important to know about the Bible. The Bible is only about the time from the beginning until now. It can only deal with *this* project of God.

The Bible is only, *can* only, deal with this project. It does not reveal anything of the time before the beginning, except that God already was. Some are fond of asking, who created God? No one. Where did God come from? Nowhere. He has always been.

Now I blow a fuse about this time. I can sort of grasp the idea of eternity going forward. But I can't hold in my mind the idea of eternity going back in time. My mind, and yours, have been created to see things in terms of beginnings and ends. So God does not ask us to see before the beginning of the project that includes you and me. But that doesn't keep us from wondering about it, does it?

It seems clear enough to me that God was not alone from eternity. And I can't help myself. I wonder what He was doing for all that time before "the Beginning." There's more, but you'll have to write and ask for a *FREE* cassette tape of a radio program titled, "Before the Beginning." Just check the box on the enclosed card and return it to us.

And thanks for staying in touch,

*Ronald L. Dart*

P.S. Don't forget, that cassette tape is *FREE*. If you can make a donation to help, it will be gratefully received, but don't fail to order the tape on that account.

## The Lonely God

A book by Ronald L. Dart

Is it possible that an infinite God could find Himself wanting anything? Was He discontented to remain alone? The Bible says "It is not good for man to be alone." If it's not good for man to be alone, then perhaps it wasn't good for God to be alone either. Did God reveal Himself as a Trinity – the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? God made a decision to start with a comprehensive design that included man, whom He made in His own image. The Bible begins and ends with a tree. When Adam and Eve ate of the tree, did they "fall" or did they make a wrong choice? What were the consequences? After they ate of the tree, God drove them from the idyllic Garden of Eden. Learn from this insightful book where to find the bridge back and how the body of Christ fits with the Tree of Life. The paperback edition is offered for \$11.95, or the hardback edition for \$24.95, plus shipping and handling. To order, call 1.888.BIBLE.44.

### Read Our Mail

"We enjoyed the 2006 Feast at Destin, sermons and seminars were great. The Youth program was fantastic, it's better every year." R & EK

"We started supporting CEM and introduced YEA to our group. I have taught the Beginners class for three years. What a blessing it is to have the YEA lessons! I love children and love to teach them. The planned lessons make it so easy for us and are very effective in teaching God's word and way of life."

"Wasn't it truly the greatest Feast ever? Thanking God for the love you have for Him to give all of us a glimpse of what it's really all about! We also thank God for your dedication to the work that He has given you to do and to share with all of us." E & B

"Just finished 'The Breakout,' going through it on my own. I really enjoyed it. I resisted the style at first because I'm leery of study aids that 'lead you' to preconceived conclusions. I like the word to speak for itself. However, it really grew on me until I could hardly put it down. It was very well written and definitely kept my interest. I found the core text of the lessons to be very exegesimal as it tackled no more than a couple chapters at a time which I appreciated, while giving other scriptures for further study. A nice balance. The questions and even just the story

## Calendar of Events

**Memorial Day Weekend, May 26-29, 2006** - Family Retreat at Paris Landing State Park, TN. For your affordable room reservations call 1-800-250-8614 and give 3043 for the reservation number. There will be great sermons, seminars, YEA classes and fun family activities. To help, e-mail smartin400@sbcglobal.net.

**YEA Teen Summer Camp, June 25-July 2, 2006** at Wewoka, OK. To receive an application and early notice, please send your name, complete mailing address, e-mail address, telephone number and date of birth to Larry Watkins at CEM, or e-mail him at lsw@cemnetwork.com.

**Feast of Tabernacles, October 6** (evening service) -14, 2006 at the Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN. For information about the area check out [www.chattanoogaofun.com](http://www.chattanoogaofun.com) and for housing and other Feast information go to [www.borntowin.net](http://www.borntowin.net) 2006 Feast, Events, then "Feast of Tabernacles."



### Radio Update

Scottsbluff, NE  
**KCMI** 96.9 FM  
Saturday 12:00 Noon

An additional  
new time is:  
New Orleans, LA  
**WLNO** 1060 AM  
M-F 12:30 p.m.

### Christian Educational Ministries

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

line encouraged me to really get into the word and I found my study to be very Berean-like.

"I think this would work very well as a portion of a small group study and I look forward to getting the rest!" SM