

# Living to Win

February 15, 2006  
Volume 11, Number 2  
Christian Educational Ministries

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

## God Loves a Mystery

After a lot of thought, I have concluded that God loves a mystery. Years ago, there was a radio show called, "I Love a Mystery," and I can remember hearing it on my old Philco radio.

The reason I think God may love a mystery is because I am made in the image of God, and I love mysteries. I like puzzles – jigsaw, crossword, mazes, word finders, you name it. And sometimes when I am studying the Bible I find myself faced with a mystery. What on earth was God saying or doing on this occasion and what does it all mean?

Long ago, someone complained to me about all these mysteries that needed solving. Why does God hide stuff? "Why," he wanted to know, "doesn't God come right out and tell us plainly so we don't have to guess?" That's a fair question that I'll try to answer. First, how plain does God have to be? What part of "Thou shalt not steal" do we not understand? We don't have to guess about adultery, honoring our parents, or telling the truth. The Ten Commandments make these plain.

Then there is this to consider.

Which of two lessons are you most likely to remember the longest? The one spoon-fed to you by a lecturer, or the one you had to struggle through all by yourself? The truth is that the struggle to understand a thing is an important part of any learning process. When you have found your own way to an answer to a difficult question, you are far more likely to remember it.

And, I could add a third reason why God doesn't just spell it out for us. God loves a mystery. We should understand that well enough. There are people who take great pleasure in designing crossword puzzles that drive us crazy. Maybe God likes a good treasure hunt, or a

logic puzzle. Surely there is no greater teacher, and He seems to prefer experiential learning.

A proverb comes to mind: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter" (Proverbs 25:2). So there you are. Instead of painting a picture for us, God gives us a three dimensional jigsaw puzzle to solve.

But there may be a more serious side to this. There is a rather difficult passage in Romans that reveals something unexpected. In the 11th chapter Paul tries to sort his way through a vexing problem. Why, he wondered, were so many Jews rejecting the Gospel outright? After all, they were God's people. They had the promise of the Messiah, now He is come, and they want nothing to do with Him. It just didn't make sense.

*continued on page 3. . .*

## Supporting the "Mast"

CEM is most grateful to all of you "partners" who have chosen to support the work God is doing through CEM and the *Born to Win* broadcast. The definition of partner in nautical terms is one of the heavy timbers that strengthen a ship's deck to support a mast. We are eternally grateful to those of you who partner with CEM by supporting the "mast." Without your monthly and bimonthly contributions we would be unable to go through the doors God is opening before CEM and the *Born to Win* broadcast. You are making a big difference! Thanks Partner.

## Family Retreat Memorial Day Weekend, May 26-29, 2006

By Skip Martin

“Are you ready for some football?” So ring the words of Hank Williams, Jr. each Monday night during football season. Well, the real question is, “Are you ready for a mini-feast?” Yes, the CEM Memorial Day Family Retreat at beautiful Paris Landing State Park, Paris, TN will be like a mini-feast.

Get ready for stimulating seminars, action-packed YEA classes, lots of music, good food and fellowship. *Special* YEA lessons and seminars that are relevant and exciting are already written for students from the ages of three to 20. Spiritually enhancing and life changing seminars for adults will be conducted at the same time as the YEA classes each morning.

Come on and join us when you arrive on Friday night for sandwiches and refreshments provided by CEM. On Saturday morning, we will have seminars and YEA classes. There will be a church worship service Saturday afternoon with lots of inspirational music and Ron Dart speaking.

A cookout is planned for Saturday night. We need volunteers to help with this cookout. Contact me at [smartin400@sbcglobal.net](mailto:smartin400@sbcglobal.net). Then there will be a free outdoor concert provided by the State Park at the Paris Landing Amphitheater. There will be more YEA classes and seminars Sunday morning with afternoon fellowship and activities. Stephanie Smith is putting together another pool party this year for the kids. Kids, bring your bathing suits and be prepared for a great time.

Our famous Pie and Ice Cream Social will be on Sunday night, with a special twist. We want everyone to bring their favorite games to play – card games, puzzles, dominoes, Bible Trivia, etc. Pam Dewey is putting together a family-oriented scavenger hunt that will challenge everyone, and encourage young and mature to interrelate and have a wonderful time. You won't be hunting for “things,” like bottle caps, but for people, information, and ideas. A seven year old will enjoy this activity as much as a teenager or a 70-year-old grandmother. The hunt will last all weekend long, with prizes for the winners to be presented at the Pie and Ice Cream Social on Sunday night.

We'll have YEA classes and seminars Monday morning, followed by a closing address by Ron Dart.

Paris Landing State Park is located on the banks of the Kentucky Lake near Paris, TN (about 30 miles from Clarksville). Rooms are \$75 per night, but it gets better. If we use at least 50 rooms, the park will give us a \$10 per night discount. 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. The Paris Landing State Park reservation number is 1-800-250-8614 and our group number is 3043. To whet your appetite and to see pictures, checkout Paris Landing State Park's website at <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/ParisLanding>, <http://groups.msn.com/CEMMemorialDayFamilyFellowshipWeekend/shoebox.msnw/Page=1>.

### *Radio Update*

Austin, TX **KLGO** 99.3 FM Sunday 7:30 a.m.

Houston, TX **KTEK** 1110 AM M-F 8:00 a.m., Sunday 9:30 a.m.

Des Moines, IA **KPSZ** 940 AM M-F 12:30 p.m., Sunday 7:00 a.m.

Des Moines, IA **KRNT** 1350 AM Sunday 9:30 a.m.

Shreveport, LA **KWKH** 1130 AM\* Sunday 7:30 a.m. \* 50,000 watt

*God Loves a Mystery*

*continued from page 1 . . .*

Paul likens Israel to a domestic olive tree, and the Gentiles to a wild olive tree. He concludes that it was necessary to break some of the natural branches out of the olive tree (Israel) so the branches of the wild olive tree (Gentiles) could be grafted in. Why was it necessary to get the Jews (at least some of them) out of the way so the Gentiles could enter? Wouldn't there be room for all in God's Kingdom? Wasn't it possible for the Gentiles to simply be brought in among the Jews?

It might have been, but there was really strong resistance to this idea among the Jews. Not all of them, of course. Virtually all the disciples of Jesus were Jews in the beginning, but even they had a resistance to the Gentiles coming into the faith. In the minds of many, God was the God of the Jews and no one else. But this was not the will of God Himself.

Here is what Jesus told them before His ascension:

*"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all the **Gentiles**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).*

No matter. No one wanted to go to the Gentiles. Finally, God led Peter, virtually by the hand, to Cornelius and showed him

what must be done. Okay, now everyone has the picture, right? Wrong. It took the calling and commissioning of Paul to get the job done. So God had to break the faith of Jesus loose from its Jewish roots to allow the Gentiles to see and hear.

But in the process of explaining all this, Paul said this of the unbelieving Jews: *"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all"* (Romans 11:32).

You can be forgiven, if you don't catch his drift. Unbelief? Makes mercy possible? How could shutting a person up in a state of unbelief allow God to have mercy on him? Hang on, and I'll try to explain. Jesus, in one of His parables concluded with this judgment:

*"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more"* (Luke 12:47-48).

Now imagine for a moment that you are reading the Bible one day and you come across something you are not doing and you certainly should be. Two things can happen at that point. One, you can repent and do what is right or, two, you can close your eyes to what is right and continue on your way.

That, in turn, presents God with two alternatives. He can intervene and force you to see what is there. And if you don't respond, He can write you off forever. After all, to sin willfully in the face of full revelation is the bitter end. Or, He can conclude that you aren't quite ready yet and count you as sinning in a state of ignorance and plan to visit you later. But God doesn't want to wash His hands of you.

When you think about it, there may be a lot of reasons why God loves a mystery. I developed this theme further in a radio program I would like to send to you. Just check the box on the enclosed card and we'll get a cassette tape of *God Loves a Mystery* in the mail to you right away.

Keep in touch. The world is getting scarier by the day.

Sincerely pressing to get the Word out,

*Ronald L. Dart*

*In Memory*

CEM is very grateful for the generous donation made in memory of Vernon Lohse who died January 7, 2006.

Our prayers and heartfelt sympathy go out to Vernon's wife, Eunice Lohse, of Minot, ND, at the loss of her husband.

## ***The Lonely God***

*A book review by Toni Coffee*

Anyone who has heard and enjoyed Ron Dart's *Born to Win* radio program – or his sermons or seminars – will certainly welcome his first and newly-published book, *The Lonely God* (Shelbyville, Ky: Wasteland Press, 206 pp., \$24.95 hardbound or \$9.99 paperback edition, plus shipping and handling).

*The Lonely God* condenses a subject of vast scope – ranging from God before the creation of the universe to the final judgment – into a slim volume. The book consists of 26 chapters, each addressing some aspect of God, His creation, or His plan of salvation. Its organization and chapter length make it easy to read as well as to move directly to subjects of particular interest. Mr. Dart plainly states his thesis in Chapter 1, "The Paradox," which also serves as the introduction:

"This book is not an attempt at a unified theory of God nor an attempt to argue for this or that dogma. . . My objective is to share the journey toward understanding, to walk alongside you and talk about God. And perhaps, dare we think it, to find friendship with God."

He then proceeds to talk with us, in his easy, familiar style, about a number of subjects of great interest and concern to anyone who is seriously considering his walk with God. You might be drawn to a chapter dealing with an issue of personal interest – for example, "How Many Gods?" (Chapter 4) dealing with Trinitarianism, or "Talking With God" (Chapter 17) about prayer. For me, the price of admission was repaid by chapter 8, "Liberty." Mr. Dart succinctly resolves the problem of how a righteous and loving God could allow evil in His creation: "God is good, man is free. And if you're not free to do evil, you're not free at all. . . We have the freedom to do good. We have the freedom to harm, and if we have it, so do others. If others have that freedom we have the freedom to suffer from what they do."

What grabbed my attention about the chapter on "Liberty" in particular was that it was so. . . well, sensible. After reading it, I came to see that it was so obvious in its simplicity that I really should have understood it that way before. Much of the book is like that – Mr. Dart has applied his talent

for making the difficult become readily understandable, and in the process helped me to clarify my muddled thinking about many subjects.

*The Lonely God* is filled with insightful, thought-provoking presentations of subjects that could be contentious, but are presented with a non-confrontational approach. That makes *The Lonely God* an excellent vehicle for introducing Christians of any church affiliation to a new appreciation of our awesome God. The book captures the tone of the *Born to Win* broadcasts, a friendly, conversational approach to the great questions that puzzle many modern Christians. After reading this book, I felt like I had in fact had a long, probing talk with a friend as we walked toward a better understanding of God.

### **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, email [smartin400@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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](mailto: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.chattanoogaafun.com](http://www.chattanoogaafun.com), and for housing and other Feast information go to [www.borntowin.net](http://www.borntowin.net), 2006 Feast, Events, then "Feast of Tabernacles."

### *Christian Educational Ministries*

PO Box 560

Whitehouse, Texas 75791

**phone:** 1-888-BIBLE-44

**fax:** 903.509.1139

**e-mail:** [adm@cemnetwork.com](mailto:adm@cemnetwork.com)

**website:** [www.borntowin.net](http://www.borntowin.net)

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