

Living to Win

December 15, 2006
Volume 11, Number 12
Christian Educational Ministries

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

Moses and the Constitution

It is surprising at times where insights will come from. I was browsing the Internet and came upon a speech by a Supreme Court Justice of these United States, which helped me understand some things about biblical law that I had not gotten quite straight. The speaker was Antonin Scalia; he was speaking at The Catholic University of America in Washington. The speech was ten years old, but that didn't matter a bit.

Christian people have a lot of difficulty with biblical law and sometimes take shortcuts in trying to understand it. One of the most common approaches is to divide the law into types. Thomas Aquinas divided the law into three types: moral, ceremonial, and judicial. Something like this is widely accepted by Christians, allowing that the moral law continues, but the others have passed away. So, how did Justice Scalia help me with this?

The title of his speech was, "A Theory of Constitution Interpretation," and it seems to me that the big problem Christians have with biblical law is not so much the application of law, but the *interpretation* of law. He began his speech

with a question: What is the object of the court? He went on to discuss the issues:

"This is a matter of interest to not only judges and lawyers, but any intelligent American citizen, philosopher or not. What do you think your judges are doing when they interpret the Constitution? It's sad to tell you after 200 years, there is not agreement on this rather fundamental question: What is the object of the enterprise?"

Well, I can't say I am surprised to learn that we lack an understanding of what the judges in the courts are actually doing. But it is good to have it laid out in such clear terms, and I think Justice Scalia is implying that not even the

justices themselves have agreement about the object of the exercise. I learned something about constitutional law recently that I didn't have straight. I thought that the Constitution should be interpreted on the basis of original intent and I assumed that Justice Scalia thought the same way. What I learned was that there is a marked difference between "original intent" and "originalism." The difference is more important than I thought. Here is how Scalia explained it:

"The theory of originalism treats a constitution like a statute, and gives it the meaning that its words were understood to bear at the time they were promulgated. You will sometimes hear it described as the theory of original intent. You will never hear me refer to original intent, because, as I say, I am first of all a textualist. . . . If you are a textualist, you don't care

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.

2007 CEM Feast of Tabernacles

By Skip Martin

We are pleased to announce that the 2007 CEM Feast of Tabernacles will be held at the Emerald Coast Conference Center (ECCC) on Okaloosa Island, in Florida. This is a change from the original plan to return to Chattanooga, Tennessee for the 2007 Feast. We chose to move back to Florida because of the family-friendly housing there.

Finding the perfect location for the CEM Feast is a very difficult task. We must have a location nailed down at least four years in advance, or we could find ourselves “out in the cold.” When choosing a location, there are several “musts” that we consider. First is the facility. It must have plenty of rooms for YEA classes, two or three larger rooms for seminars, and one very large room that will accommodate at least a thousand people for services. Second, we must make sure that the housing needs of CEM Feast attendees can be met. Since the CEM Feast is a family affair, the area must have housing with multi-bedrooms, baths, and kitchen facilities. And third, the area must have a variety of activities, not only for things CEM sponsors, but for “on your own” times. There are other things that we consider, but those are the three “musts.”

There are many locations along the Florida Coast that have family-friendly housing with off-season rates, but then there are those pesky hurricanes. Many will remember 2004, when we had only a couple of weeks to relocate the Feast. In 2003, we moved into the newly constructed ECCC on Okaloosa Island, and have held two Feasts there. The layout of the ECCC fits CEM’s needs well. It has several rooms for YEA classes, large rooms for daily seminars, and the main room holds nearly 1,200 people. The Conference Center is located just east of the intersection of Highway 98 and Santa Rosa Boulevard. There are two “drive up” areas that allow for dropping off passengers close to the door. A ramp for the handicapped is located at each of these drop-off points. There are about five hundred parking spaces around the building, which provide ample parking for everyone. The Conference Center has “state of the art” audio and video systems. The sound system enhances sermons, music, the Variety Show, Youth Day, and other activities held at the Conference Center.

There is plenty of housing in the Destin/Okaloosa Island areas. While there is more housing in the Destin area, we have been amazed at the quantity and quality of housing on Okaloosa Island, so be sure to check out both locations. CEM’s website, www.borntowin.net, has a “Feast of Tabernacles” link. This Feast section will be updated as the planning year progresses. Housing information for the 2007 Feast is under “Accommodations.”

On a side note, we realize that many other groups are observing the Feast in the Destin area, and are delighted they have joined us at some of our services and/or activities. We hope they will continue to do so.

In addition to serving the needs of the brethren attending the Feast, CEM feels that there is also a need to serve the communities where we attend the Feast. At the 2006 Feast in Chattanooga, Tennessee we sponsored two projects. One was working with a local group that provides assistance to widows in Chattanooga. Two widows’ homes were prepped for painting by CEM Feast attendees. The other project was working with the local food bank. Over two tons of food were collected for the needy of Chattanooga, donated by the CEM Feast attendees and boxed by some of the YEA students. We plan to continue working with local groups wherever the Feast is held each year.

We are excited to be back at this beautiful location in Florida, and hope that you will choose to join us for the Feast in 2007.

*Moses and the Constitution
continued from page 1 . . .*

about the intent, and I don't care if the framers of the Constitution had some secret meaning in mind when they adopted its words. I take the words as they were promulgated to the people of the United States, and what is the fairly understood meaning of those words."

It is striking to me that when you start examining law in any historical context, you keep coming upon the same principles. And so, when examining the laws of the Bible, we can take the words of the text as they were originally handed down and as they were understood by the people who heard them. We can look for what Scalia calls, "the fairly understood meaning of those words." With the Bible, this is crucial, because we are looking at many laws that had a meaning in that culture that does not naturally carry over into our own. Let me give you an example:

"Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined" (Numbers 15:38-39 NKJV).

It is evident that the custom of wearing that fringe or tassel had to do with identity. Studies indicated that this custom was as well understood in that culture as the yellow ribbon is in ours. The yellow ribbon has come to mean you have

a loved one in the military serving far away. I think it may have originated with the yellow stripe down the leg of a cavalryman's uniform, and his lover wearing a yellow ribbon in support of him. The custom has morphed into various other applications, such as the pink ribbon for breast cancer awareness.

I think the blue tassel for Israel served a similar purpose. It made a public statement: "I am a commandment keeper and a servant of Jehovah." I met a gentleman not long ago who was wearing a pair of tassels woven of white and blue. But I think he was wearing them, not so much as a sign to others, as of a legalistic approach to the law. God says I should wear a tassel, so I'll wear one. I doubt seriously that one person in ten would know what that tassel was supposed to mean, and thus it becomes pointless. I have heard that some wear that blue ribbon on their underwear, which makes it all the more irrelevant. The fellow I met had his tied to his belt under his jacket, and you could easily have missed them. I think the Israelites were supposed to wear them in plain view. In some ancient societies, the tassel, not necessarily blue, was a sign of rank or status.

So here is what we have, in the *meaning* of the words to the people who first heard them. "In the tassels you wear on your garments, you will always include a thread of blue." Thus you remind one another of your God, his commandments, and his ways. It is worth noting that blue was one of the dominant colors in the decor of the Tabernacle. Thus it was a

double tie to the worship of Jehovah. It was the signature color of the Tabernacle of Jehovah.

For a society that does not wear tassels, the meaning of the law doesn't come through. Even if you decide to wear a loop of blue ribbon on your lapel, people may realize that it means something, but will not know what. In the society of the time, it identified commandment keepers and worshipers of Jehovah to one another. Try to avoid thinking of this as an Old Covenant practice that has passed away with the Old Covenant. That will lead you down the wrong path. Simply think of this as a custom of the time that no longer carries the meaning it once did. If you customarily wear tassels, then put a ribbon of blue in them. But if the custom doesn't exist, don't bother to create it.

It is also worth noting that this was a voluntary provision. I have never seen in the Bible anything resembling "tassel police." The idea that any part of the law was voluntary gives some people the willies. Even if breaking the law was a sin, compliance was still up to the individual. Let me return to Scalia's view of the Constitution. He noted that he does not use legislative history:

"The words are the law. I think that's what is meant by a government of laws, not of men. We are bound not by the intent of our legislators, but by the laws which they enacted, which are set forth in words, of course. As I say, until recently this was constitutional orthodoxy. Everyone at least said that: That the Constitution was that

continued on page 4 . . .

*Moses and the Constitution
continued from page 3 . . .*

anchor, that rock, that unchanging institution that forms the American polity. Immutability was regarded as its characteristic. What it meant when it was adopted it means today, and its meaning doesn't change just because we think that meaning is no longer adequate to our times. If it's inadequate, we can amend it. That's why there's an amendment provision. That was constitutional orthodoxy. When I say constitutional orthodoxy, I don't mean it's just judges and lawyers. Judges and lawyers are not very important. It's ultimately the American people. What do they think this document is?"

Now here we come across something rather different. God's law is immutable and we can't amend it. But we can amend our understanding, interpretation, and application of the law. This is what Jesus was doing through most of the Sermon on the Mount. There is much more to be said on the issue, and I say it in a message titled, *Moses and the Constitution*. You can get a *FREE* tape or CD of the program by marking the enclosed card to indicate your preference and sending it back to us.

Yours in advancing understanding of the Bible,

Ronald L. Dart

PS. This offer is *FREE*, with no obligation. You don't have to contribute to receive it. But your contribution to help in the work of CEM and *Born to Win* will make a real difference in how far we can reach. Thanks for being in touch.

Calendar of Events

Friday-Monday, December 22-25, 2006, Winter Family Tournament, Lexington, Kentucky: You're invited to join us for the 10th Annual Winter Family Tournament in Lexington, Kentucky. Nowhere else can you find so many excellent speakers representing such a wide variety of fellowships within the Church of God.



Radio Update

Bakersfield, CA
KERI 1180 AM
M-F 4:30 pm &
Sun 7:00 am

Martinsville, VA
WFIC 1530 AM
M-Sun 8:30 am

Blacksburg, VA
WKNV 890 AM
M-F 4:00 pm
Sat 7:30 am
& Sun 12:30 pm

Nashville, TN
WLAC 1510 AM
Sun 7:30 am

Denton, MD
WKDI 840 AM
M-F 1:30 pm
Sat 8:30 am
& Sun 2:00 pm

Norfolk, VA
WKGM 940 AM
M-F 9:30 pm
Sat 6:30 am
& Sun 7:30 pm

Huntsville, AL
WVNN 770 AM
Sun 7:30 am

Rocky Mt., VA
WYTI 1570 AM
M-F 5:30 pm &
Sat 4:30 pm

Jacksonville, TX
KLJT 95.3/102.3 FM
Sun 7:30 am

Tyler, TX
KTBB 600 AM
Sun 8:00 am

Christian Educational Ministries

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Three Months Ended
October 31, 2006

Receipts:

Contributions	\$328062
CEM Bookstore	25460
Special Donations-Benin	2475
Interest Income	9611
	<u>\$365608</u>

Expenses:

A/V Supplies	\$ 7009
Rents	6316
Office & Adm. Expenses	5141
Mailing Expenses	6941
Postage	15949
Printing	8881
Radio Expenses	196973
Telephone & Utilities	2440
Youth Ministries	5286
CEM Bookstore	7236
Foreign Operations	7670
Employee Benefits	34729
Wages & Payroll Taxes	103040

Total Operating Expenses 407611

Decrease in Fund Balance (\$ 42003)

2006 Feast of Tabernacles Statement of Operations

Total Offering	\$46874
Total Expenses	44039
Fund Increase	<u>\$ 2835</u>

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