

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

## A Corrupt Media

I lived in England for nearly seven years, and I tend to love things British, but when I was in England, the Labor Party was a lot further to the left than they are today. Britain was all but a welfare state. Marginal tax rates were astronomical. Wages were low. One fellow I knew, a good salesman, told me it was hardly worth him working after May. Then Margaret Thatcher became prime minister and everything changed. I was gone by the time she came on the scene, but I knew how she had revolutionized the British economy.

In recent years, I encountered a Labor leader who gained my respect in ways I never imagined possible. You know him. His name is Tony Blair. He has gained my respect enormously in the past several years, and as he left office, he said something profoundly important. He was speaking to an audience at Reuters News Service and acknowledged candidly that what he said would be “rubbished in certain quarters.”

After noting that the proliferation of media outlets in this Internet age has forced all of them virtually to scream for attention, Blair spelled out how the media go about

the process of seeking impact at almost any price. They go for scandal and controversy, he said, ahead of ordinary reporting. “News is rarely news unless it generates heat as much as or more than light.” He went on to say, “The media attack motive instead of attacking judgment.”

I thought that was a profound statement. I didn’t get it at first, though. Joel Belz, writing in *World* magazine explained: “Blair didn’t spell out precisely how this happened to his friend George W. Bush—but the implication was clear. It’s not bad enough for the media to say that Bush has simply made mistakes on various issues. They have to claim darkly instead that he calculated to mislead the American public.”

We have come to expect this sort of thing from the political opposition, though it isn’t clear to me why they need to. If the leadership makes enough mistakes, isn’t that reason enough for turning them out of office? Is it necessary to paint them in the blackest possible hues?

A friend of mine used to work with a company that sold airplanes. One salesman, when talking to a customer, made it a point to run down the competition. As it happened, his airplane was well built, but he would pour out accident statistics on the competition. My friend observed that the net result of his approach was to turn people off of buying a small plane altogether. His approach was to sell the benefits of his plane as though there was no other plane. Guess who made more sales.

I don’t think it ever dawns on politicians, that when they paint

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## What Your Donations are Doing. . .

A grateful lady wrote: “Dear Brother Dart, thank you so much for your teachings and the DVDs you send. I appreciate them and if I were able, I would send money for them. I only have \$365.00 a month Social Security and it just barely meets my needs. I thank you again and again. Blessing to you and all in your ministry.” She is only one of many who receive our materials who can’t afford them. Those who give to CEM make it possible for many people, such as this lady, to receive CDs, DVDs, and other materials *FREE*. Your tithes and offerings are making a real difference in the lives of many people and are greatly appreciated.

## **Best Ever Feast of Tabernacles**

*By Skip Martin, Festival Association Chairman*

Over 1000 grateful people returned home from the CEM Feast of Tabernacles in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, after coming together to worship the Creator in prayer, song, and fellowship. Blessed by an abundance of wonderful weather, they participated in much provided them. A person must come back year after year to take full advantage of the opportunities to worship, learn, and fellowship with the thousand or so people who come each year. Powerful sermons were given—inspirational, educational, encouraging, and uplifting. Daily seminars offered something for everyone. YEA classes were filled with enthusiastic youth, eager to learn about Jesus and the way He teaches us to live. Activities abounded for the young, old, and in-between. It was a Feast filled with opportunities to grow spiritually and to make new, or rekindle old, friendships.

Opening night service was filled with excited people who came to hear the message and meet and greet many whom they hadn't seen since the previous year. Coffee was provided each morning on the terrace for those who wanted to visit before the day's schedule began, and a "Meet and Greet" evening on Thursday night gave all a chance to come together and have fun. There were movies, dances, picnics, beach parties, canoe trip, cruise, senior luncheon, variety show, golfing, deep sea fishing; and a pie and ice cream social. The Contemporary Praise Service on Wednesday was attended by many who wholeheartedly worshiped together in music. The Youth Day Service was a huge success, from the songs performed by the younger choir to the skits and testimony of the older ones. Feast attendees fully cooperated in two community service projects. The toys and children's things were part of a seminar given by Aletha Prettyman. Food, clothing, toiletries and Wal-Mart gift cards were given for the Waterfront Rescue.

After services on the Last Great Day groups were heard discussing this "best Feast ever" and already making plans to return next year when CEM will host the Feast in Panama City Beach at the beautiful Boardwalk Beach Resort Convention Center. Accommodation information is already on the [www.borntowin.net](http://www.borntowin.net) website. The countdown for the 2008 Feast has already begun! We hope to see you there.

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## **Festival Music From The Heart**

*By Brent Kern*

This year's Feast showed a musical progression much like we have seen in the history of Christian music. The music team took a step toward showing variety in worship through style, instrumentation, subject matter, genre. For the first time, we attempted to mix traditional and contemporary styles. Instruments that are typically used for classical concert settings and those that are typically used for pop bands were used. Trumpet and guitar, flute and bass guitar, piano and drums, saxophone and keyboard were all heard each day, playing during all of the styles and genres of music used for praise.

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## **Fantastic Youth Day**

*By Joe Weicks*

Youth Day 2007 was a memorable event at the CEM Feast of Tabernacles. Our youth presented "Remembering Paul" in a worship service where they led the opening and closing prayers, the song service, provided special music, performed Bible skits, shared the Word of God, and provided a heart warming message commemorating the life, faith, and ministry of the Apostle Paul. Our young adults also worked extremely hard behind the scenes providing audio, visual, electronics, and staging support for the Youth Day service. The Youth Day service was a moving and worshipful experience that touched many.

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their opponent black, a lot of it gets on them as well. If we have learned to expect this from politicians, why on earth do we have to put up with it from news media? The media, Blair said, hunt in a pack. They are “like a feral beast, just tearing people and reputations to bits.”

Truer words were never spoken. Small wonder the media were unhappy with his words. Blair went on to accuse the media of elevating commentary on the news to a role higher than simply reporting the news—and regularly blurring the distinction between the two. “This is not exceptional,” he said. “It is routine.”

I know he is right. The distinction is not just blurred. I can’t find it at all. All this, Blair suggested, has come about because of the ferocity of the competition that now exists among the various media outlets. The sheer numbers, on one hand, coupled on the other with the incredible speed with which they are forced to produce, has trivialized, rather than enhanced, the competition.

So Blair argues that instead of blaming the media, we might well see them as victims. They are “increasingly and to a dangerous degree driven by ‘impact.’ Impact is what matters. It is all that can distinguish, can rise above the clamor, can get noticed. Impact gives competition an edge. Of course, the accuracy of a story counts. But it is often secondary to impact.”

What on earth are we to do about this? Blair had two sugges-

tions: first, that all the media reassert their own commitment to distinguish between news and comment; and second, that some form of government regulation might prove necessary.

Joel Belz was not impressed. He thought both approaches were “dangerously counterproductive. With hundreds of media outlets going after each other tooth and toenail, let listeners and readers decide for themselves just how much raw news and how much analysis is good for them. And whatever you do, leave government bureaucrats out of the equation.”

In general, I agree with Mr. Belz. Yet, I recall, many years ago, Congress did something that worked. It was called, “Truth in Advertising.” Under the Federal Trade Commission Act:

- ▶ advertising must be truthful and non-deceptive;
- ▶ advertisers must have evidence to back up their claims; and
- ▶ advertisements cannot be unfair.

Why can’t these standards be applied to political ads? And how big a step is it to apply them to news stories? What makes an advertisement deceptive? According to the FTC’s “Deception Policy Statement,” an ad is deceptive if it contains a statement—or omits information—that is likely to mislead consumers acting reasonably under the circumstances; and is “material”—that is, important to a consumer’s decision to buy or use the product.

Shucks, folks, we’ve all seen political ads we know were designed to mislead voters. This is especially true of stories popped

just before the election when the candidate has no time to respond. How does the FTC determine if an ad is deceptive? They are well defined steps they follow to reach a conclusion. It seems to me that something like this could be applied to politics and news (after all, they seem to be joined at the hip).

Now, I ask you, why can’t we have a “Truth in Political Advertising” law? You could use the same principles for evaluation and enforcement. Could you get it through Congress? I doubt it. Congress would want to maintain their constitutional right to lie. It seems to be a presumed right of elected officials, although it is certainly not in the Bill of Rights.

The FTC requires a company to have a “reasonable basis” for the claims it makes in ads. A “reasonable basis” means objective evidence that supports the claim. The kind of evidence depends on the claim. At a minimum, an advertiser must have the level of evidence that it says it has. What a shocking, onerous requirement! You must have what you say you have. For example, the statement “Two out of three doctors recommend ABC pain reliever” must be supported by a reliable survey to that effect.

Why can’t we require a reasonable basis for the claims made in campaign ads? And why can’t we find some way to hold the news media to their stories? Actually, there is a way, but it isn’t government that will have to do it. It is you and me. I recently discussed this issue in depth from a biblical point of view in a program

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titled, *A Corrupt Media*. I'd like to send you a *FREE* CD of this program if you will just check the box on the enclosed card and send it back to us. Be sure to keep listening, and be in touch.

Yours for honesty in news and politics,

*Ronald L. Dart*

PS. That CD is *FREE* and without obligation, but your contribution will help us keep the *Born to Win* program on the air. If it weren't for our friends who contribute, we would soon close up shop.

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## Unforgettable Fun Activities

*By Wade and Shirley Hamil*

The 2007 Feast provided an abundance of opportunities for people to eat, fellowship, and bond in God's loving family. About 300 gathered to enjoy charcoal grilled hamburgers prepared by Dave and Joy Kern and other volunteers. The Family Dance and the Young at Heart Dance provided a fun-filled evening for about 400 people to dance the night away. We owe Michael Deering and Bernard Carman our gratitude for this successful evening. Wayne and Nita Hinton recruited volunteers to dish up slices of delicious pie with ice cream to about 250 people. Sharon Richardson and Vicki Bryant worked weeks planning a most successful seniors' luncheon that was enjoyed by all who attended.

## Exceptional FOT Youth Classes

*By Toni Coffee*

Youth Educational Adventures (YEA) classrooms were thematically decorated and alive with excitement for 158 young people, ages three through 19, at CEM's 2007 Feast of Tabernacles in Fort Walton Beach. Friendships were renewed and new ones made in YEA classes specifically developed for age, interests, and issues.

Interactive lessons at all levels taught biblical principles focused through object lesson activities, followed by a discussion to evaluate the experience and draw out the meaning. Beginners' classes buzzed with activity, including such lessons as *Bee Joyful* and *Bee-lieve*. The theme for the Primaries was *Friends Forever*. The value of friendship was discovered while acting out memorable biblical stories and making meaningful crafts to reinforce the lessons. Juniors were encouraged to *Stay on Course* by coping with *Flat Tires* and being careful to *Avoid the Ruts*. A remote-controlled car was maneuvered through a track filled with obstacles. Intermediates found that *Impressions of Truth* and *Impressions of Greatness* have biblical significance and applications for their lives. Senior Teens went *In Search of God* for guidance in their lifelong journey of learning and growing in the knowledge and grace of God.

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## Educational and Insightful Seminars

*By Nancy Vandemark*

Over 1000 people attended a variety of seminars that inspired, encouraged, and informed people in their Christian walk. We had a lot of positive feedback. Plans are already underway for the 2008 Feast. For those of you who have never attended the seminars, we encourage you to rise a little earlier to see what you are missing. Next year, we are planning to have seminars in the afternoon on the Sabbath and one other day for those who can't attend in the mornings. We hope to see you next year.

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## A Friend in Need

Michael and Stella Porter returned to Benin from the Feast to find that their home had been destroyed by fire. They lost everything including the office equipment they had accumulated to do God's work in Benin—computer, duplicator, and other office supplies. Donations to help them would be greatly appreciated. Donations sent to CEM for this should be specifically marked and 100 percent of those donations will be sent to Benin.

*Christian Educational  
Ministries*

PO Box 560

Whitehouse, Texas 75791

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

**fax:** 903.509.1139

**email:** adm@cemnetwork.com

**website:** www.borntowin.net

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