

About the New Covenant

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes

What did the First Christians believe about the new covenant? I mean those Christians who were alive in the days when the books of the New Testament were being written—what did they believe?

I have heard a lot of discussion about the Old and New Covenants. There is something about them that I think very few people seem to have understood. Let me lay a little background.

Several years ago, I attended a workshop presented by a psychologist who shook me up a bit. He said that the human mind is like a closet you can never clean out. Everything you hear, everything you see, everything you smell, everything you experience through the senses, and everything you create by *thought*, goes into your mind and *stays there . . . forever*. You never really lose anything. When you forget something, you have temporarily lost the ability to access it. But any number of things, a sound, a word, a smell, can recall it in a snap.

Imagine a virtual room covered with cubbyholes top to bottom, side to side, all four walls. Now, if you sit down to watch a movie, you will fill a number of these

cubbyholes with the story and events of the movie. Some of the events will make a deeper impression than others and have a more dominant place—say, at eye level. Others will be up against the ceiling and out of reach. Sex and violence tend to print more deeply and can often be troubling, depending on how powerfully they are presented. I still recall the scene from the *Godfather* where a dead horse's head turns up in someone's bed. It was shocking.

The human mind is designed in such a way that it has to create meaning out of all the junk we put in there. Nothing can remain meaningless. This is what Viktor Frankl calls the drive to meaning. So, while we sleep, our mind runs through all this stuff and rearranges it. It attempts to find relationships

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and to assign meanings to events. Out of this jumble, the mind creates meaning.

But that meaning is not always right, and not always healthy. It can sometimes create mental illness in the form of neuroses. A classic example is the double bind. Take two authority figures—the Bible and an apostolic leader of a church who is said to be infallible. The Bible says one thing, the Apostle

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You've Asked . . .

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The Bramble and the Olive Tree

by Lenny Cacchio

Once the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, “Reign over us!” But the olive tree said to them, “Shall I leave my fatness with which God and men are honored, and go to wave over the trees?” Then the trees said to the fig tree, “You come, reign over us!” But the fig tree said to them, “Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?” Then the trees said to the vine, “You come, reign over us!” But the vine said to them, “Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?” Finally all the trees said to the bramble, “You come, reign over us!” And the bramble said to the trees, “If in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, may fire come out from the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon” (Judges 9:8-15 NAS).

That little parable told by Jotham, son of Gideon, should remind us of our responsibilities on the one hand and warn us on the other against craving to be ruled.

The people of Israel had experienced the wise and brave leadership of Gideon, but at his death they seemed to be incapable of living without someone around to tell them what to do. Just like the trees in the parable, they seemed to go from one honorable candidate to another offering to place themselves under rulership, but all the honorable ones refused. So the big, mighty trees submitted to the rule of the basest bramble. By doing so, they gave up their dignity, for to take refuge in the shade of the bramble, one must stoop to the bramble’s level. “But if not,” the bramble said, “may fire come out from the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon.” Their rulership would be one based on coercion.

Israel was born a free nation. They had escaped from slavery, and it was God’s intent that they remain so. He was to be their only King, and they themselves were to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6). But the history as recorded in the Book of Judges shows the sorry result of a people who had freedom without character, for time and time again their freedom led to license, which led to moral laxity, which led to social disorder. Eventually the nation found itself in bondage to its enemies, or calling for a strong man to restore order. Freedom has its costs, and they seemed unwilling or unable to pay the price.

The lesson of Jotham’s parable is twofold. If good men are too content with their own lives to provide leadership, then the bramble will fill the vacuum. Good men are enjoined to do their civic duty.

But more than that, it is uncomely for the majestic trees of the forest to beg someone to rule over them. That is the road to serfdom.

As the American Republic goes through its renewal, a renewal which the framers of the Constitution mandate, let us reflect on the freedoms we have lost because of our desire for security. To quote Benjamin Franklin: “They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”



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says another. Both are infallible. This is a double bind.

It is easily cured if we can just decide which authority to follow. But if our system requires that both be right, then our minds have to make sense out of something that does not make sense. Our conclusion? “There must be something wrong with me because I can’t understand this.” Or, we lie to ourselves and pretend we understand what we don’t. We tell ourselves that if we are patient, we will come to understand it. And the subconscious mind, doing its best, rearranges all the wires in the mind so we can find meaning in the meaningless. And when we are wired wrong, we make bad decisions and become confused.

In counseling with people from religious traditions that create the double bind, the most common phrase I hear is, “I’m confused.” And their leadership tells them, “Just be patient, you will come to see it.” The devil will tell you the very same thing. It is like the woman who finds her husband in a closet at a party with another woman and lipstick all over his face. He asks her, are you going to believe me or your eyes?

The normal response of a sane mind in the presence of a lie is confusion. The way out of confusion? Call it a lie. Recognize that you are being lied to by a liar. Say it out loud: “That is a lie.” Confusion will melt away, and meaning will start to return.

Now what does this have to do with the Old and New Covenants? Deuteronomy 6:1, “Now these are

the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” —they are to have a prominent position in that closet that can never be cleaned out—your mind.

Continuing in verse 7: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

Now, what effect does this have on how your mind develops meaning? And what does it have to do with the New Covenant? Well, it develops deep grooves, prominent ideas that give you a worldview that is not shared by many people. “Write them on your doorposts.” I wonder if you have

the Ten Commandments on the wall of your house? Someone gave me a plaque of the Ten Commandments, so I put it up. I no longer notice it. It is a phenomenon of human nature that we do not notice what is always there. We notice what is new. What is changed.

The equivalent of the doorpost in our houses is the refrigerator door. But if you have kids in the house, you need visuals that change frequently. These visuals, be they pictures or Scriptures, go into that closet and they will stay there forever. When a bad experience goes into that closet, the things you have taught your kids will be there to help make sense out of things—to attach the right meaning to events. You are giving the kids an absolute that will tend to support mental health. Be very careful never to give them a double bind, where they have to figure out who is lying to them.

The fact is that Americans and others have shamefully neglected the commandment to teach God’s Law to our children, and we have created a problem that we cannot solve in less than a generation. If you want to understand what has gone wrong with us, it is simple. We have not taught our children that God is the ultimate authority. Who do your children see as the ultimate authority? Government? School? Perhaps the church?

There is much more to say on this topic, as well as to show you what this has to do with the New Covenant. Ron Dart develops this idea to a surprising conclusion in a program titled *About the New Covenant*. Just return the card to receive your *FREE* CD today!

Join The Feast Fun Show

By Wade Johnson

The Feast of Tabernacle's Fun Show will be Monday, September 27, at 7 p.m. If you have talent and would like to participate in this happening, please e-mail Wade Johnson at funshowdirector@sdca.org.

Your ideas are valuable to me and the success of this fun show depends on people like you participating. If you have an act or a talent of any kind, here's your opportunity to share it with others. Please let me know as soon as possible. We want to schedule your contribution to this event in proper sequence and write an introduction that will highlight your part and motivate people to eagerly come and enjoy it.

Plans are to assemble a group of musicians to do a few numbers I have arranged—two fast-moving, old spiritual type numbers. Along with other instruments needed are a trumpet, clarinet, and bass. If you can play any instrument, please let me know. The show must be together no later than the full rehearsal time at 3 p.m. the day of the show. Last minute sign-ins will be welcome, but the earlier you contact us about your act or talent, the better the fun show will be.

Anyone who would like to help behind the scenes is encouraged to let me know what you are willing to do. We need stage directors, sound people, lighting technicians, and others to be part of this anticipated production. Your participation and support are a very necessary part in the success of the Festival Fun Show and will be greatly appreciated.

Christian Educational Ministries Statement of Cash Flows for the Three Months Ended April 30, 2010

RECEIPTS:

Contributions	\$323866
CEM Bookstore	26108
Other Income	2389
	\$352363

EXPENSES:

A/V Supplies	\$ 6416
Occupancy	7568
Office & Adm. Expenses	7066
Mailing Expenses	3786
Postage	17746
Printing	11798
Radio Expenses	195939
Telephone & Utilities	4419
Editorial Services	1743
CEM Bookstore	4346
Employee Benefits	11557
Wages & Payroll Taxes	85567
Total Operating Expenses	357951

Decrease in Fund Balance (\$ 5588)

2010 YEA Feast of Tabernacles Books Available for All Sites

YEA can make this Feast special for kids 3-20 as you anchor them to Christ. Again we're offering exciting, age-appropriate, full color books. These books use active forms of learning to capture attention and long be remembered. Each student should have his own book. The easy-to-use Teacher's Guide makes class preparation oh-so-easy and effective. We only print what is ordered and August 16, 2010 is the cut-off date.

Ask about bulk rates and look for the enclosed flyer for more details.

Calendar of Events

Feast of Tabernacles, September 22-30, 2010, Fort Walton Beach, Florida - Come join us in celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles! This year we will be hosting events at the Emerald Coast Conference Center in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida, with opening night services beginning at 7:30pm on Wednesday, September 22, 2010. You will also be able to view all services at Ft. Walton Beach, Florida, via Video Live Streaming at: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/cem-network>. We will be adding more information under the Feast of Tabernacles section as soon as we can. Please check back or call us at the office, 903-839-9300 or email Larry Watkins at lsw@cemnetwork.com.

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