

Ronald L. Dart Ministries



Volume 2, Issue 1

NEWSLETTER

January 2019

Faith in a Box

By Ronald L. Dart

How is it possible to hate a man who could make the blind see, the lame walk, and the deaf hear—a man who could take some poor guy who is totally stark-raving mad and restore him to his right mind? What on earth could motivate religious people to want to kill him? The healer, of course, is Jesus and the men who wanted to kill him were the religious establishment of the day.

The political structure of Judaism was relatively stable—a two party system: Pharisees and Sadducees—and everybody knew where everybody was. Then a man named Jesus walked down from Galilee to the Jerusalem area and began to pose the most serious threat to their power they had ever encountered. Jesus was a problem.

If you take your time reading the New Testament, it becomes plain that they didn't hate him because he healed sick people. It wasn't his miracles, or feeding the five thousand. It wasn't all the amazing things that he did, but when he began to teach he was, to borrow a modern expression, "out of the box"—they hated him because he was not orthodox. I use the word "orthodox," not in the sense of identifying a sect like the Orthodox Church or the Orthodox Jews, but in the broader sense of the word—defined as conforming to established doctrine, especially in religion. You might want to underline in your mind the word "conforming," because it is the nonconformists, the unorthodox, who give us such headaches from time to time.

Jesus was in clear defiance of the established religion of the day. He refused to conform. And it was this that led religious leaders to where they were willing to kill him. Pontius Pilate, hard-headed Roman that he was, saw this. We don't know what he thought about Jesus personally. We don't know whether he believed anything he had heard about Jesus. But we do know it was the custom of the time that he would release one prisoner at the Passover season, so he decided to see if

he could get them to release Jesus. He said, "Who will you want me to release to you: Barabbas, this thief, this murderer, or Jesus who is called the Christ?" Matthew put in this parenthetical expression: "for he knew that for envy they had delivered him." Pilate knew; he could see it clearly. And, if you will take your time and read through the New Testament, you will see it just as clearly as Pilate did.

The common people loved Jesus. He had no establishment to protect or advance. He had a gaggle of disciples who would come and go, depending on what he had to say and what he did. After over three years of preaching and teaching up and down the country — healing sick people, restoring insane people to their right mind, and other miracles—on the day of Pentecost there were 120 disciples left. Jesus had said that he would build his church, but not much of that had happened prior to Pentecost.

As far back as you want to look in every society known to man, orthodox establishments tend to be antagonistic toward unorthodox teachers. Why? The answer is simple: fear—loss of power. The establishment tries to intimidate their followers into not listening to this or that unorthodox teacher. They try to

continued on page 2 . . .

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Faith in a Box	Ronald L. Dart	1
Scripture Writing and Bible Reading		3
2018 Board Meeting	Blake Silverstein	4
Improve Your Life	from Ronald L. Dart's notes	4

Faith in a Box
continued from page 1 . . .

shut up or stop the unorthodox teacher if they can find ways to do it. They tried with Jesus. And they tried, somewhat unsuccessfully, with the Apostle Paul—he was a hard man to shut up.

When you look at the history of Judaism before Jesus and the history of the church after Jesus, a fundamental truth begins to emerge. Judaism in the Second Temple period around the first century, and then Christianity in the late second century, were both plagued with heresies. The early church, for example, had to deal with a man named Arius who came up with the idea that there was no way that Jesus could be God because there is only one God. It was a heresy. Arius was dead wrong. The church kept fighting it off. The end result of all this fighting off of heresies, gradually, inexorably turns organizations into nice, neat boxes—orthodox boxes where everything is under control.

If you plan to have any cohesiveness to your faith at all, heresies have to be answered. In this case, the leadership was unable to resolve the issues being raised and, finally, just slammed the door on the argument with a creed. They said, “This is it. If you don’t believe this, you’re not a Christian.” They put their dogma in a nice box, tied it with a ribbon, and considered it settled.

There was a problem with that little box of dogma. It may have been the best approximation of the truth at the time, but in closing the box and declaring it to be the *truth*; the establishment put an end to growth. The only thing you can do at that point is make a complete break with the establishment, as Martin Luther finally did and triggered the Protestant Reformation.

What does all this mean to you? If you’re a Christian, you may be a member of a church which, in turn, may be a member of a larger denomination, which is also a member of what is sometimes called “mainstream Christianity.” What is mainstream and what is not depends on who you’re talking to. Chances are your church, your denomination, lives in its own orthodoxy. It’s important that your church knows what it believes and that it makes the distinction between orthodox and unorthodox teaching. It’s important to maintain cohesiveness in the face of forces that might fracture the church. It was a major factor in the early church and, in fighting off the heretics, some of the great orthodox doctrines were codified.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians and, in the process of developing this idea, he not only laid the groundwork for what the church ought to look like, but he inadvertently gave people ammunition to create the kind of orthodoxy which would prohibit growth at the same time it was trying to go forward. “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:1-2 NIV).

The problem lies here; because arrogance, impatience, and exclusivism are things that tend to happen with orthodox organizations. He goes on to say, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (v. 3). One way of approaching this unity is to exclude everybody who disagrees. It’s like the old joke: How do you carve an elephant out of a bar of soap? Well you take a bar of soap and a knife and you cut away everything that doesn’t look like an elephant! That’s what some people do with their churches and their religions. They get rid of everybody that doesn’t really agree. Paul is challenging the Ephesians to look for a unity of the spirit in the bond of peace—in other words, an inclusive unity, not exclusive. He said, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (vv. 4-6).

Perhaps this marvelous exhortation to the church created the imperative to orthodoxy. However, this is followed in Paul’s letter by the word “*but*”: “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.’ (What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (vv. 7-13).

The key word is “*until*.” The prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers were to do all these things *until* they reached unity in the faith. When do we get there? Well, I

*Faith in a Box**continued from page 2 . . .*

don't know if anybody ever has. It's a process, and we're not really there yet. We're not in the unity of the faith; we haven't really come to the full knowledge of the Son of God. We haven't come to the perfect man; we're not in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Then what business do we have putting everything in a box, putting a ribbon around it, putting it away, and saying this is all there is? We aren't there yet. The unity of the faith is a goal; not a new establishment. In the years that followed, the winds of doctrine Paul spoke about (v. 14) continued to blow people all over the place. However, this was followed by a caution: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

Unity is a good thing, but with every good thing there is a downside. The very nature of orthodox thinking is that it cannot easily change, and growth demands change. You can't grow spiritually without changing. And orthodoxy doesn't change much. The Nicene Creed hasn't changed in approximately 1700 years. The Apostles' Creed hasn't changed in longer than that. Orthodoxy doesn't change. You can consult Jesus on that issue. His attempt to change orthodoxy took him straight before Pilate and finally to the cross.

That's true of nearly every orthodox organization, and even of some who think they're not orthodox; it's true everywhere. It's in the nature of churches, organizations, and even denominations to settle into orthodoxy of their own making which slams the door on spiritual growth. By spiritual growth I mean the growth in the knowledge and the understanding of God, his plan, what he's doing, and what he wants from you. I understand why that happens. Because when you open the door, the wind starts blowing a lot of debris out of

the house, and it's an unpleasant thing. The church exists to provide a safe harbor out of the wind. Pardon me for mixing my metaphors here. I'm grappling with a way to make this clear. There is a balance between knowing what you believe and standing up for it, and locking yourself into it so you cannot grow out of it.

How early did this affect Jesus' disciples? Earlier than you might think. You'll find the story in Mark 9:38-40. John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in your name and we told him to 'stop it' because he doesn't follow us." Jesus said, "Don't do that. Don't forbid him. No one who works a miracle in my name can speak lightly against us. For he who is not against us is on our side." Here was a fellow who was actually doing miracles in Jesus' name and the insiders knew nothing of the man. Our old friend, the Apostle Paul, went through something like this himself. The Christian church in the earliest years created its own establishment, and Christ called Paul to his service outside of that establishment. Not only that, he called an enemy of the church into his service.

I realize that I'm asking you to face a paradox. On the one hand, unity is a good thing and stability is to be desired. On the other hand, the most stable people around are in the cemetery. The truth is that growth is a little bit frightening. But, sometimes, you have to let go of the secure perch you are on and launch yourself to a new and higher plane. In my own life, growth in grace and knowledge has come in stages. Every plateau has been good for a while and then has become confining. But leaving it is always frightening. You know the old saying: I guess you just can't get there from here? Consider this: You can't get there without *leaving* here. Faith is a journey that requires us to overcome fear, to forsake safety, and to go with God where he is taking us. A lot of saints have gone down this road ahead of us.

Scripture Writing and Bible Reading

Many of you have enjoyed the monthly Scripture writing program. We will make all of those Scriptures available together, to share with a friend, or in case you missed any.

Let's continue to grow in grace and knowledge in 2019 with a new reading plan. Each day, you will read a different part of the Bible. For this plan the Bible is divided into the following sections: Epistles, The Law, History, Psalms, Poetry, Prophecy, and Gospels. By switching areas daily, you don't get bogged down several

days or weeks on an area that you find difficult to read.

Developed by Michael Coley (www.Bible-Reading.com) he says, "I made this plan up myself, after failing at my annual goal of reading through the Bible every year." We have his permission to use it this year. To continue the Scripture writing program, I encourage you to choose a Scripture each day from your reading and continue your Scripture writing in 2019 as well. We have enclosed the full-year plan in this newsletter.

2018 Board Meeting

By Blake Silverstein

The 2018 annual Christian Educational Ministries board meeting took place November 29th and 30th. Board members John Beasley, Richard Crow, Jon Garnant, Rod Martin, Willie Oxendine, and Larry Watkins were able to meet with us at the CEM office in Whitehouse to discuss all things CEM and to enjoy some good Texas barbeque. John Currier, a board member from Alabama, was unable to attend this year.

The meeting was very productive and covered the whole of CEM's operations, personnel, future

radio broadcasting, and online endeavors. Discussions about the *Born to Win* newsletters' new look and our new mobile/online message delivery methods were hot topics, as well as how CEM will continue to support Churches of God across the world.

The world isn't what it was 50 years ago, or even five years ago. Times are changing more rapidly than ever and how and where the Gospel is preached is no exception, but the driving theme will always be Jesus Christ—the way, the truth and the life—and his teachings found in the Bible.

Just a note: Our *Born to Win* newsletter is changing next month. Watch your mailbox for a new, full-color format.

Improve Your Life

Edited from Ronald L. Dart's Notes from the *Improve Your Life* Radio Broadcast

US News, in their first issue of the year, offered, "50 Ways to Improve Your Life . . ." Some were useful:

- Waltz your way to better fitness. What a nice way to get yourself off the couch.
- Adopt a dog, you'll live longer. They make you feel good because they are always glad to see you.
- Learn American Sign Language.

Some of the ideas in *US News* might raise your eyebrows such as: "have yourself tested for a sexually-transmitted disease." If you're sleeping around, it may be a good idea. And then, you might consider the biblical prescription: one man, one woman, for life.

There were a few really good ideas such as: go to the library, read a book, and engage in random acts of kindness.

Here are some of my own ideas to improve your life:

1. Read *The Book—The Bible*. You can buy a "One Year Bible" which breaks it up into daily readings. CEM offers several Bible reading plans such as the one included with this newsletter.
2. Take 15 minutes after you read to meditate—think about something. See Psalm 5:1-3 and Psalm 19:14.
3. Prayer is important to improving your life. Prayer and Bible reading combine nicely. You speak to God and God speaks to you.
4. If you don't feel like praying, go to a quiet place, kneel and open your Bible to the first Psalm. Read it and talk to God about it. Put a mark there, come back to that

place and continue. You may be surprised where you are spiritually when you get to number 150.

5. Keep a journal. Write notes to yourself. Write notes to God. Later, you go back and get a view of your thinking. You may be profoundly surprised at what you come to understand later.
6. Teach your children the Bible. CEM has age-appropriate Bible lessons, for ages 3 to 19. Teach your kids to read the Bible aloud. Godly children will go a long way toward making your life better.
7. Be still for a while—Psalm 46:10. We need this lesson more today than ever before. Everything around us is designed to keep us keyed up. To demonstrate this, just turn the television off for one evening. I am not saying you should get rid of it—just realize you are being manipulated and sold on many ideas and things you don't really need or want.
8. Think about your conduct in light of the Bible. Read Proverbs 1:7-9 Do you know people who hate wisdom and won't listen to instruction? If so, then you know a fool. Then comes the next question: Are you sure you aren't one? Try not to play the fool.

PO Box 560 • Whitehouse, Texas 75791

phone: 1-888-BIBLE-44 • **fax:** 903-839-9311

e-mail: adm@borntowin.net • **website:**

www.borntowin.net

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

February Reading Plan



Each day of the week, you will read chapters out of a different part of the Bible in 2019. Read each Sunday from the *Epistles*, Mondays from the *Law*, Tuesdays from *History*, Wednesdays from the *Psalms*, Thursdays from *Poetry*, Fridays from *Prophecy*, and Saturdays from the *Gospels*. We are enclosing a copy of the entire 2019 reading plan and we will also continue to include the monthly plan in each newsletter. For those who really enjoyed the scripture writing program we encourage you to choose a scripture each day from your reading and continue your scripture writing in 2019 as well.

Fri	1-Feb	Isa 23-28	Mon	11-Feb	Gen 20-23	Thurs	21-Feb	Job 15-16
Sat	2-Feb	Matt 11-13	Tues	12-Feb	Judg 7-11	Fri	22-Feb	Isa 40-44
Sun	3-Feb	Rom 9-10	Wed	13-Feb	Ps 18-20	Sat	23-Feb	Matt 20-22
Mon	4-Feb	Gen 16-19	Thurs	14-Feb	Job 13-14	Sun	24-Feb	Rom 15-16
Tues	5-Feb	Judg 1-6	Fri	15-Feb	Isa 34-39	Mon	25-Feb	Gen 28-31
Wed	6-Feb	Ps 15-17	Sat	16-Feb	Matt 17-19	Tues	26-Feb	Judg 17-21
Thurs	7-Feb	Job 11-12	Sun	17-Feb	Rom 13-14	Wed	27-Feb	Ps 24-26
Fri	8-Feb	Isa 29-33	Mon	18-Feb	Gen 24-27	Thurs	28-Feb	Job 17-18
Sat	9-Feb	Matt 14-16	Tues	19-Feb	Judg 12-16			
Sun	10-Feb	Rom 11-12	Wed	20-Feb	Ps 21-23			

CEM Mission Statement

Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) was founded in November 1995 by Ron and Allie Dart as an independent, non-denominational ministry to serve the public and individual Christians of every kind through the ministry of Ronald L. Dart. Mr. Dart, an ordained minister and evangelist, has served God through hundreds of sermons, broadcasts, Bible Studies, and books—bringing clarity and simplicity to topics. CEM promotes Ron Dart’s radio ministry, *Born to Win*, which is heard from coast-to-coast. His clear, conversational, and inviting style can be heard the world over. The *Born to Win* website, www.borntowin.net, features more than 1000 of Mr. Dart’s timeless sermons and studies at any one time. Follow Mr. Dart and CEM at www.borntowin.net, Facebook, YouTube, and other media.

Our mission is:

First, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. (Matthew 28).

Second, to teach the disciples of Jesus Christ so that they may be “proficient and equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17).

Third, to teach and train this generation and the next with studies and programs focused on youth, through the Dart’s special passion, Youth Educational Adventures (YEA). (Deuteronomy 11:19, Proverbs 22:6).

Fourth, to bring God’s people closer together, through cooperative efforts wherever they may be. (2 Corinthians 5:18).

To this end, we teach the Bible and its Truth, with a goal of helping people make their own lives work while they are a positive influence and blessing to those around them.

Born to Win

PO Box 560

Whitehouse, TX 75791

1.888.BIBLE.44

www.borntowin.net

Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery



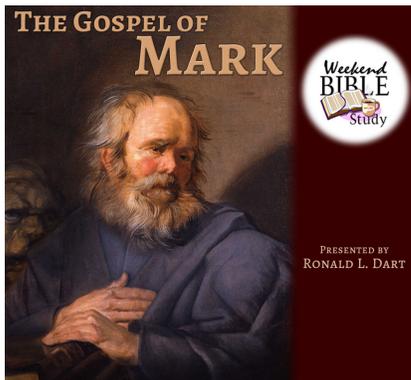
Faith in a Box & Doctrines, Creeds, and Dogmas

FREE CD

Faith in a Box – The Church after Jesus and Judaism was plagued with heresies. In both cases, their leadership just shut out the issues. It was as though they put their beliefs into a nice box, tied it with a ribbon, and put it on the shelf of things that had been settled. Problems can arise by closing the box of dogma and declaring it “The Truth.” Heresies have to be answered for there to be cohesiveness to your faith. Learn how these issues should be handled.

Doctrines, Creeds, and Dogmas – Most churches have a set of beliefs that members are expected to hold. Creeds and doctrines differ depending on denomination. Learn what creeds, doctrines, dogmas, and traditions have in common and what problems are inherent in them. Learn how to handle disputed dogma.

The Gospel of Mark - CD Album



The Gospel of Mark CD Series - This series is taken from Ronald L. Dart’s Weekend Bible Study on the Gospel of Mark. It is the shortest of the four gospels, the second book in the New Testament and the first of the Gospels to be written. John Mark, who is mentioned in Acts 12 and 13, Colossians 4:10, and 2 Timothy 4:11 is the author of this book. This Gospel is the closest to an eye witness account of the life of Christ because Mark, was an associate of Peter, who was one of the 12 Disciples. There are 13 Bible studies on seven CDs. Learn more about your Savior and his Father by studying this book with Ron Dart. The retail price is \$32.95. Available with this offer for \$16.95.

ID #: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone #: _____ email: _____

Check here if this is a new address

For credit card orders, call 1.888.BIBLE.44 during business hours, 8:30 AM to 5 PM CT, or return the form below:

Visa
 MasterCard
 Discover
 AMEX

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ / _____ CID #: _____

Signature: _____

	Code	Price	Qty	Amount
Faith in a Box and Doctrines, Creeds, and Dogmas	SC141CD	Free		\$0.00
The Gospel of Mark CD Album	MRKSCD	\$16.95		\$
Thank you very much for your financial support .				\$

This offer expires February 28, 2019 Subtotal \$ _____

Texas Residents only add 8.25% of subtotal \$ _____

Residents of Canada and Mexico add 15% \$ _____

All other **non-U.S.** countries, add 25% \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed* \$ _____

***Payments MUST be in U.S. dollars**