

# SBC Voices

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## A Great Commission Suggestion: Pink Slip the ERLC

November 3, 2010 by [Dave Miller](#)

It isn't personal, its business!

Great Commission business. I think it is time that the SBC de-funds the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and gives those funds to the IMB to increase our missionary force around the world.



I know that Richard Land is one of the bogeymen of the Baptist left. They disdain him because he has taken conservative stands on political and social issues through the years. **I have no such axe to grind.** I'm in agreement with the vast majority of the opinions I have heard him put forward. I do not dislike Richard Land or disagree with his stances (for the most part). I just think that in these troubled economic times, there are better things we could be doing with 3.236 million dollars per year (1.65% of CP gifts).

I don't see the comparative Kingdom value of the work of the ERLC. Its as simple as that. I think missionaries on the field could accomplish a lot more than Richard Land in Washington.

Is the ERLC really making a difference in America? Do politicians change their votes because of Richard Land's pronouncements? Are there Baptists out there who are influenced or educated by the ERLC position? I can say that in my 30 years of ministry in Baptist churches, the ERLC (and its predecessor) have made no discernable impact on the work I have done or the churches I have served. Would anything significant be lost if we just did away with the ERLC? Is that which might be lost comparable to what might be gained by sending more missionaries around the world?

**I'm willing to be educated.** If someone can tell me what work the ERLC does that is of great eternal value, I'm willing to listen. I really am.

I have a friend who was in the appointment process at the IMB. He is a fine young man with a fine young family. Because of budget shortfalls, he got the pink slip from the IMB. They won't be sending him now or in the near future. He is still going as a missionary, but with a different board. The IMB lost a good missionary family because of budget shortfalls. He and his family are not alone in this. **Instead of sending missionaries out, we are sending them away, and I find that disturbing.**

**I think that the IMB could do more of Great Commission significance with the 3.236 million better than the ERLC does.** In good economic times, maybe there was a good reason to keep the ERLC around. But when we are cutting missionary forces and denying service to competent, qualified and willing missionaries, I think its time to make some hard choices.

What does it cost to fund one missionary? I really don't know. Let me take a guess – perhaps 100,000 per year to pay them, provide benefits, travel and all the other costs. High? Low? I don't know. But if we transferred the money from the ERLC to the IMB, at 100k per missionary family that's around 32 new missionary families on the field – more if the per-missionary costs are less.

Someone answer this question: What would have more eternal/Great Commission value – 32 missionary families serving around the world or the ERLC lobbying on political and social issues here? Dozens of missionaries or a culture-warrior?

In times like this, we have to make choices like that.

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## Comments



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 3:30 pm

If there is any interest in discussing this, great.

However, please do not use this for anti-Richard Land rants. The question is whether the ERLC has comparative value, not whether you have a positive (or negative) opinion of Richard Land.



bill says

November 3, 2010 at 4:28 pm

I think that this may be case where to speak of one is to speak of the other since they have been so intertwined for so long.



Anon says

November 3, 2010 at 3:48 pm

I am excited to see the discussion here. Like the OP I have zero axe to grind with the ERLC or any people associated with it...But I have long wondered from a cold-hard facts standpoint:

1. What do they do?
2. What impact does it have?
3. Is that the BEST use of resources?

The other question is: if there IS a need for something like the ERLC does it require \$3.2MM? This does not have to be an all or non debate...



Bill Mac says

November 3, 2010 at 4:06 pm

I wholeheartedly agree. If we must have someone make pronouncements about what the SBC "thinks" on certain issues, let the president do it.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 4:27 pm

Or, perhaps our seminary presidents. Al Mohler does a lot of cultural analysis.



bill says

November 3, 2010 at 4:27 pm

Ed Stetzer pretty sharp too.

George Barna as well.



bill says

November 3, 2010 at 4:27 pm

I think the ERLC seriously needs to go away.

I've mentioned the Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission before in my Sunday School class and people asked me about it after class and wondered who is funding yet another conservative group doing the repetitive work of so many other conservative religious groups and organizations.

They were shocked when I mentioned that this is the political arm (lobbying group) of the Southern Baptist Convention. Not one person thought we ought to have such a part of the Southern Baptist Convention.

I believe that the money spent on the ERLC ought to go to either local or international missions. It won't cure all the problems we're seeing but it will be a good start to eliminating the wasteful parts of our bureaucracy. As I've stated in the past, putting missionaries on the ground will have far more lasting implications for the Kingdom than dinner parties, handshakes, and photo ops with our politicians who regard evangelical Christians in the same way they regard other voting blocs.

This supposed "Pro-Life, Pro-Family" message that is coming from the ERLC is actually coming from our pulpits and in our efforts to share Christ with the lost.

When educated bloggers have problems finding things to point out in support of an institution like the Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission, then the solution for said problem is apparent. The institution, this sacred cow, this avenue to use our tithes and offerings unto the Lord to grease the wheels of a secular government, needs to go away.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 4:33 pm

I think you make a good point here, Bill. There are a number of other groups doing what the ERLC does (Focus, FRC, etc). Why do we need to duplicate these?



cb scott says

November 3, 2010 at 4:55 pm

bill,

I think today for it to go away would not be too soon.



Christiane says

November 3, 2010 at 4:29 pm

What IS the role of 'ethics' in the SBC?

How is 'ethics' defined ?



cb scott says  
November 3, 2010 at 4:53 pm

“How is ‘ethics’ defined?”

From Scripture, L’s. 😊



Christiane says  
November 3, 2010 at 5:26 pm

verses, please 😊



bill says  
November 3, 2010 at 6:25 pm

Genesis 1 to Revelations something....



Christiane says  
November 3, 2010 at 6:53 pm

Thanks, Bill

your answer and C.B.’s answer fits in with what I thought before I asked which is this:

the personal ethics of each believer is formed from their own individual interpretation of revealed teaching in Scripture, so there isn’t a ‘unified’

code of ethics that represents the Southern Baptist faith . . . (reason: different people come up with different interpretations of Scripture)

now, if I'm wrong, then the SBC would have a unified, defined code of ethics, in which case, it would be a good idea for the SBC to be represented by someone like Richard Land who can answer questions from the public, like the one I asked. 😊



Bob Cleveland says

November 3, 2010 at 4:39 pm

Dave,

Last I heard, the cost to keep a couple on the field was in the \$40's. So there are apparently a lot more potential missionaries in the wings, than 32.

And I agree about why are we lobbying a secular government, in the first place. I see none of that in the Bible, and when the Apostle Paul DID appeal to Rome, it didn't turn out so good.

Well, unless you count what he wrote while awaiting execution, which I figure he would've written anyway.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 4:45 pm

I'm trying to avoid making a politically incorrect and potentially hurtful joke about how long ago you got those figures.

Could we really pay, house, and provide benefits for missionaries for 40K per year? That may be the basic pay package or something. But I'm talking total cost to the IMB to support a missionary.

I picked the 100K figure because I thought it was on the high end, and because it made division easier. I really don't know the figure.

But, obviously, if the figure is 50K, then you could put 65 missionary units out there.



Stuart says

November 3, 2010 at 10:35 pm

According to the IMB website in the LMCO section, the figure is \$43K. I have to think that doesn't include something, whether cost of country adjustment, medical insurance, annuity, etc. but that's the figure they publish.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 10:39 pm

If that's the total figure, then I'm gonna look pretty stupid for harassing Bob.



Doug Hibbard says

November 3, 2010 at 11:33 pm

I clicked through from an RSS feed to point you to the LMCO data for the number. 2008 a church I once attended set 42,577 or so as their goal because it was what the IMB publicized as the cost of one missionary “unit” for a year. Being related to and knowing several currently serving IMB folks, the number sounds about adequate for the amount spent on support, though perhaps not on budget.

Although it would be awesome to allow IMB folks 50k a year for ministry activities, so 50k for salary/benefits and 50k for budget, giving them 100k would be nice.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 11:36 pm

Do you have a link on that?



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 11:38 pm

I’m not advocating what we should pay. I’m just trying to estimate for the sake of math. Maybe the 50K figure is closer to accurate, in which case we could sent 65 missionary units with the ERLC money.



Doug Hibbard says  
November 4, 2010 at 7:20 pm

I don't know if this will link, so some guru can fix it:

[http://www.imb.org/main/give/page.asp?  
StoryID=4426&LanguageID=1709](http://www.imb.org/main/give/page.asp?StoryID=4426&LanguageID=1709)



Bob Cleveland says  
November 5, 2010 at 2:02 pm

I don't have any special knowledge about this, but our pastor moved the church to set the goal for our Lottie Moon offering at the cost to keep a couple on the field, a few years ago. We've kept up, as it has changed from year to year, but we've met the for the past few years. By a HUGE margin last year, in fact.

Don't worry about looking stupid. It's rather fun, in fact, and everybody ooh's and aah's when you accidentally say something intelligent.

I know from experience.



Dave Miller says  
November 5, 2010 at 2:44 pm

I just couldn't believe the figure was that low. Everyone seems to be confirming the figure.



jack says

November 3, 2010 at 4:55 pm

I heard a preacher say one time that the isle down the center of a typical church is not made to divide us from black or white, Democrat or Republican, rich or poor. I don't like politics on church grounds as far as rallies or speeches. ERLC does that at the SBC level and in addition to the cost of operation – buildings , salaries, cars and expenses are monies that are “given” to various people and organizations which we see as fitting our mold. This is the Lobbying Arm of the SBC and the Courts or Congress determined that lobbyist licenses are not required for certain ministers and perhaps others who work for that office and while these monies are not secret , I've never seen a figure. It can be horrendous if unchecked. That's my main beef which everytime you pat one on the back you make an enemy of another and as Christians and Baptists we aren't very successful doing that. As far as trimming an operation that's always possible but one thing that stands out are the magazines and other publications with their inherant costs plus mailing fees most of which could be handled on the internet or eliminated entirely. While a seminary takes paid healthcare away from retirees ERLC is against “OBama Care”. One man in that office to “ring my bell” said “all Medicare, Medicaid and Rx Programs, PLUS Social Security will probably be eliminated” If he really believes that he must have to take a cab to work everyday and when he arrives – no one gets out. I never want to put someone out of work but in order to be fair and to maximise everyones position in that event these discussions are very necessary. Otherwise the

best connected get the breaks. People are valuable and a judicious separation of anyone in the “family” is a must so they can come back – if the people left get on the stick and do their job. AMEN



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 5:13 pm

I am looking for someone to give the counterpoint here. What are reasons that the ERLC should be kept going?



Darby Livingston says

November 3, 2010 at 6:12 pm

Good luck finding that. You might just have to write a personal letter to Richard Land himself to get that counterpoint.



Darby Livingston says

November 3, 2010 at 6:13 pm

Or read David Brumbelow. 😊



David R. Brumbelow says

November 3, 2010 at 5:15 pm

I disagree. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission provides a valuable ministry to and from the SBC.

\* They provide an ongoing influence and relationship to the president, congress, supreme court, and other government officials. They give a unique Baptist viewpoint on political, spiritual, moral, and religious liberty issues. They speak for Baptists and missions in ways we will probably never know. Of course they also speak to Baptists.

\* They provide information to Southern Baptists and non Baptists and non Christians about what we believe and stand for. Sure, others can provide such information. But the ERLC is an agency specifically designed for such. People can easily find or be referred to them.

\* They are an ongoing witness to the world of where we stand on a number of issues. They provide a number of good, solid position papers. They have actively opposed same sex marriage and legalizing marijuana.

\* They lead in a number of special emphases and days in the SBC life. Many do not emphasize these days, but many do. They emphasize concerns about world hunger, race relations, religious persecution, drugs, gambling, pro-life, etc.

Yes, others speak to these issues. And Baptists should also speak.

I do not look at this as an either or situation. I support the IMB. I also support the ERLC. Both are vital in certain ways.

Another consideration: The IMB not only receives funds from the Cooperative Program, but also from the special Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. If churches want to increase the IMB funds, they can always give more to this special offering. The ERLC has no special offering and is a small part of the CP.

A strong church, denomination, and Christian influence in America will ultimately strengthen missions around the world. It will do so on a more enduring basis that if we

let everything else slide and send it all to missions. Neglect our influence and strength here, and it will adversely affect worldwide missions down the road.

David R. Brumbelow



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 10:35 pm

Okay, David, let me address the points you made.

**\* They provide an ongoing influence and relationship to the president, congress, supreme court, and other government officials. They give a unique Baptist viewpoint on political, spiritual, moral, and religious liberty issues. They speak for Baptists and missions in ways we will probably never know. Of course they also speak to Baptists.**

I wonder how much influence he really has. But I do not deny that there is SOME value to the ERLC. My concern is comparative. What could you do with the 3.235 million in international missions?

**\* They provide information to Southern Baptists and non Baptists and non Christians about what we believe and stand for. Sure, others can provide such information. But the ERLC is an agency specifically designed for such. People can easily find or be referred to them.**

I'm not sure I ever gotten a lot of value from what the ERLC says SBC folks believe. That may be my fault for not making access of it.

Again, I'm not saying there is NO value, just not enough value to balance out what we could do with the money elsewhere.

**\* They are an ongoing witness to the world of where we stand on a number of issues. They provide a number of good, solid position papers. They have**

**actively opposed same sex marriage and legalizing marijuana.**

Couldn't say, seminary presidents and professors provide these position papers?

**\* They lead in a number of special emphases and days in the SBC life. Many do not emphasize these days, but many do. They emphasize concerns about world hunger, race relations, religious persecution, drugs, gambling, pro-life, etc.**

Again, it seems that this function could be swallowed up elsewhere. Also, doesn't Focus or the FRC counsel provide similar services?

Let me be clear. I'm not anti-ERLC. I'm not anti-Richard Land. I am just questioning whether in times like these we couldn't do better for the Kingdom by redirecting that money.



Gene Scarborough says  
November 6, 2010 at 11:50 am

Dave-

In it's present form and function, I couldn't agree with you more.

What we need to realize it that it's former function as the Christian Life Commission was not near as political or Republican. In it former life it was clearly NON-PARTISAN and expressed a Baptist opinion on matters of religion and other things which needed a Christian response and comment.

Under our rule of AUTONOMY no one could actually speak for the local church because of the divergent views held in a more autonomous day.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 6, 2010 at 3:04 pm

The CLC was also not anti-abortion—or sufficiently anti-abortion. The only correct biblical position regarding abortion is that it should be illegal. If it was only available for cases where a mother's life was in jeopardy (ectopic pregnancy) we would have maybe 1% of the abortions we have now.



BDW says  
November 6, 2010 at 4:03 pm

Maybe you could trim the ERLC's budget. I'm sure Land gets a nice paycheck. But that Washington office is expensive. Hard to trim too much on the costs of having a presence in DC.

Defund the ERLC and the SBC will find herself as one of the only major religious groups in America without an organizational presence in the nation's Capitol. Doing so would signal that Southern Baptists are disengaging from culture, affirming a commitment to a more pure fundamentalism of the separatist variety. It would be a move in the spirit of J. Frank Norris. Retreat.

I don't know what the philosophy of the ERLC is today. But once upon a time, the SBC ethics agency was guided by the belief that no Baptist can speak for another Baptist. Thus lobbyists like Land should be seen as speaking to but not for Southern Baptists.

Although, I know Land claims to speak for Southern Baptists on issues he deems consensus issues. Beyond gay marriage and abortion, I tend to think the consensus is somewhat artificial. Of the two most recent issues that he's addressed – immigration and Muslim relations – I think it's hard to argue that Land really has his finger on the pulse of SBCers as he likes to say.

By the way, if the SBC did retreat from DC, I suspect it would not be long before a new Baptist ethics voice emerged with a DC presence – an effort that I'd love to be a part of and hope to one day.



bill says

November 3, 2010 at 11:00 pm

Response to Mr. Brumbelow

Point 1: With literally hundreds of other lobbying groups all vying for the ear of all these people listed, it has been proven time and time again that you get results with elections, not handshakes and cocktails. Put the ERLC money into NAMB and into programs designed to assist our established churches and change people. Those people vote, last night repeats itself over and over again. You might even see actual legislation passed on all these social issues that we keep giving a baptist perspective on all the time.

Point 2: They may have provided news to baptists and non-baptists but they're obsolete with the internet. I'd rather get my news from online sources that don't draw their paychecks from the Southern Baptist Convention anyways. A webpage can display our stances and let people know where we stand. Pastors have a far more effective reach in letting people know where we stand by just preaching the

gospel on Sundays.

Point 3: The ERLC is not the witness to the world. Missionaries are. We are. Christians are. As far as position papers, put that on our academia which it's probably coming out of anyways. Put that task onto our academics. As for major social issues like abortion and legalized marijuana, that task should be squarely in the hands of each and every person who claims Christ. Last night California struck down marijuana legalisation. Why not pour more missionaries and support into California so more people can be reached and people changed. The voting totals will swing and that's what makes or breaks an issue.

Point 4: If we don't even know what they're emphasizing, then where's the problem? The problem is that the ERLC isn't communicating with baptists claimed in the earlier point. This just strengthens my point to disband and dismantle the ERLC. Let NAMB have this task of helping to inform local churches about special emphasis days. Heck, why aren't the pastors talking these days up? Let the pastors do this task.

You're going to get the strong Christian influence in America when more people are reached for Christ, not when we host a gala and invite elected officials or somehow manage to get a ten minute face to face in between other lobbying groups. We need to be putting feet and hands on the ground here in America, not putting our tithes and offerings into the coffers while helping to grease the cogs of a secular government. We neglect our influence here when we stop trying to reach people here, not when we don't have a lobbyist in Washington.

The Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission may have had an influence thirty years ago. But with so many other things that I feel is wrong with the Southern Baptist Convention, we are entirely too slow in recognizing when something is either outdated or ineffective and we just flat out refuse to change. This is something that needs to go away and that money dispersed to other agencies.

We don't need to have the ear of the king when we serve the King of these kings.

It's been too apparent that there are those who'll never listen to what we have to say and those who merely nod, smile and just know that if they say the right things, we'll just keep mindlessly voting for them. To this end, we need to double our efforts in the field and influence elections rather than do what we're doing and host dinner parties.



Brian says

November 3, 2010 at 5:47 pm

Whether or not the ERLC stays around or goes away is of little concern in my opinion. I'm sure there are good reasons to keep it around and good reasons to cut it out of the CP. That being said, perhaps we should be careful not to limit Kingdom work simply to foreign missions.

Dave, your closing question "What would have more eternal/Great Commission value – 32 missionary families serving around the world or the ERLC lobbying on political and social issues here?" is either a straw man or a case of the excluded middle. Why can't we have both? A robust and Biblical view of Kingdom work includes both worldwide evangelization (Mt. 28) and social engagement (Jer. 29:1-7). In times of economic crisis and Great Commission Resurgence, it might seem prudent to slash and cut any program that doesn't have any direct impact on missions. But if we followed that logic to the extreme, many more programs would fall by the wayside. Why should we not cut everything but the IMB?

That being said, maybe the ERLC deserves to go, but with it should not go a more robust understanding of ministry that includes other ways God works than just the mission field.

Brian



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 10:49 pm

I'm not sure I'm either setting up a straw man or excluding the middle.

### **“Why can't we have both?”**

Well, because we are falling so badly behind in our CP offerings that we are reducing our missionary personnel. We have to make cuts. We cannot do it all and tough choices have to be made.

I would think it better to cut the ERLC and send our 50 or so missionary units than to keep the ERLC and continue to send away qualified, capable and willing mission volunteers.

There seem to be other ways we can do social engagement.

### **“Why should we not cut everything but the IMB”**

That seems to be reductio ad absurdum.

The CP has 5 primary funding focal points. 50% goes to the IMB. About 23% goes to NAMB. Around 22% goes to the seminaries. the remaining 5% goes to the ERLC and the Exec Com. We've already talked about cutting the EC to fund IMB (1%).

You have to have administration to make a mission work like this operate.

IMB funds oversees mission work.

NAMB funds the local mission work.

The seminaries are training the church leaders for tomorrows churches and the

missionaries of the future.

So, what does that leave? To me, the only function we are funding significantly that serves a lesser GC purpose is the ERLC.



David R. Brumbelow says  
November 3, 2010 at 5:53 pm

A couple of other thoughts:

It can be beneficial to the church to have someone who has the ear of the king. How about Joseph, Daniel, and other prophets speaking to the kings and those in authority. Seems Esther was valuable to God's chosen people, in speaking to the king. Many believe one of the reasons Luke wrote Acts was to let the Roman Empire know Christians were not a threat to them. As far as Paul and Caesar, who knows? Paul did greet those of Caesars' household. And sometimes they need to speak words of judgment to those in authority; John Baptist and Jesus come to mind. (Paul, John Baptist, Jesus were executed. But we are not called to always do the safe, but the right thing.) Richard Land and the ERLC have connections and influence in Washington DC that we could never figure out.

For those who would say there was no such agency in the Bible, well, I guess you could say the same for the IMB. We could just let the churches send their own missionaries. But we dealt with that issue a hundred years ago or so.

David R. Brumbelow



Dave Miller says  
November 3, 2010 at 7:10 pm

Thanks for stopping by to be my counter-point. Later in the evening, I will try to give some kind of response.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 10:51 pm

You're stretching a little for that one David. But again, I do not say that there is no value to the ERLC. See my answer above to Brian.

The ideal would be increased giving which would make all boats rise. But that isn't happening and we are actively reducing our mission force.

In the light of that, is it really a high priority to keep Richard Land doing what he does?



Brent Hobbs says

November 3, 2010 at 9:25 pm

I think there's a place and need for the work of the ERLC. Could there be some cost reductions and reductions? I imagine there could be some adjustments if we looked closely.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 10:42 pm

I guess I'm thinking that the work of the ERLC could be rolled into some programs at the seminaries for much less money – the position papers and stuff.

I have no reason to believe that the ERLC has a lot of bureaucracy from which significant cuts could be made.

It is not that I want to see the ERLC done away with. It is just that in a time when missionaries are being brought home for financial reasons, the value of the ERLC seems to wane.



Lydia says

November 3, 2010 at 9:38 pm

Who could possibly speak for 16 million in the “autonomous” SBC churches in DC? Are we missing the irony?

Wasn't Land a supporter of the ground zero mosque? Didn't he say it was a religious liberty issue? (Never mind that Sharia law forbids religious liberty)



Bess says

November 3, 2010 at 10:20 pm

I really really don't like that if Richard Land speaks he's speaking for the entire SBC. I think that completely goes against the priesthood of the believer. I would probably agree with much he says but not all of it and I don't want him speaking for me.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 10:53 pm

Lydia, if you go to the ERLC website, there are several articles of clarification that explain Land's position on the Ground Zero Mosque.

But that brings up Bess's point. Why does Richard Land's position on the GZ Mosque matter? He's welcome to his opinion. But if he represents himself as speaking for Southern Baptists, then I have a problem.



aaron says

November 3, 2010 at 9:42 pm

I would be scared to know how much we would raise if we had a special offering like a Lottie for the ERLC. We have so many in our convention that seem to care more about politics and policy than the gospel.



Dave Miller says

November 3, 2010 at 10:40 pm

Interesting question.



jack says

November 3, 2010 at 9:43 pm

Billy Graham used to get asked to come to meet with people of importance in our Government – including Presidents – of Both Parties and for all the reasons you can imagine. We’ve already set the table for the SBC on the Republican side which automatically puts you in opposition to the other. We don’t need opposition – we need Friends. If you don’t like “Northerners” around Michagan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota because their mostly Democrat or stay inside at the corner Pubs in the hard winters shooting darts then maybe we should forget planting churchs anywhere but the deep South – or maybe we could just call them a “mission field” or get out of the business of preaching the Gospell to the whole world. To not make enemys that you don’t have to make is common sense. I’ll bet a donut that the SBC has not been to a luncheon where the President was in attendance. Only a guess and a donut ain’t but a buck nowadays.



Doug Hibbard says

November 3, 2010 at 11:38 pm

I’ve wondered the same things, and there are other organizations that aren’t SBC but duplicate much of what ERLC does: provide Christian, even conservative Christian, commentary and political oomph in DC.

I wonder if we would bring our membership numbers down closer to our actual practicing membership if we weren’t trying to have the ERLC be able to claim to speak for 16.5 million. After all, if we have 16.5 million members, that’s better than 5% of the US population, so we should have clout.

I’m with you on this one, it’s worth the discussion. Is the ERLC really about spreading

the Gospel or is it about earthly influence?

Anyway...have a good night.



Mark says

November 4, 2010 at 12:17 am

Dave, one news article states –

*“ Southern Baptists gave \$141 million to support the work of missionaries through the 2008 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, but it is not enough to fund many of those who are ready to go. The \$30 million shortfall is equivalent to what it costs to support the work of approximately 667 international missionaries for a year.*

And

*“ The IMB spends 71 percent of its total budget – including the Lottie Moon offering and a major portion of funds received from the Cooperative Program – on missionary support, encompassing salaries, housing, medical care and children’s education. It averages approximately \$43,000 annually per missionary.*



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 12:37 am

We really don't pay our missionaries much, do we?



WJ says

November 4, 2010 at 2:13 pm

Dave that is per missionary not missionary unit which would included both husband and wife. You are probably closer on your \$100,000 per unit when you add in all the bennifits and other things.



WJ says

November 4, 2010 at 2:15 pm

You must also add in field parity for cost of living which in some locations is 0 and in others is so much that they max out the Social Security amount for the year when combined with thier salary.



Jon says

November 4, 2010 at 12:42 am

It seems like the ERLC tries to cover two tasks: explaining the Baptist view of social issues to government, and explaining social issues to Baptists.

Explaining "Baptists" to government seems like something a convention should do. Christianity, done right, irks bad government. So all churches should be concerned about the borders of church, family, and state, Because we have a federal government,

it is important to have advocates near the seat of that government.

Take, for example, the CLC/ERLC work on RLUIPA. Many churches have started in empty downtown storefronts. A government more concerned with tax revenue than spiritual growth doesn't like tax-free storefronts. Many have tried to keep churches out. The CLC/ERLC was instrumental in drafting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and the later Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). RLUIPA prevents government actors from using zoning laws to burden free exercise without a compelling interest. That law has helped countless churches form in the places where they are needed the most, despite local government opposition. That work is dry, but essential if you care about starting churches without government interference.

It also makes sense to have this task in a separate entity. Government relations is a specialized task that benefits many, if not all, churches. It doesn't fit within the seminary education model; it's not about pastoral education or church operation, or even church life. It takes full-time commitment, given the scope of government. It would be inefficient for each state or entity (or church) to send someone to Washington on a case-by-case basis.

The task you're focusing on seems to be the other one: "explaining social and political issues to Baptists." To the extent the ERLC behaves like a Baptist media bureau, or a Baptist Focus on the Family, or a religious alternative to Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh, it seems fair to wonder whether it's a core task for the CP.

But separating the former from the latter takes a pretty sharp scalpel — a level of cutting usually left to a board. Given the choice between an ERLC that does both tasks, or no ERLC, I'd choose to keep it. But I know what answers I'd like to hear from potential ERLC trustees.



Louis says

November 4, 2010 at 12:42 am

There are a couple of misconceptions here that need to be corrected first.

One, the ERLC is not a lobbying organization. That has actually been tried in court. Some tried to attack the ERLC by having its tax exempt status in the District of Columbia removed because it was not a ministry, but a lobbying organization. After a trial, the court found the the ERLC was not a lobbying organization, but a religious ministry.

I think that it is important that we understand what ERLC's mission and program statement are. It is not a lobbying organization.

Second, the money is really not a big deal. Remove the ERLC from the CP budget, and Dr. Land could go directly to churches. The ERLC would get more money by this approach. I suspect that the ERLC would not oppose being removed from the CP.

To understand the value of the ERLC one needs to have an understanding of its history and the role it plays. I would like to see a show of hands as to who on this blog has read the recent history of the ERLC.

The ERLC and its predecessor organizations have been around for decades. Southern Baptists created it because they wanted to have an agency that would help educate Southern Baptists on issues related to the Christian Life, and one that would also reflect the denomination's stand in the public arena.

Also, I suspect that there is a bit of naivete when it comes to religious bodies and their involvement in moral public issues.

Almost every major religious body in the U.S. has an organization like the ERLC in D.C. In many cases, formerly mainline denominations have rejected any emphasis on biblical or doctrinal issues. When a religious body does that, what is often left is –

politics.

I have seen this in our town, particularly at the local divinity school. The programs, the faculty and the students are all jazzed about politics. They are not jazzed about missions, Bible studies and other areas that are the traditional focus of religious bodies. They are completely given to secular politics, wrapped in religious language and symbolism.

If biblically conservative denominations make no investment in speaking to public issues and explaining those to issues to their constituents, that leaves the field entirely to denominations that do not even attempt to look to the Bible for a direction on moral issues. Whether the issue is abortion or a host of other issues do we really want only those religious groups that have no biblical framework for analyzing and addressing those issues to be the ones speaking in the public square. Doesn't it make sense that the SBC would also want to speak to these issues?

And it is not a violation of autonomy for the ERLC to speak in a manner that is consistent with the resolutions and other actions taken by the SBC at its annual meeting.

Of course, we could allow Wiley Drake, Ronnie Floyd or hosts of other pastors to speak individually. But those individualized messages would be likely to get lost in a barrage of individual church messages – as opposed to one message.

ERLC may not reflect the views of every church in the SBC on every issue. The same is true of any pastor who attempts to speak on behalf of his church on some issue. There might be many members who disagree.

But that is a different question than the one posed here. That question asks whether the ERLC is accurately reflecting the dominant position of the SBC churches on the issues at hand. The question of this post is whether to even have an ERLC.

I would argue that nothing is perfect in this regard, but that the ERLC today is much

better at representing the SBC constituency than the CLC and BJCPA of earlier decades. I suggest reading the history of the ERLC recently written by Jerry Sutton. You would not believe who the speakers were at previous CLC events compared to what is done today. Try Jesse Jackson, Marian Wright Edelman (sp?), Joseph Fletcher (father of situational ethics), and who can forget the famous "Playboy Seminar" on sexuality hosted by the CLC before the CR.

So, it is fair and wise to ask whether the ERLC is accurately representing the SBC.

But I do not believe it is wise to jettison the ERLC altogether. The ERLC existed long before the CR and today's issues. If the ERLC did not already exist, it would be recreated within a year of its disbandment.

People ask whether the Seminaries can take this on. I suggest that you really consider all of the activities of not only Dr. Land but the ERLC staff when it comes to the issues that they speak to and all the work they do with congress, one would understand that the Seminaries do not have the time or staff to adequately address these issues. Addressing these issues takes knowledge and time.

No agency leader is perfect. Dr. Land has a good educational and vocational record that equips him to be a speaker in these areas.

I could go on here. I think that maybe the problem is that we are expecting the SBC to speak on an issue and "poof", the issue is solved. And we underestimate the cost of losing a presence of a biblically faithful denomination speaking to issues. It's hard to know how much influence the ERLC has. But we know if it disappeared from the landscape that it would not help move things forward in a good way. We are just not patient.

If we have any contribution to make toward our society based on the Biblical convictions we have, we will be faithful if we speak to that. And I think that a collective approach to speaking is a more strategic way to proceed.

These are just some thoughts. I would be glad to see some additional thoughts from all of you.



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 2:38 am

I'm going to have to digest this tomorrow, Louis. But you make some good points – as we have come to expect.



Strider says

November 4, 2010 at 1:34 am

I really appreciate Dave addressing the plight of the IMB in the current financial crises. We are in a crises. We are cutting back the Missionary force from 5600 to 5000. We are having to say no to many qualified candidates from the churches that the IMB was created to serve. Two things to say about this:

One, I really do cost you about 43,000 per year. That is most of the story but not the whole story. As we move to more difficult places it costs more. My pay package, salary, benefits, housing, retirement etc is about 43,000 but I also live in a 'closed' country so I have to have an Aid Agency office that costs about 60,000 per year. This office supports the visas for 25 adults so I think this is great value for money. If you go to other places that are more developed it cost much much more to keep an M there. For the record I have not had a raise in about seven years or so and last year they cut our retirement contribution in half. If you give me even less money I will stay. Shoot, I think I can speak for everyone I know on the field and say that we all would work for less if we have to.

But secondly, we are missing the lesson of 1st Baptist Dallas who are building a 115

million dollar complex. The lesson is not, 'look at all that wasted money that could go to missions'. The lesson is look what happens when people believe in something. The money is there, the problem for the IMB is the same as for the ERLC: Most of you don't know what we are doing and are not willing to put more money into what you do not understand. I don't know what the ERLC has done- which means they have told their own story even more poorly than we have- but the IMB has seen some of the most exciting Kingdom growth over the last 20 years that Christian mission has ever seen. If the Churches are not passionate enough to fund that then they are either apostate or ignorant. I am thinking they are ignorant and if so, that is our fault. We must do a better job of communicating what is happening in closed and dark places. I am convinced that if you all understood what was happening here we would not have to be talking about who to cut.



Dave Miller says  
November 4, 2010 at 2:39 am

One thing I've always liked about you, Strider. You lay it right out there. No beating around the bush.



Strider says  
November 4, 2010 at 5:42 am

Are you being sarcastic because my reply was as long as you post?  
Sorry Dave.



bill says  
November 4, 2010 at 10:13 am

Or you could raise the point that pastors will pull out all the stops to build up their own churches but will do just enough to say that they gave

something to the CP.

What goes without saying is that many of these churches with massive building campaigns are beating the tithing point to death and using the building as the reason rather than, "Hey, we could be sending more missionaries!" You all here know that I support tithing, but I want my tithes going to the Lord's work, not the work of men. I can understand building new buildings, but the proof is in the pudding on how they decorate and utilize those buildings.

A church locally just spent 5.4mil on a new building. Over 3mil, if you actually dig in the long and confusing paperwork that they released, has gone to decorations rather than space. There is a difference. The actual building came in around 1.8mil with .6 going to fees, permits, etc.

Check and see if the pastor gets a handmade mahogany desk or if he gets some desks from a decent office furniture outlet. That's where zeroes start getting added to costs of building. And no, I don't mind if individuals in the church banded together to get that mahogany desk, I mind it when it's thrown into the cost of the building. I doubt that many of you here could identify a cherry wood desk and a cherry wood veneer desk.



John Wylie says

November 4, 2010 at 10:40 am

I like Dr. Land. I find he's very interesting and intelligent. But, I would imagine that the SBC like the Federal Gov't is going to have to make some tough choices about streamlining their budget. The BGCT and the CBF have already trimmed way back.



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 11:11 am

Really, I was being direct, Strider. You cut right through the baloney and make your point!



Joe Blackmon says

November 4, 2010 at 7:49 am

I can't stand political liberals. I would love for there to be a way to influence the country politically to move away from the center and further to the right. I get giddy imagining the good guys being able to frustrate the Dems in their ability to take my hard earned money away from me and give it to someone who is lazy, unwilling to work, or here illegally.

However, even if all those good, noble goals were to see fruition, it wouldn't bring people to the gospel. And I would lay money that Land has about as much influence as that loud, obnoxious uncle at the family reunions—people let him go first in line at the desert table just to get him out of the way quicker. He's basically a denominational fat cat with a cushy job who gets paid WAY more than he's worth for doing, well, not much of anything.



Lydia says

November 4, 2010 at 9:24 am

“However, even if all those good, noble goals were to see fruition, it wouldnt bring people to the gospel. And I would lay money that Land has about as much influence as that loud, obnoxious uncle at the family reunions—people let him go first in line at the desert table just to get him out of the way quicker. He’s basically a denominational fat cat with a cushy job who gets paid WAY more than he’s worth for doing, well, not much of anything.”

Joe, You are absolutely right. If you read Louis’ comment between the lines it is more about us having a place at the political table (which we would not have if we did not claim 16 million) so the libs don’t corner the market on influence in DC.

So, we try to play the same game the liberals do. Very little to do with Jesus Christ. And it ignores our historical position of autonomy and the priesthood. We are not a voting block or a political movement to contend with. (Look at breakdown of evangelical voting patterns)

But Louis says it well as a pragmatic lawyer. Note this sentence:

“Also, I suspect that there is a bit of naivete when it comes to religious bodies and their involvement in moral public issues.”

The implications are that if we do not see the spiritual need for the ELRC, we are simpletons who cannot possibly understand the big picture.

But Louis, You hurt your own argument when you tell us this:

“Southern Baptists created it because they wanted to have an agency that would help educate Southern Baptists on issues related to the Christian Life, and one that would also reflect the denomination’s stand in the public arena.”

How do you measure the success of that mission? And the fact the courts said it was not legally a lobbying organization, does not mean it isn't otherwise, what is our corporate stand? All 16 mill of us?

Land does not speak for me and is many times an embarassment.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:49 am

We??? Richard Land doesn't speak for you??? When did you become Southern Baptist Lydia? This is certainly new news to me. Next you will be telling me Joe is now Southern Baptist too. 😊



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:54 am

Don't you have some covers to pull over your head and hide under?



Lydia says  
November 4, 2010 at 3:53 pm

Debbie???

I grew up SBC until college and have attended an SBC church since 2005.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 7:14 pm

My apologies then Lydia. I thought you said you were no longer SB.  
My mistake.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 7:52 pm

At least Lydia gets the gospel right, doesn't claim that other religions lead to Christ, and wouldn't contact a muslim for the purpose of pretending to be his friend just to use some information he had for a personal vendetta against Paige Patterson.



Dave Miller says  
November 4, 2010 at 11:10 am

I mentioned this before, I would really prefer this not to become an enterprise in Land-bashing. Once things go negative here it is almost impossible to bring them back.

So, the topic of discussion is whether the ERLC's work (done by Richard Land, or anyone else) is comparatively valuable. Are there better ways to spend CP money.

I'm gonna be fairly persistent here.

Land-bashing would be permissible in the CR-Playground comment stream but not here.

Thank you for cooperating.



John Wylie says

November 4, 2010 at 11:19 am

Dave,

The number of non missionary personnel in state and national SBC agencies is ridiculous. I think that the SBC ought to only pay missionaries whether foreign or home, and whatever support staff is needed to get the job done. Instead of executive directors, D.O.M.s, foundation heads, and all the many buildings that are maintained by various entities; there ought to be one office building with just enough financial secretaries and payroll clerks to pay the missionaries.



Christiane says

November 6, 2010 at 3:50 pm

"I get giddy imagining the good guys being able to frustrate the Dems in their ability to take my hard earned money away from me and give it to someone who is lazy, unwilling to work, or here illegally."

Well, JOE, rejoice.

Now that the House is cleaned up, you can look forward to your hard-earned money going to pay for the billions of dollars we borrow from China in order to maintain those huge tax cuts to the top 2 % of our wealthiest taxpayers.

You know, none of us want our tax dollars going to support the wrong crowd, do we? I understand exactly how you feel. 😊



Christiane says

November 6, 2010 at 4:04 pm

JOE, this is going to cheer you up (especially when you see WHO really gets the tax-cut profits):

<http://firedoglake.com/2010/10/17/tax-the-rich-now/>



Joe Blackmon says

November 6, 2010 at 7:11 pm

Let's see here—a tax cut for some lady that has figured out that if she just doesn't go to work the American taxpayer will foot her bill for food, housing, medical care, etc....in other words, a human parasite—a drain on taxpayer resources

—or—

tax cuts for a woman who owns a business, has investments, hires people, owns two houses that she bought with money that she earned from hard work.

Yeah, anyone with any kind of sense could see which of those two deserves tax cuts.



Christiane says

November 6, 2010 at 7:52 pm

Oh no, JOE, you don't 'get it'. Those tax cuts for the top 2% will have to be paid for by the middle class. That middle class lady with business has got to pay up for the guyz at the TOP who likely won't be paying anything.

When the top 2% keep their 'break', we will need to 'borrow' a few more billion to make up for what they don't pay. So, the middle class pays for the debt on and on and on . . .

Oh, and as for the super-rich creating jobs? And not sending American jobs over-seas? Bullpucky!

That 'trickle-down' myth has no back-up data in reality, Joe. You're too smart to be buffaloed like this.



Dave Miller says

November 6, 2010 at 7:59 pm

The "trickle-down myth" as you call it, when enacted by Ronald Reagan, led to two decades of unprecedented American prosperity.



Dave Miller says

November 6, 2010 at 8:01 pm

Now, please take this discussion to the Politics Playground and address the ERLC issue here.



bill says

November 7, 2010 at 10:51 am

I've never been hired by a poor man, only rich people with incentives to invest in businesses.

The trickle down works only when the government isn't spending money like a sailor on leave in Thailand.



Rick says

November 4, 2010 at 8:56 am

I agree with David Brumbelow, Jon and Louis. They seem to me to be the voice of reason on this issue. Disbanding the ERLC seems like a radical step, a knee jerk reaction, more than a bit forced.

If we are only talking about (a) saving money to support more missionaries, and (b) evaluating a discernible impact upon my own specific ministry, I would sooner defund Southern and Southeastern Seminaries. I mean, what can we really do with six

seminaries that we could not also do with four much more efficiently?

For the record, I'm not advocating that. I'm just saying that by the same logic, we could defund those organizations, not affect my ministry at all, and release MILLIONS of more dollars for missions.

A word of caution here: If groups of Baptists start advocating the elimination of ministries that are unpopular to a certain faction, don't be surprised if some of the ministries that are popular to you become targeted by other Baptists with different preferences.

I, for one, have more use for the information provided by the ERLC than I do for some of the church growth books produced by Lifeway Research, whose methods, in my opinion, leave a lot to be desired.



Joe Blackmon says

November 4, 2010 at 10:48 am

*I, for one, have more use for the information provided by the ERLC than I do for some of the church growth books produced by Lifeway Research, whose methods, in my opinion, leave a lot to be desired.*

Lifeway's stuff has always been a joke. Lifeway itself is now not even a joke but it's more like a bad punchline after it decided to sell The Shack. They had NO RIGHT to do that.



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 11:14 am

Rick, as I mentioned in a comment somewhere else on this thread, I am not anti-ERLC. I do not think that I am responding “knee-jerk.” (But who knows?)

In tough times though, the sBC has to make choices.

My question is whether the function of the ERLC is valuable enough to justify its continuation in the light of severe cut-backs in our missionary force.

Rather than simply criticizing me for raising the question, maybe you could tell me what function the ERLC serves that makes it worth keeping while we are reducing our missions force.



David R. Brumbelow says  
November 4, 2010 at 11:30 am

The beauty of percentage giving is that while the amount may go down in tough times, it goes back up in better times. In tough times we all have to tighten our belts.

Our national CP gives 50% through the IMB, plus the special Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for the IMB. I think that is outstanding. But I also strongly support the 1.65% that funds the ERLC.

David R. Brumbelow



Dave Miller says  
November 4, 2010 at 2:43 pm

That's a reasonable position, David. I'm not sure I agree, but at least you have stated a positive case. You and Louis have articulated some pretty good defenses of the ERLC.



Rick says

November 4, 2010 at 12:26 pm

Dave,

You write: "I am not anti-ERLC." Really? Your headline reads that we should give it a pink slip. I'd hate to see what it would look like if you REALLY WERE anti-ERLC. Would explosives be involved?

Also, I chose not to defend the ERLC because the earlier writers, in my view, had done an excellent job of articulating the need for such an organization. Why should I assume a defensive posture, thus giving you the advantage? Why should I not counter with something like, "Why doesn't Dave Miller's church give him a pink slip? These are hard times and tough choices must be made. Dave's salary could be used to send that missionary to Brazil where, arguably, more people would be reached than Dave is reaching in Iowa." Not picking on you, by the way...the same is true for my salary in Alabama.

Listen, throwing around these pink slip proposals is pretty serious stuff. That's why I view it as "knee jerk" or "radical." It always sounds good...as long as it's somebody ELSE'S pink slip.



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 2:40 pm

I think your comment shows one of the problems we have as Southern Baptists. We would rather defend the status quo than discuss how we can make our work more effective.

I asked a question and tried to maintain a pretty balanced perspective. The knee-jerk reactions seems to be the protection of the SBC status quo.

That is, I guess, why we needed a GCR. The institutional momentum of the SBC makes it impossible to ask questions and make suggestions without the status-quo police serving warrants.

I resent your implication that I am lying about not being anti-ERLC. I try to speak the truth and I find it both annoying and offensive that you cannot just deal with what I said, but feel you have to question the integrity of my words. I'm NOT anti-ERLC. If we had better funding, I have no objection to the process. You don't have to agree with me, but I resent you questioning the integrity of my words.

And, if I'm not getting the job done at my church, they should pink-slip me. None of us has a "right" to be employed by the SBC or by our churches. We must serve the interests of the kingdom. If the interests of the kingdom are better served by releasing me, I'm sure I won't like it, but that is what my church ought to do. They ought to value the Kingdom higher than my employment.

It seems to me that you are saying that we should maintain the status quo regardless of any other considerations.

Honestly, the knee-jerk protectionism of the status-quo is one of our real problems.



Rick says

November 4, 2010 at 4:04 pm

Dave,

How can I prove to you that I don't want to keep everything status quo? (1) Let's fire the voluntary SBC Parliamentarian. After Orlando, it's clear that you get what you pay for. (2) Let's cut one-third of Southern Seminary's CP gift of \$9.5 million in order to get your \$3 million and still keep the ERLC. (3) Let's publish all the denominational executive salaries and cap them at \$150,000 releasing the surplus through the CP funding formula. (4) Let's stop publishing all those printed materials they hand you at the convention and just put it all online. It saves money and it's even "green" for those who care about such things.

I am not just a status quo protectionist.

Also, I did not mean to imply that you "lied" about not being against the ERLC, but come on, Dave. You honestly don't think that arguing for the disbanding of an organization can reasonably be viewed as an attack on that organization? You have seriously proposed DEFUNDING the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention! Brother, it is a stretch to say that you don't have anything against it when you want to eliminate it.



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 5:16 pm

I just ate a late lunch/early supper at Golden Corral. I like Caesar's Salad, but I didn't eat any. I only have so many calories to devote to lunch, so I chose not to use my calories on Caesar's salad. I like just about everything at Golden Corral, but I only chose a few items (well, more than I should have, but still only a fraction).

We can't have everything. We can't do everything that has value. So, I can say that while I appreciate that there might be value in the ERLC ministry and that I have no axe to grind with Richard Land. I can also say that while I "like" the ERLC, I like something else more.

I would rather see my friend (and dozens of others) sent to the mission field than seeing Richard Land doing his thing. That is nothing against Richard Land. I just don't think that the work he is doing is as crucial as the work of missions. I don't think that ERLC adds as much kingdom value as a few dozen missionaries would.

That is a judgment you are free to disagree with. I do not think it is fair play for you to assert that I am not saying what I mean; that I lack the integrity to speak truthfully.



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 5:27 pm

I will repeat my comment from above (or below – who knows).

The IMB gets 50% of CP national dollars. I think that it is the best of our entities and needs more funding.

NAMB, which gets 23%, while dysfunctional, serves a purpose. I'm unimpressed with Kevin Ezell at this point, but maybe he will sort things out. The work they do is important, even if they have, perhaps, not been very good at doing it.

The seminaries get 22% of the CP pie. They are training the pastors, church leaders and missionaries of the future. I'm not sure why you

single out Southern, but several have suggested we lessen the CP support for our seminaries to increase IMB support. I would definitely consider supporting that, depending on the details.

The way you word that, I get the impression you may have some sort of axe to grind with Southern. I don't think the SBC budget is the place to work out your personal hostilities.

While the EC is hardly a missionary organization, I think we all recognize the need for administration to keep the organization running.

That leaves the ERLC.

Of all of these organizations, it seems to be the least Great Commission oriented. It seems to me that there are many other conservative organization doing similar work so I'm not sure we couldn't get by without it.

I put a priority on our World Missions work. I think it is what the SBC does best. So, I'd like to see funding increase. The ERLC is the best place to do that.

That's my heart. You can continue to question the integrity of my comments or you can take my word.



bill says

November 7, 2010 at 10:49 am

The parliamentarian at the Southern Baptist Convention is the only

person in the room willing to admit he's wrong or when he's made a mistake. We don't need to fire him, we ought to clone him and put them in our other high ranking positions!!!



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 10:44 am

It's absolutely O.K. if someone wants to be a Southern Baptist. Even for a day. And Joe, believe it or not there are people in business, dairy farms, manufacturing etc. up north that are as frugal or more than you and are Democratic politically. Finally, before coffee, it's rare that you can beat a man at his job- finish carpenter, steel worker, electrician and yes even a lobbyist. It's cheaper and you get better results if you put someone you like on a retainer. You'll have more and better " friends " .



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 10:55 am

Joe, Is Lifeway making money or losing money. Are they putting something IN or taking OUT ?



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 11:10 am

I'm sorry, I seem to have missed the part where we determine truth by the line that says "Excess/Deficiency of Revenues over Expenditures" (i.e. if there were more revenues than expenditures then we MUST be doing the right thing). If you are going to apply that standard, then there are pornographic websites that are rolling in truth.



Dave Miller says  
November 4, 2010 at 5:28 pm

Lifeway makes money and puts the profits back into the work of the SBC.



Bill Mac says  
November 4, 2010 at 10:56 am

What is Richard Land's salary?



aaron says  
November 4, 2010 at 11:10 am

I think Ben Cole posted that a few years ago before he dropped out of SBC stuff. I remember right Land answered his questions about salary and benefits.  
On another note about saving money, why is it that the salaries of our entity heads

are kept secret or at least are hidden. How much do the seminary presidents make or the heads of our agencies? Someone suggested to me that some companies have gone to paying their ceo's no more than three times the salary of the lowest paid employee. What would that look like in our convention?



Dave Miller says  
November 4, 2010 at 5:29 pm

That may be my next post, Aaron.

We live in such a culture of secrecy. We need to walk into the light.



bill says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:34 pm

You'll just have to wait fifteen years to have any recent examples of secrecy.



bill says  
November 7, 2010 at 10:47 am

I'm surprised that this didn't elicit any response from you, Dave.

I am disappointed.

I'll work on my sarcasm this week...





Gene Scarborough says  
November 7, 2010 at 11:38 am

I'm rolling in the floor laughing at the Gospel truth!!!!



jack says  
November 4, 2010 at 11:06 am

A paid Lobbyist on a retainer is only interested in accomplishing your goals and most of the time like right now, you need votes from both sides to get that job done. A Lobbyist is known for being able to do just that as opposed to someone who is known as a hard core Republican who would never be let in the Demicratic Club for a Club Soda.



jack says  
November 4, 2010 at 11:24 am

When I said you can't beat a man at his job to justify a paid Lobbyist , I left out the most important one – a Seminary Pastor who is well qualified, deserves his salary as opposed to layman who doesn't know the Bible and will “preach” for nothing and his wife and kin applaud.



Tom Filling says

November 4, 2010 at 11:37 am

When this ministry was launched it had relevance. Now that the IT world is robust much is accomplished in terms of awareness and action through that channel.

This is a classic example of WHY we need objective and frequent assessment of all that we are doing with an Objective Metric. No fudging – no ‘sort of’ numbers. We establish a standard of effectiveness and hold everyone to that standard.

There has been and is a STRONG and PERSISTENT resistance to this kind of Metric being developed and applied. Rainer & Stetzer wrote a book titled Transformational Church. Here is the problem.

BEFORE that book was published I wrote to Ed and asked him – – “Will there be a definition of Disciple & Transformation. His answer was “buy the book Tom.” I have the book there are no such definitions. If our objective is to “MAKE DISCIPLES”, and it is, how can we claim to be developing Transformational Churches when we cannot define what a Disciple is or what Transformation is. Smoke & Mirrors.

I applaud the question – Why do we have the function of Richard Land & Co.? We need to ask WHY of all that we are doing and answer with exegetical precision. No fudging. No duck & dodge such as has been permitted for decades to get us where we are.

Be gracious. Be civil. Be honest. Be courageous. But, do not perpetuate ‘programs’ ad infinitum ad nauseum just because we have always done it that way. God give us courage to speak the Truth in Love.



Dave Miller says

November 4, 2010 at 2:35 pm

I'm kinda surprised that some are offended that I even asked the question – the defensiveness is pretty strong.

Its seems there are some who would rather defend the status quo than deal with the tough questions.



Louis says

November 4, 2010 at 11:52 am

Lydia:

You make some good points.

On the lobbyist thing, there are lots of laws governing lobbyists, what constitutes lobbying etc. I have to admit that I am not in a position to judge all of that. But I will say that my understanding is that the District of Columbia came pretty hard after ERLC, lawyers were involved, and a D.C. Court made the decision. I would assume that the issue was examined carefully in detail, and that a court made a finding that has stood. So, I will admit that I am putting some faith in that adversarial process. But I can do no better than that because, as I said, I have no expertise or experience in this area.

Your point on the results is really worth considering. After 30 years or more intense political awareness than evangelicals have ever had, I am not sure that we are any further along than we were in 1980. There are lots of reasons for that. Many of which

are simply beyond our control. Some are not. And we should examine those and get better at what we are doing.

But for me the issue is faithfulness. How are Christians supposed to behave and exercise their civic responsibilities in a democracy?

I cannot come to the conclusion that Christians are to relegate themselves only to matters of personal salvation and piety. Now, I would never want to see Christians do what liberal theologians and religious movements do – junk personal salvation and piety altogether for political activity.

Also, I think that there is a very real danger that when Christians work on civic related issues, left or right, that there is a tendency to see that as our salvation and for us to lose our focus.

At the end of the day for me is the belief that the Christian, whether individuals, or churches or in a denominational context, has a civic opportunity and responsibility to our fellow men and societies. I can only imagine what Peter, Paul, John and the other apostles would have given to have that right. The only option they had was creative civil disobedience or direct disobedience.

We have an opportunity to proclaim God's truth in every area of life to our society, and I believe that we can and should do that. I am for doing that with a healthy theological understanding that we are still dealing with the City of Man, and I am for doing it well. Augustine dealt with this so eloquently generations ago.

There are many criticisms that can be made about evangelical involvement in politics in this country as far back as William Jennings Bryan, and beyond. I think of the some of the moderate Baptists in our town that tried to prevent the new downtown arena from selling beer when it was constructed. That is just one example of an unwise approach.

But issues of war, human life, human freedom and many others cry out for a voice from

the church. It is not a matter of pragmatism, but conviction.

I want us to do it well (as Mother Theresa did with the abortion issue), and when we speak on a denominational level I want us to do it with a consistency with the SBC constituency. That is my beef with most denominational organizations in this area. They are usually out there doing damage – taking positions that are contrary to their rank and file. ERLC may not speak for everyone, but I believe the positions it has articulated on most of these issues are consistent with SBC sentiment, at least as far as that can be measured.

So, I am for doing things better. But I am opposed to doing nothing with such a great opportunity and responsibility. For me, it really is a matter of stewardship.



Lydia says

November 4, 2010 at 4:03 pm

“At the end of the day for me is the belief that the Christian, whether individuals, or churches or in a denominational context, has a civic opportunity and responsibility to our fellow men and societies. I can only imagine what Peter, Paul, John and the other apostles would have given to have that right. The only option they had was creative civil disobedience or direct disobedience.”

My concern is that we can strive to make society more “moral” but that does not translate into individual salvation. But then it does make life more pleasant for us... but it is not really our “mission”. Paul used his rights as a Roman citizen but it was to spread the Gospel.

I am also reminded that the early abolitionist and suffrage movements started in churches. It is sometimes a fine line between a social non-Gospel and the Gospel.



Louis says

November 4, 2010 at 10:33 pm

Your concerns are valid. This is a tough area of the Christian life that has tripped up many a Christian or movement.



Christiane says

November 4, 2010 at 10:52 pm

This is a fascinating topic.

The concept of how socially-integrated the Gospel of Christ should be is now being explored even by Baptists, and in ways that are groundbreaking.

I noticed that SBCVoices has reference to the new post on Downshore Drift, where there is a discussion of Tim Keller's book: 'Generous Justice', and this was excerpted from it:

"At the beginning of the book, he talks about his motivation to consider the Biblical view of justice. He recalls how he was greatly affected by the hypocrisy of white Christians in the 1960's when they defended segregation instead of siding with those fighting for justice. He thought that "justice" was a secular concern until he was taught more fully on what the Bible taught about justice and God's concern for the oppressed."

That part: 'what the Bible taught about justice and God's concern for the oppressed' is an important revelation that there is a growing awareness among evangelicals of the connection between the Christian and the suffering world around him.



Christiane says

November 4, 2010 at 10:54 pm

<http://www.downshoredrift.com/downshoredrift/2010/11/deacon-ministry-generous-justice-and-caring-for-the-poor-tim-keller.html>



Gene Scarborough says

November 7, 2010 at 11:44 am

Under Foy Valentine's leadership the Christian Life Commission did just this.

Under the present leadership, we have a CEO who wears Republican suspenders to work!

Does this give any insights to change and the lack of need for what we now have????



BDW says

November 7, 2010 at 12:13 pm

Hey Christiane,

Thanks for the link. I'm not sure that Tim Keller has represented what many centrist evangelicals, mainline Protestants and Catholics would consider a "biblical view of justice." I could be wrong; I haven't read the book.

But Keller seems to be advocating a social ethic that is highly individualistic. It's the same type of individualistic ethic preached by 19th century revivalists like Charles Finney who argued that social concern MUST follow regeneration. In other words, good Christians will birth a better society.

I agree that we as individuals should spend our own time and resources caring for the poor, the orphan, the elderly and oppressed. But I believe an individualized ethic by itself offers an incomplete definition of "biblical justice."

Individual solutions are not always the answer. We have structural problems that require structural solutions. Evangelical sociologists Christian Smith and Christian Emerson have touched on this subject in their book *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (it's a good book for group discussion by the way, I know of several churches and community organizations that have read it) Basically the book shows that the individualism that is central to evangelicalism leads evangelicals to turn to interpersonal solutions to race problems that entail little or no sacrifice. Meanwhile, because of their individualism, evangelicals are often unable to see the need for structural solutions.

What's interesting is that Keller recalls the 60s and Civil Rights Movement. Obviously, an individualistic ethic was incapable of curing the racial crisis. Thus, the South had to undergo real, meaningful structural reforms which were resisted by many southerners in different ways.

I hope to take a look at the book sometime. I'm glad that Keller has discovered that the Bible has a thing or two to say about justice.



Christiane says

November 7, 2010 at 1:03 pm

Hi AARON,

Thanks for your comment. I was very moved by the 'excerpt' that I quoted. I can appreciate your concern of "I'm not sure that Tim Keller has represented what many centrist evangelicals, mainline Protestants and Catholics would consider a "biblical view of justice."" You are right. It may not be 'the same'. But perhaps it is a 'small step' towards a more fully developed understanding of God's concern for the oppressed as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. 'Small steps' are fine with me. 😊

Sometimes 'small steps' are best for some, Aaron.

Thanks for the mention of the two evangelical sociologists. I look forward to acquainting myself with their writings.



Gene Scarborough says

November 7, 2010 at 4:35 pm

BDW-

Why the assumption that the South had great problems without consideration to Watts in LA and many northern cities with terrible race relations, like Detroit???

I think part of the problem is so much focus on the South that people

could ignore their own backyards!



BDW says

November 7, 2010 at 7:19 pm

Gene,

Not arguing that cities outside of the South did not have race/ethnic problems as well. California did not have a society structured along the lines of legalized discrimination (Jim Crow South). Northern cities certainly weren't the target of the CRA of 64 and VRA of 65.



Gene Scarborough says

November 8, 2010 at 6:12 am

I have traveled this country and abroad to see a level of prejudice and discrimination everywhere:

Orientals / Hispanics on the West Coast

Almost any ethnic group in NYC

Irish in Great Britian

Anyone not French in France

Etc.

It is a negative trait of humanity based on a desire for a sense of superiority to people who think themselves somehow inferior!

We displace our self-loathing on others in order to feel better. It's a poor way of dealing with feelings of inferiority.

I think it might just apply to Baptists these days too.



Louis says

November 4, 2010 at 11:53 am

Lydia:

What's up with Debbie's taunt? Surely you are in an SBC church, aren't you?



cb scott says

November 4, 2010 at 12:19 pm

Louis,

It's just that, a taunt.

Lydia's SBC pedigree would surprise a lot of folks.

Without saying more, I think you can take the taunt with a grain of salt and chalk it up to the normal "blog vendetta" that just goes with this territory.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 12:25 pm

Yeah, basically Debbie can't stand that Lydia gets the gospel right, proclaims the exclusivity of salvation through Christ (that the person has to personally, consciously know that it is Christ who is saving them when He saves them), and that no other religion leads to God, the Father of Jesus Christ.

In other words, the opposite of everything they do in Enid. LOL



Christiane says  
November 4, 2010 at 12:56 pm

“(that the person has to personally, consciously know that it is Christ who is saving them when He saves them)”

JOE, you are loved by God with a great love, regardless of your pride, regardless of your anger, regardless of your words . . .

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_OK-gPlyb0&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_OK-gPlyb0&feature=related)



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 1:10 pm

There's not a drop of anger or pride in that. That is exactly what scripture says. Rather than platitudes, perhaps you could try to make a point from scripture as to why what I said is wrong.

(crickets chirping in the background)



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 7:10 pm

And Joe this is the problem I have with you as this is absolutely untrue. Again. I have a problem with a non-SB person addressing this issue. I always have. This is not the first time I have spoken out about this. Certain things are in house and questions should be asked....but by us. Not those who do not have a stake in this one way or another.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 7:55 pm

Why don't you go crawl back under your bed and hide there. I'll ask what I want, when I want, how I want. You didn't have ANY problem with someone outside the SBC asking questions about Caner\* so you can take your hypocritical "We police our own" SBC stance and shove it up your big nose.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:02 pm

This (\*) should have been in the comment above.

\* The questions that were asked of Caner were legitimate if the people who asked them had integrity. Of course, that would exclude

Debbie.



Debbie Kaufman says

November 4, 2010 at 8:41 pm

Joe: I addressed this with CB. And I didn't hear you bringing this to the forefront or any other Christian for that matter. I had to fight to get anyone to even see that Mohammad was telling the truth. So I wouldn't give me a speech on integrity. You are free to disagree with my view on this particular subject, as for anything other than that, I stand by all I have written on this subject and would do it again in a heartbeat in the same way given the chance. This affected all Christians and Mohammad as well since Ergun's lies were about his very own religion.



Debbie Kaufman says

November 4, 2010 at 8:43 pm

If a thread is made on the Caner subject I will participate and answer all ludicrous accusations and questions. I am speaking about this particular topic however and feel very strong about what I mentioned. This subject is one only SB's can address in my opinion. Otherwise it would be like Spain telling the United States how we should run our country or the neighbor across the street telling you how to raise your kids. Their opinion just doesn't matter nor is it any of their business. I know that's a strong statement but it is how strong I feel.



Bess says

November 4, 2010 at 8:47 pm

Hey Debs we're all waiting for you to explain to L's that she must cease and desist posting on this thread. You've called out Lydia and Joe by name so let's see the post addressed directly to L's.



Christiane says

November 4, 2010 at 8:50 pm

Hello BESS,

now, which 'bess' are you THIS TIME ?



Bess says

November 4, 2010 at 8:57 pm

Hey L's! Debster's going explain real soon which threads you should be allowed to post on and which ones you should MYOB. Maybe the blog hosts should post the rules somewhere about who's worthy to comment here. We should all have to take kind of SBC purity test before commenting ya know so we purge the blog of those non SBCers.



Gene Scarborough says

November 7, 2010 at 11:46 am

And Joe doesn't get moderated for such harsh words?????

Common, Dave, it's time to look closely at Joe!!!!



Debbie Kaufman says

November 4, 2010 at 7:06 pm

No, it's not a taunt, it is much more than a taunt. At the risk of opening another can of worms, as a Southern Baptist, I do not think that non-Southern Baptists should have a say in this type of matter. This to me is in house. Now if we are talking about the Great commission, or other matters that are not so much in house, even women in ministry. no problem. But in house matters are to be in house I believe. No one knows better than us(SB's) about matters such as ERLC. That is the basis for my comment.

On the internet some pass themselves off as SB when in fact they are not. This has happened more than once. Joe Blackmon himself attempted this. I have a problem when other denominations or those with no church or denomination try to give their opinion on these matters. It's kind of like telling how to raise another

person's family. I think it is none of their business. That is as blunt as I can be without being rude. I also get upset if those who are not SB try and pass themselves off as being such. It makes it sound as if their are more affirmative or negative opinions on certain subject matters from those in the SB church, when in fact they are posers.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 7:58 pm

*Joe Blackmon himself attempted this.*

That is a LIE and I demand you prove it or apologize. When I moved to the state we currently live in, we were members of an SBC church here in the area. We left the SBC church a year ago. I have said on numerous blog comment threads that we went to a non SBC church.

I most certainly have not once EVER tried to "pass [myself] off as SBC". You will either prove your statement or apologize.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:45 pm

I feel absolutely no need to apologize Joe. I stand by my statement again.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:18 pm

Then you BETTER prove it. I have NEVER said I was SBC when I wasn't.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:24 pm

Joe: The proof I remember from either of you is no longer on the internet. I am going purely by memory. I do admit to having a big grudge against you and huge grudge would not be an understatement. So it could be that this clouded my judgment and in all fairness and honesty to you, you could have very well have said you were not SB and I missed it. I recall it being after you were confronted about it, but again, my memory could be clouded by the obvious resentment I have towards you. If that is the case, I do apologize.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:44 pm

You lied. I was NEVER confronted about it. I have been ASKED and answered and not one time did I EVER say I was SBC when I was not a member of an SBC church.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 10:04 pm

Joe: I did not lie. This was exactly as I remember it from reading comments written by both you and Lydia. Now I have apologized. I realize that I have resentment toward both of you and that could

have clouded what I was reading. I freely admit that. Resentment does do things to comprehension of reading. And I do admit to having a boatload. A huge boatload of resentment towards you.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 5, 2010 at 9:03 am

*Resentment does do things to comprehension of reading. And I do admit to having a boatload. A huge boatload of resentment towards you.*

Just to make sure it's easily visible I'll say it again:

Mission accomplished. 😊

Oh, and trust me, the feeling is MORE than mutual—exponentially so.



cb scott says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:13 pm

Debbie,

You are just raggin on Joe with this comment, right?

You have stated you have “Thy Peace” as a resource person for you who can comment on anything on your blog.

L's comments constantly on SBC issues and you never have a problem with that.

MoKhan certainly chimed in with your approval.

And as Lydia said, she was a messenger in the '09 SBC.

So surely you are just raggin' on Joe, right?

If you are not raggin', it does seem to be a double standard on your part, does it not?

BTW, Joe has more than once told the story of how he got in the church he is in now.



Bess says

November 4, 2010 at 8:22 pm

CB, when I was a girl we'd go to Granny's house and she had a clock that would go "Cookoo Cookoo". Sometimes we'd be awake at midnight and count the Cookoos and it would Cookoo 13 times. We'd laugh and say the "Cookoo's gone Cookoo."

Those are good memories.



cb scott says

November 4, 2010 at 8:25 pm

Bess,





Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:27 pm

Thanks CB,

Not only have I told folks that I'm not in an SBC church, I never once told people I was in the SBC when I was not. We joined that church in 10-2009. Prior to that time, our membership was in an SBC church.



Bess says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:32 pm

Hey Joe maybe you could consult with the Pharisee Monitor about whether Pharisees would approve of censorship.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:35 pm

CB: I could have sworn Lydia said she was not SB more than once. . But obviously I read wrong. I have admitted that. I also have explained why I said what I said. I strongly believe that matters such as this are in house. In the family of the SB. Outsiders should be honest and say that they are outsiders and their words should not carry a lot of weight. I do not think

this to be the case on all SB topics, but those of a more personal nature such as ERLC or even IMB policies are in house subjects and should be kept among those who are SB. We are the ones who vote. We are the ones who send the money and messengers. We are the ones who invest heavily in this and outsiders are not the ones who are going to get things changed. Nor should it matter to them. It matters to us. It affects us. No more explanation will be given.



cb scott says

November 4, 2010 at 8:53 pm

Debbie,

Probably where you got confused was from one of those times when all of you were ganged up on me beatin' on me for some CR position I held and lydia said something to me like:

“cb, if you represent the SBC, I don't want any part of it.”

Does that make sense? 😊



Debbie Kaufman says

November 4, 2010 at 10:48 pm

Joe: In all honesty I do not believe I lied. It is what I remember. I normally have nothing against non-SBrs commenting on anything and I do not have authority here either. I am simply voicing my opinion as a member of a church who is belongs to the SBC as saying I do not think non-SB people's opinions have much weight on this

important issue. It's an in house decision and should remain in house. I feel this way about most SB issues that could change the course of the SBC.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 5, 2010 at 6:40 am

*I am simply voicing my opinion as a member of a church who is belongs to the SBC **that hates the SBC, particularly its leadership***

Sorry, you forgot to add a littl something there. I added it in bold for you.

*Resentment does do things to comprehension of reading. And I do admit to having a boatload. A huge boatload of resentment towards you.*

Mission.Accomplished. 😊

And trust me, the feeling is MORE than mutual—exponentially so.



Gene Scarborough says  
November 7, 2010 at 11:49 am

Again— Joe needs to be nice—-or muzzled!!!!



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 8:38 pm

As for Mohammad, that was an entirely different case CB. I would use him again if need be. And he told the truth about something no Christian or SB was willing to stand for. It also affected him since Ergun's lies were about Muslims of which Mohammad is. This however is much more in house.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:22 pm

So, Liar, when are you going to offer your proof that I claimed to be SBC when I wasn't since you stand by your lie above? Oh, wait, you're from Enid—you folks don't really do integrity, do you?

You lied and you know it.



Frank and Larry says  
November 5, 2010 at 12:25 am

“no Christian or SB”

So, you surveyed all the millions of Christians and feel comfortable that the data you collected supports your condemnation of the entire lot — all in favor of one Muslim who is a “Christ-hater.”

Wow! That's some leap of faith.



Joe Blackmon says

November 5, 2010 at 8:24 am

*So, you surveyed all the millions of Christians and feel comfortable that the data you collected supports your condemnation of the entire lot – all in favor of one Muslim who is a “Christ-hater.”*

*Wow! That’s some leap of faith.*

SSBN,

Don’t confuse Debbie with the facts. They scare her.

I wonder what color the sky is on the planet that she lives on.



Dave Miller says

November 7, 2010 at 3:21 pm

Any chance you guys could leave the bickering behind or move it to the moderate’s playground? I’d like to keep this stream focused on something simple – like discussing the topic I wrote about.



Christiane says

November 7, 2010 at 3:34 pm

Oops



Christiane says

November 4, 2010 at 11:54 am

For Richard Land, instead of 'lobbyist', since he is an 'ethics' person, what about calling him a 'permanent diplomatic representative' of the SBC to the United States government and to international embassies?

I take it he is based in D.C.

What are his duties and responsibilities ?

Who supervises him ? (Who does he take orders from?)

To whom does he answer ? To whom does he report ?

Most importantly, WHAT is it that he is authorized to convey about the SBC to other entities in Washington, D.C. ?



Frank and Larry says

November 4, 2010 at 1:06 pm

“I don’t see the comparative Kingdom value of the work of the ERLC. Its as simple as that. I think missionaries on the field could accomplish a lot more than Richard Land in Washington.”

If your premise is correct: why not put all our money into the IMB and do away with everything else?

The problem is that your premise is faulty. It establishes a “forced option” that is not logically sound as it suggests a false cause and effect relationship. Such easy solutions to fighting the evils of this world are really no solutions at all.

Your suggestion is similar to a small business man that eliminates his advertising budget during tough economic times. Most businesses know this is a sure way not to be around when economic times are better.

I do not think that the “either/or” perspective will bring about a stronger Kingdom effort. The ERLC is holding back the waters behind the dam of deteriorating morality in our nation. This allows the gospel to move more freely.

So, the answer to SBC economic woes are not spending less but giving more. The problem with our missions is not on the spending side as much as it is on the giving side. Just look at the 85% to 95% of church members who do not give regularly. There’s the problem. There’s the solution to more missionaries.

Not every agency or activity of a religious body can be measured by the ruler of pragmatism (“it’s just business). Sometimes, we need to do what’s right just because it is right, not because it is economically feasible.

I’m not at all for disengaging from the public market place by cutting the ERLC. I think that will actually do less for the Kingdom, not more.



Rob Ayers says  
November 8, 2010 at 3:42 pm

Here Here!



Louis says  
November 4, 2010 at 1:34 pm

CB:

That's what I thought, but I don't know the players as well as you do. Lydia has always shown to much insight and knowledge to have been non-SBC, and the context was clearly a taunt.

I just don't get it.



Lydia says  
November 4, 2010 at 4:04 pm

I was a messenger to the 2009 Convention, btw.



Louis says

November 4, 2010 at 1:35 pm

Christiane:

Go to the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission website. That will provide you the info you are seeking better than any summary I or anyone else could give you.



Christiane says

November 4, 2010 at 1:42 pm

Thank you, Louis



Bill Mac says

November 4, 2010 at 1:39 pm

What does the ERLC do that has anything to do with ethics? Are they an ethics watchdog? (serious question)



Louis says

November 4, 2010 at 1:59 pm

Bill Mac:

I would recommend, as I did to Christiane, that you go to the ERLC website. It is full of

info about what it is, what it's program statement consists of, the projects and matters on which it is working. There is some really good information there currently about persecution situations around the globe.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 2:43 pm

Joe #80, Those aren't crickets – they're squirrels .



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 3:39 pm

At some point, somewhere, on some blog we need to remind ourselves to ( churchy term ) to be good stewards of the money intrusted to us. More bang for the buck which might not include buying Cadallics as personal cars for people even tho they might pick up someone important at the airport. They'll ride in anything and will appreciate the frugality. I like to watch people in church for different reasons and at different times. I always peek. But the sight of some people taking a folded one dollar bill from their purse should encourage that. To be fair some of the same people will have a tithe envelope at another time of the month but not all.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 4:03 pm

On the plus side of the ERLC, having an " Ambassador " or some such person who has the wisdom, mannerisms, and knowledge of official SBC positions and who could be counted on to not hurl insults at others. If they can't we have the wrong person or we accepted an invitation to the wrong party. I bought a book of three books of Jimmy Carters. When he was President a married couple representing the SBC were invited to the Oval Office for a meeting with him. They called him a "secular humanist " to which he replied at the time that he didn't know what that was. He did explain his responsibilities as Captain of a nuclear submarine with close quarters as well as what his job of President entailed – which anybody with an appointment with the President of the United States should know. It was an insult and we lost because that man can pick up a phone or tell his secretary to do or fix certain things and they're done. So , Someone who has some smarts and realises what can be gained from a meeting and what can't.



Lydia says

November 4, 2010 at 4:13 pm

" You honestly don't think that arguing for the disbanding of an organization can reasonably be viewed as an attack on that organization? You have seriously proposed DEFUNDING the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention! Brother, it is a stretch to say that you don't have anything against it when you want to eliminate it."

Why is discussing the possibility considered an "attack". If that is the case, we cannot hope to change much of anything.



Rick says

November 4, 2010 at 4:33 pm

In my reading of the OP I did not interpret the remarks to be a mere discussion of a possibility. It seemed to me that it was a clear and definite call for the specific action of eliminating the ERLC. I think people have the right to promote the elimination of an entity. They also have the right to claim they do not oppose an entity. I simply do not see how there is room to claim both of these things simultaneously.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 4:21 pm

Lydia 98, I agree we can play the " devils advocate " in a discussion for that purpose without " attacking " anyone or anything.



Rick says

November 4, 2010 at 4:55 pm

I agree someone can play devil's advocate in a hypothetical discussion. If someone writes an editorial calling for the elimination of an entity, I no longer consider them engaged in that kind of speculative journey. They have, at that point, reached a conclusion. Perhaps "attack" is too strong a word, but if someone proposed the elimination of your church or ministry organization, would you simply view them as "playing devil's advocate?"



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 4:42 pm

Rick, I'm sorry you don't . But the objective for us all is a better SBC and if a discussion promotes or gives someone the feeling their being attacked then they have the wrong mindset. At the beginning the rules said we wouldn't attack Richard Land; it goes without saying we don't attack each other for which nothing is gained.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 5:04 pm

I see your point of view but consider, This is not a hypothetical discussion – it is real . But at the end no vote will be taken and if we did vote it would mean nothing. If we could determine at this sitting what the future of the ERLC then every word might change another's mind and that would not be a discussion but a meeting. If different subjects that promote strong views were not allowed – then this would be a dull world – in my humble opinion.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 5:49 pm

Dave, Does Lifeway and whatever divisions it has give all of its profits back to the SBC ?



Dave Miller says  
November 4, 2010 at 5:51 pm

I think that is accurate. For instance, in states like mine, where the SBC is pretty weak, they fund a state staff position. I think they do that in several states.

Lifeway's profits are plowed back into SBC work. I think CB has more knowledge on this (I never thought I'd say THAT) and maybe he will weigh in.



jack says  
November 4, 2010 at 6:01 pm

Well nobody at Lifeway will say anything besides , " he's in Europe – on vacation " when you ask for somebody.



Dave Miller says  
November 4, 2010 at 6:03 pm

?????????



Doug Hibbard says  
November 4, 2010 at 7:33 pm

Back on the missionary salary discussion, it does not double for a married couple, so

you're still not at 100k for a couple. 60k salary+benefits is probably closer.

And as Strider put it, you've got to fund the platforms and the ministry. I've got in-laws on that line as well.

This is a legitimate question to be asking, whether ERLC should continue to receive funding. The national push for GCR is that states should cut whatever they have to cut to get to at least 50/50, and that many state groups are defending 'sacred cows' without considering the billions of lost outside of the US. At the national level, we should be asking the same question: in light of billions of lost folks, do we have the right to spend millions pushing for favorable government treatment (if that's not lobbying, I don't know what is. ERLC pushes for laws we like and against laws we don't, for and against nominees for positions and policies)?

It's not a question of whether or not ERLC does good stuff, but whether it's the best use of the resources. If we can't even ask those questions, what kind of trouble are we in? The discussion needs to be had somewhere, it might as well be on a blog. Unless it would be better for someone to stand up in Phoenix and move to amend the budget and see what happens. That might be a sight to see...

I've seen some good explanations of what ERLC does and how they help in the thread, so thank you all for that. I'm with Dave, though. In the face of declining missionary budgets, do we have the right to a political group?



Strider says

November 5, 2010 at 12:39 am

It is 43k for my wife and I. Just saying.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 8:06 pm

How does saving money adjusting ERLC and spending more in missions help the overall problem of suffering from the shorts ?



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 8:18 pm

Joe , A non- SBC person making ugly remarks about an SBC church member's big noe who might be of Jewish decent is totally out of line. That they might have big toes is an open question – or ears.



cb scott says

November 4, 2010 at 8:23 pm

jack,

Don't worry. Debbie is not Jewish. She is a SOONER. 😊



Debbie Kaufman says

November 4, 2010 at 9:32 pm

A Boomer Sooner!



Dave Miller says

November 5, 2010 at 2:24 am

I think there is medication for that now.



Debbie Kaufman says

November 5, 2010 at 2:39 am

There is Dave. It's called beating Texas.



Dave Miller says

November 5, 2010 at 3:10 am

Q: What is there to cheer for when Texas plays OU?

A: Injuries.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 9:00 pm

CB, What's a sooner. I know that this is a set-up.



Bess says

November 4, 2010 at 9:04 pm

Jack, tread carefully! There must surely be some complicated protocol and etiquette regarding who gets to discuss the Sooners.



cb scott says

November 4, 2010 at 9:23 pm

jack,

I know you live in this country. How can you not know what a SOONER is?

OK, the word Sooner has a rich history from the land rush days in Oklahoma. But today it designates a lower class FOOTBALL NATION not affiliated with the SEC FOOTBALL CONTINENT. The SOONER NATION is part of a scrub FOOTBALL CONTINENT known as the "big 12" and is of little consequence other than to provide entertainment for the less fortunate within the FOOTBALL GALAXY who do not live on the SEC FOOTBALL CONTINENT who have first class FOOTBALL.

The University of Oklahoma is connected to the SOONER NATION. I hope that explains everything.

Now tell me jack, in what FOOTBALL NATION do you live?



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:33 pm

jack: If you do not know what a Sooner is, how in the world can you call yourself an American. 😊 Just askin.



aaron says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:12 pm

I have a even better idea on how we can save money in our convention. We pay a convention employee, entity head, or seminary president no more than 3 times the salary of a full time IMB missionary. Lets have a SBC Voices vote. All in favor say I.



Gene Scarborough says  
November 6, 2010 at 8:29 am

**AYE!!!!!!!**



jack says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:12 pm

If somebody is waiting for me to hit the GONG and say " B-, B-, J- I'm not doing it .  
Someone else.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 9:23 pm

Joe, This discussion is about a non-SBC person saying ugly remarks about a nice Jewish lady who belongs to a Baptist church. What do you say about that ?



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 9:30 pm

CB , 144 Un the fringes of the Skins. I started to say the Mets but that would have been a lie.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 9:33 pm

I actually saw Sammy Baugh play for them. I was young.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 9:36 pm

I figured it was, " I'd rather go duck hunting SOONER than later.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 5, 2010 at 9:46 pm

Awk! That is a stinker. Ha



Gene Scarborough says  
November 6, 2010 at 8:31 am

My son has a great retriever and we both know how to tell good jokes and laugh while the ducks are getting up with the sun!

Give us both a call and we will gladly join you—and duck-k-bob is delicious!!!!



jack says  
November 4, 2010 at 9:53 pm

After John Riggins stopped playing I lost interest. Joe Gibbons former coach of the skins and Nascar car owner and the owner of Interstate Batteries have partnered to peomote indoor racing. Gibbons is a religious man and probably so is the Battery Man. At the Coliseum in Newport News Va this Saturday they are racing and my boy was asked to say a prayer at the beginning. Langley Air Force Base is there and the Navy in every form is there and the excitement of these Patriotic Americans celebrating a good time with their families is reason enough for God to be a main part. If I'm stupid enough to answer these questions you'll know what street I live on. Boy's picking me

up here.



jack says

November 4, 2010 at 9:57 pm

Joe. Debbie has the authority to make you a Member of SBC Voices which kills this entire arguement and if you ask her nice she won't refuse I'm sure.



bill says

November 5, 2010 at 10:38 am

Can we get the Joe/Debbie love/hate fest moved to one of the playgrounds?

They both made some good points until they started talking to each other.

Even I'm trying to behave in here...



Joe Blackmon says

November 5, 2010 at 11:47 am

*They both made some good points*

bill,

In honor of saying something nice to me I'll take a vow of niceness for at least the rest of the workday. 😊



Dave Miller says  
November 5, 2010 at 12:16 pm

I have a couple ideas where they could move it...



Bob Cleveland says  
November 5, 2010 at 2:20 pm

As I recall, the term "SOONERS" came from the fact that some folks entered the territory during the great land rush, to stake a claim, BEFORE the territory was declared open and available.

Cheaters, in other words.

Gee .. I wonder if.....



Dave Miller says  
November 5, 2010 at 2:45 pm

Comments that belittle Sooners in any way are always welcome.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 5, 2010 at 2:46 pm

Warms the cockles of my heart. 😊



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 5, 2010 at 6:49 pm

Or any comments that belittles the Yankees are doubly welcome. And you don't have to be SB to make them either. 😊



Dave Miller says  
November 5, 2010 at 7:01 pm

Liberal.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 5, 2010 at 6:50 pm

Bob: Don't even think it. Ha



bill says

November 5, 2010 at 2:54 pm

So by what quantifiable metrics are we judging the work of the ERLC?

We've managed to put rubrics in place to judge how effective missionaries are in the field.

We've managed to put standards to judge Lifeway and our seminaries.

So what is our measurable standards for the ERLC?

Also, which advances the work of the kingdom more? A suit in Washington, D.C. or missionaries in the field?



Dave Miller says

November 5, 2010 at 3:17 pm

I'm not sure that there is much of a "quantifiable metric" to judge the effectiveness of Richard Land and the ERLC.

You can measure mission work by churches established, baptisms, etc. I'm not sure that is an effective or valid way of doing things, but it is a measurement. I think the ERLC's mission defied quantitative analysis.



bill says

November 5, 2010 at 4:19 pm

Well, how much unique information are we getting as Southern Baptists compared to comparable news outlets, including the internet?

How much influence is actually being put on legislative pieces?

How many pieces of legislation that we are supportive of are getting introduced?

Are these pieces dying in committee?

Are these pieces even getting votes?

Are these pieces even getting legislators that will publicly comment on them?

How well are “special emphasis” days (really? this is under the ERLC?) promoted and events attended?

And lastly, do we really need to have “the ear of the king” to conduct ministry? Is there some super secret guest pass that we have to have to conduct missions and outreach in this country and in other countries?



Dave Miller says

November 5, 2010 at 5:33 pm

One of the problems here is that many of us don't really know what the ERLC does (that's probably partially our fault and partially theirs.) Is it a lobbying group? An issues promotion group? A position-paper producing group?



Rick says

November 5, 2010 at 6:13 pm

What are the standards to judge Lifeway and our seminaries? What about all our state Baptist papers? Our orphanages? Our youth camps?

For that matter, what are the standards to judge SBC Voices? And don't you dare accuse me of being anti-SBC Voices simply because I want to totally eliminate its existence. I love the website and all, but hey, times are tough. Let's take all the time and effort we spend on this and go do some North American missions work.

All this vile talk about the ERLC! It's one of the things I really LOVE about Southern Baptists. While other denominations shrink from taking stands, we speak out.

This is one thread I'll just never be able to accept. We sweep the House on Tuesday and now we want to get rid of the ERLC? We may only be one or two election cycles away from reversing Roe v. Wade. Anyone want to put a metric to that? Stay the course!



Debbie Kaufman says

November 5, 2010 at 6:56 pm

Rick: I would say that is a straw man argument. We stand strong against abortion, as well as other denominations standing strong for morally correct stances. They just don't have a spokesman or anything like the ERLC voicing for them. The votes show that there are many Christians besides us standing for truth.

We must also way the cost of these appearances. The number of missionaries we are having to turn down and not send out to countries that need to hear

the gospel. Is that really worth the cost? I believe that is the ultimate question here.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 5, 2010 at 6:57 pm

that should be weigh the cost



Dave Miller says  
November 5, 2010 at 7:12 pm

You know, Rick, Voices is not a place where one position dominates all discussion. The one instruction I received when I became editor was to have a wide open discussion with varying viewpoints. I try to do that.

But when you come along and start calling-names and attacking the character of those who disagree, you are out of line.



Rick says  
November 5, 2010 at 11:27 pm

I did not attack the CHARACTER, only the POSITION being espoused.



Dave Miller says

November 5, 2010 at 11:37 pm

Yeah, right.

“Vile?” The word has a meaning. “Morally despicable or abhorrent.”

So, I can speak “Morally despicable and abhorrent” words but not BE morally despicable and abhorrent?

Puh-leese.



Dave Miller says

November 5, 2010 at 7:05 pm

Do you honestly believe that Richard Land and the ERLC had a lot to do with that?



Rick says

November 5, 2010 at 11:35 pm

Yes, definitely yes, absolutely yes. Richard Land and the ERLC have strengthened and promoted the moral voice of Southern Baptists in our society. A few years ago Time Magazine called him one of the 25 most influential Christians in America.



bill says

November 7, 2010 at 10:45 am

And he was outranked by people like Benny Hinn and Joyce Meyer...

I wouldn't use that poll or magazine as a defense of Richard Land.



Doug Hibbard says

November 5, 2010 at 7:10 pm

Judging Lifeway is a whole different story, since it's not CP funded, but rather the other way. Many states are discussing exactly these issues with how they fund youth camps, orphanages, and state papers.

The time we spend on SBC Voices is often time in passing to comment and consider, and you've likely seen the references to bloggers of all stripes backing up from using their time to blog to focusing the effort.

We may also be one or two election cycles from total socialism. We may be days away from the final judgment of Christ, when there will be no further opportunity to win the lost to Christ.

Again, it's not about whether ERLC does some good. I would have hoped that after 160+ years of being guided by the Word of God and the will of God's people expressed prayerfully and in cooperation, we shouldn't have anything going on that's not good. It's just a question of whether or not this is the real

purpose of our CP money.

And it's not that we swept the House. The American people made some decisions, cast their votes, but the equating Republican politics with the purposes of Southern Baptists is a big part of why this discussion needs to happen. I am vehemently pro-life and anti-infanticide, anti-euthanasia, and pro- a lot of good, conservative things. But to control the House of Representatives politically should never be our goal. To see every member of the House saved and controlled by the Spirit, guided by the Word, that's a goal. If that's a function of ERLC, it's the best function.



Christiane says

November 5, 2010 at 7:34 pm

I do not know if R v. W will someday be reversed. But I do know that if it is, it will not be what stops abortions from happening in this country. There were abortions before R v. W and there will be abortions after, if there ever is an 'after'.

There are many who think it integral to speak FOR the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death. And not only to speak for it, but to live NOW in our country in 'witness' to the strength of our faith.

'The abortion issue' was created by those who wished to use it politically, and they have done this. And they will continue to do it, until it becomes obvious that their 'wedge issue' is used without conviction, and for the gaining of political clout.

The proclamation of the dignity and worth of all human life, from the moment of conception until natural death, can touch a cord in those who are made in

the image of God.

The 'merging' of 'politics' and 'religion' has failed to give Christian witness to our country.



Joe Blackmon says

November 5, 2010 at 8:09 pm

*I do not know if R v. W will someday be reversed. But I do know that if it is, it will not be what stops abortions from happening in this country.*

But there were exponentially fewer of them. Further, abortion was not a legal option so IF someone chose to do it, they were taking legal risks—not to mention physical risks. That's good. If someone is going to choose to murder a baby then whatever happens to them is on their own head.

BTW, when you're willing to rightly criticize Oh\_Blah\_blah for voting to deny medical care to babies who survived abortions, then you might have credibility to speak to the issue.



bill says

November 5, 2010 at 7:47 pm

We had a Republican House, a Republican Senate, a conservative Supreme Court and a Republican President for six years and no substantial abortion legislation was passed.

Care to make a stronger argument?

This just proves that the ERLC was incompetent in a Washington, D.C. that should have been more sympathetic to our viewpoints and makes my point for me.

So, I should ask, care to make a different argument?



Rick says

November 6, 2010 at 12:30 am

The road to reversing R v. W involves SC nominees more than legislation. Bush did make progress there. A conservative Prez will need a conservative congress to confirm nominees.



bill says

November 7, 2010 at 10:40 am

Yeah,

Bush had the majority in the Senate, House, AND SCOTUS.

No abortion legislation whatsoever beyond your press friendly resolutions and/or Pro-Life endorsements during interviews.

The ERLC really outdid itself when it held all the cards in the deck.



bill says

November 5, 2010 at 4:22 pm

The simple truth is this:

If we can find ways to quantify the effectiveness of a ministry, then we can quantify the effectiveness of this organization which has already been referred to as a ministry by its supporters.

If we can't, then how can we justify measuring the effectiveness of a missionary?

Oh, and Dave, I'm ready to go to town on the GCRTF and state conventions whenever you're ready...



jack says

November 5, 2010 at 7:10 pm

Rick asked, What about the Seminaries, Lifeway. O.K. What about them . Everybody can have a turn in the barrell. There standards for promotion. pay, separation are all fair game for review as people have been known to take a million dollars. But for right now this discussion is about ERLC and there's no reason not to have it. Frankly with all the nepotism and whatever===. Anybody that can't write a letter can write a book as long as they have a multitude of proof writers etc. and wherewithall of the SBC if you get the drift. We need to trim the fat in a fair way IF IT IS NECESSARY and why not now. It's just good business.



jack says

November 5, 2010 at 7:52 pm

Christiane 190, That's powerful.



jack says

November 5, 2010 at 8:29 pm

There are 435 members of the U.S. House. 80 can go on sa single trip together. Takes at least 218 to pass a bill in the House. Then you aim at the Senate. I know we are friends with Richard? Pence from Ohio or Indiana. He also attracts Focus on the Family. He can get some attention where we can stand beside him and smile but he is only ONE VOTE. He's Republican so now that bthey have lost the majority what can ONE PERSON DO ? NOT MUCH ! In my humble opinion.



jack says

November 5, 2010 at 8:31 pm

ABOVE SHOULD HAVE REPUBLICANS IN MAJORITY. But it always changes.



jack says

November 5, 2010 at 8:42 pm

The Country of Romania fought to pass legislation. General Motors, IBM all hire people to “get something done”. Just how many friends do you think we’ve made trashing the Masons, the Shriners, opposing Hate Crime Legislation which passed and I’m sorry but we haven’t made an honest effort out in the open to make friends with the black people never mind the black Baptists who have their stuff together. Just how important do we think we are ?



jack says

November 5, 2010 at 8:53 pm

This can be zapped but I say this with all respect for Richard Land. He looks tired. He has bags under his eyes and under his chin. And part of it could be the very thing we’re discussing because he knows there are problems. He’s a smart man. If I was his boss he;d get a year off with full benefits and then come back and talk about it. Stress is a horrible thing.



Dave Miller says

November 5, 2010 at 8:54 pm

I’m not sure, and maybe someone has a better recollection, but I think perhaps he has had some health problems.



cb scott says

November 5, 2010 at 9:56 pm

Dave,

The comment thread on the Sports Post is closed? That is sinful. Just plain

sinful.



jack says

November 5, 2010 at 10:56 pm

Cb, I gave you an answer to your whatever it was on this blog and it is/was on #169. I gave you my reply and I thought you passed out.



Rick says

November 5, 2010 at 11:58 pm

Dave,

I guess I'm persona non grata. Fine. I'll end with this. The ERLC is a force for good in the SBC and in America. Eliminating it would thrill social liberals, atheists, evolutionists, proponents of gay marriage, the Democratic Party and, I believe, Satan. It would obviously not thrill me at all.



Dave Miller says

November 6, 2010 at 12:01 am

You are not persona non grata. But I have been surprised that you have resorted to insult and ad hominem instead of reasonable discussion.



Dave Miller says  
November 6, 2010 at 12:03 am

Satan? Wow!

And I thought BDW was being extreme yesterday when he called  
Republicans fascists.



BDW says  
November 6, 2010 at 9:20 pm

Thankfully at least a couple people I believe picked up on the fact that my  
use of the word Fascist was me responding to a ridiculous adjective  
“Socialist’ Democratic Party” with an even more ridiculous adjective in  
“Fascist’ Republican Party”

Greg said Socialist, I said Fascist.



Dave Miller says  
November 6, 2010 at 9:24 pm

Thanks for the clarification.



Rick says

November 6, 2010 at 12:12 am

So I describe the steady stream of criticism against a man and an agency I admire as “vile” talk and that constitutes an ad hominem attack against you personally?

Do you not think people have insulted Dr. Land by calling him a “suit in Washington” or by commenting on his personal appearance?



Dave Miller says

November 6, 2010 at 2:08 am

I glanced back through the comment stream. If anyone has insulted Richard Land, I haven’t seen it. Granted, I haven’t read every word of every comment.

If you can point out where someone insulted Land, I will delete the comment.

I didn’t find it.



Rick says

November 6, 2010 at 10:25 am

Here is the kind of “vile” language that really does amount to ad hominem attacks on the person rather than the subject:

Joe Blackmon 11-4 at 7:49 AM: “loud, obnoxious uncle”  
“denominational fat cat”

Lydia 11-4 at 9:24 AM: “an embarrassment”

Gene Scarbrough 11-6 at 8:37 AM: “Our qualification for the ERLC:  
(1) How much do you look like a monkey (2) How high can you climb  
a tree (3) How good can you show your tail to those who look”

Perhaps we could send these comments to Dr. Land’s wife and family in a Christmas card from SBC Voices. If his position is indeed terminated, we could also include helpful directions to the nearest unemployment office.



Dave Miller says

November 6, 2010 at 10:41 am

I didn’t see either of the first comments you mentioned. As to Gene’s comment, it was left this morning. I delete a high percentage of Gene’s comments and that one will go.

Just for the record. NONE of those comments (Gene’s excepted) were as extreme or unkind as your comments.



bill says

November 7, 2010 at 10:37 am

Rick,

We all know deep down in our hearts that Dr. Land would have

either a cush position within the Southern Baptist Convention, a pastorate somewhere, or he'd have a secular job lobbying in Washington, D.C. by the end of the week that he got pink-slipped.



Dave Miller says

November 6, 2010 at 1:26 am

If your comments are not ad hominem, I'm not sure what ad hominem is.

I asked people not to be disrespectful of Dr. Land. I did not see any comments that were disrespectful. One person mentioned that he did not look well, but I did not take that as an insult. If someone insulted Dr. Land and I saw it, I would delete it.

There seems to be little willingness on your part to engage in reasonable discussion, and I do not intend to continue to respond to your insults. So, while you are welcome to keep commenting here, I am through responding to comments of this ilk.



Rick says

November 6, 2010 at 10:29 am

To be clear, I have no ill feelings toward any individuals per se, and certainly not toward you as the blog editor and author of the post. I simply have a very strong disagreement with the idea of eliminating the ERLC, and would argue against this idea no matter the identity of the

person who proposed it.



bill says

November 7, 2010 at 10:43 am

That's your opinion and you're entitled to it.

I'm still waiting on solid concrete evidence of the effectiveness of this "ministry" as you called it. Since we have concrete standards that we apply to our missionaries and their effectiveness in ministry, then surely we have measurements in place for this ministry.

Or are we now protecting pet ministries?

I'm beginning to believe in this.



Christiane says

November 6, 2010 at 12:15 am

Does he perform more of the activities of a lobbyist, or of an envoy?

It makes a difference in how he would be perceived by others who were not Southern Baptists.



Gene Scarborough says  
November 7, 2010 at 8:14 am

The CLC (Christian Live Commission) was headed by Foy Valentine in it's greatest days, in my opinion. He wrote articles on how Christianity impacts society for the SBC. He was consulted by many in government when it came to what the view of their largest church group (outside the Roman Catholic realm) might think.

I think you would call it a place to find out what Baptists are thinking. Always, Dr. Valentine was quick to note that no one can speak for all Baptists due to Autonomy.

When Land took over he was known to wear his Republican elephant suspenders and support traditional Conservative Republican causes. You could hardly distinguish his position from that of Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson.

There was little said about the Autonomy of Southern Baptists and how no one speaks for us all. I found little in his papers and articles which inspired more justice and equality across this nation. There was plenty of anti-abortion / anti-feminist / anti-gay stuff. Most things written were more "anti-" than a pricking of the Conscience to become more like Christ in areas of tolerance and understanding.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 7, 2010 at 9:45 am

Foy Valentine was a moderate. The CLC mght not have been pro-choice but it most certainly was not anti-abortion. The goal of Christians is not to reduce abortion. The goal of Chrisitians is to make abortion illegal which will result in the reduction of abortions.

Now would making abortion illegal mean there were never any abortions

performed? Of course not. People will still seek abortions and there will be doctors who will perform them. The difference? They will be illegal and therefore much more unsafe. Therefore, someone getting an abortion will be taking a huge risk, possibly taking their life in the own hands—and I'm perfectly ok with that. After all, they're trying to commit murder of an innocent baby—anything that happens to them, they deserve.



Dave Miller says

November 6, 2010 at 11:05 am

For the record, I just deleted a bunch of comments that did not address the topic. (I left the light-hearted chit-chat about sports). But we have a sports playground, a political playground and a CR-related playground. Take the nonsense there.



jack says

November 6, 2010 at 2:55 pm

Christine, U.S. Coast Guard is a super way to be in the service. Weather never has a holiday and there are people that can't plan well. One of their mottos is, " You have to go out, but you don't have to come back ". But they have equipment like large boats which will completely roll over and remain completely intact. I've seen pictures of them at an inlet in Washington State. Hawaii has to be a nice duty – on good weather days; and then it's the best duty when you can show off what you have and what you and those backing you up know.



Christiane says  
November 6, 2010 at 3:04 pm

Hi JACK,

I think David deleted my comment. But you are right about those 'roll over' small boats. I've seen the videos on them.  
Pretty amazing.



Dave Miller says  
November 6, 2010 at 3:39 pm

I debated on that one, Christiane. It had a lot of value, but it also referenced the comment attack-war I am trying to slow down. So, I pulled it down.

I felt bad about that one.



Christiane says  
November 6, 2010 at 9:23 pm

Thanks for the note, DAVID. I trust your judgment in these matters. I had kind of figured it out already.

Don't ever give up trying to keep the peace. 😊

Have a wonderful Sunday.



Gene Scarborough says  
November 7, 2010 at 9:00 am

The Coast Guard is now charged with Homeland Security in addition to its life-saving and drug interdiction duties. They are the enforcement arm of drug and alcohol abuse on the waters and have the right on inspect boats for proper safety equipment and safe boating.

You don't want to cross them or try to outrun them!

Their most dangerous duty is to go out after idiots who take a boat out in weather when no wise person would venture. On purpose they have to launch when the call comes in.

My son has been with them since high school and is now an E-7. His first duty was on a 210' Cutter out of Wilmington, The Diligence. Their worst duty was rescuing Cubans and Haitians in the boatlift of the 80's. He still won't talk much of shark infested waters with boats overcrowded and capsizing. They had some 700 on board a ship with a crew of 70! They took them back to Guantanamo Bay for processing.

His notation of the respect air crews got upon coming aboard motivated him to endure some 8 years of waiting / training to qualify as a flight engineer / hoist operator / ground mechanic for helicopters (Dauphine). I was with him in the radio duty at Savannah during New Years. Their duty is to respond to any flair shot from a boat even if they suspect it is a stupid boater celebrating the season. For the Coast Guard this is a command to launch.

When his aircrew came back from a false call in January, the first thing I noted was the cold water suit poking out from under the flightsuit. Even as far south as Savannah, the water will kill you with hypothermia in 30-45 minutes in winter. They HAD to go and risk their lives over frigid water over another stupid citizen

violating the rules of the water!

Their Savannah section had a citation from the Commandant for intercepting a high-speed boat with contraband being tossed overboard. They dropped a marker beacon on the bales floating, continued the pursuit and called in boats to intercept them. Later the boats retrieved the contraband and they had a free trip to Federal Prison!

At Detroit they were patrolling the Canadian borders which are separated from the US by only 10-40' of water at points. They were also searching for men overboard from freighters on the Great Lakes. Always, that far north, the water is frigid enough to kill you within 40 minutes should you have engine problems and have to ditch. My son kept such from happening with serious "by the book" repair and maintenance. He is now the last mechanic to sign off that a plane is airworthy.

In addition, my son has personally saved 3 people from drowning in private waters with his rescue training from the USCG! He got a citation for his bravery and lifesaving.

This Airman is a source of joy for me as his father. He does not attend church because he saw awful things being done to me by 2 corrupt Baptist churches which fired me, but he is a true person of faith and bravery. In a second he will put his own life at risk to save others—no matter how dangerous it might be! He is the kind of Chief whose advice and counsel is sought by those under him when they have family problems and personal issues.

The last thing I will say about the Coast Guard is that they are search and rescue specialists of the highest order. They do not carry guns, but are detached to war zones to assist the Navy in searching ships in the Persian Gulf for guns and drugs. When Katrina ravaged New Orleans they rescued more people than any other service with smart techniques.

If you saw the rescue footage there was a distinct difference between the Coast

Guard and other helicopter rescues. Their jump swimmer went down to rooftops dressed in a bicycling outfit of shorts and a short sleeve shirt with knee pads for protection. Every other airman going down was clad in a full flight suit and enclosed helmet. Where the USCG jump man had on a light bicycling helmet for keeping cool in hot conditions, the other jump men were heat-exhausted after 3 lift cycles.

The orange USCG copters were cycling for fuel and saved victims to unload—and kept doing the cycle all day without having to rest their jump man!

They are simply the best-trained outfit and use every smart move to save the most people possible. For a great view, you might view the movie, “The Guardian” (Buena Vista home entertainment / Kevin Costner). It is about the most dangerous job of Jump Swimmer as a senior swimmer befriends a new man in their most dangerous of jobs. Navy SEALs have the same duty, but it doesn’t involve hypothermic waters or swaying masts of sailboats which can ensnare the cable lowering the swimmer to get people off a boat in distress. Any moment a foolish man could get killed, but the Coast Guard has lost very few planes or men to foolishness or impaired equipment.

I’m sure Jack is equally proud of his son participating in good and brave actions to save lives. Would that us Baptists could focus more on saving people than fighting over “who is right.”



Dave Miller says  
November 7, 2010 at 9:25 am

Gene, please try to stay on topic.



Gene Scarborough says

November 7, 2010 at 4:37 pm

Will do, but the USCG comment above merited a good insight into what they do.

I apologize for the diversion. Maybe we need some with tempers getting short.



jack says

November 7, 2010 at 4:55 pm

I heard you Gene on 253.



Darby Livingston says

November 8, 2010 at 11:05 am

It's tiring to hear Christians speak of "justice" as though it's something that can be 1) individually attained during this present evil age, or 2) socially attained during this present evil age. Jesus didn't come to fix this present evil age. He came to deliver some from it and to judge others for it. It seems insane to state that Heaven and Hell or in fact realities and then act as though something else is more important or urgent than that.

“Oh, I believe Heaven and Hell are real, but there’s a lot of good that needs done here and now,” some will say. Or “You’re so heavenly-minded you’re of no earthly good,” others will proudly proclaim. I think the ERLC is a huge distraction from what is actually of fundamental importance. It’s like a dad watering the brown grass in the backyard while the house is burning to the ground, with the stuck children screaming for help in an upstairs bedroom.



Joe Blackmon says

November 8, 2010 at 12:30 pm

Well, Darby, the problem as I see it has more to do with how “doing justice” is defined. I mean, you’ve got liberals and moderate baptists (in other words, people who don’t matter) we believe justice is not overturning Roe v. Wade, making sure gay people have “rights” (snicker), redistributing wealth to try to ensure everyone has the same standard of living, giving criminals amnesty after they violated our borders, and taking from people who work hard for their money to give to people who are capable of working but sit on their tails all day.

In contrast, real Christians know that not only all these objectives not biblical in any way, they also don’t make a lick of sense. Of course, when has “making sense” been the goal of moderate baptists.



Joe Blackmon says

November 8, 2010 at 12:31 pm

That should say “who believe” not “we believe” in my comment above.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 8, 2010 at 12:09 pm

Darby: I disagree. Justice needs to be brought in the here and now and the fact is that some are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good. God cares about justice here and now and so should we.

He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger [foreigner], giving him food and clothing (Deuteronomy 10:18)

Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy (Psalm 82:3).

So says Jehovah, Keep judgment and do justice; for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed (Isaiah 56:1).

I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor (Psalm 140:12).

To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice (Proverbs 21:3).



Aaron Davis says  
November 8, 2010 at 12:40 pm

Debbie,

I agree that we should strive for justice here and now as representatives of the Kingdom. However, I think this should be done in the churches. I don't think we need the ERLC to do this for us. When the churches reflect the Kingdom, we will see more accomplished in our community, both in eternity and the here and now.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 8, 2010 at 4:16 pm

You could very well be right Aaron, but I guess my thought is what if you are wrong? I do think it needs to trim down considerably money wise, but I'm not so sure that annihilation of the ERLC is the answer.



Darby Livingston says  
November 8, 2010 at 12:53 pm

A concordance search of the word "justice" does not a correct theology make. Jesus is the fulfillment of every text you quoted Debbie. He succeeded where Adam and Israel failed.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 8, 2010 at 1:16 pm

*A concordance search of the word "justice" does not a correct theology make.*

Oh, SNAP!!!!

*Just A Friend*

Biz Markie

From the album *The Biz Never Sleeps* (c)1989



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 8, 2010 at 2:12 pm

There is only one definition for justice Darby. There was no concordance search Darby. These are passages I have written down as reminders of God's desire for justice to those who have none. Both desiring salvation for others and desiring justice for others is God's work through us.

Proverbs 11:1

A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 8, 2010 at 2:18 pm

The reason is to show who God is in his justice as well as his mercy.



Christiane says  
November 8, 2010 at 3:55 pm

Yes, Christ is the perfect "tzedek" of God. The Lion of Judah.

We cannot understand the 'Mercy' of God: Christ as the 'Agnus Dei', the Lamb of God;  
without also understanding the 'Justice' of God: Christ as the Lion of Judah.

'Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly (Genesis 18:25)?' God's response to our pleas for justice might not come the way we expect or in the

time frame that we expect, but God's justice will come, because it MUST COME.

It is Christ who fulfills the prophecy of Ezekiel:

"Ez 34:11-12, 15-17

Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will look after and tend my sheep.

As a shepherd tends his flock

when he finds himself among his scattered sheep,

so will I tend my sheep.

I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered

when it was cloudy and dark.

I myself will pasture my sheep;

I myself will give them rest, says the Lord GOD.

The lost I will seek out,

the strayed I will bring back,

the injured I will bind up,

the sick I will heal,

but the sleek and the strong I will destroy,

shepherding them rightly.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord GOD,

I will judge between one sheep and another,

between rams and goats."

These Words of Our Lord are found in the Gospels, in fulfillment of this Prophecy:

(Mt 25:31-46)

"Jesus said to his disciples:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory,

and all the angels with him,

he will sit upon his glorious throne,

and all the nations will be assembled before him.

And he will separate them one from another,  
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.  
He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.  
Then the king will say to those on his right,  
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.  
Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.  
For I was hungry and you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,  
a stranger and you welcomed me,  
naked and you clothed me,  
ill and you cared for me,  
in prison and you visited me.'  
Then the righteous will answer him and say,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,  
or thirsty and give you drink?  
When did we see you a stranger and welcome you,  
or naked and clothe you?  
When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'  
And the king will say to them in reply,  
'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did  
for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.'  
Then he will say to those on his left,  
'Depart from me, you accursed,  
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.  
For I was hungry and you gave me no food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,  
a stranger and you gave me no welcome,  
naked and you gave me no clothing,  
ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'  
Then they will answer and say,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty  
or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison,

and not minister to your needs?’  
He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you,  
what you did not do for one of these least ones,  
you did not do for me.’  
And these will go off to eternal punishment,  
but the righteous to eternal life.”

And this coming of Christ’s Justice is born out by the witness of St. Paul:  
1 Cor 15: 28  
“... so that God may be all in all.”

We exalt Christ as Christians, individually and ‘in Christian community’ when  
we pursue justice for the His beloved oppressed. Our Lord Himself had great  
compassion for them.  
And the Heart of His Church ‘in community’ must be the Heart of Christ.



Debbie Kaufman says  
November 8, 2010 at 4:17 pm

Amen Christiane.



Christiane says  
November 8, 2010 at 1:08 pm

Hi DEBBIE,

I love those verses about the Justice of God.

One of my favorite verses is found in the Word of the Lord  
from the Book of Amos:

‘LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN LIKE WATERS  
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE AN EVER-FLOWING STREAM’

The JUSTICE of God is also celebrated in these verses:

“Isaiah 48:18

If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Jeremiah 22:3

This is what the LORD says:

Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

Ezekiel 45:9

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

You have gone far enough, O princes of Israel! Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Debbie, those words ‘to act justly’ are dear to the conscience of Christian people everywhere.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 8, 2010 at 1:18 pm

Where is the justice in denying medical care to babies that survive their mother's attempt to legally murder them (abortion)? So leaving them in the linen closet to die is somehow performing justice?



jack says  
November 8, 2010 at 2:02 pm

How much money does the SBC spend in their political efforts to influence people and legislation in all its forms ? The truth might surprise us.



jack says  
November 8, 2010 at 10:00 pm

Like everything else that needs to keep up , maybe after a sabbatical the ERFC could be re-made with its efforts re-channeled and re-directed. Magazines over the web only one but to everyone with a computer. Stay out of controversies that cause us more harm than good and don't infringe on the Bible. Rent out the office spaces in the building SBC owns in D.C or sell it outright. We're not making the money that we were when that building was bought or running things as successfully either. Ask yourself how much of a money manager your wife needs to be to be in the hole each month. Probably got a correspondence course in business if she does well or just is properly

motivated to eat spaghetti and hotdogs once in a while.



jack says

November 8, 2010 at 10:58 pm

All kidding aside, if you live in the United States of America your life can be pretty good thanks to those who went ahead of us. Sometimes we have to fight to keep it and fighting takes many forms. Ask those in a little town in Missouri who today sent Fred Phelps and his goofy baptist church packing before he could protest a funeral of a fallen soldier. Jerks.



Christiane says

November 8, 2010 at 11:31 pm

Jack, I needed to hear about this. I understand that half the town turned out to block Westboro. Makes you proud of our people, doesn't it.

I was getting worried about America's 'heartland' after reading about the firemen watching as a man's house burned down with three little puppies dying in the fire, 'cause he forgot to pay his taxes.

The firemen, some of whom watched the house burn with tears in their eyes, were 'ordered' not to help, so as to 'teach people a lesson'. That kind of 'Ayn Rand' politics wouldn't have happened in the America I grew up in. Our people were 'better than that' then.

But, you know, the incident of that Missouri town turning out to support the funeral of the dead soldier would definitely have been a part of America, long ago in my childhood.

I hope this spirit catches on and people realize that they CAN make a difference

for their countrymen.  
This gives me a lot of hope.



Lydia says

November 9, 2010 at 11:56 am

“That kind of ‘Ayn Rand’ politics wouldn’t have happened in the America I grew up in.”

I don’t think you are familiar with Ayn Rand. She would have applauded the guy for not paying his taxes, not to see him punished. Remember, Howard Roark blew up his own building.

Nice try, though. :o)



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 1:02 pm

It doesn’t work, Lydia. The reason that people think of Ayn Rand concerning this Cranick house fire incident, is that she was famous for her ability to ‘always be right’ and still have no heart.

Good grief. She would have applauded the firechief who denied services to the Cranicks ‘cause he didn’t pay on time’, even though Mr. Cranick offered to pay on the spot, ‘cause he had forgot to do it.

Ayn Rand was the type who, if one of those puppies had managed to get out of the burning house, would have thrown the puppy back into the fire. She would have taught Cranick reality. Like Beck said: no ‘compassion, compassion, compassion’. Same ilk.

You know something, Lydia, in the end it was about ‘money’. Another

reason people associate Ayn Rand with this incident is because it fore-shadows the kind of world we will live in where seventy-five dollars paid on-time secures a man's home and the lives of his three puppies. And if he doesn't pay? And he didn't (on-time). Well, here is the takeaway quote from Glenn Beck:

" If you don't pay the 75 dollars then that hurts the fire department. They can't use those resources, and you'd be sponging off your neighbor's resources. "

New and Improved World, Lydia ? NOT SO FAST.

No. Not new.

More like the ancient pagan Rome of Crassus, the richest man in the world in those days . He got his money by having people pay him ahead of time, and if their house caught on fire, Crassus' fire-fighter's would come and put it out. And if they didn't pay, their house burned.

Sounds like the fire-chief took a page from an uncivilized pagan Roman's play-book. Yep. Lifted it right out of ancient history.

Self-reliance and everyman for himself? Ayn Rand ? Please.

I'll take a compassionate America over pagan Rome any day, Lydia.



Lydia says

November 9, 2010 at 1:57 pm

Christiane, you are twisting once again. You are good at that. I have read everything there is to read by and about Rand years ago and you simply have it wrong. Or perhaps those you parrot have it wrong.

I am no fan of Rand (she is totally God-less) but you are quite wrong

about her position. She would have applauded the guy for not paying the tax. It is the liberals who would let his house burn for not paying taxes. they LOVE taxes and cannot get enough. And government employees are well aware of what awaits if taxes are not paid.

Rand is at least a thinker. She would know that those around the guy who do pay would want to keep their house from burning and would pay to have the fire put out. Rand would be more apt to propose Pre-fire insurance and it be a free market solution.

You are simply parroting what you are hearing liberals say about her right now. she is making a trendy comeback among some of the young because of your Obama. What happens when folks are faced with Marxism as a solution (And the fascism of government now jointly owning big businesses) is that people tend to "over correct". That is why Rand is trendy now. Some are seeing her as the anecdote to the Marxism, nanny government that Obama is trying to ram down our throats.

In reality, Obama is all about Ceasar and the faceless bureaucrats of "Rome" handling all your needs. We know how compassionate those bureaucrats are who have never met the people they make decisions for.

Throwing puppies back into the fire? That sort of hyperbole is below you, Christiane. If I am not mistaken, Rand once had a dog and she did not burn him, strangle him or torture him.



jack says

November 9, 2010 at 10:01 am

Christiane, I don't like to be in the judicial system but somebody or some organization perhaps even the ACLU should have taken someone to court. Seems it would be an unlawful order and it could be refused. Someone in that town has been appointed King – he thinks, including the Fire Chief. That town in Missouri only has about 2000 residents. Someone researched where, what streetcorner their permit was issued for and they jammed it up with people, cars & flags. So many people that westbroke immediately left. While they were surveying the situation their tires could have been ice-picked – all four. A few years ago some Iranian students were protesting something and were protected by police etc. Everything went O.K. until they threw down the American Flag they had and stomped it. This is a Navy Town with a good Coast Guard and Air Force presence. That was the end of that demonstration. Nobody should take us for granted. Even the cops there that day just happened to be looking the other way after they threw the Stars & Stripes on the ground.



Joe Blackmon says

November 9, 2010 at 10:20 am

*A few years ago some Iranian students were protesting something and were protected by police etc. Everything went O.K. until they threw down the American Flag they had and stomped it. This is a Navy Town with a good Coast Guard and Air Force presence. That was the end of that demonstration. Nobody should take us for granted. Even the cops there that day just happened to be looking the other way after they threw the Stars & Stripes on the ground.*

Oh, no. Here come's L's sermonette about how prejudiced it was to not allow those poor muslims to tromp all over the American flag. Jack, ol' son, you need to

realize that we're the bad guys and those poor, defenseless muslims are just reacting to our hatred. After all, we support that evil empire in the middle east, Israel--well we did until the Oh\_blah\_blah administration. L's will help you see the light--America is the enemy of freedom. Muslims are the defenders of freedom--the freedom to live under shiria law, have women abused and oppressed, and be killed for professing belief in Jesus Christ.



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 1:16 pm

Wait a minute, JOE.

That FLAG? It covered my father's casket. It was flown on the warships in WWII when he fought in the Pacific. It was flown on my husband's destroyer in Viet Nam. It was flown on the Bennington, the air-craft carrier that my brother-in-law once commanded.

It was flown on the destroyer where my sister in law's father was the executive office. It flew over the field hospital where my niece served in Iraq as a surgical trauma nurse. It flew over the US hospital ship Comfort, where she cared for Haitian post-op victims who were intebated and sedated. It flew over the USCGC Forward where my son served and won awards for his service. I can go on and on and on . . .

so if you want to bring my name up to do with supporting the trashing of our flag, my family for generations has fought for your freedom to do it. I'm proud of my family, and my country.

And I'm proud of your freedom to speak.

Your freedom to speak was earned, Joe.

Don't forget that. Especially this week.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 9, 2010 at 1:30 pm

Come off of it, L's. The above was obviously me mocking your "poor pitiful muslims" speech that you do. I particularly enjoyed the part of Jack's story where the police officers turned their head after they threw the flag on the ground. I can only imagine what was done to those guys when the crowd made sure their protest was over.



Christiane says  
November 9, 2010 at 1:44 pm

I forgive you, Joe.  
But don't forget VETERAN'S DAY.

As far as 'freedom of speech' in our country. I'm all for it.  
People died for that freedom.

But I love the story about the town turning out to stop the Westboro guys from doing their act at the soldier's funeral. Wonderful American spirit, that. Full of 'heart'.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 9, 2010 at 2:01 pm

It's pretty telling that you didn't say anything about being glad those muslim guys had their protest cut short, which involved desecrating the flag you claim to love so much. Very telling indeed.



jack says

November 9, 2010 at 12:24 pm

Joe, I'm not that "ol'" and I'm certainly not your "son". Would you protect yourself or your Country?



Joe Blackmon says

November 9, 2010 at 1:03 pm

Jack, quite obviously my comment above was tongue in cheek since I was mocking L's beliefs. I've intended to offend you before but not in that comment.

I'm not sure of the context of your "protect yourself or your country" question?



Louis says

November 9, 2010 at 2:31 pm

Lydia:

Good info on Rand.

Rand was able to immigrate to the the USA and escape the tyranny of Marxism that engulfed Russia and then most of Eastern Europe. She saw and lived through the horrors of what too many intellectuals in this country at the time were calling “the future.”

Rand was not a Christian, and we should not embrace much of her philosophy (Objectivism).

But she had the abuses of government pegged. Her testimony before HUAC on the attempts by the USSR to influence Hollywood is a must read. It's not very long and can be looked up.

I believe that she and we, Christians and non-Christians, have every right and obligation to question the processes of government and human freedom. Buzz words such as “justice” etc. can be misleading if they are not defined first.

To Washington, Jefferson, Madison et al., “justice” meant the guaranty of certain basic freedoms – religious and political conscience, speech (vocal and written), private property, treatment before the law that is not based on position, power, family etc.

Since Marxism became a popular philosophy (and its softer forms) “justice” often means a guaranty of more than these basic freedoms, but resources and opportunities and the right to take from one's neighbor the money, land and other resources necessary to provide these things.

I know of very few people today who believe we should have no government and no social safety net.

But beyond the safety net there is a significant disagreement about how much to provide, and how much to confiscate to provide it.

It is an age old tension in democracies between freedom and equality.

Taking the term “justice” from its Biblical setting to justify 21st Century government expansion and the necessary confiscation of property from some to do that, and the empowerment and expansion of government in the process, is appalling.

I would argue that the Biblical writers’ personal views of “Justice” were much more in keeping with the views of the founders than some of the people who run around today claiming an OT prophetic mantle.

In all but the most obvious cases, I believe that we can actually have more intellectually honest and spiritually edifying discussions in our society about political matters if we check our spiritual language at the door.

OK, I think that on big picture items – life, religious persecution, intentional, needless violence – let’s invoke Jesus.

But I don’t think that we should be invoking Jesus on income tax vs. property tax vs. Sales tax and what the rates should be, or whether the EPA rules on clean air and water can be refined, and the speed limits on streets, or the number of weeks one should get on unemployment etc.

God just did not give us a blue print for these things. And if every tax increase to provide some benefit for a poorer person is something Jesus would want, then tell me at what percentage Jesus stands up and says, “Now, that’s enough.”

Again, we can debate these things without claiming to know the mind of God on them and make choices and then get on with life.



Lydia says

November 9, 2010 at 3:24 pm

I will never understand why Christians think it is “justice” to give to Caesar and let his faceless bureaucrats dictate who gets what operation.

As to Rand, I tend to agree with Whittaker Chambers’ take on her that he wrote about in Time. Chambers, a former underground communist and convert, said that when the independent minded, rugged farmer takes a payment NOT to grow wheat, we are already on the road to socialism. That was in the 50’s when he said that.

But it seems that many in their 20s’ discover Rand and are enamoured for a while. (These are the “I am John Galt” bumper stickers we are seeing around) It is the over corrective anecdote to Obama’s Marxism.

She makes you think even if one eventually sees the problems with Objectivism. Her recent popularity is a direct result of the Marxism of Obama’s policies. And you are right, Louis, that Rand was a refuge from the Communists. They took her father’s pharmacy business and the family had to flee.

the whole point of this is not supporting Rand but not allowing her position to be twisted. Just the thought of Rand insisting someone must pay their taxes is ridiculous. She believed almost all government services should be privatized!



Louis says

November 9, 2010 at 3:37 pm

Lyida:

I understand. Historical references are significant, and I am glad that you made the

correction for all of our benefit.



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 4:35 pm

“Just the thought of Rand insisting someone must pay their taxes is ridiculous. She believed almost all government services should be privatized!”

The problem is this:

That house that burned down? It was in an area that wanted to cut their taxes, so they didn't provide a fire-department for the residents.

So Mr. Cranick's situation was what Ayn Rand valued: no dependence on gov't. You are 'on your own'. And he WAS.

The deal was that he and his neighbors were offered 'coverage' for \$75 a year for fire-fighting services. His neighbors paid. He had paid in the past, but had overlooked that year's payment. His neighbor called the fire department to come out, but their hands 'were tied' because Mr. Cranick had not paid on time.

Soooo . . . 'A deal is a deal.' The house burned down. And it was legal to let it happen.

And all followers of Glen Beck applauded. And some Christians applauded.

And all followers of Ayn Rand can rejoice that Mr. Cranick and his neighbors now live in an area that doesn't have to pay taxes for a fire department (only now he lives in a trailer).

And nobody died, except for three puppies.

Oh, and some silly firemen wept, as they watched the house burn . . . but Glen Beck followers would tell them to 'get over it' and 'toughen up'.

I think he put it this way: 'these things are going to have to happen.'

Prophetic?

I certainly hope not.

Ayn Rand is a heroine of a 'certain culture'. And there, 'every man for himself' has replaced 'love thy neighbor as thyself'.



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 4:36 pm

CORRECTION: the deal was that Mr. Cranick and his neighbors were offered a deal FROM A NEAR-BY TOWN for \$75 per annum.



Darby Livingston says

November 9, 2010 at 4:43 pm

We're not talking about loving a neighbor as thyself Christiane. We're talking about people who want others to pay for the goods and services they enjoy. And rather than just steal it outright, they demand that the government do it for them. That said, I think it would have been very kind if the man could have paid the fee and had the fire put out immediately on the spot.



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 5:09 pm

Yes, Darby, it would have been 'kind'.

But the 'powers that be' had different values.



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 5:55 pm

I think we are beginning to see in this country the results of a political philosophy that has gone to great lengths to search for a superior moral justification for selfishness.

It's a philosophy that's catching fire.



Lydia says

November 9, 2010 at 4:59 pm

Exactly what does Ayn Rand have to do with his house burning down? IT is a Randian philosophy not to help your neighbor? Or is it a Randian philosophy not to make your neighbor pay for you? Christiane, as I have learned, it is best to check things out that you post before believing all the "particulars".

You know, 2 months of cable fees would have paid the fire fee. And Darby has it exactly right. You seem to equate love with spending other people's money by government bureaucrats.

And I suppose that Obama always speaks for you? Or perhaps Nancy Pelosi or Barney Frank? Glenn Beck does not speak for me. In fact, he needs to stop telling folks he is a Christian when he is a Mormon....so that means a MORMON applauded?



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 5:22 pm

Why, Lydia !

From your comments one would think you would want to distance yourself and your philosophy from Ayn Rand. But I thought she was one of your heroines. How wrong I was.

People have already made the connection between Rand and the far-right. I'm not the first to see it.



Darby Livingston says

November 9, 2010 at 5:50 pm

You're right concerning the connection between Rand and the far-right. But that doesn't make her wrong. 😊



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 5:58 pm

Darby,

What happened to Mr. Cranick was perfectly legal.

The fire-chief had a right to deny him services, a right granted by law.

And backed up by a lot of far-right pundits.

I think we are beginning to see in this country the results of a political philosophy that has gone to great lengths to search for a superior moral justification for selfishness.

It's a philosophy that's catching fire.

And, my goodness, did people notice.



Dave Miller says

November 9, 2010 at 6:06 pm

There are definitely two sides to this. There is a law that people have to pay the 75 bucks. If they provide service anyway, why should anyone pay the fee?

I see your point, but on the other hand, laws are laws and people need to obey them. So, if people can flaunt laws without consequence, that is a problem?

As you blame right-wingers for their “selfishness”, I think I could say the same thing about left-wingers and their lawlessness. Ignore the law. Spurn the law. But still expect the government to show up and provide services.

This is a tough one. I have sympathy for the people whose homes burned.

But why didn't they pay the \$75?



Lydia says

November 9, 2010 at 6:41 pm

Christiane, stop twisting. I was focusing on your very bad interpretation of Randian philosophy. It has nothing to do with what I believe about anything. It was about historical facts from someone who once studied Randian philosophy as many college students do. You are welcome to think whatever you want about me. I am just another meanie to you that does not support a nanny state. I prefer adults.



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 6:47 pm

You need to get your tuition refunded, Lydia. 😊



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 6:46 pm

It was one house, DAVID. Just one. Not so bad, but it could have your brother's or cousin's.

Mr. Cranick forgot to pay a bill.

He offered to pay the firemen when they showed up, but their boss back at the office said no, to let it burn as a lesson to everyone.

Perfectly legal, David.

And he should have paid the fee . . . yes.

But it that REALLY the point? The money? I think there is something else going on here that bears close examination by all Americans together. And I think we know what it is.

Yes, there ARE two sides. Thank God, there is a side that isn't going around making fun of Mr. Cranick's southern accent and saying 'THEY SURE SHOWED HIM, DIDN'T THEY?'

I'm for decency, David. We can have a free-market society and still behave like decent human beings. It is possible.



Lydia says

November 9, 2010 at 6:59 pm

"You need to get your tuition refunded, Lydia."

No, you need to get your facts straight before you comment on Randian Philosophy. Just the thought of Ayn Rand being angry because someone did not pay their taxes is hilarious because it is so 'UnRandian'.

I understand where you are coming from. There is a big push on the left right now to link the ENTIRE tea party with Ayn Rand. ... and throwing puppies in burning houses. :o)



Christiane says

November 9, 2010 at 7:48 pm

"Just the thought of Ayn Rand being angry because someone did not pay their taxes is hilarious because it is so 'UnRandian'"

your words, LYDIA, not mine



Lydia says

November 10, 2010 at 10:01 am

“Just the thought of Ayn Rand being angry because someone did not pay their taxes is hilarious because it is so ‘UnRandian’

your words, LYDIA, not mine”

Yes. And????



jack says

November 9, 2010 at 7:02 pm

Someone knew before the engines left the firehouse that that residence was not insured; or at least it was determined enroute. Had they not dispatched or turned around enroute that’s one thing that can be debated – whether that Law is “Just or Legal”. But to pull in front of a home and refuse to touch it smells of someone trying to teach someone a “lesson” while we all , except this “Chief” makes a call from where he can’t smell the smoke. We don’t pin up pictures of the table where the offender will be put to death, or send surgical hose in with his dinner. Some of this is torture that no guard or Fire Chief is qualified to administer.



Darby Livingston says  
November 9, 2010 at 7:09 pm

Actually Jack, in an article I read, the fire department was actually dispatched because his neighbors DID pay the fee and they were there to prevent the fire from spreading. How's that for customer service? Preventative dispatch even.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 9, 2010 at 7:27 pm

It's off topic of the original post but since it's being discussed–

Here's a wrinkle–let's say dude had paid the \$75 dollars and through some error it was never credited to his account. Let's say he had the cancelled check or his bank statement proving such. Of course, it was in the house burning. How would the fire dept reacted then?

See, I'm all for them making him pay the \$75 and him not having fire service if he didn't. But they need to allow for some case like I described above or letting him pay on the spot or something.



Christiane says  
November 9, 2010 at 7:49 pm

He tried to pay on the spot.



jack says

November 9, 2010 at 7:34 pm

Interesting to discuss, but we have a can of worms in the SBC that needs the light of day so it can be dealt with and more SBC Presidents don't have nervous breakdowns or anybody else. We should share the successes and share the problems and it's becoming evident looking at the news around that there is more than enough trouble to be exposed that most don't want released. Check out ABP news on web on Missouri Convention lawsuit and charges of corruption.



Louis says

November 10, 2010 at 12:15 am

Christiane:

Hasn't Ayn Rand been linked with the right for over 60 years?

What in the world are you talking about?

I certainly respect your belief that the way to have the best society is to take money from people and give it to others. Like I said, no one these days is for a society with no safety net.

And on the other end, I know of few people who have given away all of their possessions for others. I haven't. I doubt that you have. So we all have some limit beyond which we will not go.

But it's not a sign of moral superiority to argue that other people's money should be

spent on more social benefits for others.

Can't people disagree about these things without your making moral judgments about the people with whom you disagree?



Christiane says

November 10, 2010 at 12:59 am

Louis, I am glad you used the words 'moral judgments'.

Do I speak up about something I think is a moral issue regarding what happened to Mr. Cranick?

ABSOLUTELY



Christiane says

November 10, 2010 at 1:45 am

Hi LOUIS,

You wrote this?

"I certainly respect your belief that the way to have the best society is to take money from people and give it to others."

Hmmmm . . . . clarification will help here . . . .

I don't think it is right to take tax money from the middle class, and then turn around and proportionally give corporations and the wealthiest Americans HUGE tax cuts paid for by borrowing trillions of dollars from foreign powers, thereby expanding the national debt.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 10, 2010 at 9:08 am

Oh, but taking tax money from the middle class to give to people who are capable of working but not willing to and borrowing trillions of dollars from foreign powers, thereby expanding the national debt, that's ok, huh?



Lydia says  
November 10, 2010 at 9:59 am

Then you must be furious with Obama over such things as GM and AIG. :o) After all, their execs were taking huge salaries before and even after the bailout.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 10, 2010 at 10:10 am

And weren't those bailout also financed with debt? Yes. Yes they were.

But those were ok with L's, Lydia, because there are two things that liberals LOVE to do even more than slice up little babies while in their mothers wombs so they can pull them out in chunks.

1) They love to reward incompetence. GM is losing money because they make crappy cars that no one wants to buy and pay unskilled, uneducated workers \$55,000 a year. Give 'em a bail out.

2) They love to punish success. Someone works hard, is creative, inventive, and takes risks and as a result becomes wealthy. THAT'S NOT FAIR!!!! Take money out of his pocket to give to someone who could work but isn't willing to. Why should he have so much when someone else has so little.



Darby Livingston says  
November 10, 2010 at 8:44 am

There is nothing proportionate about the tax system. This classic nonsense about corporations and wealthy people is disgusting.

I recall the Bible saying something about not coveting your neighbor's stuff.



Lydia says  
November 10, 2010 at 11:32 am

"1) They love to reward incompetence. GM is losing money because they make crappy cars that no one wants to buy and pay unskilled, uneducated workers \$55,000 a year. Give 'em a bail out."

It is much worse than that. A colleague was telling me about her brother who was

making 150,000 per year as an unskilled production worker with one of the big car companies when he took a buy out to retire after 25 years. he was mildly mentally disabled and did very poorly all through school. He has no post secondary education.

His sister has 2 masters degrees, works in management in the private sector and makes less than half of what he made as a union worker in a factory.

This is the result of unions. This sort of thing cannot be sustained. The only thing worse are all the very high mid and upper level management government salaries which greatly surpassed private sector management salaries a while back.

Government jobs are the gravy train.



Joe Blackmon says  
November 10, 2010 at 11:54 am

Lydia, you know we're just fear-mongerin' fundy's. 😊

My wife worked at a credit union near a automotive production plant and she said there were two things you could tell about the production workers from that plant. One, their accounts were always overdrawn. Two, they very obviously had little to no education and were bringing in biweekly checks somewhere in the \$3,000 range sometimes.

The reason GM and other car companies couldn't make money is they had been put in a strangle hold by union goons.



Cruella de Ville says

November 10, 2010 at 12:13 pm

Joe,

You don't by any chance have any puppies I could...uhhh..."adopt"?



Christiane says

November 10, 2010 at 1:02 pm

I knew it was a matter of time before YOU showed up, Cruella!!!!

I'm calling PETA.



Louis says

November 10, 2010 at 1:53 pm

Christiane:

I said that most people I know believe in some sort of publicly financed safety net. There are differences about how far that should go.

Some people have great faith in the ability of societies to be better places by increasing the size and scope of the benefits that are publicly financed.

I may disagree in some cases and agree in others.

What I object to is people trying to claim or insinuate that they are more caring and more righteous because they have a different belief on these public policy issues related to taxation and the scope of the public vs. private sector than those who disagree. And that those who disagree are somehow morally blind or deficient.

I note you are against an extension of the Bush tax cuts, but I am not really following the logic expressed in your statement.

People can be for or against tax cuts, and that's o.k and should be debated.

But neither side is morally superior or deficient based on their position on the tax cuts alone.

I trust you agree with that.



Christiane says

November 10, 2010 at 4:16 pm

Louis, I don't think that 'sides' are the case here.

Something happened that was indecent and unAmerican.

It was 'legal', yes.

And Mr. Cranick was 'at fault' by not remembering to pay.

But the 'incident' itself was obscene to me. Absolutely obscene.

I can find no 'justification' for the tone taken by the authorities to allow an American's HOME and his pets to be burnt up like that.

It wasn't 'the money', was it? It was something much darker.

Whatever it is that Glenn Beck says 'has to happen' now, I sure don't want that for my fellow countrymen. No way.

Somewhere, Louis, and somehow, forces in this country have attacked our

American solidarity as a humane people and as a people who live 'in community' as neighbors.

I will always believe that the philosophy and agenda of these forces is truly immoral and profoundly unAmerican.



Louis says

November 10, 2010 at 5:46 pm

I am sorry that I haven't followed this so closely.

I don't know who Mr. Cranick is and about his taxes. I saw his name mentioned in a couple of posts but did not read them closely and found them hard to follow. I will assume for the sake of this discussion that whatever you say about him and his situation is terrible.

I have not followed Mr. Cranick or what Mr. Beck said about Mr. Cranick or the puppies or the humans etc.

I was really making comments about economic policy in a macro sense, not Mr. Cranick's situation.

I don't know about making claims that "forces" and "philosophies" in this country are attacking American solidarity and such.

If you mean Glen Beck, Ayn Rand or whomever, I will have to disagree. I am sure that we can pull quotes from any number of people in the media or public life that have said something wrong about something.

I did not follow Beck's rally, but note that he has a popular TV and radio show, neither of which I watch.

From the clips and such that I have seen, it is extreme to label Beck as attacking American solidarity or immoral or whatever. I suspect that Beck represents what many Americans are concerned about right now or else he would not have the following he has.

I don't agree with Jon Stewart or the other guy on lots of stuff, but I don't think they are unamerican or attacking our solidarity etc.

Why can't we just discuss who has the best ideas and why and leave out the moralisms?

I am sure there are extreme cases (left over communists and Nazis in our midst), but they are the minority.



Christiane says

November 10, 2010 at 7:26 pm

LOUIS, we disagree, especially about Glen Beck.  
His remarks were sickening, in my opinion. A new low for him.  
And that guy with him? Making fun of Mr. Cranick's southern accent?  
Please.

Maybe you are surrounded by like-minded people, Louis. And they all see things the same way that you do. But a lot Americans reacted to Mr. Canick's story at the gut-level, like it was a wake-up call.

And puppies being allowed to burn to death?  
It's like the canary in the mine just died, Louis.  
We're in some serious trouble and we've had a 'real life' early warning.



Bart Barber says

November 10, 2010 at 6:54 pm

I didn't read all of the comments. I'll plead guilty to that right up front. Somebody else may already have made my point. But I'm going to link ERLC and missions...

1. I believe that ERLC is going to become only MORE important to our missionary efforts in coming years. The Cordoba House controversy illustrates an increasing willingness among some American groups to begin to restrict the ability of religious groups to build/remodel new facilities. Even in our DFW area (a zone not exactly hostile to Southern Baptists) we've seen local municipalities trying to zone out church plants. I think that they attempt to do so for fiscal purposes, knowing that worship facilities are tax-exempt and wanting to keep them from taking high-value property off of the city tax rolls. ERLC exists to advocate for this kind of religious liberty on our behalf.

2. Events like those that recently took place in Dearborn, MI, demonstrate the temptation even felt within the USA to restrict evangelistic efforts in order to quell controversy. ERLC exists to advocate for religious liberty to share the gospel. We're going to need that kind of advocacy more and more, I think.

3. Foreign policy is not irrelevant to foreign missions. I'm glad that the ERLC is able to give voice to our concerns about foreign policy. I've come to be against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, not because I am a peacenik, but because I'm bothered by the fact that American blood has been spilled to establish governments that persecute Christians and deny religious liberty to millions. ERLC exists to advocate for religious liberty around the world, IMHO.



Dave Miller says  
November 10, 2010 at 7:20 pm

Thanks, Bart. Good points.



Louis says  
November 10, 2010 at 7:31 pm

Christiane:

I still don't know the story that you are referring to. I am sorry. I'll accept that Beck said something sickening about it.

Lots of people say lots of things. The only thing I know about Beck is a general summary of what I pick up on when he's in the news.

He just seems to me to be one of the many voices in the American spectrum. I am not a supporter or a detractor, really.



Christiane says  
November 10, 2010 at 7:42 pm

LOUIS, I'm sorry for not clarifying.

Here is a news report:

<http://news.mywebpal.com/partners/955/public/news987695.html>



Christiane says

November 10, 2010 at 7:47 pm

And here is the 'Glen Beck and Company' video (scroll down) :

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-cesca/glenn-beck-mocks-fire-vic\\_b\\_753193.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-cesca/glenn-beck-mocks-fire-vic_b_753193.html)



jack says

November 10, 2010 at 9:10 pm

I like Beck's sidekick in the video. Mississippi got rated as the State with the poorest math development. That's where the Fire Chief was from – I think. Y'all count off in ones.



Louis says

November 11, 2010 at 12:42 am

Christiane:

Thanks. I read the story and watched the clip, but did not read the Huffington Post piece.

The redneck schtick makes my more mad than anything. It seems that Southern rural, poor, whites are fair game for being made fun of. I would like to see that end.

Beck's point is technically correct from a legal standpoint. But this is one of those times where a small point is swallowing up the bigger picture.

If the fire department never came out because the house was not on the list, that would be more defensible. The FD should come when they get distressed calls from covered properties.

But to be right next door and allow this sort of waste is ridiculous. Also, I did not understand why the animals died. Couldn't they get them out well in advance of the house being engulfed while the garage was on fire? The story doesn't tell us.

The obvious answer to this policy is to give FDs the right to issue hefty fines to people who don't pay the fee, but get their homes saved by FDs. And let the fines be secured by a lien on the property. Maybe \$1,000 or something.

It is worth considering what it would do to the survivability of rural FDs if people stop paying for the service if they figure out their homes will be saved anyway. That is not an insignificant question.

But there are other ways to deal with it (such as fines etc.).

Also, I was wondering what happens in situations where the FD from a County goes out and finds that a property on fire is not in the County, just on the other side of the County line, and there is no jurisdiction. Would the County fire department let it burn, or would they say, "we're out here and we're so close, let's put it out." I would hope they would say the later, but I don't know the legalities and such.

I did not find what Beck said to be "sickening" or evil etc. The sidekick making fun of the people was sickening.



Christiane says

November 11, 2010 at 1:05 am

Oh LOUIS, don't you realize?

That 'sidekick' was Beck's 'Amen, Charlie.'

And you are so right: the mayor and fire-cheif certainly could have found a better way . . . something financially appropriate like heavy fines, and then saved the home and the animals. And all those family photographs and keepsakes . . . all gone. To prove what?

Louis, I guess you can tell that this business has really upset me.

(a side note to DAVID, here: I wasn't JUST upset because one of the pets was a CAT, so don't start. 😊)



Dave Miller says

November 11, 2010 at 2:02 am

Cruelty to cats should be celebrated, not punished.

Again, sorry. I can't help it.



Christiane says

November 11, 2010 at 2:14 am

from LOLcat Bible:

Proverbs 1 Verse 29

(for them what needs it), here is the quote:

“29 Dum d00dz kno feerz Ceiling Cat



Christiane says

November 11, 2010 at 2:14 am

sorry, couldn't resist 😊



Louis says

November 12, 2010 at 11:02 am

Christiane:

Looks like this post is now stale, but I found this article in the news today about the Broward County, FL sheriff's office having to discontinue or scale back protection to a city in the County because it had not paid the fees. Here's the story.

<http://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local-beat/Pay-to-Protect-Sheriff-Cutting-Services-to-City-Over-Late-Payment-107315038.html?dr>

Of course, I still feel that they should have put out the fire and that it was petty and ridiculous for them not to have done so. It would be like the Broward County Sheriff's deputy going to a house for a minor domestic disturbance only to find a murder was in progress next door, but since the City boundary was between the two properties, the deputy would not go and assist.



Christiane says

November 12, 2010 at 1:26 pm

Thanks for the link, Louis.

Like I said, the Cranick fire was a sign:  
like the death of a canary in a mine.

Years ago was a film about a dystopian (sp?) society in the future, called 'LOGAN'S RUN', starring Michael York, the British actor. It was one of Farrah Fawcett's first films (she was a 'bit' player in it). In the film, people live an idyllic life in a paradise setting, UNTIL they turn thirty years of age, then they are euthanized.

But there is scene in that movie: A beautiful park by a lake, where people are picnicking on the shore. Farrah Fawcett falls into the water, and is screaming and drowning. Everyone sits quietly watching her suffering, unmoved, without compassion or empathy. Without response... ."

Maybe you can understand, Louis, why I see a major 'change' going on in our 'society'. Maybe it's too late for us. Glenn Beck is very popular and has a great following, and of the Cranick fire, said 'these things are going to have to happen now'.

The 'excuse' is 'money'. But that is not what this is really about, is it?



Dr. James Willingham says

December 27, 2010 at 12:39 am

Plainly, Southern Baptists need a representative and contact person in D.C., one who knows politicians and the ins and outs of our government. To that end and that purpose, we need the Commission, and, while I could wish Dr. Land knew his southern Baptist history and doctrine a little better, he still can serve the purpose for which he is placed there. And the longer one is in a location, the better he or she becomes with the ins and outs of it. Missions involves more than just preaching. Otherwise Jesus would have never mentioned giving a drink of water, and James would have never called anyone to task for not caring for the needy.

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-- 121 Comments

[David Rogers](#) Parsons, I think we've already been down this road several times in the past, the most recent on....

[Tarheel](#) "People who speak in ecstatic utterances in PRIVATE can hardly be considered charismatic. True....

[Tarheel](#) It was intended to be at least somewhat humorous..

[volfan007](#) Thanks, Todd. David.

[Todd Benkert](#) Amen, David! I don't think there's ever been a time that I didn't

“have some....

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### **The real question about the future of SBC missions**

-- 1 Comments

Kevin Good word!.

---

### **Divorce, teens, baptism, and tongues in the IMB’s new appointment policies**

-- 76 Comments

Alan Cross Ryan, You said, “I ask this because it is something my church is working towards with a ministry in....

Alan Cross Stuart, yes, I will be in touch soon. Thanks for your insight. I have learned here to just put stuff out....

Ryan Abernathy Vol, Thanks for the interaction. My only response would be that others study the same scriptures and....

Ryan Abernathy Stuart- Question for you. Do you see value in partnering with stateside churches for the long haul to....

Stuart Or (sadly) neither. You’ve got a ten-year body of work to dig through before you can confirm the latter..

---

### **More Than One ‘R’**

-- 9 Comments

Ethan Moore C.S. Lewis addressed the notions of Natural law (mathematical) and Human law (ethical) from a....

Greg Harvey The platonic ideals were perfect versions of flawed reality. Aristotle's view that what is...  
Bart Barber "The mystery of math is ultimately ethical." I like that!.

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-- 55 Comments

Bart Barber I don't know..

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