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IRS going after a church, on: 2005/11/8 21:27

Conservatives Also Irked by IRS Probe of Churches

The agency's warning to All Saints is part of a wider look into political activity by nonprofits.

By Jason Felch and Patricia Ward Biederman

Times Staff Writers

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The IRS threat to revoke the tax-exempt status of All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena because of an antiwar sermon there during the 2004 presidential election is part of a larger, controversial federal investigation of political activity at churches and nonprofit groups.

Over the last year, the Internal Revenue Service has looked at more than 100 tax-exempt organizations across the country for allegations of promoting — either explicitly or implicitly — candidates on both ends of the political spectrum, according to the IRS. None have lost their nonprofit status, though investigations continue into about 60 of those.

The IRS denies any political motivation behind the initiative it started last year. The Treasury Department's inspector general found in February that there was some mismanagement of the investigations but no indication of them being used as a political cudgel to silence critics of the Bush administration.

However, the IRS action has triggered an unusual coalition of critics who say they are concerned about the effect on freedom of speech and religion.

When Ted Haggard, head of the 30-million-member National Assn. of Evangelicals, heard about the All Saints case Monday, he told his staff to contact the National Council of Churches, a more liberal group.

Haggard said he personally supports the war in Iraq and probably would not agree with much in the Rev. George Regas' 2004 sermon at All Saints, which was cited by the IRS as the basis for its investigation. But Haggard said he wants to work with the council of churches "in doing whatever it takes to get the IRS to stop" such actions.

"It is a violation of the Constitution for the IRS to threaten that church. It may not be a violation of IRS regulations, but IRS regulations have been wrong," said Haggard, who is pastor of the 12,000-member New Life Church in Colorado Springs.

Robert Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, cheered when he heard of Haggard's offer, which Edgar said represented a rare reaching out by the evangelical group to the council.

Edgar, a United Methodist minister, former Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania and ex-president of the Claremont School of Theology, said the IRS move against All Saints appeared to be "a political witch hunt on George Regas and progressive ideology. It's got to stop." He stressed that Regas did not endorse a candidate in the sermon.

Edgar said he did not favor a bill repeatedly introduced by Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) that would allow pastors to endorse candidates without putting their church's tax-exempt status at risk. Existing law is adequate, as long as enforcement does not vary for churches with different ideologies, Edgar said.

The tax code prohibits nonprofits from "participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office." The ban includes endorsements, donations, fundraising or any other activity "that may be beneficial or detrimental to any particular candidate."

Advocating for ballot initiatives, as many California churches have done in advance of today's special election, is a separate issue, tax experts said. Churches and other tax-exempt organizations are allowed to engage in lobbying as long as "a substantial part of the organization's activities is not intended to influence legislation."

Savvy churches make sure they don't draw unwanted attention from the IRS, church officials and others said.

When elections near, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles sometimes sends reminders to local parishes of its guidelines on political action. "We don't endorse or oppose candidates, but we can endorse ballot propositions when there is a moral or ethical issue involved," said archdiocese spokesman Tod Tamberg, who knew of no local Catholic churches under IRS scrutiny.

This weekend, during Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Archbishop Roger Mahony endorsed Proposition 73, the state ballot initiative requiring parental notification before an abortion can be performed on a minor.

The Rev. William Turner, senior pastor at New Revelations Missionary Baptist Church in Pasadena, said he has never been questioned by the IRS about political activity at his church, despite his reputation as a supporter of President Bush. "We tell our members to vote their conscience," Turner said. "I've been very careful to preach the Gospel, and I can't get into any problems with the IRS for preaching the Gospel."

The Rev. John Hunter, pastor of 18,000-member First African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Los Angeles, said his church follows the IRS rules. "Churches have to be very careful," he said.

First AME also taps the expertise of member Kerman Maddox, a public relations and political consultant. He tells candidates they can worship at First AME but cannot speak from the pulpit about their candidacy. Instead, he tells them "they can shake hands, pass out literature and campaign to their heart's delight" if they stay off church property. The church doesn't endorse ballot initiatives, he said, and it bans campaign literature at the church.

At All Saints, Rector J. Edwin Bacon on Sunday told the congregants that the guest sermon by Regas, a former rector, on Oct. 31, 2004, had prompted the warning from the IRS. In the sermon, Regas did not instruct parishioners whom to support in the presidential election but said that Jesus would have told the president that his Iraq policies had failed.

The IRS' letter cited a Times article describing Regas' sermon as having triggered the agency's concerns. The church denies it violated tax rules and has retained a Washington law firm to help argue its position.

Using such news reports and tips from the public and interested groups, the IRS identified more than 100 nonprofits that had allegedly intervened politically in the 2004 presidential election. The agency reviewed the cases and selected more than 60 for fuller examination. About a third of those organizations were churches, officials said.

The IRS is barred by law from identifying those nonprofits, and the agency would not comment on the specifics of the All Saints case or others.

Steven Miller, the IRS commissioner of tax-exempt and governmental entities, said there is nothing political about how cases are chosen. Churches need to be more cautious about what they say during election seasons, and make it clear when they're not speaking for the church, Miller said. "If there's no election, there's no potential for intervention.

"The courts have said, yes, you have freedom of speech, but not the right to tax-exempt status," he added.

The best-known target of the IRS initiative is the NAACP. The IRS has cited a July 2004 speech in which the organization's chairman, Julian Bond, criticized the Bush administration's policies on civil rights as the cause for the audit. The NAACP is fighting the audit.

In 1976, Congress passed a law that required audits of churches to be done only if there was a "reasonable basis" to believe a violation had occurred, and made such audits subject to a special approval process from senior IRS officials.

Marcus Owens, the former head of tax-exempt organizations at the IRS and now a private attorney representing All Saints, said that the more recent IRS policy changes lowered the threshold for church audits, allowing front-line IRS agents to pursue probes with only cursory approval from above.

"This is exactly the sort of 1st Amendment briar patch the Congress wanted to keep the IRS out of," said Owens. The IRS disputed Owens' contention, saying audits still face a rigorous approval process by high-level agency officials.

On Monday, Regas did a half a dozen interviews with reporters from local and national newspapers, radio and television

. And he was inundated with phone calls and e-mail messages, "all positive," he said.

When he was asked if he had any regrets about his 2004 sermon, he said: "No regrets. I only wish I had preached it with greater intensity."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-irs8nov08,0,2552376.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

Re: IRS going after a church - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/11/8 23:31

Wilkerson in his book "The Vision" (or was it "Set the trumpet to thy mouth"?) made mention that the IRS would be used as an instrument to come against the church. The larger churches have gotten to lax with thier spending, I'd watch for al ot of church properties being auctioned off as they will be forced to conform to the same tax laws corporations do.

Re: IRS going after a church - posted by groh_frog, on: 2005/11/8 23:36

That's a very interesting article. Especially the fact that many churches are getting their opinions out there, essentially getting involved in what's going on.

I think it's great to see the support, but I'd like to know more about that church, too. Particularly because this is an incident that's occured before, much to the disgrace of the church.

I'm specifically referring to "The Reverend" Sung Myung Moon's Unification Church. If you don't know, it's a cult, and has been deceiving many for years. Moon himself claims to be Christ returned, purifying the sins of all who worship him, since Jesus was unsuccessful in his task. Well, a while ago, the IRS was indicting Moon for Tax Evasion, and he let out a press release claiming how the Government was trying to shut down his ministry to Christ. Well, many christian churches responded and rallied to support Moon.

Well, the truth was that he was evading taxes. But the embarassing part was that so many church leaders just though Moon was just another pastor of a good, christian church.

So, I wonder if there's more to the story. What's the church all about? And what's the worst that could happen? I don't mean to say that it's a good thing what's going on, but "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's", and God will provide. They can't stop the Good News of Jesus Christ by attacking the physical church! As I've seen, persecution has a way of purifying believers, also.

Grace and Peace...

Re: IRS going after a church - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2005/11/8 23:55

Hi Neilgin...

While I do not believe that any non-profit organization should lose their tax exempt status with the IRS, the "church" mentioned in this article is a fine example of an extremely liberal political machine. All Saints Episcopal Church is an openly homosexual church institution that endorses everything from *gay marriage* to *gay clergy*. They are loudly opposed to nearly all traditional Christian thought.

This church has made the news in the past, but usually for protesting conservative Christians that stood opposed to homosexual marriage or homosexual ministers. The bulk of their "sermons" consists of far-left political rhetoric.

Again, I don't believe that any non-profit organization should be taxed. But I am happy that people are finally seeing this particular political institution for what it truly is.

<http://www.allsaints-pas.org/>

:-(

EDIT

In fact, here is a "prayer" that was listed on their website from a dinner honoring Rosa Parks. Please note the extremely

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political nature of this "prayer," as well as it's apparent "political correctness:"

Quote:
----- As we eat this meal tonight, O Lord, and enjoy the fellowship at our tables, we pray that you will bless this food and this fellowship, God, by making us, like our sister Rosa Parks, tired of giving in.

Make us tired of giving in, Lord, to the classism and racism in our country exposed by the winds of hurricane Katrina.

Make us tired of giving in, Lord, to this unjust war that has now taken the lives of over 2,000 U.S. soldiers and tens of thousands of Iraqis, and which rewards corrupt corporations, takes away civil liberties, and sets Christian against Muslim.

Make us tired of giving in, Lord, to tax cuts for the super wealthy that steal food from the poor and steal schools and health-care from everyone else.

Make us tired of giving in, Lord, to a life of timidity and insensitivity that does not live for liberty and justice for all.

Make us tired of giving in, Lord, to leadership that does not ask us to sacrifice so that the human race can become the human family.

For in living for others and in prayerful awareness of our dependence upon You and of our interdependence on one another will we truly be blessed.

All these things we pray in your holy name.

Amen.

http://www.allsaints-pas.org/all_saints_church.htm

Re: - posted by groh_frog, on: 2005/11/9 2:33

Wow!

I just looked through the site of this church, and I'm speechless.

I was looking through transcripts of sermons, and the second one on the list was called "mixing religion and politics is our duty".

This church has twisted the Word of God, and blatantly created more "friendly" doctrine to fit their political beliefs. I think it's disgusting. But I agree with the IRS's watch over them, not because of their specific doctrine, but because it is seemingly a political organization, like ccchhrrriiiss said.

It has an agenda that it's working to further. Should it be a taxable organization? I don't know enough about it to say. But does the IRS have a right, even an obligation to be investigating this group? By their own doctrine, yes.

It's sad to see, however, that these are the 'christians' that are making the news.

Grace and Peace...

Re: Cccccchris....., on: 2005/11/9 16:57

Yes my brother, I know All Saints Pasadena well.

It's one of the most beautiful church buildings I ever seen in my life, the stained glass are truly beautiful works of art depicting the life of Jesus.

The church itself is open all day for prayer, and many times I **used** to drive out there and pray in it. My mentor had shown me the place when we were filming a sermon series on different kinds of church **buildings**. I fell in love with the building.

One Sunday after my home church I drove over to just be with the Lord some more, get on my knees, talk to Jesus, contemplate the stained glass in order to contemplate His life.....and read the Word. I was sitting out in there courtyard reading the Bible, when a real pretty girl in her wedding dress came out with a photographer. I asked them if they needed the stone courtyard bench I was sitting on, it was underneath a lovely tree. They did, thanked me and I moved to another bench. A few minutes later another pretty girl in a wedding dress came out and both girls posed for their wedding pictures.

I could never go back there and pray like I used to.....I tried a few months later, but.....it felt to me as the Spirit had fled, and I didnt have that same keen unction one desires when talking to the God Most High.

Let me say this, **constitutionally** I support civil unions. What I mean is, if I was a legislator I would support two Americans right to form any union they desire. This is freedom.

Is it God-honoring?

Of course not, but freedom, free will is a messy business. Two people should be able to pass benefits to each other.

They spoke out against the war. I want to write Rector Bacon and ask him if he shares the same passion to protect the lives of the unborn. But I think it's very dangerous when the IRS gets used to punish the enemies of an administration.

Do you agree? Do you support the war in Iraq? I KNOW you don't support abortion.

God bless you brother.

ps...if you look real deep into new modern episcopal liturgy, you'll find an apostate prayer to raise cakes!! eeeeeek! where's Elijah when you need him!!

groh frog, on: 2005/11/9 17:02

Quote:

-----I think it's disgusting

is it much different than D. James Kennedy?

in the fact that both seek to further a political and cultural agenda...or is it that Messrs Kennedy's world view might coincide with yours?

Once the IRS starts punishing enemies, watch out.

But it's all good, make Bibles illegal and take away the 501c3's and then we'll see who the true followers of Jesus are!!

come persecution come.

here's the hypocrisy, on: 2005/11/9 17:10

Here's what I find disgusting, that this fellow Regas who preached the antiwar sermon said this:

Quote:

-----In his own voice, Regas said: "The religious right has drowned out everyone else. Now the faith of Jesus has come to be known as pro-rich, pro-war and pro-American.... I'm not pro-abortion, but pro-choice. There is something vicious and violent about coercing a woman to carry a term an unwanted child."

That is disgusting. Preach against the war!! Bless God, but be against all forms of murder, and to the religious right I say, preach against the murder of the unborn, but refuse to give cover to a president who lied to the people to begin a vicious cruel unwinnable war.

HYPOCRISY!!!

thats whats disgusting.

Re: here's the hypocrisy - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2005/11/9 21:00

Hi Neilgin...

Actually, I am not certain as to whether or not the war in Iraq was a "just war." I have wrestled with the notion from even before the war began. I am currently taking a Graduate course in International Law -- and this issue has been discussed several times using firsthand source material.

I do believe that there are times in history when war is necessary. Even most pacifists would agree that it was necessary for the United States to enter into World War II -- whether to stop Hitler's tyranny (as "hawks" might argue) or as a response to the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor (as the "doves" would argue).

There are even times when *preemptive* attacks are necessary. This is most clearly understood through a case study on the "6 Day War" involving the nation of Israel and several Arab nations (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq). Israel actually preemptively attacked the other nations (and rightfully so) because those nations had become an immediate threat to the security of Israel. In six days, Israel defeated all of those nations. In doing so, Israel also destroyed the air forces (and much of the military might) of those nations.

It has been argued that Al Qaeda actually gained respect in the Muslim community due to the lack of preemption (and later, the lack of retribution) following the acts of Osama bin Laden. Al Qaeda played a role in the first bombings of the World Trade Center in 1993; the 1998 attack on the US embassies in the African cities of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya; the Millennium Bombing plan on the West Coast in 1999; and the 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen (that killed a friend of mine). It might be argued that Al Qaeda could have been destroyed if President Clinton had acted following those attacks.

I respectfully disagree with your notion that President Bush actually lied about the events leading to the war. I do not know the President personally, and I do not trust the media or political ideologists. I do not have firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the war, but I do have the accounts of the *Congressional Journal* and some firsthand source material. The events were actually presented to the President by United States military intelligence. This intelligence pointed to Saddam Hussein possessing WMDs -- or the immediate potential for developing WMDs. Other nations concurred -- including nations that were more pacified in this. Great Britain, Russia, Germany, Australia, and even France believed that Saddam Hussein either currently possessed, or was in the process of obtaining, such weapons. The entire administrative staff of the Pentagon (most serving long before Bush became President) decided that this posed a threat to U.S. security. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred with the Pentagon. The evidence was then presented before both Houses of Congress, and they overwhelmingly granted President Bush the authority to take military action.

As is part of the purpose of the United Nations Charter, the UN wanted to prevent war. However, even an agency that was created to prevent war had placed demands on Saddam Hussein in the months following the first Gulf War (in 1991). Hussein violated every one of these demands multiple times! Not only did Saddam Hussein commit terrible atrocities against his own people, but he also attempted an assassination of the former President Bush in 1992. Saddam Hussein also sent payments to the families of each of the Palestinian suicide bombers in Israel. History may prove that Saddam Hussein did not have WMDs. But history has already shown that he consistently attempted to obtain such weapons. These were all complete violations of the UN Security Council resolutions attempting to control the situation.

My uncle, a strong believer, was injured in Iraq in November 2003. His armoured humvee was hit by an RPG in Fallujah, resulting in the death of his best friend (sitting on his right), and another close friend (sitting on his left). The images on the news of the Muslim militants dancing atop the charred remains of the vehicle were played all over the news. If it were not for the bodies of these two men (acting as a shield), my uncle would certainly have died. He healed in a hospital made from one of Saddam's lavish palaces. Eventually, he returned to duty. His job is to destroy the illegal weapons that Iraq had amassed during the years leading up to the war (mostly from the French and Russians). Every day, they detonate multiplied thousands of pounds of such weapons (each looking like small mushroom clouds). Currently, my uncle is in Africa removing landmines, hopefully preventing the deaths of countless innocent children and other civilians.

I do not believe that it is wise to judge the President of the United States by calling him a "*liar*" when you do not know all of the facts. You may disagree with him and his policies, and even distrust him, but it is wrong to judge him through such limited means.

I agree with your notion about hypocrisy in the Christian community. There are some believers that blindly follow the urges of the *Religious Right* or the *Liberal Left*. A Christian should vote according to his or her knowledge of the Word of God.

od. I am indeed *pro-life*. This also leads me to not only vote against abortion, but also against the death penalty -- because I view all life as precious in the sight of God. I vote against gay marriage because I believe that such a recognition destroys the moral validity of *normal* marriages -- as well as forces an entire nation to agree with a sinful lifestyle choice. I support the notion that some wars are justified if they can strengthen the security of a nation. If a man did not defend his wife or children from an intruder, I believe that man is "*worse than an infidel*." If a leader of a free nation did not take such action to secure the defense of the nation, then that person is also a bad leader. This does not mean that all war is justified (or even the War in Iraq) -- it just means that, at times, war can be justifiable.

I do not always agree with President Bush or conservatives (and of course, Republicans). But that does not permit me to become an *accuser* of the President in a case that I do not know all of the facts. I have seen President Bush take some steps that have curtailed abortion -- which ends the lives of nearly a million unborn babies in America each year. I am quite thankful that someone like John Kerry is not in office who would nominate "activist" judges to the Supreme Court (that would strengthen the cause of abortion or homosexual activism).

The Episcopal "church" in this IRS case is much more political than most would imagine. They blatantly oppose all traditional Christian beliefs. From looking through their website, it is clear that they support homosexual marriage, homosexual ministers, "universal" salvation (including Muslims, Buddhists, and even atheists), abortion rights, and politically oppose all conservative ideas. While I do not agree that they should lose their tax-exempt status, I am happy that they are exposed for what they truly are -- a *political machine* of the far-left.

I know that we may disagree politically -- but I guess that is the beauty of a free society. We can agree that we should both pray for the President -- that his decisions may become directed of the Lord.

:-)

Re:, on: 2005/11/10 11:21

great reply chriss. 8-)

You swayed my idea about the war a little, really opened my eyes. Bravo!

Chris...do you want to delve a bit deeper?, on: 2005/11/10 17:09

Lets separate some elements of the discussion that you blended together.

Firstly, my background. I have a background in intelligence. I have seen deceit as a policy CHOICE used again and again. It's not judgement, that's fact. I could give you specific instances, but lets speak of the issue at hand.

You brought up the 1st Gulf War, are you aware that Ambassador Glaspie gave Saddam Hussein a tacit go ahead to invade Kuwait?

Quote:

-----July 25, 1990 - Presidential Palace - Baghdad

U.S. Ambassador Glaspie - I have direct instructions from President Bush to improve our relations with Iraq. We have considerable sympathy for your quest for higher oil prices, the immediate cause of your confrontation with Kuwait. (pause) As you know, I lived here for years and admire your extraordinary efforts to rebuild your country. We know you need funds. We understand that, and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country. (pause) We can see that you have deployed massive numbers of troops in the south. Normally that would be none of our business, but when this happens in the context of your threats against Kuwait, then it would be reasonable for us to be concerned. For this reason, I have received an instruction to ask you, in the spirit of friendship - not confrontation - regarding your intentions: Why are your troops massed so very close to Kuwait's borders?

Saddam Hussein - As you know, for years now I have made every effort to reach a settlement on our dispute with Kuwait. There is to be a meeting in two days; I am prepared to give negotiations only this one more brief chance. (pause) When we (the Iraqis) meet (with the Kuwaitis) and we see there is hope, then nothing will happen. But if we are unable to find a solution, then it will be natural that Iraq will not accept death.

U.S. Ambassador Glaspie - What solutions would be acceptable?

Saddam Hussein - If we could keep the whole of the Shatt al Arab - our strategic goal in our war with Iran - we will make concessions (to the Kuwaitis). But, if we are forced to choose between keeping half of the Shatt and the whole of Iraq (i.e., in Saddam's view, including Kuwait) then we will give up all of the Shatt to defend our claims on Kuwait to keep the whole of Iraq in the shape we wish it to be. (pause) What is the United States' opinion on this?

U.S. Ambassador Glaspie - We have no opinion on your Arab - Arab conflicts, such as your dispute with Kuwait. Secretary (of State James) Baker has directed me to emphasize the instruction, first given to Iraq in the 1960's, that the Kuwait issue is not associated with America. (Saddam smiles)

"We have no opinion on your Arab - Arab conflicts, such as your dispute with Kuwait"

What does that sound like to you?

a tacit green light to invade?

Saddam KNEW we had extensive overhead recon capability. We had been schemeing for years to "project force" into the Persian Gulf, to put boots on the ground to secure oil supplies into the 21st century.

This is clear, but does that make it RIGHT?

is that something that Jesus would endorse?

It might be a geopolitical imperative, but how does it weigh out in this most Holy Faith?

is it right?

Hence, the whole first Gulf war was predicated on a lie by George Bush the first.

You brought up all of Saddam Hussein's ills..granted, BUT , what do they have to do with the "war on Terror"? The war on terror is against Al-Queada which is really another way to say the "Islamic Brotherhood".

The Baathist Socialist Party had very little operational linkage with Al-queda, or for that matter any islamic terror group. That demolishes one causi belli that the bush administration trotted out.

The other causi belli was Iraqi possession of WMD, which is another falsehood.

How do we know its falsehood? Have any nuclear weapons been found in Iraq?

Do you not think that we have UNBELIEVABLE satellite recon coverage over Iraq? Has anything been seen?

The whole thing is a mess, an awful deadly mess, and I don't mean just Iraq. The president and some of his advisors purport themselves to be followers of Jesus, and now I hear news that our Vice President is going all out to make sure the CIA is exempted from the "no torture" clause.

What are we becoming?

and what really makes me sick is that this is happening during an administration whose Chief Executive, our President, says that he follows Jesus. Even as I type these words I'm getting sick, because there's a large large portion of "evangelicals" who give cover and support to this sinful behavior.

Think about this, ask yourself how the Lutheran church in Germany conducted itself during the reign of Hitler.

Re: Chris...do you want to delve a bit deeper? - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2005/11/10 21:06

Hi Neilgin...

First of all, regardless of whether or not this "interview" concerning the first Gulf War is correct (you did not leave a citation), I still cannot see a "tactic go ahead" as you suggest. If anything, it seems like a typical conversation that might occur between an ambassador and the President of a nation. One should remember that, while an Ambassador sits as a representative of the United States, his words are not definitive. Like all public officials, they sometimes say things that are not truly representative of the policy or administration that they represent.

Regardless, Saddam Hussein's actions in 1990-1991 were still an inexcusable violation of customary international law. This brutal dictator invaded a neighboring nation "in the name of Allah" for the sake of oil interests. After Iraq was defeated, they unconditionally accepted the conditions offered by the United States and the United Nations. Yet over the decade following the war, Saddam Hussein repeatedly violated those conditions -- including an attempt to assassinate former President Bush in 1993.

After such repeated violations, President Clinton ordered several military actions against Iraq -- including several massive bombings. Recently, the American forces in Iraq (including my uncle) have destroyed millions of pounds of illegal weapons over the past two years (mostly from France, Germany and Russia). If you would like to see some photographs of the demolition of such weapons, let me know. I have dozens that I can share.

As for the claim that President Bush lied, you have still not offered any concrete evidence. There are many liberals sitting in seats of power who truly have demonstrated hatred for the President. They would jump at the opportunity to find such "evidence" and use it to embarrass (or even prosecute) the President. To date, no evidence has been produced. Instead, there is only great amounts of hateful rhetoric being thrust into the media by certain liberal groups and individuals.

Indeed, President Bush has publically claimed to be a Christian. While some have mocked him for his claims and the policy of his administration, I do not know this man's heart. Neither do you. Neither does anyone. Those who so quickly judge him must remember that they will be judged in a similar manner.

It is also dangerous to harshly label the "religious right" with such derogatory connotations. There are many honest and well-meaning individuals who are considered part of the "religious right" by liberals. I know many of them -- and they are not blind hypocrites. They cannot all be judged by the questionable examples of men like Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell. Many of these individuals sincerely desire the best for their families and for this nation -- and they feel so strongly about issues like *abortion* and *homosexual marriage*, that they are willing to demonstrate such beliefs with their votes.

I am amazed at the self-apparent authority of "armchair generals" who sit in judgment of the Administration today -- including those in the Church. I interned at NASA Langley Research Center during my undergraduate years. I saw images (including real time video) from spy satellites (mostly stationary satellites) that I found disturbing -- and quite frightening. Most of this would never be accessible to the public. The purpose of such satellite surveillance is to preserve the security of this nation.

The Pentagon, CIA and military leaders of this nation do not operate according to political "hunches." I am currently finishing my graduate thesis in the use of satellite technology in U.S. Foreign Policy during the Iran Hostage Crisis. I am learning that only a very small percentage of such data is presented to the President. In fact, the President hardly views much of this information at all. The Government has many experts combing through incredible amounts of data, and they in turn present any relevant data deemed important to the administrative staff of the President (particularly, the National Security Advisor -- during the days leading to the war in Iraq, Condoleezza Rice).

It is quite possible that the information presented to the President was wrong (or badly interpreted). Many individuals, including the intelligence community within several foreign nations, all believed that either Iraq already possessed WMDs - or they were in the process of obtaining/developing such WMDs. And the possibility also remains that some in the Administration may have "jumped to conclusions" in order to orchestrate a war against Iraq. But to stand in judgment of the President or the Administration without firsthand knowledge is wrong. Usually, the complete truth of the decision making process of a Presidential administration is never fully known. We can only make assumptions years later, following the publication of memoirs or declassification of time-sensitive material.

Many members of the left truly hate Christian beliefs. As believers, we take spiritual stands against abortion, sexual im

morality (including homosexual immorality), and cultural degradation. This often results in believers being labeled as part of the "religious right" by members of the media. While there is blatant hypocrisy within some who claim to be believers, it is wrong to label all such believers that politically support the President in this manner.

Again, we do not have to agree with one another politically or in regards to Presidential support. Irregardless, I will always love and hold you as a brother in the Lord. It is marvelous that we live in a nation that allows us such vast freedom to publically praise or criticize our President. As believers, I hope that we can spend much more time praying for this President (or any President) than criticizing him. I am praying that God will do in President Bush all that I am praying that God will do in me. I want for this President to truly know and fellowship with Christ in his fullness -- and to spread that relationship with others around the world. While it may be idealistic to believe that this is possible, I still pray that it can happen.

:-)

Re: Dear Chris, on: 2005/11/10 22:47

I would have to characterize the Glaspie/Hussein exchange as anything but typical.

He asked her directly if America had any opinion on his territorial claims towards Kuwait to which she replied:

Quote:
-----U.S. Ambassador Glaspie - We have no opinion on your Arab - Arab conflicts, such as your dispute with Kuwait. Secretary (of State James) Baker has directed me to emphasize the instruction, first given to Iraq in the 1960's, that the Kuwait issue is not associated with America.

Amb Glaspie could have replied: Mr President, the United States would view any attack upon the sovereign nation of Kuwait as a breach of international law, and as an assault on the vital interests of the United States.

But she didnt say that.

(<http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/ARTICLE5/april.html>)

Because she wasn't tasked to say that. We wanted Hussein to attack Kuwait. There was never a doubt we could defeat the Iraqi army. We wanted to project force into the Persian Gulf, we wanted a frightened Sa-ud Kingdom to "ask" for American military assistance.

And why do think that Bin Laden gave as the reason for the 9/11 attacks?

U.S. troops desecrating the holy places in the Sa-udi Kingdom.

If you can't see that truth, or maybe you don't want to acknowledge that truth...then maybe you should get on your knees and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth about this spirit of deception run amok in the highest circles of American political power. It has nothing to do with left or right.....or the left "hating" the President.....

Quote:
-----Instead, there is only great ammounts of hateful rhetoric being thrust into the media by certain liberal groups and individuals

.....give a listen to right wing talk radio, especially that right wing talk radio on "**christian**" radio stations, Frank Pastore of the KKLA fame "the intersection between faith and reason" comes to mind. Left and right hate each other, this country is so polarized right now, it's ugly season.

Back to your litany of complaints against the evils of Saddam Hussein, these have NOTHING to do with persecuting the war on terror. Nothing.

If the President had nothing to fear about cooked up pre-war intelligence estimates why has nothing happened in the Congressional committee that was impaneled to begin such an inquiry.

you wrote:

Quote:

----- The Pentagon, CIA and military leaders of this nation do not operate according to political "hunches."

They operate way way outside any realm of accountability and their primary impetus is to project American power abroad. We, in my opinion have devolved far away from what our founders envisioned, from a Republic....we have devolved in to the National Security State, whose primary reason for existence is to organize and wage war....ie.."project force".....Everything is geared towards this end, whether it be the War in Vietnam, or the War on Poverty...or the War on Drugs, or the War in Panama, the War in the Gulf, or the War on Terror now, or the War on Chicken Flu.

Everything in the national polity is geared to meet the dictates of the National Security State, and this is a dreadful state of affairs, so when you say something like this

Quote:

----- Many members of the left truly hates Christian beliefs.

it just grieves me because I say to you that many of the right hate Christian beliefs, many on the right dress up their secular political imperatives in the cloth of the faithful.

In fact it begs the question, what are "Christian beliefs"?

as far as the Holy Word of God revealed to me thru His Spirit, Christian beliefs are to love the Lord your God with all your body heart soul and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

Thats it. Why is it that those on the right correctly stand against abortion (murder) yet give cover to this unjust (unwinnable) war (murder) and those on the left correctly denounce this unwinnable war, correctly denounce capital punishment (murder), yet give cover to those who murder the pre-born?

I've asked this question again and again and again and NO ONE has had the cajones to even forward an answer that made sense, I just see the same hypocrisy over and over again.

What is it gonna be Chris? One National Security State under god?

Marvel about this freedom...yes, because those days are going to end and sooner than you think, and the end of this freedom will NOT come from a left ward government , it will come from the far right, totaltarian, authoritarian govt.

There will come a day when historians will view the Bush family as a pox upon this nation, from Prescott, who was a banker to the nazi's, and lied about his relationship to them, incurring a fine, to George the First, who made deals with terrorists to delay the releasing of hostages, and who invaded Panama under a false pretext to abrogate the Panama Canal Treaty and in the process 5,000 innocent civilians died, to George the second whose lie has resulted in the deaths of 2,000 brave GI's (and counting)

Now when you speak about "armchair generals" I don't know whether you're referencing myself. This is the Internet, you have no idea whose at the other end, where they been , what they done.

I've done a bit more than "intern" anywhere. Why don't you ask these questions in your study of the Iran hostage rescue.Did William Casey, then manager of the Reagan/Bush campaign have any communications with his colleagues at the CIA during the crisis?

Did Richard Secord who was one of the chief planners of the rescue mission, and Oliver North who was stationed aboard the mother ship, have any dialogue with the Reagan/ Bush campaign?

as you know, both men later had highly placed NSC jobs in the Reagan White House.

Was the rescue force broadcasting in plain voice, as opposed to encrypted? and if so why? Incompetence?

What role did the Tudeh(communist) party of Iran play.....what role did the Soviet signals interception teams play?

Ask those questions....except you might find yourself ...unpopular.

But you know what?....you're gonna see only those things you want to see.

I pray the Spirit reveal the truth to you.

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss () , on: 2005/11/11 0:32

Hi Neilgin...

I appreciate your quick response. As I stated before, we can disagree politically and still consider one another brothers. However, I do feel that the words found in some of your more political posts are filled with a contempt for the President that might not be based on concrete fact.

I did visit the website that you provided. After visiting the homepage (and a few subsequent pages), I noticed that it seems to be a commercial website filled with anti-Bush propaganda. I found a lot of editorial articles -- but there did not seem to be any evidence provided which would substantiate their claims. While that does not mean that all of such information is *incorrect*, it does seem to amount to prejudicial bias. Even the site specific inner URL that you referenced does not provide a single citation as to where they retrieved that particular Glaspie/Hussein "interview."

Again, you have not presented any evidence that makes me believe that the President acted dishonestly. Instead, I have only read harsh and judgmentally specific accusations without any evidence to substantiate your claims. During my thesis' research, I was instructed to completely disregard all third-hand source material. Consequently, I have relied almost completely on firsthand sources (including my interview with President Carter in July, and several interviews with members of the Carter Administration), along with a few academic and governmental secondhand sources (for historical chronology).

Can wars sometimes be justifiable? Yes. While former President Carter did not believe that the current war in Iraq amounted to a "just war," he does argue that some wars are justifiable, such as World War II (<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/09/opinion/09CART.html>). Like I stated in one of my previous posts, a preemptive strike can also be justifiable, as demonstrated by Israel's preemptive strike on four Arab nations to begin the Six Day War.

But all of this is beside the point. I am not defending the President. I am just trying to point out that no one can know the heart of this man besides God. Nor is it wise to make blanket accusations about the segment of the country that the liberal media mockingly refers to as the "*religious right*." From many of your posts, it seems that you believe that Bush is NOT a believer (even though he claims to be) because of your perspective concerning his actions (or how members of the media or certain political watchdog groups report his actions). In fact, you seem to somehow know the heart and spiritual condition of the President of the United States. I truly believe that it is dangerous to judge any person like this. And I do not believe that God would reveal this to anyone -- even after prayer. I have seen would-be "prophets" who claimed such "gifts" from God that were actually cognitive "suspicion."

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not trying to defend the President's policies, the "religious right" or anyone in the "vast, right-wing conspiracy." I do see the hypocrisy of some people that claim to be acting on behalf of believers (even those labeled as the "religious right"). And please do not misunderstand my political leanings either. I definitely do not "fit" into either political party's platform. In some ways, I am decidedly conservative (especially on matters of abortion). Yet, in other ways, I would be considered a liberal (I oppose the death penalty). But the social, moral and religious hypocrisy that abides in our nation is not confined to one party. Remember, God is not an American. Nor is he a Republican or a Democrat. He is God. I am always reminded of the angel that appeared to Joshua. Joshua asked, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" The angel replied that he was neither. Instead, the angel stated, "Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come" (Joshua 5:13-15). Thus, I believe people should vote on issues rather than blind allegiance to a political party or ideology.

I typically vote for the anti-abortion candidate. Abortion kills nearly a million unborn babies each year in America alone. This issue is one that I consider of foremost importance. While there are some who argue that neither party truly opposes abortion, I would rather vote for the party that at least takes some measures to oppose this act of murder (even if it is reputed to be in word only) than the party that views abortion as a "fundamental right" within their party's national platform. As such, there is a clear distinction between the Republican and Democratic Parties respectively.

This thread began with the posting of an article where a liberal "church" faced the possibility of losing their tax-exempt status because of their blatant, leftist political bias. They openly preach against President Bush and his policies. They promote homosexual marriage and homosexual ministers. They support some abortion rights. They support the notion of "universal salvation" (everyone is saved, regardless of a belief in Christ). They also defend the religious ideology of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. Should such a Church lose its tax-exempt status? I do not believe they should lose their tax-exempt status -- even though I consider the doctrine of that particular "church" as "spiritual prostitution" with leftist philosophy. But like I wrote before, I am just happy that this particular "church" is being exposed for what it is -- a leftist political institution.

I ask that we all pray for the President. The Bible states that "the heart of the king is in the hand of God" (Proverbs 21:1). God can direct (or *redirect*) the heart of this President.

:)

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/11/11 5:09

This IRS issue is very important. Why does the government need increasing ownership of our money and land? Clearly something is not functioning properly in our country from a constitutional point of view. I'm starting to feel as if I'm living in a monarchy where the King has the military and resources for war at his disposal.

After reading through this thread a question comes to my mind that I've not heard brought up before. Maybe Neilgin or cchhhrrriiss or anyone could comment...

How is it in the last part of the 20th century the executive branch of our Government can wage foreign wars without declaration from the Congress as mandated by the Constitution? Seriously, all of this Iraq war discussion centers on whether George Bush Jr., who is just one man, was able to commit US into war without a formal declaration from Congress. Where are the state representatives, the senators, the generals and cabinet members in this scenario? Are they lying about their support?

For this conservative, this war is no longer a conservative or liberal issue; it's a constitutional issue. If the Constitution is still the highest law in the land, then in the next couple years we need to see Bush systematically fulfill his public commitment to pull out of Iraq. (Pulling out does not mean staging a series of photo-op homecoming parades while leaving a network of fully equipped US Air bases throughout Iraq.)

If we do not pull out it is reasonable to conclude that Iraq is designed to be an instrument of US military control in this region. Rather than the remote control policy of the 20th century, we've moved into the neighborhood for the 21st century. I may not be an "armchair general" but I am pretty good at grade school math; from my reckoning we aren't too far away in this country from bringing back the draft. All our government needs is a dramatic issue to press the point...is China's rapid military build up dramatic enough? Or even just another 9/11 episode?

If the draft comes at a time when our country needs to defend its survival then that's one thing. But if the draft is the cost of US global hegemony then our American dream has become a George Orwell nightmare where war is called peace and slavery is called freedom. Even without a confrontation with China, we may be fighting a string of these wars for the next 50 years...

It is an understandably tempting strategy to have a permanent military presence in a region that hosts so many terrorist operations. Indeed, one of the "benefits" of the present conflict is for the US to have a laboratory to perfect its warcraft for future conflicts. Yet, it is known that Chinese generals were so impressed with our hi-tech gunnery in the first Gulf war that they immediately began updating their own armed forces. And so, the hot war with the mid-east is being swallowed by an emerging cold war with the east. This is why this issue needs to be discussed fearlessly without IRS harassment.

I am still a conservative American who is admittedly suspicious of "international law"...but the next presidential candidate who has the international credibility and a realistic plan to stave off world war III will get my vote whether he or she is

mbolically pro-abortion or not. (I would say the same for my state representative but apparently representatives don't have a say about invading other countries...at least that's how they act.) The secular question that lies before us is whether democracy can lead to a safer world than fascism or dictatorships. But perhaps the question is mute. With God all forms of government can do good and without him no government can be anything but depraved.

MC

Re:, on: 2005/11/11 9:12

I have no answers but didn't want these comments to be forgotten.

Quote:
-----The secular question that lies before us is whether democracy can lead to a safer world than fascism or dictatorships.

But perhaps the question is mute. With God all forms of government can do good and without him no government can be anything but depraved.

...After reading through this thread a question comes to my mind that I've not heard brought up before. Maybe Neilgin or ccchhhrrriiiss or anyone could comment...

How is it in the last part of the 20th century the executive branch of our Government can wage foreign wars without declaration from the congress as mandated by the constitution?

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2005/11/11 11:02

Hi there, Compton...!

Quote:
-----How is it in the last part of the 20th century the executive branch of our Government can wage foreign wars without declaration from the congress as mandated by the constitution? Seriously, all of this Iraq war discussion centers on whether George Bush Jr., who is just one man, was able to commit US into war without a formal declaration from congress. Where are the state representatives, the senators, the generals and cabinet members in this scenario? Are they lying about their support?

First of all, that is a good question. According to the *War Powers Resolution*, the President does have power to commit troops without Congressional approval -- but only for a period of 60-90 days. So why are troops still in Iraq without a formal declaration of war? Because the United States Congress overwhelmingly voted to support the military actions. They were presented the same data that was also presented to the President by the Pentagon, CIA and Joint Chiefs of Staff. These members of Congress came to the same conclusion that President Bush did -- that Iraq (under the rule of the dictator, Saddam Hussein) represented either an immediate or future threat to the security of the United States.

Quote:
-----For this conservative, this war is no longer a conservative or liberal issue; it's a constitutional issue. If the constitution is still the highest law in the land, then in the next couple years we need to see Bush systematically fulfill his public commitment to pull out of Iraq.

While I am uncertain of the "public commitment to pull out of Iraq" that you are mentioning, I do see that even many anti-war members of Congress and foreign policy specialists see the importance of not prematurely withdrawing from Iraq. Regardless of whether or not this action was "justifiable," it has happened. The United States fulfilled its goal of removing Saddam Hussein from authority in Iraq. It has remained to see Iraq approve a Constitution, and it will likely remain throughout Saddam Hussein's trial. The United States is not likely to pull out of Iraq until the nation (and region) safely view the new government with legitimacy.

As terrible as wars can be, this war has not been nearly as atrocious as some initially claimed it would be. While every life is valuable -- the loss of life has been relatively limited. There have been about 2000 American casualties over the past three years. However, included in that number are 500+ accidental, "friendly fire," or other "non-hostile" deaths. Realizing the complexity of this issue, and compared with other military conflicts (including the 58,000 Americans killed in Vietnam), this number is remarkably low. In fact, there were 2,245 murders in New York City in 1990 alone. The civilian deaths in this war have been terrible, but also remarkably low for such a long and terrible conflict. Estimates range from 8000-30,000, compared with between 300,000-1.5 million in Vietnam.

My uncle was stationed in Iraq for nearly two years. During that time, he was injured -- and watched two of his closest friends die while sitting next to him (during an RPG attack on their humvee). But my uncle said that he feels that the news media has sensationalized much of their coverage of the war. My uncle said that he saw quite a bit of support for the U

S actions from many people living in Iraq. Many are just glad that Saddam Hussein is gone. Others are just hoping that Iraq will become a truly representative democracy.

My perspective on this war is still one of inquiry. I am not willing to necessarily embrace the war (or any war) unless I truly believe that such a war is justified. As with the war in Iraq, I am uncertain. I have seen no reason or real evidence that even hints that President Bush arrogantly orchestrated evidence to create this war -- especially since they must have realized that questions would eventually rise if no WMDs were found. It seems to me that the Administration, the CIA, the Pentagon and the foreign intelligence all truly believed the data that was presented by Secretary of State Colin Powell in the days leading to the war. But "hindsight" history has a funny way of changing our perspective.

My real issue is that some people are willing to very openly and vocally criticize what they seem to truly believe is *apparent* hypocrisy from the "right" -- but make such judgment without evidence. President Bush claims to be a believer, having given his heart to the Lord following a night of drunkenness during the early 1990s. But even like Neilgin has suggested, some of these people tend to dismiss such a claim of salvation. However, no one is "so close to God" that they are entitled to loosely judge the heart of any person. I do not know the President of the United States. President Bush may very well be a believer -- or a nonbeliever. But we cannot possibly know this information because we feel that "God told me so." We cannot judge his spiritual condition -- especially based on secondhand information or slander provided by the media (or online gossip). I have seen far too many believers hurt by such "armchair prophets" who hold a "*gift of suspicion*" rather than any "firsthand knowledge" from God.

The left -- including the "church" that this thread is supposed to discuss -- is willing to attack anyone that does not agree with their particular beliefs. The left mocks Christians by labeling them the "religious right" because of their beliefs on social and moral issues. They hate that we stand opposed to abortion, homosexual "marriage," homosexual "ministers," beliefs in public displays of faith, etc... So instead of attacking the issue, they attack the entire group -- in an attempt to paint us as a group of bigotted, anti-tolerant, brainwashed and narrowminded fanatics.

Historically, Christians have always been the minority within all nations. But when this particular nation was founded, it was founded by a multi-denominational Christian majority based upon indisputable Biblical precepts. While it was far from perfect (and indeed may have been "Christian" in profession only) -- it undoubtedly stood alone in the world. Even today, the majority of Americans still hold to the traditions handed down by our Christian heritage. But the left has grown increasingly bold in its attack on the Church. America is no longer a "Christian nation." But should we give up and yield this nation over to the extreme left? There is nothing wrong with believers standing up in opposition to such attacks -- regardless of whether or not the left labels us as part of the "religious right." I am not ashamed of my relationship with the Lord. I am not ashamed of my beliefs that are molded by this relationship. And I am willing to "stand in the gap" for those that are openly mocked (or accused) by the left. I believe that all believers should "test everything" (I Thessalonians 5:21) in all aspects of our lives -- and all the more as we see that day approaching.

Congressional vote from Congress approving military action in Iraq:
<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/10/11/iraq.us/>

Anti-war website's list of casualties:
<http://icasualties.org/oif/hnh.aspx>

:~)

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/11/11 13:05

Thanks ccchhrrriiiss for your helpful knowlege of the War Powers resolution. That answers much for me. It seems this subject is perhaps better suited to carry on in the "Day are evil" thread but I'm fine with continuing this discussion here if everyone else is. (I'm also respectfully aware that we are perhaps on the outskirts of Sermon Index's revival mission. After this response I will just listen to what everyone else has to say.))

First off, I agree with your perspective of America. I'm not overly cynical about our nation. I recognize the good we have achieved in Iraq. I'm also not an anti-Bush guy. It was fair of him to note in his speech today that his political enemies are "deeply irresponsible to rewrite the history of how the war began." So I don't think he practiced deciet but I do think the poor guy is in over his head. What is his ultimate strategy?

Quote:

-----While I am uncertain of the "public commitment to pull out of Iraq" that you are mentioning, I do see that even many anti-war members of Congress and foreign policy specialists see the importance of not prematurely withdrawing from Iraq.

I was being speaking of the administrations's tone earlier in the war. For instance Powell said that we would leave if Iraq asked us and we would leave by the end of June 2004 but of course that did not happen. We blew by the deadline so fast it's barely worth remembering.

Quote:
-----The United States is not likely to pull out of Iraq until the nation (and region) safely view the new government with legitimacy.

Isn't this the same as saying we will never leave? Is Iran going to recognize the new government? Is Syria? Not likely! Remember Saddam's claim on Kuwait was based on the pretext that Britain had no right to carve the territory away from Iraq a hundred years ago! It's not so hard to imagine that the mid-east front will remain open for the next 25 years...only it won't be called a front.

So let's not kid ourselves about ever pulling out. We can never leave the region now without creating a vacuum. We are committed to the end! Now I am not one who believes the war is all about oil profits...I believe security is also part of the strategy in being there. We want to intimidate the mid-east from hosting terrorist operations! I understand the appeal of this very well. The minute we hear of terrorist collaboration or WMD possession, we are ready in a moment's notice to cross borders and inflict further regime change in the region. Only then can we achieve "peace" in the region...by replacing the existing governments. Could this be the American project of the next 50 years? To remake the mid-east? It would surely be comforting if other nations shared the cost of this ambitious project with us.

Meanwhile the US-Sino struggle for dominance in the Pacific is closing down on our children. This is what is concerning me about us conservatives in this country. We think we can have the sole right to move our strategic might around the world without provoking fear and envy from other nations. We would never tolerate China invading Iraq or even Taiwan. Yet for the past ten years China has lied to the UN about a startling military build up. She will want Taiwan soon and will be willing to nuke our aircraft carriers to have her. Then we will have two fronts open. Who will stand with America in her defense of Taiwan and South Korea? Perhaps we need to face the reality that we can't control events like we imagine.

I know God can intervene.

Forget the left and right politicians...and we have to start thinking beyond Fox and CBS's menu of issues. I don't know what the answers are...but I'm tired of us conservatives waving a flag like a magic wand over these complex questions. Our enemies don't care about our freedom. If we really want freedom in this century, we may have to face our ultimate fear as Americans...sharing global hegemony.

MC

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiss () , on: 2005/11/11 14:42

Hi Compton...

Thanks for your post. This entire situation is indeed both troubling and thought-provoking.

Quote:
-----Isn't this the same as saying we will never leave? Is Iran going to recognize the new government? Is Syria? Not likely! Remember Saddam's claim on Kuwait was based on the pretext that Britain had no right to carve the territory away from Iraq a hundred years ago! It's not so hard to imagine that the mid-east front will remain open for the next 25 years...only it won't be called a front.

Actually, the state governments in the region are already in the process of establishing diplomatic relations with the new government of Iraq. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and several other nations have already begun the process of reopening the respective Iraqi Embassy on their soil. The United Nations has already taken steps to recognize the new government. Even more amazing is the fact that Iran is prompting other nations in the region to recognize the new Iraqi government (perhaps due to the Shiite representation among the Arab states).

Personally, I am a *realist* (versus an *idealist*) in my beliefs about international affairs. I feel that the role of the United Nations should be limited to only mediation, arbitration, coalition building and relief. I do not support any sort of strengthening

ng of the UN -- because it seems quite bigoted against the United States (and Judeo/Christian beliefs in general). But if people such as former UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali had their way, the UN would be a supreme world government (much like *Big Brother*) and an easy seat for the anti-Christ.

Like many other believers, I have wrestled with the notion of what a serious Christian's role in politics or government should be. On one hand, I am heartbroken at the thought of this world without Christ. I truly and wholeheartedly desire to see a true move of God in my life -- and in the lives of all true believers. Life is so short -- and politics seem so meaningless in respect to eternity. I constantly wrestle with the notion of "setting my mind on things above." My heart's cry is, "Take this whole world and give me Jesus." The night that I met the Lord, I told Him that I would trade all that I am, and all that I would ever be, if I could only know Him, and be His friend.

On the other hand, I see so much danger to both evangelism and personal faith if believers were to become *political isolationists*. Paul himself understood and used the governmental and political systems of Rome in an effort to preach the Gospel -- even to "Caesar's house" (Philippians 4:22; Acts 25; Acts 28). I also cannot stand to see the murder of millions of unborn children every year as the result of a misunderstanding of the "right to privacy" by certain liberal groups. A few years ago, there was a Pentecostal Church that was threatened by the legal system for not admitting homosexual members, or considering homosexual ministers and workers. The case was dropped -- but such cases are bound to continue. I don't feel that its right to do nothing in such instances.

Right now, I still stand torn between political involvement or political neglect. But the purpose of this particular thread is due to a particular "church" that constantly "preached" against traditional christian beliefs. There are some who may not agree with the beliefs of that Church (including their support for homosexual "marriage," homosexual "ministers," support for abortion, relinquishing the right to publicly display their faith, etc...), but they join that Church in mocking or ridiculing what they deem to be hypocrisy on the part of the President or religious conservatives. Again, I am glad that this particular Church is being exposed as a leftist political machine.

Perhaps another thread could be started concerning the political involvement of believers. I still have so many questions concerning the extent of political involvement that believers should participate in. Please pray that I journey in the direction that the Lord has for me.

: -)

By the way, I just read the article that you mentioned concerning the President's assertion that there is a "liberal rewriting of history" by certain groups who make accusations without evidence. How funny that we were speaking of this same issue this morning and last night!

<http://www.breitbart.com/news/2005/11/11/D8DQE8480.html>

Mikey C, on: 2005/11/11 14:49

you wrote:

Quote:
----- But if the draft is the cost of US global hegemony then our American dream has become a George Orwell nightmare where war is called peace and slavery is called freedom

thats some gooooood writing.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/11/11 15:19

I said I wouldn't keep fanning this conversation but I think it's fair to note when I learn something new.

Quote:
-----Even more amazing is the fact that Iran is prompting other nations in the region to recognize the new Iraqi government (perhaps due to the Shiite representation among the Arab states).

I didn't know this...quite encouraging. I'm still skeptical about us ever pulling out but hopefully more of my fretful concern s are based on misinformation! Any thoughts on Taiwan in the next ten years? Is America the only country with the stren gth and will to stand up to China's generals?

Quote:

-----Please pray that I journey in the direction that the Lord has for me.

I certainly will...I personally have no problem with Christians in politics. Can't righteous people rule and make laws? I hop e so!

MC

where to begin..... to Chris, on: 2005/11/11 15:53

This post might be a bit rambling, forgive me for that.

The genesis of this thread, all saints getting slapped about by the IRS, be wary of your joy at their travails. Are they apostates leading sheep astray?

yes, most definitely. But they are not the only ones clothed in priestly vestments leading sheep astray. When the IRS is used as a tool to stifle dissent, the slope gets slippery.

You referenced not using third hand source material. In intelligence work, sometimes all you have is third, fourth hand material , and your own analysis skills....and some discernment.

Its not that I'm judging the President's heart, or his salvation, it's the fruit...the fruit of the Spirit that is evident in the mans' life and his leadership that TO ME do not ring true. When he speaks I do NOT see love, or patience.....thats my discernment.

When I consider President Carter, another self professed follower of Jesus, I see the fruits of the Spirit. I see a man personally invested in Habitat for Humanity, and I see a man who writes of things of the faith. (Contrast that with President Bush the first....the Carlyle group?)

You interviewed him....what did you see?

And do you know how hard the National Security State endeavoured to get that godly leader out of office?

I asked many questions about the hostage rescue attempt....these are questions that you will never get answers to...on paper...that's the way it is with state secrets.

You asked before, out loud I presume, should a believer become involved in politics. I can't tell you what to do. (lol) only give my own testimony, transparently.

I would like to see either Sen Barack Obama(D-IL), or Rep Harold Ford Jr. (D-Tenn) elected President. I doubt ...right now, that either would be deemed "ready". So I go to my own personal B choice, which is John Edwards. Because I am looking to work in New Hampshire circa late 07. I started to investigate, looking (writing) on blogs, seeing what the man is about..etc etc etc.

and the Lord led me to this, especially in the light of what happened to other believers (Rove, DeLay, Frist, Reed) if you mess about in worldly political systems, and muck about in the fleshly trash of empire....you get mucked up.

Paul PREACHED to the imperial guard, he witnessed Christ to the rulers of this world, he did not JOIN the power structure of the Empire.

Do you get me? Do you get what I'm saying?

Hence, I made a personal decision in the Holy Ghost, that I would not become involved in Democratic party politics, because Paul **did not join the power structure of the Empire.**

I love you too brother...you remind me of my mentor, my brother Pastor Ted. he's very Republican, we just don't have a lot of political dialogues.....we talk about ministry and we talk about Scripture, and family.

Love is gentle.

Re: IRS going after a church, on: 2005/11/11 18:11

I'm sorry this comment is slightly out of synch...

Quote:
-----The left -- including the "church" that this thread is supposed to discuss -- is willing to attack anyone that does not agree with their particular beliefs. The left mocks Christians by labeling them the "religious right" because of their beliefs on social and moral issues. They hate that we stand opposed to abortion, homosexual "marriage," homosexual "ministers," beliefs in public displays of faith, etc... **So instead of attacking the issue, they attack the entire group** -- in an attempt to paint us as a group of bigotted, anti-tolerant, brainwashed and narrowminded fanatics.

Hi Chris,

12.11.05 EDIT: 'entire group' = person EDIT end

With due respect to your learning, this technique is hardly new... It is certainly over 400 years old and some might argue that the same rationale was employed to put Jesus to death.

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2005/11/12 14:27

this has been most interesting and eye-opening. personally my feeling is this, politics have a way of distracting us from the great commission. we should be ever-conscious of the leadings of the Spirit of God lest we go down the wrong road. Let each of us seek the Lord earnestly about what He would have us do and then do no more nor less. i love this country as we all do but let us not lose sight that ultimately our allegiance is to heaven and to Christ who bought us by His own blood. this is not to say that we should neglect america but rather we should do whatever Christ asks concerning our nation, anything more or less is disobedience and is from self and doesn't glorify God. We should not be ignorant of what's going on either but instead if in seeing all these things the Lord burdens us to do something to respond with all diligence

given the most precarious state of our economy (deficits, scandals etc), military (in light of chinese military buildup, india obtaining nukes and stretched out forces), government (more scandals, increasing public distrust etc), and most importantly spiritual state (increasing contempt for God) there is one thing which is certain. at some point soon our nation as we know it shall collapse and cease to exist as it is now. this will ultimately affect the whole world. at that point only 1 thing will matter, are we allied with Christ or not. let us all fall on our faces and repent, repent and repent some more before a n all-Holy, all Sovereign, almighty God and He shall surely give us grace enough to endure what is to come.

Ironman, on: 2005/11/12 18:27

Thank you for that word.

God bless you sir.

Re: where to begin..... to Chris, on: 2005/11/12 20:12

Quote:
-----Hence, I made a personal decision in the Holy Ghost, that I would not become involved in Democratic party politics, **because Paul did not join the power structure of the Empire.**

I love you too brother...you remind me of my mentor, my brother Pastor Ted. he's very Republican, we just don't have a lot of political dialogues.....we talk about ministry and we talk about Scripture, and family.

Love is gentle.

Hi Neil,

I often find myself agreeing with what you post, without being able to justify it from a knowledge of American politics. I think it's your rationale, rather than the detail, which I appreciate. (Although, without the detail, the rationale is meaningless... I do realise that.)

'..because Paul did not join the power structure of the Empire'

Amen. He was above it. That's why he could use it (with a clear conscience, I think), to further God's agenda.

'Love is gentle.'

As a punchline, this got me in the spiritual solar plexus. Thanks. ;-)

Re: IRS going after a church - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/11/12 20:48

I'm going to write something here and I hope noone gets to upset with me. I agree with much of what's been said here. We live in America but our citizenship is in Heaven, like Abraham we look for a city whose builder and maker is God. Our hope is in the same God who was able to sustain the early Christians in the Roman Empire... in caves and with no certain dwelling place.

I'm sick of the multimillion dollar church buildings with their multimillion dollar church budgets that only produce 1/2 cent per \$100.00 SPENDING on missions and outreach funding domestic and foreign. Sure there are some great churches and organizations that are doing a wonderful Christ honoring work but they have fallen into the exception rather than the rule category.

God is going to use the very thing the church covets most to bring it down, MONEY, greed, Power, and social acceptance. Just like Israel we haven't yet learned that we don't belong to this corrupt world, and that the resources we have are to be invested in eternal things like reaching the lost, enabling those with the burden of the Lord to go, storing up treasures in heaven and not here on earth! I say, let the IRS do what they will. Maybe when the organized churches have nothing left they be forced to look up. The church seems to operate best when it has least anyway!

Re: It's about time, on: 2005/11/12 20:59

It's about time the tax man is going after the churches. I see God in this, as the Church is so stingy in helping their own, God will fish it out of them one way or another.

Let me tell you a story that happened in our city. A woman who was a faithful giver at a church that she was attending for many years. In the process of time, she became financially strapped where she could not pay her tithe. When it came time that she needed some food, that church (a well to do pentecostal church) turned her away because according to their books she hadn't given in a few months.

I had heard similar stories over the years.

God has a way of reducing a man's pride, and I agree with another member who said, that there would be a lot of churches being auctioned off--Good it's about time, less churches means less money hungry control freak pastors and deacons.

Man, I hate injustice in the body of Christ.

Karl

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/11/12 21:05

AMEN

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/11/12 21:32

Huh...While I understand everyone's frustration with those wealthy 5 star churches...I am bug-eyed at seeing everyone cheer the IRS on. Maybe the IRS should raise your taxes or even take your property...if it's so good for your souls. Better yet, why not just donate our deeds and retirement accounts to the government?

Please, let's not burn the good trees in the forest for the sake of the rotted ones! :-?

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/11/12 23:48

No offense bro. but you know nothing about the federally siezed multi- millions of dollars the government has already taken from the US Steel workers pension funds and have tied up for more than 7 years, not to mention dozens of other funds that regular folks have placed of thier own monies in simular pension funds. Then we can talk about emmient domain where towns are already taking property from private ownership and paying below market re-placement value. As to the IRS it runs an on going war collecting an estimated 5 billion dollars per year illegally, and that's according to "thier own figures" published under the Freedom of Information Act". Many churches use less than 1% per \$100.00 dollars on any kind of missions or local outreach. Much of that is due to inflated overhead and building expenses. On the local level there is very little accountability and pastors spend monies within the church budgets foolishly, they'll buy things like computer systems for the offices and spend thousands more for a system than what you or I would have paid for the same system . No real accountability. Church has become Big Buisness and everyone sees it. The government will soon remove the exempt statis from the church because of all the foolish spending habits, I mean I can name several ministries that have thier own private jets!

I don't hate the church, but I do hate the direction organized religion is going and its priority structure. It's unfortunate that some good ministries will suffer because of the excesses of other ministries, but God is able to hide and keep that which reflects His character and Nature in righteousness and perseve them blameless in this present corrupt world.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/11/13 0:14

Quote:
-----No offense bro. but you know nothing about the federally siezed multi- millions of dollars the government has already taken...

No offense taken brother! I was thinking of the kind of collectivization policies you were describing when I made my comment. Lenin would be impressed by the IRS in some cases.

For what it's worth my previous church was very much like the kind you and Karl were describing. We were only a congregation of around 400 people, but the leadership had almost a million dollars in the bank and were still borrowing more money and running big building drives for further expansion...meanwhile they put needy people in the church through "stewardship" classes before ever considering helping them. Then a visiting speaker would come in and the pastor could exhort the congregation to choke up 13,000 dollars in one service to buy the guy a new car.

I could have put my three children through most any college in the country with the money I gave that place before I woke up and left. I'm sure not a penny I gave was invested in eternity. It's a lifetime shame.

Yet, even so, I know of many good churches that are small and the pastor or his wife are still having to work jobs to support themselves. Most churches aren't big businesses...I've come to believe that there are many more godly hard working pastors and elders, (and laypeople) than we know about...the problem is that their quiet service by nature doesn't afford them the visibility that television or advertising gives fatter organizations. Most of the good churches are invisible to all but their own local communities.

Now while I think they would keep serving the Lord even if they lost their non-profit staus, I would hate to see the extra burden placed on them.

Besides, if these wealthy churches that are being run by ambitious pastorpreneuers lose their tax exempt status all that will happen is the church will become a full fledged business. Instead of taking "donations" for "gifts" they'll just lose the

pretense and start merchandising thier stuff...nothing will change.

The only pastors that will get hurt by taxes are those pastors that don't have anything to sell.

MC

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2005/11/13 0:34

bro mike

Quote:

-----ambitious pastorpreneuers

now that's an interesting word...it should be in a dictionary.

my comfort in all this shadiness and God-robbery is that the Lord knows all and sees all and will reward such as He sees fit.

ERS - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/11/13 1:31

Quote:

-----Then a visiting speaker would come in and the pastor could exort the congregation to choke up 13,000 dollars in one service to buy the guy a new car.

Funny and ironic, that's just a bit under my obligation to the ERS (Eternal Revenue Service) It's due in part to a failed contracting business and yes it's been faithful monthly payments, never was a dodge just the way things happened. Rende r unto Caesar and Caeser's 'Palace' and his guards and... Not bitter in the least, but it is awfully difficult for small busines s's these days so my sympathy would be equal to ...

Quote:

-----I know of many good churches that are small and the pastor or his wife are still having to work jobs to support themselves.

Quote:

-----the problem is that their quiet service by nature doesn't afford them the visibility that television or advertising gives fatter organizatio ns. Most of the good churches are invisible to all but their own local communities.

Ah yes, but highly visible where it really counts.

Re: - posted by cchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2005/11/13 2:41

Hi Neilgin...

I agree with the notion that there are alot of other groups that are "*clothed in priestly vestments leading sheep astray.*" H ypocrisy is rampant and can be found politically in both the left and right, as well as with the Christian or the non-Christia n. However, this is often the same argument used by nonbelievers concerning their lack of faith in Christ. They claim th at they don't want to give their hearts to the Lord because there are so many hypocrites in the "church." I usually tell suc h individuals that I agree with them -- but that this fact does not change the topic at hand.

The fact that there is some hypocrisy within some of those that are mockingly referred to as the *religious right* does not c hange the fact that the platform of the entire Democratic Party calls for complete freedom for abortion to all (including ab ortions paid for by the state), as well as making such abortions more easily available to all (including minors as young as twelve years old without parental notification). The Democratic Party Platform also demands state recognition of "gay m

arriage."

There is quite a bit of mean-spirited unsubstantiated rhetoric that is included within that platform – and I suppose that the same could probably be said of every party's platform. Granted, not everything in the DNC National Platform is evil like their demands for abortion "rights" and homosexual marriage. There are actually a lot of good things that are included within the party platform. I totally agree with much of the social work intended to help the poor and downcast. However, I do not always agree with the means called for by the DNC to go about it. Ironically, the platform even calls for America to "stay the course" in Iraq until the job is complete.

Personally, I do not blindly vote for a "party." I vote on the issues that I deem to be the most important. I will not vote for a person who openly and vocally supports abortion. Some of the men that you stated that you would like to see become President (like Democratic Senator Barack Obama and former Democratic Senator John Edwards) openly support *abortion, gay marriage, and stem cell research from aborted babies*. When abortion first became legal, liberals attempted to argue that *a fetus is not alive* (instead, they argued, *a fetus is just tissue matter*). As science and reason became more clearly understood, liberals stopped using that argument. Currently, they use less decisive rhetoric. They often attempt to argue that abortion is a "terrible process" – but one that is a "private decision" between a woman and her conscience. In other words, a woman can murder her unborn child because she feels that this is a matter of privacy. That is hypocrisy in its most modern, devilish form! And when liberals are confronted about this hypocrisy, they try to argue that "conservatives do not really want to stop abortion either." They seem to forget the Congressional Record that demonstrates that the conservative votes are the ones that repeatedly attempt to outlaw this slaughter.

When I interviewed President Carter during my graduate thesis research, I was impressed with the genuine attitude by which he seemed to honestly answer my questions. He seemed quite sincere. He is one of the few anti-abortion Democrats that exert major influence on the party. We spoke about topics ranging from the Iran Hostage Crisis, the current situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, to his involvement with his local Church. However, I was instructed that I could not ask questions about such "controversial social issues." Other than that, I was quite impressed. But this was no different than many of the other Governors and Congressmen that I met at a Governors Conference a few years ago (while I was representing NASA). I was able to spend some quality time with several Governors and members of Congress during the conference. But the most interesting things that I learned came during our free time – at the beach, restaurant, bus rides, and just relaxation time. I was amazed at how "normal" most of these men and women were. I did not feel intimidated by their intelligence or importance. Believe it or not, some of them were actually rather shy. There were several professing Christians among them – and at least a few of them seemed totally dedicated to Christ. I was invited to join a few of them (five Republicans and a Democrat) in prayer one morning. I didn't know what to expect, but they all seemed very sincere in their love for the Lord!

Whenever I hear a person who loves the Lord openly mock or criticize President Bush using arguments that are unfounded (except with "proof" that is really just unsubstantiated slanderous accusations by the media or liberal institutions), I notice that I feel sad in my heart. This has become increasingly common amongst liberal churches, as is the case with this particular "church" that the IRS is investigating. As far as I understand, most of us do not know President Bush. Yet so many liberal believers have made accusations going so far as to question or verbally doubt his profession of faith. I do not know whether or not the President is truly born again. But neither does anyone on this planet. Instead of openly and vocally criticizing and slandering this man – why don't we just pray for him? Yes, we can and should question his actions. But unless we have firsthand knowledge of his decisions, we are in no position to judge him (or other members of his administration).

During the scandal involving President Clinton and Monica Lewinski, I prayed for the President daily. I did not agree with Clinton on much of his liberal political philosophy – but I did not try to accuse him of things that I heard from conservative "talking heads." I did not laugh at him when his moral failures were exposed by the release of his Grand Jury testimony and subsequent confession. I prayed for him – that he would turn wholeheartedly toward the Lord. The same is true now. I pray for the President – that the Lord would do inside of him all that I am asking for myself.

Indeed, the Lord's return is soon. There is a lot of dark times ahead for this world. Those believers that are "post-trib" feel that we will go through the Great Tribulation. Thus, in their perspective, everything is part of this world system that will welcome the anti-Christ. Those believers that are "pre-trib" feel that, while the days do grow darker as the day approaches, the Church will miss the wrath of God. There are some who believe that there will be a "great, last day revival" before the Lord's return. And then there are those who believe that it is all a farce, and since darkness is inevitable, we should just let it happen and prepare for the worst. Charles Finney also believed, like many other believers in history, that the Lord's return was at hand. Yet he still preached from town to town to get right with the Lord. Eventually

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, he became the President of a college (Oberlin College).

While Paul did not become a direct "part" of the political system in Rome, he did partake in that system in order to "appeal unto Caesar" (Philippians 4:22; Acts 25; Acts 28; Romans 13:1). Christ taught about participation in government, such as paying taxes (Mark 12). Its funny, but many of the people calling for less Christian involvement in politics are often the ones most involved at criticizing the Government (or the President) in the first place.

Like I wrote before, I constantly struggle about what the extent of my political involvement should be. I pray for the Lord to direct my steps— especially since I see so many attacks, slanderous accusations of bigotry, and general mockery on Christianity from liberals on the left. I feel torn, partly because I research such issues. I do request a lot of prayer in this, because I have had several opportunities to become more involved. I recently helped organize a forum opposing the Minuteman Project along the U.S./Mexico border. I have also participated in several other civil rights issues for racial and ethnic minorities. In addition, I have participated in several meetings to ensure continued First Amendment protection for public and private religious liberty. Sometimes I feel as if I am accomplishing something, but then I also feel torn. I am praying for greater clarity in this. I have several choices to make following graduation in December— including whether to pursue employment with NASA using my Engineering background (BS in EE/CS), or to pursue employment using my Political Science (BA) and Foreign Policy (MA) background. Please continue to pray for me in this.

: -)

<http://www.democrats.org/pdfs/2004platform.pdf>

http://obama.senate.gov/news/050707-obama_listens_to_residents_concerns/

http://www.issues2000.org/2004/John_Edwards_Abortion.htm

http://www.ontheissues.org/Senate/Barack_Obama.htm#Abortion

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051112/pl_nm/rights_gaymarriage_dc

Re: ERS - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/11/13 15:04

Quote:
-----ERS Eternal Revenue Service

and

Quote:
-----Render unto Caesar and Caesar's 'Palace'

Loved those.

Quote:
-----but it is awfully difficult for small business's these days

I agree. I'm feelin'you bro.

Quote:
-----Ah yes, but highly visible where it really counts...

...most of all to Him who watches in secret.-)

Blessings,

MC