

Friday, January 27, 2012

CRITICS' CHOICE OF BEST 2011 MOVIES

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/movies/commentaries/2012/criticsawards2011.html>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 19:36

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

PROPOSED EISENHOWER NATIONAL MEMORIAL A TRAVESTY!

"Dwight Eisenhower was one of the outstanding leaders of the Western world. He also spent more consecutive time at the center of national and international affairs than any other American of his time: longer than either of the Roosevelts, longer than Henry Stimson, longer than anyone. For 18 years - from the moment in November 1942 when he took command of the Allied Expeditionary Force whose invasion of North Africa began the defeat of Hitler's Third Reich, until Jan. 20, 1961, when he handed the burden of the presidency to John F. Kennedy ...He was supreme commander of the greatest political-military coalition in history, holding it together despite great centrifugal forces (both political and personal) until that coalition won what Eisenhower memorably called its "crusade in Europe" and the "Thousand-Year Reich" was no more. He led an Ivy League university; he helped forge NATO into one of the instruments that prevented another totalitarian power from dominating Europe; he helped keep the Republican party from drifting into the irrelevance of isolationism. Despite the criticisms of the nation's high-cultural and journalistic tastemakers, he was a successful (and crafty) president, one of the few two-term chief executives who left the Oval Office a highly popular man. Americans, now and in the future, ought to know that this country can produce men of such accomplishment. No one will learn any of this, however, from the Eisenhower Memorial that will soon be built in the heart of monumental Washington: unless, that is, Congress moves quickly to force a reconsideration of a historical and aesthetic travesty. The present Eisenhower Memorial design, by postmodernist Frank Gehry, has virtually nothing to do with the Dwight David Eisenhower of history. Plans call for Ike to be memorialized in sculpture as a barefoot farmboy on the Great Plains: not the great wartime leader; not the soldier-diplomat; not the chief executive of the United States who presided over eight years of peace and prosperity. The Gehry conceit seems both obvious and entirely in tune with the postmodern deconstruction of history: There are no great men; there are no great virtues; there is no great striving; nor is there great accomplishment or great service to others." Read the entire Article- http://eppc.org/publications/pubID.4636/pub_detail.asp

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 20:23

OBAMA MISQUOTES, MISUSES ABRAHAM LINCOLN

In his SOTU Speech, Mr Obama said, "I'm a Democrat. But I believe what Republican Abraham Lincoln believed: That Government should do for people only what they cannot do better by themselves, and no more." "[Barack Obama] didn't get it right," says Harry V. Jaffa, professor emeritus of Claremont McKenna College, senior fellow at the Claremont Institute, and author of two influential books on Lincoln. Professor Jaffa noted that this quotation leaves out a great deal. Jaffa recited the full statement from Lincoln's speech, "The Nature and Objects of Government, with Special Reference to Slavery" (July 1, 1854): Mr Lincoln actually said, "The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves in their separate and individual capacities." "Notice the difference? The emphasis is on the need to have done, not on government doing the action. 'That distinction was missing from his quotation' Jaffa explains. Thomas L. Krannawitter, another Lincoln scholar and professor at Hillsdale College, explains, "Of course, when Lincoln, ... supported what Henry Clay termed the "American System" of internal improvements and protective tariffs, he understood that all economics is political economics, that economics always serves political ends. ... Lincoln's political economics was a means toward limited government, the end of which was the protection of individual natural rights and political liberty, the principles upon which America was founded." Krannawitter continued, "In the Progressive view, the ends of government cannot be limited to protecting natural rights, because nature supplies no rights, and positive rights created by government change over time. Thus limited government is replaced with government of unlimited power and scope, what some political scientists call the administrative state. Rejecting natural justice, the liberal mind concerns itself with "social justice," which at a minimum requires vast redistributions of wealth from the few to the many. As the administrative state itself is the arbiter of what "social justice" on any day might entail, there can be no restraints on its power; the bigger government becomes, the more "rights" will be bestowed on the people." Read entire article <http://biggovernment.com/cjohnson/2012/01/25/exclusive-noted-lincoln-scholar->

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 20:14

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Which Presidents were more wealthy than Romney would be? Washington, Jefferson, Kennedy (if ...)
Which Party Nominees were more wealthy than Romney is? Ross Perot, Steve Forbes, John Kerry
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/would-mitt-romney-be-the-richest-president-ever/2012>
By the way, here in the Massachusetts's Senatorial race, running for the "People's Seat", Brown and Warren are close to spending 70 million combined!

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 19:21

"FAIRNESS" IS NOT THE ISSUE

I do not care if Mr Romney is very wealthy. To me, Mr Obama and Mr Gingrich are wealthy also. I do not care if Mr Romney is a Mormon. I care about what their views are about Government and the role it will have in our lives. I care about what kind of President and Leader of our Nation that they would be, if elected. All this talk about what is "fair" is meaningless because no one has, or can, define the word. We would do far better if we discussed what is constitutional and legal, as well as what is moral and ethical. I can think of dozens (hundreds) of things in life that are not fair to my mind, but others could disagree for lack of a mutually agreed upon definition of the word. At any rate, it is not the Government's purpose to "make life fair" for everyone. Income inequality is not our most crucial problem as a Nation. If the Government had the will and power to triple everyone's income, would that make the Middle Class happy? Of course it would. But since that would mean the wealthy would also be better off and many in the Lower and Middle Classes would cry foul and think this would not be fair. That would prove that a major problem in our Society, beyond greed and the corruption that comes with it, is envy. I believe envy as well as greed are hurting us as a People far more than income inequality. The Government can not fix the dark side of human nature, but Politicians should not cater to it and exploit it for political purposes. And certainly, Government should not make any Policy based on it.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:14

Friday, January 20, 2012

MOST REDEEMING FILMS OF 2011

"Stop, look, and listen." That could be the motto for Christianity Today's list of the Most Redeeming Films of 2011. A number of them, including No. 1 *Of Gods and Men*, are slower-moving, contemplative movies, films that ask you to put the popcorn aside, pay close attention, engage your heart, soul, and mind, and invest in the movie. Brain and your heart, and engage. In other words, everything *Transformers 3* would never ask you to do. ... the year's best movies that include stories of redemption. Several feature characters who are redeemers themselves; all have characters who experience redemption to some degree. Some are feel-good flicks; others, less so. Several of the films are rated R and PG-13 and are not intended for young viewers, so please use discretion. But in all of these films, redemption itself is one of the main characters or plot points."

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/movies/commentaries/2012/10redeemingmovies2011.html>

Posted by Cal in Theological Issues at 16:55

Monday, January 16, 2012

THE MEANING OF MLK DAY

"I felt the evil of it all. Because it was evil. It was the antithesis of God's call on your life, and mine, which is to enter into community with others. We are called to be a gathering of old and young, black and white, male and female, rich and poor. And most foundationally, to be able to join with those very people and experience life as family that is both holistic and healthy. So I celebrate this day for all that it represents. Because it's less about one man's life, and more about a dream."

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=2238>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:15

Friday, January 13. 2012

REMEMBERING AN EXCEPTIONAL MISSIONARY

About 20 miles from our house, in Northampton, once the home of Jonathan Edwards, is a cemetery in which are buried the remains of David Brainerd. He was a missionary to Native Americans in New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania. Born in Connecticut in 1718, he died of tuberculosis in Edward's home at the age of twenty-nine. He had been cared for by Edward's teenage daughter, his fiance, who herself contracted TB. She is buried next to him. He was an effective Evangelist and God used him to bring many to Christ and influenced others to do the same. He persevered in spite of suffered great hardship and illness. Many Christians have been influenced by his Diaries, edited by Edwards. In them he shared his inner distress. On January 14, 1743, Brainerd wrote: "My spiritual conflicts today were unspeakably dreadful, heavier than the mountains and overflowing floods. I seemed enclosed, as it were, in Hell itself; I was deprived of all sense of God, even of the being of a God; and that was my misery. I had no awful apprehensions of God as angry. This was distress, the nearest akin to the damned's torments, that I ever endured; their torment, I am sure, will consist much in a privation (lack) of God, and consequently of all good. This taught me the absolute dependence of a creature upon God the Creator, for every crumb of happiness it enjoys. Oh I feel that, if there is no God, though I might live for ever here, and enjoy not only this but all other worlds, I should be ten thousand times more miserable than a reptile. My soul was in such anguish I could not eat; but felt as I suppose a poor wretch would that is just going to the place of execution." [Read more](http://www.christianity.com/ChurchHistory/11630242)
<http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biorpbrainerd.html> [a very good resource]

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 14:54

THE INFLUENCE OF PACS and SUPERPACS ON ELECTION

"Super PACs are a new kind of political action committee created in July 2010 following the outcome of a federal court case known as *SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission*. Technically known as independent expenditure-only committees, Super PACs may raise unlimited sums of money from corporations, unions, associations and individuals, then spend unlimited sums to overtly advocate for or against political candidates. Super PACs must, however, report their donors to the Federal Election Commission on a monthly or quarterly basis -- the Super PAC's choice -- as a traditional PAC would. Unlike traditional PACs, Super PACs are prohibited from donating money directly to political candidates. As of January 13, 2012, 278 groups organized as Super PACs have reported total receipts of \$32,008,813 and total expenditures of \$25,605,258 in the 2012 cycle". "Campaign contributions and lobbying expenditures are not the only ways that money is used influence public policy decisions. Outside groups spent \$33,978,419 during the 2010 election cycle to run ads, make phone calls, distribute literature and engage in other activities to sway the electorate about candidates and issues. Organizations not directly affiliated with political parties accounted for \$30,642,895 of that amount. A January 2010 Supreme Court decision (*Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*) now permits corporations and unions to make such expenditures from their treasuries directly and through other organizations. The decision allows such activity to take place without complete or immediate disclosure of who funds such communications, preventing voters from understanding who is truly behind many political messages"
<http://maplight.org/us-congress/guide>
<http://www.opensecrets.org/>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 11:09

FOLLOWING THE MONEY IN POLITICS

"If you want to run for Congress, you need money. A lot of money. To win election, U.S. House members raised, on average, \$1,900 per day, every day, for an entire two-year term—including weekends and holidays. That's \$1.4 million per House member, on average. Winning senators raised \$7.5 million, on average—\$3,400 per day. (These figures are for the 2008 election, from the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics.)" "The main source of this campaign money is interest groups that want something from government. Once elected, politicians often pay back their campaign contributors with special access and favorable laws. This common practice is contrary to the public interest. MapLight's research tools help shine a light on the connection between money and votes, to help citizens hold legislators accountable." "MapLight connects money and votes. We bring together, in one website, the money given to politicians with each politician's votes. We provide data, research services, and online tools that work together to make patterns of money and influence more transparent. Connections between campaign contributions, interest groups and votes that

Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

would have required days or weeks of manual research are now available at the click of a mouse."
<http://maplight.org/us-congress/guide>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 10:56

Wednesday, January 11, 2012

NEW ESSAY: WHOM TO CHOSE FOR PRESIDENT

"For several months now I have been searching the Word to find God-given Principles for my self and, hopefully, for others as well to guide us in how we chose a Candidate for President this very confusing and conflicted year. I have found the study fascinating, but also very complex. Here is a Summary so far. I know the issues people "on the street" talk about have to do with jobs, credit, debt and taxes- the fall-out of the "Great Recession" and how to recover and "get back on track again- Economics. Of course there are many other Issues, from Immigration to the War on Terror and trouble in the Middle East- Foreign Policy. But, underneath all this debate is a more fundamental one: what is to be the purpose and extent of the Federal Government in our lives. Connected most often with that Topic is another: Human Rights. What are they and what does Government have to do with them?"

This is an excerpt from my new Essay at <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 19:35

PRESERVING OUR FREEDOMS

"In order for every person to have a realistic opportunity to actualize their Rights, there must be Freedom (Liberty). All human beings must have religious, political, economic and social freedom, as well as personal safety to enable them to exercise these Rights and Responsibilities. It is the God-given function of Civil Government to make it possible for citizens to do that- to secure and preserve these Freedoms- the freedoms to Live, Worship, Marry, have Families, Work and own Property and to be treated with Respect and fairness."
excerpt from a new Essay at <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:32

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Individuals must enter into a Social Contract with each other, as well as with their Government, for mutual benefit. More than Government, "Community" is essential to maintain and enjoy Human Rights which are essential to fulfill Human Responsibility. But this means all members must willingly accept limits on their individual rights (but not their God-given Responsibilities) and their freedoms for the common good. Living for the "Common Good", in fact, is a very fundamental Biblical concept. Family, Church, Community and State take precedence over the individual. This is important to the Founding Fathers as well. The "Happiness" which people have a Right to pursue as their goal in life is not a personal one, but comes to those who live in right-relation with God and Neighbors in Community.
Excerpt from a new Essay at <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:27

Tuesday, January 10. 2012

RECOGNIZING TEACHERS WHO LOVE TEACHING AND STUDENTS

whats-missing-from-education-reform-debate

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:48

Thursday, January 5, 2012

SURVEYING SANTORUM

Being a social and economic conservative, I find Rick Santorum interesting and worth consideration.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/03/opinion/workers-of-the-world-unite.html>

<http://www.newsmax.com/InsideCover/Santorum-Issues>

I am convinced, as important as "electability" is, voting for the man we are convinced would make an excellent President is the the best way thing to vote. (I am still not sure at the moment who that might be.) I believe a vote "for" is better than a vote "against"

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 14:40

CLASH OF THE CHRISTIAN WEST AND THE MUSLIM SOUTH

More Christians will be persecuted in 2012 than any year in recent memory. The reason is simple. There is a clash of civilizations between the Muslim world and the predominantly Christian West, and Christianity is moving south toward the heart of the Muslim world. Now for the details: <http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=2194>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 09:27

Tuesday, January 3, 2012

WORDS OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Francis Scott (1779-1843), was a lawyer and a strong and active Christian. He wrote the famous verses of "The Star Spangled Banner" during the battle of Baltimore with the British Army and Navy after they had destroyed Washington D.C., including our Capital during the "War of 1812". Here are the words of the fourth verse of that Anthem which is rarely sung, but should be! Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand Between their loved home and _ war's desolation! Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n [God] rescued land Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation. Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: "In God is our trust." And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave. The first 3 verses are as follows-

[Key, being held captive, is standing on a British warship and looking toward the besieged Fort after the Attack had stopped and asks the Question of those at his side-] Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming? [the night before] Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight, O'er the ramparts [the walls of Fort McHenry] we watched were so gallantly streaming? [flying in the wind] And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, [from the British warships in the harbor] Gave proof thru the night that our flag was still there. [Again Key asks] Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave? On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep, Where the foe's haughty host [ships] in dread silence reposes, [they have ceased firing] What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep, As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses? Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam, In full glory reflected now shines in the stream: [The answer-] 'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave. And where is that band [the British] who so vauntingly swore That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion, A home and a country should leave us no more! Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution. No refuge could save the hireling and slave' [impressed British troops] From the terror of flight and the gloom of the grave: And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 20:09

ABOUT RON PAUL'S POSITIONS ON THE ROLE OF GOV'T

Ron Paul's Libertarian views are a challenge to Biblical Christians. They should motivate us to dig into the Bible to learn what the Word says about the original purpose of Civil Government should be. I find that many Christians either agree or disagree with Mr Paul [and all the other candidates as well] without doing that requisite study. These two articles, from commentators who usually do not agree with each other, both critique Paul's strong positions about Government. It would be a good exercise to list those positions and study them with Bible in hand.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ron-pauls-quest-to-undo-the-party-of-lincoln/2011/12>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/isolationism-redux-via-ron-paul/2011/12/30>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:50

Monday, January 2, 2012

ISLAM & THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

"Religious freedom is in global crisis. According to two comprehensive studies by the nonpartisan Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 70 percent of the world's population lives in nations where this precious freedom is subject to severe restriction. Many people suffer "mere discrimination" (some serious form of civil, economic, or political disability) because of their religious beliefs or those of their tormentors. Others—tens of millions, in fact—are victims of violent persecution, such as torture, rape, "disappearance" (kidnapping and murder), unjust imprisonment, and execution." You can be forgiven if you haven't heard much about this crisis from the mainstream press, whether left or right. Neither The New York Times and CNN, nor The Wall Street Journal and Fox News, have much time for religious persecution, beyond spectacular episodes of mass murder. Even then, the coverage is usually brief, thin, and void of analysis. How often, to cite one egregious area of neglect, has the secular press examined the effects of anti-blasphemy laws in the Middle East? In *Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes are Choking Freedom Worldwide* (Oxford University Press), Paul Marshall and Nina Shea go bravely where the media fear to tread. Based on an extensive examination of Muslim-majority countries, they contend that laws and policies punishing blasphemy and apostasy are not only a major source of religious persecution, but also an obstacle to stable democracy and the defeat of Islamist terrorism."

Read full review of the book- <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/december>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:08

HOW ALL KINDS OF STUFF WORKS

Very interesting and helpful resource-

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 16:24

WHO ARE THE TRUE "PATRIOTS"?

This analysis of the football team could be used as a helpful metaphor for politics and for churches.
http://www.boston.com/sports/football/patriots/articles/2012/01/02/the_way_i_see_it_the_patriots_are_a_mirage/

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:20

NEEDING "THEM" TO IDENTIFY "US"

Americans typically value the "Individual" while in reality we seek our personal identities, like all other peoples, in a group. But which group and why? This article reveals and explains a lot of what is happening socially in America today and in your town. We seem to need "them" in order to know "us". We even need enemies to define ourselves. Scary stuff. Lots of applications possible with this concept- good and bad.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/the-daily-need/the-penn-state-riots-the-99-percent-and-the-powerful-psychology-of-group-identity/12336/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:11

RESOLUTIONS FOR CHRISTIANS AND CHURCH LEADERS

Here is a list of Resolutions specifically for Christians and church leaders- lots of wisdom here.

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=2177>

God gave us the year now past, but He has not given us a new year. He has given us a new day!

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 10:39