

Values Voter Presidential Debate: Leaders Say They Were Snubbed

The debate was held Sept. 17 without the four GOP front-runners in attendance. Gov. Mike Huckabee won the voter straw poll.



The first ever values voter presidential debate was held Sept. 17 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., but without the four Republican presidential candidate front-runners in attendance. Mitt Romney, John McCain, Fred Thompson and Rudy Giuliani all said they could not attend due to scheduling conflicts, reported the Associated Press (AP). "They will regret the decision," Janet Folger, president of Faith2Action and a member of the debate host committee, told the AP. "Because they snubbed us, they will not win because we will not follow their lead." Despite the absence of the GOP's most prominent candidates, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee was declared the winner in the values voter straw poll, receiving nearly five times the votes as the other candidates. "Unlike other straw polls where candidates have bussed in supporters or paid for their tickets, 40 national leaders chose hundreds of delegates who accurately represent America's largest voting block," said Mat Staver, chairman of Liberty Counsel, and values voter debate committee member. "This is the most important straw poll yet."

Megachurches Opening Their Books

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Recently major megachurches in the U.S. have been following a trend to become financially transparent with congregants and staff personnel, even resembling high-profit corporations in their structure, according to a report by Reuters. From Florida to Illinois to Texas, multi-million dollar megachurches are stressing total disclosure in the area of financial accountability as a way of ensuring safe and healthy giving. “[The congregations] need to be informed completely,” said Tim Tracey, executive director of operations at the Florida-based Northland, A Church Distributed. “It’s not the leadership’s money, it’s ultimately God’s money.” The report also pointed out the work of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), an accreditation agency with 2,000 Christian member groups whose accounting practices are stringently judged.

Judge Rules Jesus Can Remain in Courthouse

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Liberties Union (ACLU) in early September by refusing to remove a painting of Jesus Christ from a display at the Slidell city courthouse lobby in Slidell, La. “The court today recognized that the First Amendment allows public officials, and not the ACLU, to determine what is appropriate for acknowledging our nation’s legal and cultural heritage,” said Mike Johnson, senior counsel at the Alliance Defense Fund, which represented the city of Slidell, a Slidell city judge, and the parish of St. Tammany in the suit filed by the ACLU in July. The Jesus painting is mounted in the courthouse alongside 15 other portraits of notable lawgivers in history, including Moses, Charlemagne and Sir William Blackstone.

Photo Credit: Ann Barks Public Relations

First Values Voter Debate to Be Held

The first-ever values voter presidential debate is scheduled for Monday evening, Sept. 17. Seven of the nine Republican candidates have confirmed attendance.



The first-ever values voter presidential debate is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 17 at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Thirty of the nation’s most influential Christian-based organizations will ask hard-hitting questions of the presidential candidates. The debate is to be moderated by Joseph Farah, founder and CEO of WorldNetDaily. “We’re going to see where the candidates stand on the issues that matter to us, and not just taking the crumbs that come from the networks and Chris Matthews and the other debates,” said Janet Folger, president and founder of Faith2Action ministry. “We’re going to find out where they

stand on all the issues that we care most about.” The questions, which will focus on issues such as abortion, marriage, “hate crimes” legislation and judicial nominees, were drafted by various Christian leaders including: Phyllis Schlafly, founder and president of Eagle Forum; Don Wildmon, founder and chairman of the American Family Association; Rick Scarborough, president of Vision America; and Mat Staver chairman of Liberty Council. The debate will be aired live on Sky Angel’s Angel One channel and will also be available online at valuesvotersdebate.com. It will re-air on Daystar on Sept. 22 at 7:30 p.m. “Even with two-thirds [19 million] of the evangelical Christian eligible voters sitting on the bench in the last presidential election, we, values voters, still made up the largest voting block in the country,” Folger noted. The majority of the Republican candidates have confirmed their attendance at the event.

Charisma News – Sept. 11 Prayer Vigil

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On the eve of the sixth anniversary of Sept.11 a prayer vigil was held in Lafayette Park across from the White House to remember the victims of Sept. 11 and to pray for God’s wisdom regarding decisions to be made about the Iraq war. “It is essential that the faith community humble themselves and urgently seek God for His wisdom, guidance and direction,” said Patrick J. Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition. “We [gathered] at the White House, on the eve of 9/11, to cry out to God for His mercy and grace and ask Him to superintend over the war in Iraq and the affairs of our nation.” The group that met together in the park was comprised

of both local and national Christian leaders. They began the evening candlelight vigil with worship and then prayed for the president, law enforcement and the military. Mahoney believes that the nation, which is still involved in full-scale war in Iraq, is in a critical period of time, and that believers must pray for God to intercede. "The decisions that will be made concerning the war in Iraq over the next several weeks will have a profound impact on the future of America and the entire Middle East," Mahoney said. "We need to seek God."

Casting Crowns Debuts on Billboard[™]'s No. 2

Last week the third release from Christian pop-worship band Casting Crowns, debuted at No. 2 on Billboard's Top 200, second only to Disney's High School Musical 2.



Last week *The Altar and the Door*, the third release from Christian pop-worship band Casting Crowns, debuted at No. 2 on *Billboard's* Top 200. Without the backing of mainstream radio or TV, Casting Crowns—comprised of youth ministers still actively engaged in their Georgia churches—held the position as the week's highest album debut in the country. Disney's *High School Musical 2* held the No. 1 position—its third week at the top spot. "This debut is a landmark achievement for this artist and our company in so many ways," said Terry Hemmings, president and CEO of the groups label Provident Music Group. "Casting Crowns has proven that artistry, ministry, career and personal life can all co-exist successfully when the mission is clear. We are truly thankful to be a part of this at a time when record sales are hard to come by and consumers have so many choices. Clearly, Casting Crowns' message of hope and encouragement, coupled with Mark Miller's magnificent production, is resonating with listeners." Though Casting Crowns' first two albums received

many music accolades and both went platinum, the Atlanta-based music group has said their focus is not on the band's success. "Our priority is to our churches and to our families," said Megan Garrett, who sings background vocals and plays the keyboard for the group to *CCM* magazine. "God's made it so obvious that Casting Crowns is something He's doing, and we know it's not going to last forever."

Debate Over the Location of Noah's Ark Rekindled

A high-tech satellite company announced recently that it could help resolve the mysterious Mount Ararat Anomaly—which some believe contain the remnants of Noah's ark.



A high-tech satellite company announced in early September the creation of a 3-D terrain model that it said could help resolve the mysterious Mount Ararat Anomaly—a deviation in the terrain at the top of a 15,300-foot mountain in northeastern Turkey that some believe could contain the remnants of Noah's ark. Satellite Imaging Corporation, in conjunction with GeoEye and INTA Space Turk, released a statement describing how high-resolution, satellite-borne sensors were used to photograph and analyze the unusual 980-foot-long piece of terrain atop the mountain. The Ararat Anomaly is surrounded by rugged strato-volcanic rock and mostly buried underneath a permanent glacier. Porcher Taylor, an associate professor at the University of Richmond's School of Continuing Studies and a leading proponent of the satellite-based research, noted the "groundbreaking 3-D (stereoscopic) fly-through movie [is] a quantum leap in making the Ararat Anomaly even more transparent." Taylor thanked various researchers and contributors involved in the project, describing the role of

GeoEye's satellite as a "space-based Indiana Jones."

D. James Kennedy Dies at 76

The Rev. D. James Kennedy, author, theologian and pastor of 10,000-member Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church passed away in his sleep Wednesday morning.



The Rev. D. James Kennedy, author, theologian and pastor of 10,000-member Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., passed away peacefully in his sleep Wednesday, Sept. 5, at 2:15 a.m. He was 76. "We will miss Dr. Kennedy enormously," said Frank Wright, president of the National Religious Broadcasters. "His moral leadership and his legacy of impacting the globe for Jesus Christ is unmatched by few in the history of the church. It is our desire to honor him by sustaining and multiplying his impact through Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church and all the ministries founded by Dr. Kennedy in the years to come." Kennedy had been suffering complications from cardiac arrest since December 2006 and had not been able to return to the Coral Ridge pulpit since his last sermon on Christmas Eve. On Aug. 26 he announced his retirement from active ministry. He will be remembered for leading Coral Ridge from a few members to 10,000 members, for Evangelism Explosion through which 5 million people gave their lives to Christ in 1996, and also for his extensive broadcast ministry. His daily radio program, *Truths That Transform*, is carried on nearly 750 stations while his weekly TV show, *The Coral Ridge Hour*, is aired over more than 400 stations. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Anne, and his daughter, Jennifer Kennedy Cassidy. "There are all kinds of wonderful things I could say about my dad," Cassidy said. "But one that stands out is his fine example. He 'walked the walk' and 'practiced what he preached.' His work for Christ is lasting—it will go on and on and make a difference for

eternity.” Dates and times for a public viewing and funeral are yet to be announced.

Ministry Sends \$8 Million in Aid to Flood Victims

Samaritan's Purse, a Christian relief organization, airlifted an \$8 million aid package to North Korean flood victims last Friday.



Samaritan's Purse, a North Carolina-based Christian relief organization, airlifted an \$8 million aid package to North Korean flood victims last Friday. The flooding had left an estimated 600 people dead and 100,000 homeless, the Associated Press reported. "In spite of the political differences that divide our two countries, we need to do all we can to care for the people of North Korea," said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). Graham noted the significance of the delivery in that it was the first direct flight from the United States to communist North Korea since the Korean War in 1950. The aid will help thousands of victims affected by the flooding that destroyed homes, power stations, crops and railroads in what is one of the countries most devastating natural disasters. With support from the BGEA and the United States government, Samaritan's Purse flew a Boeing 747 cargo jet filled with 75 tons of medicines, medical supplies, temporary shelter materials and other equipment to help aid the flood victims. "This is much more than an airlift of aid," said Graham. "It's historic and symbolic not only because the flight went directly from the United States, but also because we've had such good cooperation with the North Korean and U.S.

governments. My hope would be that this aid for those suffering can also be a bridge-building opportunity between our two countries.”

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