

**Inventory to the  
Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission  
Washington DC Office  
Records**

**AR 138-8**



**Leland House, Washington, DC**

**Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives**

**2018**

# **Inventory to the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission Washington DC Office Records**

## **AR 138-8**

### **Summary**

Main Entry: Southern Baptist Convention. Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Washington, DC Office Records.

Date Span: 1960-2013, primarily 1987-2013.

Abstract: The collection includes the records and files of the ERLC's DC office. The DC office was opened in October, 1987. The collection includes correspondence with members of Congress on specific issues and legislation. Topical/subject files on ethics and religious liberty issues are included. The most prominent topics found in the correspondence and topical series are abortion, alcohol, environment, gambling, health care, homosexuality, immigration, marriage and family, religious freedom, religious persecution, sex trafficking, tobacco, stem cell research and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Size: 18 linear ft. (43 document boxes)

Collection #: AR 138-8

### **Historical Sketch**

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (formerly Christian Life Commission) is a Southern Baptist Convention agency that provides scriptural analysis on current social issues and moral responsibilities of the Christian life. In 1947, the Christian Life Commission, housed in the Southern Baptist Convention Building in Nashville, Tennessee, succeeded the Social Services Commission that started in 1913. In 1997, the Christian Life Commission was renamed the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission to describe its focus on religious liberty and church/state relations. A.C. Miller served as the first executive from 1955-1960. Foy Valentine served as Executive Director of the Commission from 1960 to his retirement in 1987. Larry Baker succeeded him and served less than two years as Executive Director. Richard Land served as President of the ERLC from 1988 to 2013. Russell Moore was named President of the Commission in 2013.

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission exists to assist the churches by helping them understand the moral demands of the gospel, apply Christian principles to moral and social problems and questions of public policy, and to promote religious liberty in cooperation with the churches and other Southern Baptist entities. The District of Columbia office was opened in October 1987 at the request of the Southern Baptist Convention. The office endeavors to fulfill

the program statement of the ERLC by “bringing to bear Baptist statements, convictions and insight in the field of Christian ethics and religious liberty upon important policy making groups” and to “present Southern Baptist insight for consideration in the planning of federal programs on children and youth, aging, housing, employment, public health and other matters pertaining to social welfare.” The DC office is located in the Leland House in Washington, DC.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Southern Baptist Convention, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), Washington, DC Office Records document the work and activities of this unit of the ERLC. The collection includes the records and files of the ERLC’s DC office. The collection is divided into two series. I. Correspondence and II. Topical/Issue Files. Both series are arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

The correspondence is primarily outgoing correspondence to members of Congress on specific issues and legislation. These letters were sent sometimes to members of a Senate or House committee considering legislation. Most of these letters were from the President of the ERLC, Richard Land. Some letters were from Barrett Duke, the DC office Director of Government Relations. Only selected copies of these letters were retained. The collection includes very little correspondence from Southern Baptist to the DC office staff.

Topical/subject files on ethics and religious liberty issues are included. The most prominent topics found in the correspondence and topical series are abortion, alcohol, cloning, environment, gambling, health care, homosexuality, immigration, marriage and family, religious freedom, religious persecution, sex trafficking, tobacco, stem cell research and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. Testimonies, statements, and addresses on ethical and political topics by the staff of the ERLC are also included in the records. The files include numerous copies of legal files related to issues of interest to the ERLC. The Commission joined other religious groups to file amici curiae (friend of the court) briefs on behalf of one party in legal action. The collection includes extensive files on the tax exemption dispute of the ERLC property in Washington.

### **Arrangement**

The collection is divided into two series. I. Correspondence and 2. Topical/Issue Files. Both series are arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

### **Provenance**

Donated by Ethics and Religious Liberty Staff, 2016-2017.

### **Preferred Citation**

Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Washington, DC Office Records, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

### **Access Restrictions**

None

**Subject Terms**

Southern Baptist Convention. Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. DC Office.  
 Land, Richard D., 1946-  
 Duke, Barrett  
 Abortion – Religious aspects.  
 AIDS (Disease) – Religious aspects.  
 Alcohol.  
 Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.  
 Child abuse.  
 Christian ethics.  
 Christianity and politics – United States  
 Citizenship – Religious aspects – Christianity.  
 Delivery of Health Care – United States.  
 Drug abuse.  
 Ecology – Religious aspects.  
 Family – Religious life.  
 Gambling.  
 Homosexuality – Religious aspects.  
 Hunger.  
 Marriage – Religious aspects – Christianity.  
 Pornography – Religious aspects.  
 Prayer in the public schools.  
 Race relations.  
 Religion and law.  
 Religious liberty.  
 Stem cells – Research.  
 Substance abuse – Religious aspects – Christianity.  
 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.  
 United States - Emigration and immigration - Religious aspects - Christianity.  
 War – Moral and ethical aspects.

**Related Materials**

Richard D. Land Papers, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

Barrett Duke Papers. Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission Records.

Southern Baptist Convention. Christian Life Commission/Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Resource Files. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

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