



## IRS Targeted Billy Graham Ministry and Other Christian Groups

As the White House announced May 15 that acting IRS Commissioner Steven Miller would resign in the wake of revelations that the tax agency had targeted conservative groups, news has surfaced that the tax-exempt status of prominent Christian organizations had also been targeted.

[Fox News](#) reported that while President Obama announced the resignation of Miller, what he conveniently left out was the fact that, according to an official close to Miller, the IRS head was “set to resign the position of acting commissioner as of early June.” The anonymous official told Fox that Miller was planning to leave the IRS entirely a “couple of months later, regardless of the current controversy.”

Fox reported that the convenient way in which Miller was being ousted was “not mentioned by the president as he announced Wednesday evening Miller was resigning. Obama spoke following a meeting with Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew and other top department officials in which they reviewed a highly critical inspector general’s report on the practice. The report concluded poor management allowed agents to improperly target Tea Party and other groups for more than 18 months, starting in 2010.” In his statement Obama declared that “Americans have a right to be angry about it, and I’m angry about it.” The president claimed that his administration would enact “new safeguards to make sure that this kind of behavior cannot happen again.”

Even as the president was assuring the American people, more revelations were coming out about the extent of the targeting of organizations that could be broadly categorized as opposing the Obama agenda. Among the organizations the IRS investigated and audited were the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and the 180-year-old Baptist newspaper the [Biblical Recorder](#), published by the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. The IRS reportedly also targeted the humanitarian relief group Samaritan’s Purse. Both it and the BGEA are run by Franklin Graham, son of famed evangelical preacher Billy Graham.

In the run-up to last year’s presidential election, the [BGEA took out ads](#) in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and other newspapers encouraging Christians to vote in line with biblical values. Shortly after the ads were published, both the BGEA and Samaritan’s Purse were notified that they were being audited by the IRS.

On May 14 Franklin Graham shot off a letter to President Obama concerning the targeting of the organizations he oversees, telling the president that he believes “someone in the administration was targeting and attempting to intimidate us. This is morally wrong and unethical — indeed some would call it ‘un-American.’” Added Graham: “I do not believe that the IRS audit of our two organizations last year is a coincidence — or justifiable.”





Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 17, 2013

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Mark DeMoss, a spokesman for the BGEA, told Fox News that it was the first time the ministry had been audited in its then 62-year history. “These certainly appear to be politically motivated since the ministry had run some newspaper ads — not mentioning any candidates — simply urging people to vote for candidates with biblical values,” DeMoss said.

The Baptist *Biblical Recorder* appears to have been targeted because of a now-famous [interview it ran with with the Chick-fil-A president Dan Cathy](#) in which Cathy boldly spoke out in favor of traditional marriage and families. In the interview Cathy said that he and his fast-food chain were “guilty as charged” in their support “of the family — the biblical definition of the family unit. We are a family-owned business, a family-led business, and we are married to our first wives. We give God thanks for that.”

The comments enraged homosexual activists, who saw it as a direct challenge to their militant efforts to normalize homosexuality and same-sex “marriage.”

Shortly after the interview was published, the paper’s editor, Allan Blume, began getting phone calls from the IRS. He told Fox News that the calls definitely “raised some red flags and made me wonder why we were being targeted for an audit when we have been around since 1833 and have never been audited before. Putting it all together made me wonder.”

Blume said the timing of the investigation, right after the Cathy interview as well as the paper’s running of the BGEA ads, appeared to be more than just coincidence. “There seems to be a very anti-Christian bias that has flowed into a lot of government agencies,” he told Fox News, “oppression literally against Christian organizations and groups. It makes you wonder what’s going on.”

He added that while the paper was eventually given a clean bill by the IRS, the whole investigation represented “a lot of time and energy that we didn’t have. It took some of our staff literally several weeks of doing nothing but that [audit].”

Similarly, both the BGEA and Samaritan’s Purse were cleared by the tax bureaucracy, but, as Franklin Graham pointedly explained to Obama, the cost was great to both organizations. “Unfortunately, while these audits not only wasted taxpayer money, they wasted money contributed by donors for ministry purposes,” wrote Graham, “as we had to spend precious resources servicing the IRS agents in our offices.”

Graham ended his letter by asking Obama to make things right. “Mr. President, the IRS has already publicly acknowledged it operated in a less than neutral and non-partisan way,” Graham wrote. “We also now know that the target of their improper actions was much wider than political or Tea Party organizations. Will you take some immediate action to reassure Americans we are not in a new chapter of American history — repressive government rule?”



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