

Reality Check

On Wednesday, April 7 Delta CEO, Richard Anderson spoke to over 200 business men and women at the Thrivent Business Leaders Forum – the subject – Faith and Values in Leadership. In the audience were several dozen Delta workers who had earlier put an informational picket line in front of the event. They were protesting the fact that Delta leadership is not consistent in its application of moral and ethical standards.

“Delta frontline employees average \$60,000 per year in salary...of course this includes the pilots” said Anderson. The Delta workers in the crowd gasped. While it is likely true that this figure is accurate when pilots are included, they are rarely included when speaking of frontline employees. When Delta figures industry average for frontline pay, pilots are not part of the equation.

This statement gives the impression that the “race to the bottom” is not in full swing at Delta. The reality is that the ranks of Ready Reserve, a category of workers who receive no benefits, no scheduled raises and no seniority, have been expanded by 300% in the past 2 years. Reality is that frontline employees who are at top scale make around \$38,000 per year without overtime. Thousands more workers, who have several years of seniority, make far less.

This does not include workers who are employed by vendors. At Delta Global Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of Delta, aircraft cleaners are paid minimum wage. Only a few years ago this was a head of household job. Workers at another Delta subsidiary, Regional Elite Airline Services, make only slightly more.

“Rigorous debates are important, but really good rigorous debate has to be civil and collegial” Anderson continued. We agree with this statement 100%. The problem is that it does not match up with reality. While members of the Corporate Leadership Team may experience rigorous debate in the Boardroom, Delta workers are not afforded the same right. Pro union Delta workers do not feel comfortable discussing union issues during work breaks. This is because Delta management has made it clear they are deeply hostile to union representation for their employees.

In break rooms all across the system, pro union Delta workers have been told by management to leave when they talk about the union. Instead of the Delta Advocacy Policy allowing for a real exchange of ideas, it has been used to shut down debate.

Anderson also said, **“There can be no inconsistency between Judeo-Christian ethic and the workplace. Your practices in the workplace must be ethical.”** We don’t believe that engaging in practices that encourage the further destruction of career jobs is ethical. We don’t believe that using bankruptcy as a “business tool” is ethical. The outsourcing of nearly all clerical functions, such as payroll and FMLA is not ethical. Many employees face an almost impenetrable wall when trying to resolve clerical problems with outside vendors. This is new for PMNW, while PMDL have experienced this for years.

We know that airline competition places enormous pressure on executives to cut labor costs. The ethical thing to do would be to join us in Washington to fight for laws that would stabilize our jobs at a career level.