

I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of such an important event and to be a part of the requisite mental health services. Many of my colleagues have addressed very valid and troubling aspects of the happenings in San Angelo, therefore I will not reiterate their passionate words. Rather, I will address the vast amounts of hypocrisy I felt I had unwillingly become a part of during this time. Within my own family, we have argued the concepts of the letter of the law and the spirit of law en regards to the FDLS children.

First and foremost, I want to address the fact that unlike many of my other colleagues, most of my interactions with CPS workers were pleasant and enlightening. Many of the ladies and gentlemen in San Angelo were genuinely confused as to why their agency was placing so much energy into the removal of these children. On a number of occasions, I saw CPS workers trying to build a healthy relationship with the children and mothers. Furthermore, if they felt that it was better to have me intervene when a child needed the additionally mental health support, they called upon me in a positive manner.

As to my issue of the apparent hypocrisy of the basis of the raid, I should address the fact that I am originally from the Texas-Mexico border and spent a number of years working out in the "Colonias" of Laredo prior to my tenure with Hill Country. During my time working in the Colonias and my own personal experiences, I have personally known of a good number of children as young as 11 bearing children fathered by older men as well as by teenagers. I find it strange that, at least these communities in which I am speaking, the Colonias have not been the subject of large raids under the apparent stance that the CPS has taken on the Yearning for Zion compound and its residents.

During my time in San Angelo with the mothers and children, the thoughts of the inconsistency created more confusion, as I watched the healthy interaction between mother and child. Many of the mothers tried to continue with their normal daily activities such as education, worship, and chores. I was impressed by their dedication to their children and the needs of their children.

For me, on a person level, the most difficult aspect of the entire experience was the apparent lies being told to the mothers. I myself felt the inconsistency in information when we had been told that Special Needs children were to be allowed to stay with their mothers and, yet, by that afternoon, that was no longer the case. This left me in a strange position in which I felt compelled to voice the needs of these children and their mothers. This was met with less than enthusiastic response and after, after I spoke out for the children, I was asked to either leave the bus or be arrested.