This post is about the blog itself, dealing with the question of which charities it supports (in reply to numerous requests) mentioning several of improvements we have made in response to requests that I have received.

First, philanthropy. As I think everyone on the blog knows, all the member fees and all the donations (which you should feel free to begin or continue to make!) go to charity. I don’t keep a dime for myself and I pay for the upkeep, maintenance, and support for the blog (it’s not as cheap as one might imagine…) (or at least as I did) out of my own pocket. But I’m happy to do it – it’s a fantastic cause.

Several people have pointed out to me that my *explanation* about the charity aspect of the blog on the Philanthropy page on is fairly pathetic. It doesn’t even indicate which charities the blog supports. That’s a problem. And so it’s time to rectify it.

All the moneys collected by the blog go into the Bart Ehrman Foundation, and all that money goes out to support the following charities. Two are local to my community, and two are international

- **The Urban Ministries of Durham**. This is the one nearest and dearest to my heart. It is the agency that deals with hunger and homelessness in my own locale. It is an absolutely amazing “ministry” (it is not religious in anyway; the term is used in the secular sense). Among other things instead of (or rather in addition to) putting a band aid on the problems through their homeless shelter and community kitchen and food pantry and clothing pantry, Urban Ministries actually work to get people off homelessness and into permanent jobs and permanent housing. Last year they ended homelessness for 287 people. Anyone interested in seeing what a local organization can do, and do brilliantly, should check out their work at [http://umdurham.org/](http://umdurham.org/).

- **Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina**. This too is a terrific agency that deals with food distribution to the needy throughout my part of the state. The quantity of food they collect from all kinds of sources and the complex distribution process they undertake are logistically mind boggling. They literally keep people from starving. You can see what they are about at [http://www.foodbankcenc.org](http://www.foodbankcenc.org)

The other two agencies that the Blog supports are internationally well known and do not need much comment from me. I have supported their work for years and am a true believer in what they do.

- **CARE**. Care is an international relief agency that works in nearly 90 countries. As they say: “implementing long-term programs to fight poverty, responding to humanitarian emergencies, and advocating for policy change to improve the lives of the poorest people.” They deal with heart-rending problems with dignity and integrity: [http://www.care.org/](http://www.care.org/)

- **Doctors without Borders**. This is one of the truly great humanitarian charities in the world, without a question, a bright light shining in our universe. By their own summary: “Doctors Without Borders provides medical care to people in nearly 70 countries worldwide, saving lives threatened by violence, neglect, or catastrophe. As a humanitarian organization, we treat people in crisis regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation.: [http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/)

I will have these charities listed now on the Philanthrophy page.

Last week I asked how the blog was going for everyone, and I received a lot of comments, almost all of them overwhelmingly and gratifyingly positive. We simply keep getting better and better. There were also suggestions for improvement, which are always welcome.
In response to suggestions, there are three changes we have made that you may have noticed:

- The search function is much easier now. Rather than having to click on the magnifying glass on the upper-right part of the screen (which you can still do) – a function many people did not know about or notice – now there is a search box front-and-center and staring you in the face. You can search for any key word, theme, name, etc.
- Posts that you have already visited are now highlighted in red in your various lists, so you know immediately what has been read and what has not.
- There is now a rating system for each post. If you really like a post, give it a five. If you really hated it, give it a one. If somewhere in between, give it something in between. This system will be especially valuable for me as the one who cranks these posts out. I will now be able to see which kinds of posts are really addressing the interests of readers, and that will guide me in deciding which directions to take in future posts – all to the good.

Many thanks again to everyone who participates on the blog. Keep your suggestions coming, and let us know how we can make it a good experience for you. And please think about giving gift subscriptions to the blog, and about urging friends, family members, colleagues, and neighbors to join the blog, and about making donations to the Bart Ehrman Foundation to deal with problems that are being faced in our world.

Trip to Turkey?
Quickly on the Blog