

These Hispanic Evangelicals Like What They Hear From Trump

They didn't get off on the right foot, but the relationship between Republican presidential nominee-in-waiting Donald Trump and Hispanic evangelical faith leaders has been warming quickly.

"There's definitely a willingness to engage with us on our issues of concern," pastor Mario Bramnick, Senior Pastor of New Wine Ministries Church in Cooper City, Florida, said. "They're very attentive."

Bramnick is also a Regional Vice President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, and serves as the NHCLC's Justice Division Director. As a result of those ties, he's been able to meet with Trump and his staff, both privately and in larger groups.

A planned meeting in Miami that was supposed to bring together Trump and about 30 Hispanic evangelical faith leaders last Friday was canceled after the events in Dallas in which 12 police officers were shot—five fatally—after a Black Lives Matter rally. The change in scheduling had nothing to do with the subject of the meeting and more to do with security issues.

Although the Secret Service won't comment, it is likely the agency canceled all of Friday's events out of an abundance of caution. But, the leaders were still able to meet with representatives of the Trump campaign and the Republican National Committee.

Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and senior political director Karen Giorno, joined by the RNC's Hispanic Outreach

Director Jenny Korn, met with the group for about three hours. Bramnick said it was a “good meeting” that offered a “good exchange of ideas.”

Bramnick said that from his first meeting with the businessman-turned-politician, he could sense there was genuine concern for the “innocent undocumented,” and a mutual agreement that criminals should be kept out or turned away, and that better border security is necessity.”

“For Hispanic evangelicals, that’s important, but it’s not the only issue we care about,” he said. “We are concerned about our freedoms, and he has said he understands the attacks currently underway against Christians. Also, we care about life, marriage and Israel.”

Bramnick said it’s important that Trump and his Democratic counterpart former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to “go beyond the rhetoric” and let the voters see the specific policies they will enact, beyond their campaign promises.

And, from what he’s seen from Trump of late, he said he’s encouraged.

“My understanding is that he has committed to doing some additional roundtables and town halls, and will come back after the convention to meet with us,” he said. “He definitely wants to reach out and have that conversation with us, which is very encouraging.”