

Pastors, Major Pentecostal Leaders Granted Unprecedented Access to Trump Administration

Evangelical leader Dr. Richard Land, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES), was in Washington, D.C., this week as part of a “work day” with other evangelicals. But the daylong session turned into a very special time of prayer with President Donald Trump himself.

During the election, Land served on the Evangelical Faith Advisory Board, a group that still consists post-election. For the “work day,” which is what the Trump organizers billed the event, the evangelical leaders discussed judicial nominations, health care, tax reform, the president’s recent speech in Poland, briefings on legislation, alleviating difficult issues in inner cities and deregulation, among other topics.

“It’s always encouraging and inspiring to go to the White House, no matter how many times you’ve been,” Land said. “The sense of history and the gratitude that you have for the privilege of being born in and living in this country is almost overwhelming as you walk the halls of the White House. I was grateful to be invited to attend this work day, along with other former members of the Evangelical Faith Advisory Board. We had the opportunity to provide input on a host of issues and to give our opinions about where we thought the president was doing well and where he needed to improve.”

An impromptu prayer time commenced with the president soon after lunch, when the attendees were met by Vice President Mike Pence, who had been told by Jared Kushner that the evangelical leaders were in the White House complex. Pence

relayed to the visitors that the president wanted to see them in the Oval Office.

The group spent 15 to 25 minutes with Trump in the Oval Office, Land said, and then asked if they could pray with him, to which the president was resoundingly positive. The leaders formed a circle around Trump, laid hands on him and prayed that God would give the president guidance, wisdom and direction, and also prayed for his safety.

Land was in attendance with Ralph Reed of the Faith and Freedom Coalition; Gary Bauer, who worked in the Reagan White House; and Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council. The three agreed that the Trump administration has given evangelicals unprecedented access and opportunity to provide input on policies and personnel more than any administration in their experience. Land has officially been involved with the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

The evangelical group discussed recommencing weekly conference calls and applauded the idea that other faith groups would be also consulted by the Trump administration.

Land will be one of the key speakers at SES's 24th annual National Christian on Christian Apologetics this fall. One of the largest events of its kind, the two-day conference will delve into headline-making topics on Oct. 13-14 at Calvary Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. For 25 years, SES has been educating Christians about how to best defend their beliefs. {eo}