

Seminary President: Justice Must Be Tempered With Mercy

The same day President Donald Trump signed an executive order that families would not be separated at the border, evangelical leader and Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES,) President Dr. Richard Land says the American commitment to keeping families together is in the best interest of child welfare.

In his new commentary in *The Christian Post*, where he serves as executive editor, Land says a “zero-tolerance” policy is not only un-American but also unbiblical.

“When I was playing football, baseball and basketball in my youth, I learned an invaluable lesson very quickly: ‘Keep your eye on the ball!’” Land wrote. “It was critical, whether you were playing offense or defense. When it comes to the current crisis in immigration policy—a policy that is broken virtually every way a public policy can be broken—Americans and their elected representatives need to keep their eye on the ball, which means the primary, imperative concern must be the welfare and protection of the innocent children who are being victimized on both sides of the border.”

Up to 80 percent of the children showing up at the border are unaccompanied minors, Land added. What adults south of the border, parents, guardians or otherwise, allowed, abandoned or sent these children on the dangerous predator-filled trek to the U.S. border, seeking entry and/or asylum?

Furthermore, those wishing to gain entry into the United States have figured out the way to exploit loopholes in the current system is to show up with children, whether they are their children or not, he said. Consequently, U.S. border officials are reporting that there has been a dramatic upsurge

in children presenting themselves at the border accompanied by adults who are not their parents, biological or otherwise. This problem has become so pervasive that U.S. authorities are evaluating whether to use DNA test kits to identify those adults who are trying to “game” the system using these innocent children as “Trojan Horses.”

“However, whether the children are coming with their real parents for valid, asylum-worth reasons or not, the children must be treated humanely and compassionately on this side of the border,” Land said. “I believe it is imperative that the U.S. Senate and House unite in finding ways to keep families together that are consistent with controlling, not closing, our borders and regulating and curtailng illegal immigration. In the meantime, we all need to keep our eye on the ball, doing what is best for the children—the innocents who are being victimized on both sides of the border.

“Our government’s policy must never be the separation of children from their parent or parents,” he continued. “If the family is to be detained, they must be detained together in humane conditions. The so-called ‘zero-tolerance’ policy does not meet American, much less biblical, standards of justice. Biblical justice, and we would hope American justice, must be tempered with mercy, especially when dealing with children who are almost always the innocent pawns in these tragic situations. Children belong with their parents.”

As one of a number of evangelicals who have been meeting with Trump administration officials, including Attorney General Jeff Sessions, to importune them to change this policy, Land added that he is delighted that President Trump has taken executive action to rectify this policy until Congress shoulders its responsibility to provide a permanent fix to our disgraceful immigration system.

“Let us all pledge together to keep our eye on the ball—the welfare of the children from conception onward, the primary

foundational ethos of being pro-life and pro-family.”

Topics like these are explored in SES’ new “Philosophy, Politics and Economics” program, which trains pastors, undergraduate and graduate students, and lay people interested in a Judeo-Christian perspective of the vital interconnectedness of philosophy, politics and economics.

The PPE program, which is offered primarily at just a few top-tier universities around the world, introduces students to the Christian worldview of how various genres of philosophy, politics and economics intersect, and focusing on the works of Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Henry Hazlitt, Karl Marx, Thomas Aquinas, Robert Sirico, Jay Richards and others. [Learn more here.](#)