

Why I Refuse to Leave President Trump's Faith Advisory Council

Dr. Richard Land, evangelical leader and president of Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES), released a statement today regarding his position on President Donald Trump's Evangelical Faith Advisory Council.

"I am continuing to serve on President Trump's advisory council, continuing to offer counsel and continuing to pray for the president, as I am commanded to do by Scripture," Land said. "To retreat during the challenges of a national leader is not the Christian way, nor what Jesus called us to do; Jesus did not turn away from those who may have seemed brash with their words or behavior. He did not cease praying for and ministering to those who were struggling. Jesus attempted to walk alongside those who needed Him at all times, and as Christians, we must do the same, especially when they reach out for our counsel and ask for our advice.

"Our task as members of President Trump's advisory group is to give advice and counsel," Land continued. "Whether or not the president and his administration take it is up to them. If invited, I would have done the same for Hillary Clinton had she been elected president. I certainly would have provided counsel for former President Barack Obama, had he sought such advice, during his two terms. A leader presented with the challenges that President Trump is facing needs counsel and prayer from Bible-believing servants now more than ever. Now is not the time to quit or retreat, but just the opposite—to lean in closer."

Land also spoke with the Christian Post about the advisory group, stating that he, along with many others, was

dissatisfied with Trump's initial responses to the incidents in Charlottesville. Land said he also has received many emails urging him to dissociate himself from the "racist" Trump, and also rejected the claim that the evangelical group was a "rubber stamp" for the administration. Land added that members of the board, including himself, have spoken at length with the administration about pressing national issues and have condemned unequivocally racism and bigotry as anti-gospel, both before and after the events in Charlottesville.

"I was unhappy with the president's [initial words regarding Charlottesville]," Land told the Christian Post, where he also serves as executive editor. "I thought they were inartful and begged to be misconstrued and misunderstood in ways that are very hurtful to people."

Soon after the incidents in Charlottesville, Land released his own statement:

"Racism, anti-Semitism, or any attitude, posture or action where you make a distinction based on race or ethnicity to think of someone as less than yourself because of their race or ethnicity is directly contrary to the gospel," Land said. "As Christians, we must bear a clear, uncompromising witness to the fact that every human being at every stage of life is of equal value in the eyes of God. We have a responsibility as Christ's ambassadors of reconciliation to speak out against every form of racism and bigotry as unconditionally and straight-forwardly as possible.

"Racism and bigotry and the hatred and violence they spawn must be denounced and opposed as anti-Christian and anti-American whenever and wherever they manifest themselves."