

Richard Land Apologizes for Racially Charged Words

Richard Land, a well-known Baptist ethicist, got two slaps on the wrist from his denomination for “hurtful, irresponsible, insensitive and racially charged words” related to the **Trayvon Martin** case.

The Southern Baptists’ Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission’s trustee executive committee issued two reprimands to Land for comments he made on his radio show—and for plagiarism. His radio show is also being cancelled.

Since Martin’s death, Land has accused Democrats and civil rights leaders with exploiting the situation. He also failed to attribute material he discussed about the Martin case on the air.

Land issued a public apology for racially charged comments about the Martin case and said he sent a letter to President Obama asking for forgiveness.

“It was un-Christian and unwise for me to have done so,” Land wrote in his two-page apology. “God alone is the searcher of men’s hearts. I cannot know what motivated them in their comments in this case.”

In 2005, Land was featured in *Time magazine* as one of the 25 most influential evangelicals in America. Nonetheless, *Baptist Press* printed the content of the trustee executive committee’s two reprimands:

“We reprimand Dr. Land for his hurtful, irresponsible, insensitive and racially charged words on March 31, 2012 regarding the Trayvon Martin tragedy. It was appropriate for Dr. Land to issue the apology he made on May 9, 2012 and we are pleased he did so. We also convey our own deepest

sympathies to the family of Trayvon Martin for the loss they have suffered. We, too, express our sorrow, regret and apologies to them for Dr. Land's remarks. We are particularly disappointed in Dr. Land's words because they do not accurately reflect the body of his work over a long career at the ERLC toward racial reconciliation in the Southern Baptist Convention and American life. We must now redouble our efforts to regain lost ground, to heal re-opened wounds, and to realize the dream of a Southern Baptist Convention that is just as diverse as the population of our great Nation.

"We further reprimand Dr. Land for quoting material without giving attribution on the Richard Land Live! (RLL) radio show, thereby unwisely accepting practices that occur in the radio industry, and we acknowledge that instances of plagiarism occurred because of his carelessness and poor judgment. We examined Dr. Land's written work during the investigation, and we found no instances of plagiarism in any of Dr. Land's written work. As a Christian, a minister of the gospel of our Lord, and as president of the ERLC, Dr. Land should have conformed to a higher standard. We expect all future work of the ERLC to be above reproach in that regard."