

Why This Group of Baptists Is Boycotting Franklin Graham

A group of Baptist churches in Puerto Rico is boycotting evangelist Franklin Graham because of his support of President Donald Trump's immigration freeze.

"The statements of Rev. Franklin Graham, endorsing the immigration initiatives of President Donald Trump are, to us, contrary to the values of the kingdom," Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico (Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico) said in a translation of the statement.

The group refuses to attend Graham's *Festival de Esperanza* (Festival of Hope).

"I'm on my way to Puerto Rico—to warn people that God uses extreme vetting. What do I mean by that? I want the people of Puerto Rico to know that God loves them and that there is only one way to enter the gates of heaven—and that is through faith in Jesus Christ, and Him alone," Graham posted to Facebook.

Graham previously shared his support of the immigration freeze on social media.

He wrote:

There have been a lot of protests and discussion about President Donald J. Trump's executive action on immigration. Some people seem to have forgotten that the priority of the president of the United States is protecting the Constitution and the safety of Americans. That's exactly what President Trump is trying to do. Taking action to secure our borders had to start somewhere. Is it perfect? Maybe not, but it is a first step. As they work on solutions during this 90-day travel ban, unfortunately there are some innocent families caught in this time of transition.

I think that a thorough vetting process really needs to apply to people coming into the U.S. from all countries—not just 7. We have to be sure that the philosophies of those entering our country are compatible with our Constitution. If a person does not agree with our principles of freedom, democracy and liberty, which we cherish, they should not be allowed to come. Without question, Sharia law is not compatible.

Some are also criticizing Christians who support the president's position on immigration—and I'm one of those being criticized. But we have to realize that the president's job is not the same as the job of the church. As Christians we are clearly taught in the Bible to care for the poor and oppressed.

But the group of churches staunchly disagrees.

“We cannot agree with the expressions of Donald Trump as they threaten the life of our neighbor, and Jesus has always called us to love even our enemies and to be our brother's keeper,” the statement continued.

The leaders say each pastor is able to make his or her own decision about attending the Festival, but leadership would stay away in protest. {eoa}