

ERLC chief urges Trump to resign to promote national healing

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NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore asked President Trump to resign to bring about healing in the United States.

Moore, the president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, made the request in the wake of the violence and chaos created by a mob of Trump supporters who stormed the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 while Congress was meeting to certify the Electoral College victory for Democrat Joe Biden.

“Mr. President, people are dead,” Moore said [on Twitter](#) Friday morning, Jan. 8. “The Capitol is ransacked. There are 12 dangerous days for our country left. Could you please step down and let our country heal?”



During an ERLC-hosted [webinar](#) Friday afternoon, Moore said his request was an “appeal to the president’s sense of responsibility in all of this.”

“This is a moment where the entire country is waiting to see what is going to happen next,” he told those participating in the online event. “This is a very, very dangerous time. So what we need is leadership that is going to say, ‘Let’s heal, and the way that we heal is by saying violence and attacks on the U.S. government are always wrong, we’re going to prosecute them.’ And then debates about disagreements among Americans can take place.”

“There has to be a time of healing,” Moore said. “And if the president can’t or won’t do that, then there’s 12 more days left. Then I think he should take responsibility one way or the other. But we have to have stable, unifying leadership in this country.

“[O]ne of the things that we’re dependent on in this country is the kind of presidential leadership that in moments of great crisis is speaking not only to one’s own supporters but also to the entire country. And we really, really need that right now.”

Twitter suspends Trump’s personal account

Moore’s Twitter request followed a Trump tweet earlier in the day in which the president said, “The 75,000,000 great American Patriots who voted for me, AMERICA FIRST, and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, will have a GIANT VOICE long into the future. They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!”

Later, [Twitter announced](#) Trump’s personal account was suspended permanently, citing “the risk of further incitement of violence.”

After two months of claiming the Nov. 3 election had been stolen from him, Trump finally acknowledged after Congress certified the results “a new administration will be inaugurated” and announced the transition would be orderly. In a tweet Friday morning, the president said he would not attend Biden’s inauguration Jan. 20.



Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, at the Capitol in Washington. As Congress prepares to affirm President-elect Joe Biden's victory, thousands of people have gathered to show their support for President Donald Trump and his claims of election fraud. (AP Photo/Julio Cortez)

Trump urged a large crowd of his supporters in a rally near the White House Jan. 6 to march on the Capitol while the Senate and House of Representatives met to certify the Electoral College results. He told his supporters, "We will never give up. We will never concede."

A mob described by U.S. Capitol Police as "thousands of individuals" overwhelmed law enforcement outside the Capitol, occupied the building and used metal pipes, chemicals and other weapons against police officers. More than 50 police officers were injured, and one died Thursday evening, Jan. 7.

Members of Congress took cover after the mob entered the Capitol, and a U.S. Capitol Police officer shot and killed a female Trump supporter outside the House chamber. Three other people died on the Capitol grounds from

what were described as medical emergencies.

The Senate and House eventually reconvened Wednesday night and certified the election results over opposition from some Republicans.

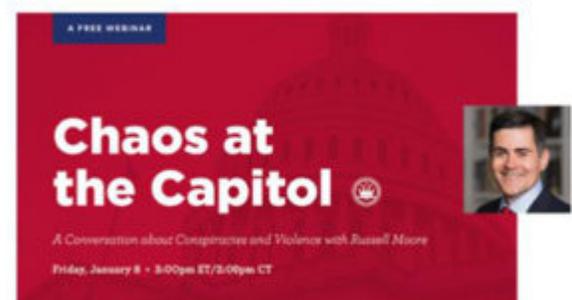
Trump balked at condemning his supporters' invasion of the Capitol while it was occurring Jan. 6, though he called for them to be peaceful. In a video Thursday evening Jan. 7, however, the president said he was "outraged by the violence, lawlessness and mayhem" and said those who broke the law "will pay."

Democrats and some conservatives have called for Trump to be impeached or to be removed by Vice President Mike Pence and the cabinet under the 25th Amendment's provision for replacing a president because of his inability "to discharge the powers and duties of his office."

'An act of domestic terrorism'

During Friday's ERLC webinar, Moore said the assault on the Capitol was "insurrection and an act of domestic terrorism."

"This is unjustifiable," he said. "Doesn't matter what your politics are, doesn't matter what your religion is, doesn't matter what region of the country you're in. This is an attack on the United States Constitution."



It also is a violation of the Romans 13 directive to be subject to the governing authorities who are established by God, Moore told the audience.

One of the reasons he was "trembling with rage" as he saw the mayhem at

the Capitol was because of the combination of images of a gallows and signs that said, “Jesus saves,” Moore said.

“Violent insurrection and the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot coexist,” he said. “And there are people who don’t yet know Christ, who all they know about Jesus is seeing ‘Jesus saves’ signs in the hands of violent insurrectionists who are disobeying the clear commands of Scripture and the explicit words out of the mouth of Jesus himself. That is blasphemy.

“We have a responsibility to say this is what Christianity is, defined by the gospel and the kingdom of God, and this is what Christianity is not.”

‘Crazy conspiracy theories’ denounced

In both the ERLC webinar and in an online event with Justin Giboney, president of the [AND Campaign](#), Moore deplored the “apocalyptic rhetoric,” conspiracy theories and “years and years of lying” on social media, talk radio and other outlets that led to the Capitol riot.

[Religion News Service](#), reporting on the online event with Giboney, quoted Moore as saying the “insurrection incited by the president of the United States is a moral abomination,” and Christians have the responsibility to speak truth.

“I talk to pastors every single day who are having to deal with crazy conspiracy theories related to vaccines or related to whatever, in their communities,” Moore said. “And after a certain point, many people just become exhausted by this. We can’t be exhausted. We have to be the people who recognize reality and have the integrity to call reality what it is, which means having mouths that line up with our hearts, as Jesus taught us to do.”

Moore said conspiracy theories are causing handwringing among lay

people as well, RNS reported.

“I’m having conversations with not just pastors, but also with people who are just saying, ‘I look at my family members and what they’re posting on Facebook, and I think, how have I failed like this?’ or pastors say, ‘I look at what church members are posting on Facebook and I think, how have I failed?’” he recalled. “And what I’ve had to say to all of them is, you can’t fix this and correct it in the time of a day.”

He said the attachment to conspiratorial thinking reinforced a herd mentality, long driven by social media.

“Part of that is the sense that the way that I protect myself is by joining myself to a herd, adopting everything that that herd believes or says as a shibboleth and then projecting a kind of swagger,” Moore said. “And it’s killing us. It’s killing us as a society. It’s killing us as communities. It’s killing us as churches.”

With additional reporting by Managing Editor Ken Camp and Adelle M. Banks of Religion News Service.