

SBC president among evangelicals to meet with Trump

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NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd plans to meet with presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump about his faith and values at a June 21 gathering in New York.

Family Research Council President a Tony Perkins, a Southern Baptist, and United In Purpose leader Bill Dallas, who partners with about 50 social conservative groups, recruited Floyd to serve on the steering committee for a meeting with Trump that could include up to 500 conservatives.

Members of the steering committee will question Trump before the larger meeting, billed as an opportunity to share information, values, principles and beliefs.

Trump ‘needs to hear our heart,’ Floyd said

“We want to talk to Mr. Trump humbly. He doesn’t need to hear us preach. He needs to hear our heart,” Floyd said. “We need to talk to him about what matters to us. The term evangelical is not a voting block. The term evangelical is a name tag, a declaration of who we are, about various truths of the Scripture.”

U.S. Supreme Court nomination opportunities, the sanctity of human life, religious liberty and racial reconciliation are topics Floyd hopes to address in the meeting. He expects to be able to invite other Southern Baptists to the meeting, he said, but is awaiting details.

Two former SBC presidents Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, and Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, already are involved in the venture.

Reflects national mood

Trump's rise to the top of a crowded Republican slate of 17 candidates was unexpected, Floyd said, but evidently indicative of the mood of the nation.

"People can say what they want about Mr. Trump, and they can have their personal opinion, but it is unquestionable that he is speaking to the heart of the American public, or else he would have never" surpassed the other GOP candidates, Floyd said.

"America is desperate for leadership. Mr. Trump has a very demonstrative way to lead. He led with extreme boldness along the way, making statements that people thought would never be received, but they have been received, embraced and endorsed by many people, and that's why they have voted for him so aggressively and generously."

'Evangelicals cannot sit this out'

Southern Baptists have a responsibility to participate in the political process, Floyd added.

"Evangelicals cannot sit this out," he said. "I think we have a biblical responsibility, and I think we have a responsibility as citizens of the United States to participate and be a part of the political processes of this country. Men and women have died on the battlefields all across this world so that I might have that liberty and that privilege, and I will take that privilege always with humility and give honor to our nation, regardless of where our nation is, because I think it's the right thing to do."

Christians must pray, vote and be willing to treat with respect whomever

God chooses as the nation's next leader, Floyd noted.

"Southern Baptists need to go to the polls," he said. "Southern Baptists need to be leading the way in being a part of this process. We cannot be seen as not interested or so mad we're not going to be engaged. I just don't think that's healthy."

Need to discuss racial reconciliation

Floyd expressed disappointment candidates have not discussed racial reconciliation, a topic he will address at the SBC's annual meeting June 14-15 in St. Louis.

"We have a conversation that has been totally ignored, and it's one of the greatest problems in the country today. I would like to ask Mr. Trump, whoever else is left and ends up running ... 'What do you plan on doing about that?'" Floyd said.

"But I also want to tell them: 'You need to call upon the church to be the church, because in my humble opinion government is not going to solve that. The church has got to step up regardless of what the government does.'"