

[Opinion](#)



Johnnie Moore, top right, stands behind President Donald Trump as he talks with evangelical supporters at the White House on July 11. (RNS/courtesy of Johnnie Moore)



by Pat Perriello

[View Author Profile](#)
perriello@aol.com

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

August 30, 2017

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

A member of President Donald Trump's evangelical advisory board, Johnnie Moore, talks about [why he will continue to support the president](#) and will not resign. He sees his role as a spiritual advisor to those who work in the White House and to foster prayer for the success of this administration. Moore claims that he can't think of a single Christian leader who hasn't spoken out against white supremacy, and he feels the media coverage has not been fair.

Moore goes on to say that evangelicals have seen progress on judges, religious liberty, right-to-life issues, and foreign policy. He says, "You only make a difference if you have a seat at the table." He adds, "We are not responsible for whether we are able to make a difference, but whether we tried."

In an article in USA Today, Jonathan Merritt [sees it quite differently](#). Merritt sees a major disconnect between what evangelicals are presumed to believe and their allegiance to Trump. He sees evangelicals as squandering their moral authority by sticking with Trump.

Merritt cites numerous examples. Evangelicals have historically opposed pornography and gambling. Trump appeared in Playboy magazine and has owned casinos. They decry secularization in our society, yet Trump does not regularly attend church. They oppose same-sex marriage, but Trump says he will not seek to overturn its legalization.

Trump nominated a gay man to be his ambassador to NATO. Members of Trump's advisory board said they would support the decision. Yet a few years earlier, when candidate Mitt Romney selected the same man as a foreign policy advisor, religious leaders revolted.

When questioned about Trump's willingness to launch a nuclear attack against North Korea, Robert Jeffress, member of the president's advisory board, had [this to say](#): "God has given Trump authority to take out Kim Jong Un."

Advertisement

Jeffress also says a majority of the board is just as supportive of the president as they were on the first day of his presidency. Only one member of the committee resigned in the wake of the events in Charlottesville. Other board members say they can think of no comment or behavior that would cause them to resign.

Merritt closes his article by noting that Christianity has never fared well when it has chosen to align itself with partisan powers. He wonders whether these leaders actually believe in the values they claim to hold. Merritt sees their ongoing support of Trump as tarnishing their reputation. He believes they are losing their ability to move the broader society in their direction on major issues.

I cannot speak for evangelicals, but I do think the time has come for Christians to take a stand. As I said in my most recent blog post, Catholic clergy [need to be highly visible](#) in the fight against discrimination and hate.

We are getting a daily dose of rhetoric and actions that demean or harm one or more segments of our nation's population. The [pardon of Sheriff Joe Arpaio](#) is but the latest example.

We cannot sit on the sidelines any longer. What do we believe? How can and should we make our beliefs known to resist this president and the direction he is wittingly or unwittingly taking this country?