

Richard Land says activists using Trayvon Martin to get out the vote

by [Bob Allen](#)

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) – Southern Baptists top public-policy spokesman said on his radio program March 31 that black leaders are exploiting outrage over the shooting death of a Florida teenager to help President Obama get re-elected.

Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, described activists Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton as “racial ambulance chasers” who are fomenting a “mob mentality” over the recent shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watch captain in Sanford, Fla.

Land said President Obama turned it into a national issue when he said if he had a son, he would look like the young man targeted as suspicious while walking through a gated community wearing a hooded sweatshirt.

“The president’s aides claimed he was showing compassion for the victim’s family,” Land said. “In reality he poured gasoline on the racist fires.”

“He put the presidential spotlight on Trayvon Martin’s death and thereby bolstered the burgeoning protest,” Land said. “I believe Mr. Obama’s comments were misguided, and I think they were harmful. No one knows what his son would look like. The statement was meant as a sign of racial solidarity. Martin is black, so by extension Mr. Obama shares the victim’s racial identity.”

Land said Trayvon Martin did not deserve to die, but shooter George Zimmerman has been judged guilty by black leaders and the mass media before all the facts are known. He said Zimmerman “is suffering for the sins of generations past” like lynching and days before the civil rights movement when police would not prosecute crimes committed by whites against blacks.

Land said if today's civil rights leaders are really concerned about violence, they should be protesting the fact that nearly half of all murder victims are black and the overwhelming majority are committed by blacks.

"Rather than holding rallies on these issues, the civil rights leadership focuses on racially polarizing cases to generate media attention and to mobilize black voter turnout," Land said. "This is being done to try to gin up the black vote for an African-American president who is in deep, deep, deep trouble for re-election and who knows that he cannot win re-election without getting the 95 percent of blacks who voted for him in 2008 to come back out and show they are going to vote for him again. Polls show that many blacks have become demoralized under the Obama economy, because they are the ones who have suffered the most from his economic failures."

Land labeled the New Black Panther Party's offer of \$10,000 to anyone who makes a citizen's arrest of Zimmerman "vigilante justice" and "racial demagoguery, pure and simple."

"This is the kind of thing the Klan used to do," Land said. "The Black Panthers are the black Ku Klux Klan, and they should be arrested. You can't go around putting a bounty on people's head. You can't go around saying you're going to give a reward for capture. They are violating George Zimmerman's civil rights all over the place."

Land labeled Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and Louis Farrakhan "race hustlers" who have "made their careers and lucrative fortunes by fomenting racial grievance and demonizing the 'white power structure.'"

"In their eyes segregation has never been truly repealed, it's just become invisible," Land said. "They need the Trayvon Martins to continue perpetuating their central myth -- America is a racist and an evil nation. For them it's always Selma, Alabama, circa 1965. They haven't noticed that the nation has changed."

Land said those using race to polarize the electorate are "playing with fire, and people are going to get hurt."

"This situation is getting out of hand," Land said. "There is going to be violence. When there is violence it's going to be Jesse Jackson's fault. It's going to be Al Sharpton's fault. It's going to be Louis Farrakhan's fault, and to a certain degree it's going to be President Obama's fault."

Land said even if he is proven to be innocent, Zimmerman will never fully regain his reputation. He compared the case to Richard Jewell, the security guard called a hero for detecting a bomb in Atlanta's Centennial Park during the 1996 Summer Olympics and then later investigated and cleared as the bombing suspect.

"The closest thing to this is the Duke lacrosse players," Land said. "And let me tell you something, those Duke lacrosse players would be marked as misogynists and racists for the rest of their lives had they not been privileged, had they not been wealthy enough, and I mean really wealthy, to have parents that could hire lawyers that could stand up to an outrageously irresponsible district attorney and a university faculty that was all too willing to buy into the racial victimization of the black stripper at the expense of the white male lacrosse players, until it was shown that they were innocent and that the district attorney was playing politics with this."

Land said he understands the temptation for people who were exploited to "revert to ghosts of the past" but this is a "new age" and "a new time."

"Racism is still an issue in our country, and we need to be very careful that we don't debase the coinage, debase the language, by claiming racism every time there is an incident and it then turns out not to be racism," Land said. "Then it becomes more difficult to convince people when there's real racism involved."