

Member of Trump's evangelical advisory board resigns

A. R. Bernard, lead pastor of a 33,000-member church in Brooklyn, New York, cited "conflict in values" with the administration.

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A. R. Bernard. Photo by Michael Chan via ARBernard.com.

A. R. Bernard, lead pastor at the largest evangelical church in New York City, resigned from the White House's evangelical advisory board, the first to depart in the wake of President Trump's comments on a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"In a social and political climate such as ours, it often takes a gathering of unlikely individuals to shape the future of our nation on issues of faith and inner-city initiatives," he wrote in making his resignation public on August 18. "I was willing to be one of those unlikely individuals." But he said it became obvious that there was

deepening “conflict in values” between him and the administration.

Bernard, 64, was active in the civil rights movement as a teenager, and his 33,000-member church, the Christian Cultural Center, is in diverse Brooklyn. He is the president of the Council of Churches of the City of New York.

After several months of quietly stepping back from the board, he wrote, Bernard resigned on August 15, the day that Trump doubled down on comments he made the day of the rally, which appeared to draw a moral equivalence between protesters and counterprotesters in Charlottesville. All of the members of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and more than a dozen business executives resigned from White House councils in response to the president’s comments.

Bernard appeared on Don Lemon’s show on CNN, saying, “I would love to see more of the evangelical leaders who are on the board make strong statements in reaction to it.” —Religion News Service