



Preaching, Teaching and Reaching for
Transformation and Liberation

“CONSCIOUS AND INTENTIONAL MINISTRY: DOING WHO I AM”

Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” Isaiah 6:8

THE PASTOR’S PEN November 6, 2022

WHAT IS AT STAKE THIS VOTING CYCLE?

There are several Conservative candidates who are running for office this cycle that are espousing rhetoric that, first, appears to be the promotion of Christian values and, second, appears to be the promotion of patriotism. These candidates and their rhetoric have gained increasing support among some Conservative Evangelical Christians who believe that these candidates best represent their Christian values and pride in their country.

This rhetoric has also found a home among some Black Christians who also believe these candidates best represent their Christian values and pride in their country. As I previously argued, this rhetoric is not about the promotion of Christian values and pride in the country, it is part of the Conservative political agenda to indirectly, subtly and manipulatively influence some Christians to vote against their true Christian values and pride in their country and vote for alternative values. Again, it is about power. It is about who has the power, who will get the power and who will keep the power.

As people who are genuine Christians and who are genuinely proud of their country support this false Christian and patriotic rhetoric, they are actually supporting Christian Nationalism – which is neither Christian nor patriotic.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM? *Christianity Today*, February 2021 Paul D. Miller

“Christian Nationalism is the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way. Popularly, Christian nationalists assert that America is and must remain a “Christian nation”—not merely as an observation about American history, but as a prescriptive program for what America must continue to be in the future.”

“Christian nationalism tends to treat other Americans as second-class citizens. If it were fully implemented, it would not respect the full religious liberty of all Americans. Empowering the state through “morals legislation” to regulate conduct always carries the risk of overreaching, setting a bad precedent, and creating governing powers that could be used later be used against Christians. Additionally, Christian nationalism is an ideology held overwhelmingly by white Americans, and it thus tends to exacerbate racial and ethnic cleavages. In recent years, the movement has grown increasingly characterized by fear and by a belief that Christians are victims of persecution. Some are beginning to argue that American Christians need to prepare to fight, physically, to preserve America’s identity, an argument that played into the January 6 riot.”

Christian Nationalism is different from living and promoting your Christian values in your country. This is where the deception is dangerous. For some Christian Nationalist, there should not be any other religion in this country except Christianity. If this happens, what are the potential consequences for and to people of other religions like Muslims? If this happens, what are the potential consequences for and to people who do not identify as Christian or with any religion? If this happens, what are the potential consequences for and to people who do not fit into their definition of Christianity?

Understand that the Christian Nationalist’s definition of Christianity is a definition of Christianity taught and reinforced in their churches every week that is not consistent with our interpretation of Jesus’ teaching regarding love, forgiveness, hospitality, justice, mercy, grace, etc. Their definition of Christianity supports their ability to remain too complacent to

condemn and too complicit to condone the existence of structural, systematic racism and its historic and sustained contribution to the challenges that Black and Brown people continue to face in this country. Their definition of Christianity supported former President Trump, with all of his immoral, ungodly and inhumane behavior, and undergirded the belief that “A vote against Trump is a vote against God.” Their definition of Christianity encouraged involvement in the January 6 insurrection as we witnessed Christian flags displayed alongside of Trump flags. Do you believe that you will be viewed as a Christian based upon their definition?

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY Amanda Tyler, Executive Director

“Christian Nationalism is not Christianity. Christian Nationalism is a Political ideology and cultural framework that tries to merge our identities as Americans and Christians, and in the process, it threatens America’s democracy, it distorts America’s promise of religious freedom for all and, importantly to me and to thousands of other Christians, it distorts Christianity, sometimes beyond recognition, and that’s because it takes Christianity’s central message which is a gospel of love and turns it into a false idol of power. It confuses our allegiances to God and replaces it with an ultimate allegiance to country.”

At this point, some may be asking, “What’s the problem? This is only about people distorting Christianity and patriotism. How bad can it be? It is very bad because, as I said earlier, it is about power. It is about who has the power, who will get the power and who will keep the power. This is dangerous because whomever they identify as the ‘other’ is not only the enemy of the country, they are the enemy of God. They will justify the use of force, no matter how illegal or immoral, to win because they believe they are winning the country back for God. If you desire evidence, again consider the January 6 insurrection and voter suppression laws. The ‘other’ are generally identified as Democrats, non-Christians, Christians who do not believe as they do, etc.

Whereas the Conservative political agenda is describing being ‘Woke’ in a negative way, the reality is they do not want us to ‘wake up.’ The Gap Band said it best in their 1980 recording, *Nothing Comes to Sleepers but a Dream*. As long as we are asleep, we can only dream, and as long as we remain asleep, our dreams will never come true.

Candis Watts Smith, Associate Professor of Political Science at Duke University and co-author of the book, *Stay Woke: A People’s Guide to Making All Black Lives Matter*, said the idea of wokeness, “is about freedom, justice, equality, access to voting. When people talk about being woke or becoming woke, they’re talking about being well-informed and well aware of systemic oppression and injustice.”

Therefore, it is time to wake up, rise up, speak up and fight; not only for ourselves, for all of those who will come behind us also. I do not know what God is calling you to specifically do, however, I know that God is calling each one of us to do something. Fight as if your future depended upon it – because in reality, it really does.

The Pilgrim Rest Oasis *Sharing the Faith · Securing the Future*

Through faith God has given us the space to be an **oasis** in the middle of the city.

An **oasis** is a fertile spot in the desert where refuge, relief, and refreshment is found.

Be part of God's plan for Pilgrim Rest and this community.

Start contributing to the **Oasis** today!
Let's continue to make progress!

Thank you for your continued support of God's plan for us.



Beginning



Current

Your contribution can be dedicated to a specific activity or the Oasis, in general.

	Educational Enrichment	Technology Literacy	Athletics & Recreation	Performing Arts	Facility Innovation
\$500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 Subject books for elementary (math, literature, history, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 iPad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 basketballs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 art sets for aspiring artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External security lighting to keep the street well-lit and safe
\$1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Summer Bridge books to help students retain learning during breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 "learn how to code" kits for elementary students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 tennis rackets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 beginner saxophones or 8 beginner violins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camera security system to keep everyone safe
\$2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 students can be challenged to excel using interactive problem-solving programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 computer for graphic design and website creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 sets of golf clubs for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Play Scripts with performance/ licensing fee and cast instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wireless PA system to easily communicate at the school
\$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 smartboard to help teachers engage students in learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 STEM lab cart of materials for a classroom with multiple activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-day Speed and Agility workshop for 15 young aspiring track stars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 pairs of tap shoes for aspiring dancers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery operated floor scrubber to keep the building looking its best
\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 trip for 15 students to visit 1 HBCU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Robotic kits to reinforce studies in STEAM subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open gym for 20 young people 1 X a week throughout the winter in a safe place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 tickets to see Alvin Ailey Dance Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LED light fixtures throughout the school to promote learning and natural light

WORK FOR THE WEEK

NOVEMBER MEMORY VERSE

¹⁸For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18

NOVEMBER MEDITATION QUOTE

"The cross is a symbol of unity in diversity and a catalyst for pursuing justice in the face of injustice."

Dr. Gardner C. Taylor