



BRAVE CHURCH
TACKLING TOUGH TOPICS
TOGETHER

Comparing Christianity to Christian
Nationalism

Opening Prayer

Loving Creator,

Please help us to love in our very small way what You love infinitely and everywhere. Remind us that everything and everyone is connected, and nothing stands alone. Help us stand for love, for healing, for the good, for the diverse unity of the Body of Christ and all creation, because we know this is what You desire: as Jesus prayed, that all may be one. We offer our prayer together with all the holy names of God, we offer our prayer together with Christ, our Lord. Amen.

From Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

Covenant Rules

RULE 1

We will accept conflict and commit to the way of kindness.

RULE 2

We will take responsibility for how our own words are received.

RULE 3

We will ask permission before we challenge someone's views on a subject.

RULE 4

We will show respect for one another and graciously receive feedback if someone feels disrespected.

RULE 5

We will use 'I' instead of 'you' statements. We will not accuse or attack."

RULE 6

Give everyone who wants to speak an opportunity to do so.

Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “ **‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’** This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: **‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Philippians 1:9-11

“So, this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that **you will not only love much but well**. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush. **Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.**”

[The Message]

Discussion

What scripture passages, lessons, examples are important to you in living out your faith?

* We're going to try the Whiteboard for this one

How does that show up in your everyday life?

In what ways can we “make Jesus attractive to all”?

Tool bar

What scripture passages, lessons, examples are important to you in living out your faith?

Then click anywhere on board to add text

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- Click to draw
- Click to add text
- Click to erase

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A definition of Christian nationalism

“Christian nationalism is a **political ideology that seeks to merge Christian and American identities**, distorting both the Christian faith and America’s constitutional democracy. Christian nationalism demands Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must be Christian.”

Amanda Tyler

Christians Against Christian Nationalism
(Confronting Christian Nationalism Video Two)

**Core beliefs
used to
identify
Christian
nationalist
ideology**

The United States was, is, should be a Christian nation

The US government should advocate Christian values

The US government should not enforce separation of church and state [in relation to Christianity]

The US government should allow the display of [Christian] religious symbols in public spaces

The success of the United States is part of God's plan

The US government should allow [formal, public] prayer in public schools

Sources:

Whitehead & Perry, *Taking America Back for God*

Baylor Religion Survey, 2007, 2017

Defining characteristics of Christian nationalist ideology

Christian nationalism values three things:

- (1) “**Power** and making sure ‘our’ group stays in power”
- (2) “Maintaining **proper boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’**”
- (3) “Establish and reinforce a very particular **traditionalist social order** in which everybody recognizes their proper place in the family, in society, in the church.”

Andrew Whitehead & Samuel Perry

Authors of ***Taking America Back for God***

(Confronting Christian Nationalism Video Three)

Discussion

Rev. Michael Curry said, "Lift up the four Gospels. Let Jesus speak. Lay Jesus beside anything that claims to be Christian. And if it doesn't match up, then we say that's not Christianity."

How do the ideological principles of Christian nationalism compare with Jesus in the Gospels?

How do we articulate the differences for others?

“An outbreak of discipleship”

- Seek the common good, reject a view of greatness that makes others small
- Live free from grudges, ready to offer forgiveness, preserve the possibility of future reconciliation
- Instead of turning to violence in word or deed, assert the power of unarmed truth... [with] due regard for our shared dignity
- Approach hard issues with humility, ...[knowing] that people who esteem the same ideal can come to different policy conclusions
- Honor the image of God in one another.... seek to subvert societal stratification in constructive ways to prioritize justice and common provision for people in need
- Assert there is hope... Live confidently with faith in God’s mercy and hope

Discussion

What might “an outbreak of discipleship” look like today [see Michael Gerson’s article]?

Where do you see signs of it today?

How does that provide a counter-narrative to the political ideology of Christian nationalism?