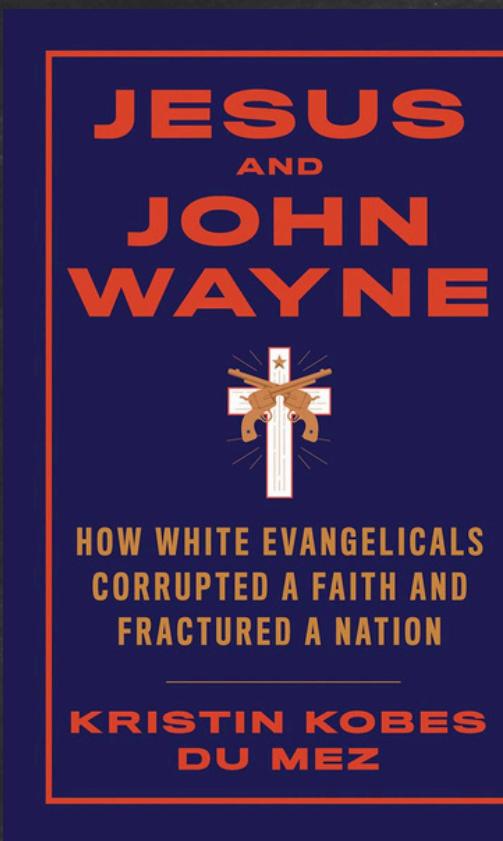
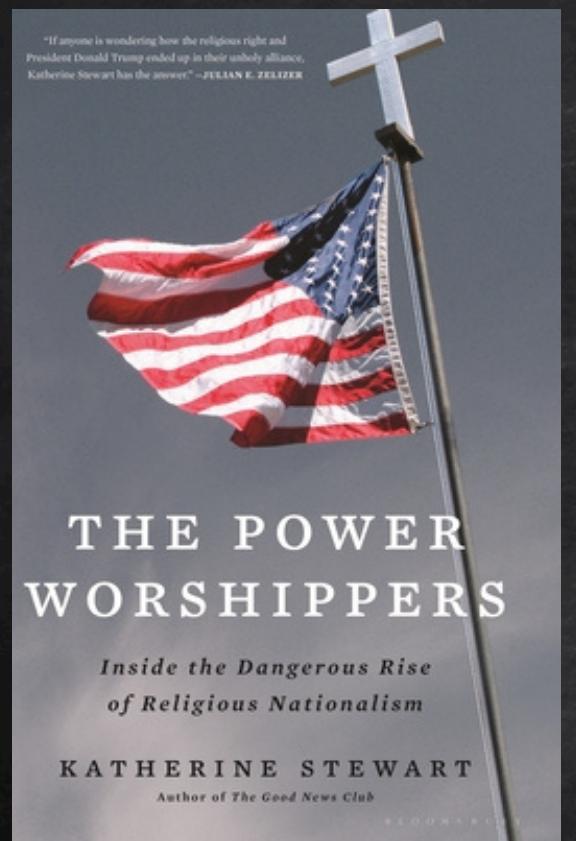
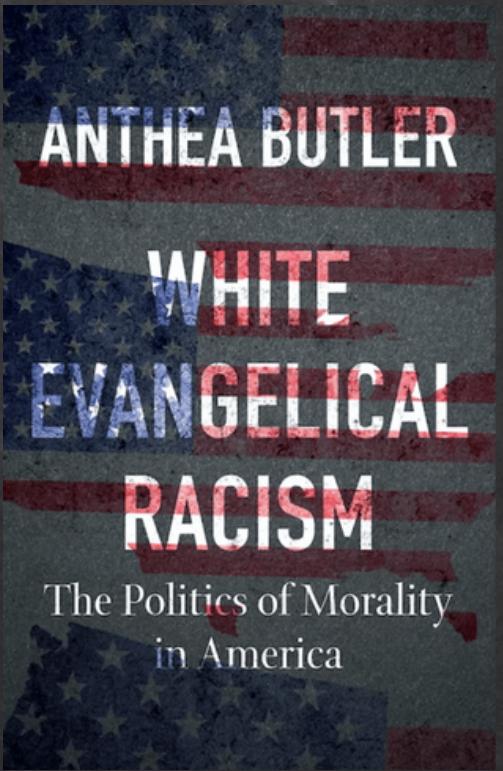
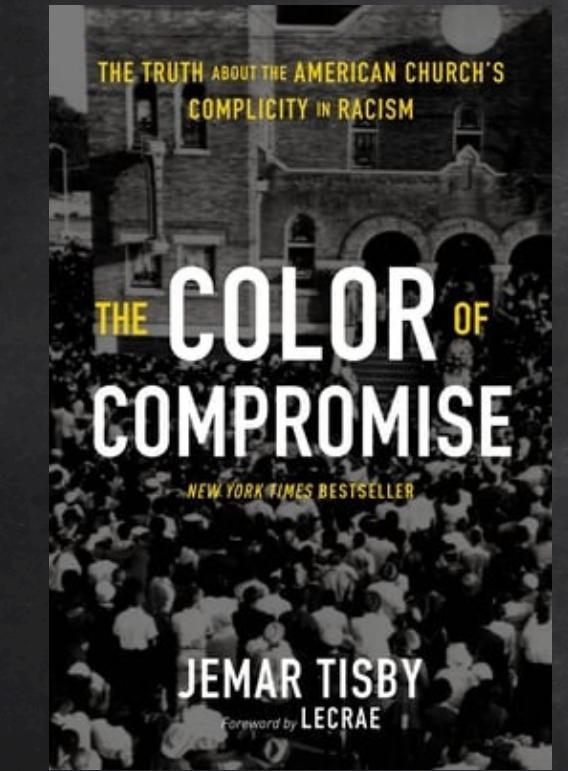


Why is our
FAITH-BASED ADVOCACY
needed now more than ever?

What is Christian Nationalism?



Christian nationalism is a cultural framework that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life. Christian nationalism contends that America has been and should always be distinctively “Christian” from top to bottom – in its self-identity, interpretations of its own history, sacred symbols, cherished values, and public policies – and it aims to keep it that way.

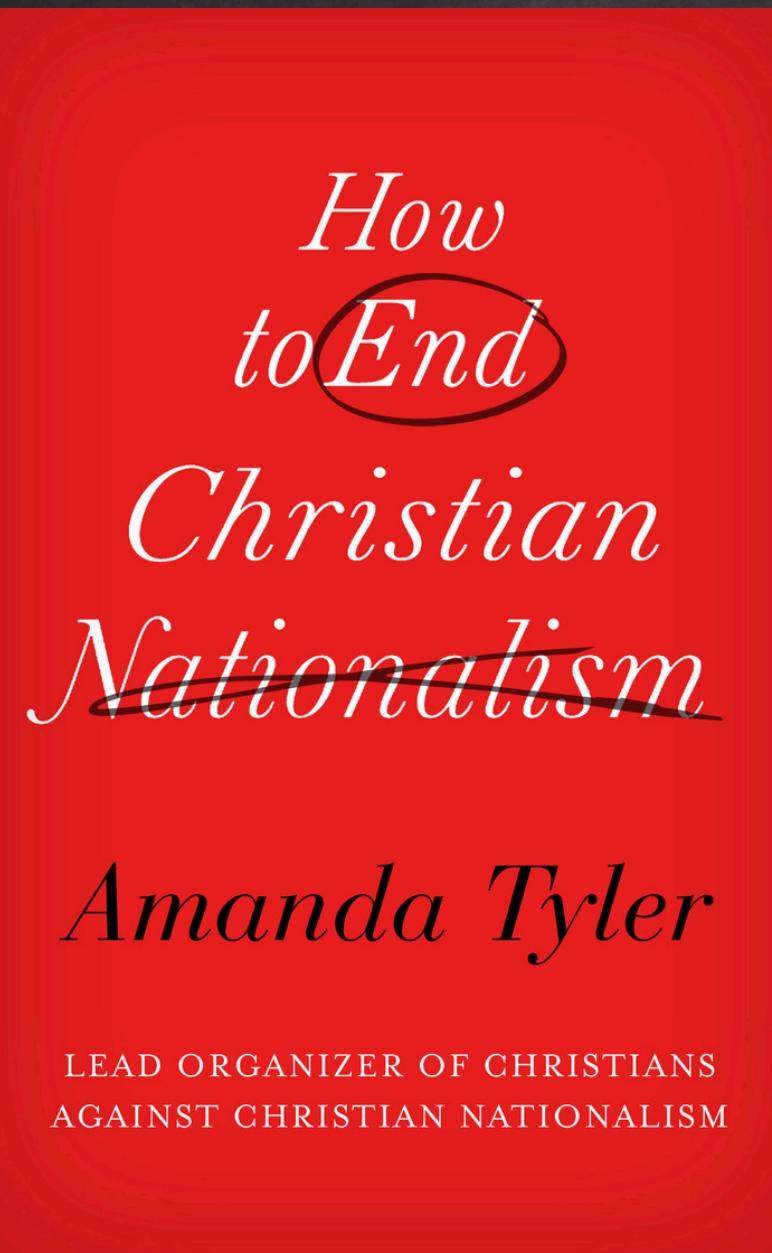
But the “Christian” in Christian nationalism is more about identity than religion. It carries with it assumptions about nativism, white supremacy, authoritarianism, patriarchy, and militarism.

Christian Nationalism & Public Ed

Christian nationalism is one of the primary threats to public education. Christian nationalism is connected to:

- school vouchers (segregation academies)
- defunding of public education (failing schools narrative to push privatization)
- book bans (re-writing history)
- limiting what can be taught in history and science
- release time for religious education
- 10 Commandments in schools
- chaplains replacing counselors... and more!

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM



CHRISTIANS AGAINST CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

<https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/>

RESPECTING RELIGION PODCAST

<https://bjconline.org/respectingreligion/>

ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://kairoscenter.org/learn-as-we-lead-resource-hub>

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Questions to Consider:

Questions to Consider:

1. Who in the church might be interested in participating? Who might lead?
2. What gifts & talents does the church have to share?
3. How much time, energy, and resources does the church have to allocate to this partnership? (Be realistic!)
4. Who in the church already has a connection to a school? Which one(s)? What school is our neighbor?
5. What are the demographics of the school? (e.g. % Free & Reduced Lunch, Spanish speakers, academically gifted)

Questions to Consider:

6. What barriers might get in the way or need to be overcome?
7. What groups in the community are in partnership with the school already?
8. Who do we need to contact & meet with to explore the idea?
Who are the stakeholders?
9. What are the greatest needs of the school according to the principal, counselor, social worker, nurse, teachers, parents, PTA, etc.?

What other questions come to mind?

Tips to Remember:

- **ASK Questions and LISTEN with your ears and heart! Where is the Spirit already at work?**
- **Be humble, curious, empathetic, and teachable. DO NO HARM.**
- **Follow all volunteer registration, background checks, and school policies to ensure kids are safe.**
- **Carefully asses what time and resources your church has to give, and plan for longevity to build trust and effectiveness. Short bursts of support can unintentionally cause harm.**
- **UNDER promise and OVER deliver--never the other way around!**

Tips to Remember:

- The students and school are **ALWAYS** the priority, not the church & its needs.
- All Glory is for God, not the church's ego. Check your ego at the door.
- Don't create more work for the school.
- Joining a team with other community partners is a great way to start. Silos are not helpful.
- Treat all children with respect and equality--don't play favorites or create jealousy!

Tips to Remember:

- Partnership is BECAUSE our faith calls us to love our neighbors, NEVER as a way to share faith.
- Evangelism is NOT appropriate and crosses legal boundaries.
- Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly. Each person is a child of God!

What other tips would you include?

Our Words Matter!

While the school may have many struggles, good things are happening too! NEVER FORGET to celebrate the GOOD and talk about the school in a positive light in the community! Be an encouragement to the students and staff!

Our Words Matter!

“**“Jake, when you talk about the school with your congregation, you tend to focus on all the challenges that the students and school face—and no doubt we have our challenges. But we are a school full of bright minds, diversity, and amazing staff. We have lots of challenges, but we are also a great place for growth and learning. Let’s try to focus on giving a more balanced view of the school”**

—Principal to Pastor Jake McGlothin

The Mission-Minded Guide To Church And School Partnerships (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017) 121.

These Stories Matter!

- Stories are what change hearts and minds... so tell the stories of what you're seeing and all the good that's hapening!
- Don't shy away from telling the realities too and naming the systems at work against students' learning and thriving.
- Focus on the children and how we can keep them at the heart of the conversation!
- Find ways to share these stories more broadly beyond your church walls!

Final Thoughts?
Burning Questions?

God, You Give Each Generation

HYMN TO JOY 8.7.8.7 D

("Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee")

Text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

https://www.carolynshymns.com/god_you_give_each_generation.html

God, you give each generation
Words of wisdom, truth to tell.
And your call to every nation
Is to teach our children well.



For each child is in your image,
Moving toward maturity.

Through your word, we hear your
message:

Teach your children! Guide and lead!

Christ, you taught us love of neighbor
When you welcomed people in;
And you told us: Children matter!
To neglect them is a sin.



May the children who are yearning
To be all that they can be
Find in public schools the caring
Of the whole community.



Spirit, give to us a vision
Of a world that's just and fair.

May our courage, strength and
wisdom
Reach to children everywhere.

God, may public education
Touch the lives of rich and poor;
May we build a strong foundation —
Then watch all your children soar.

And all God's People said, AMEN.

Let's Connect:

The Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller

Director@PastorsForNCchildren.org

919-346-6114

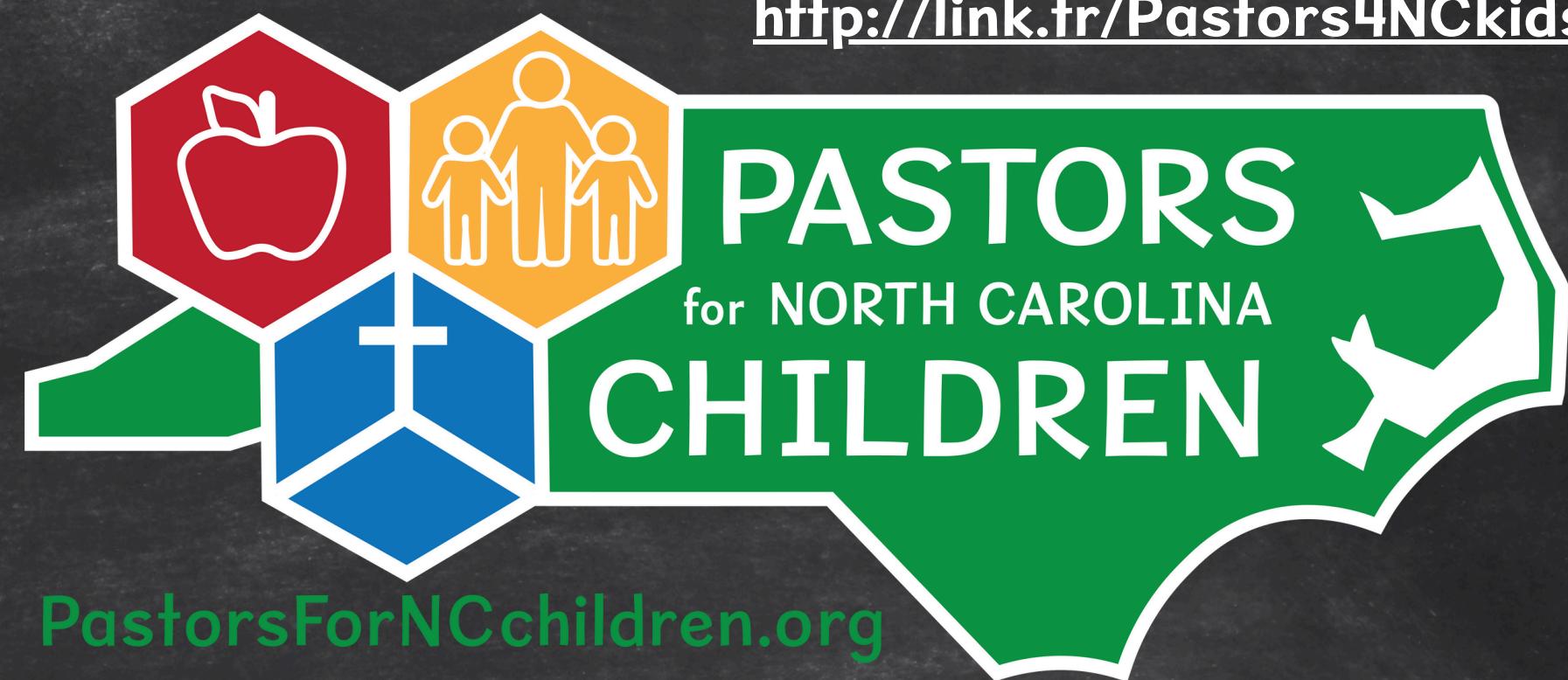
PO Box 37241
Raleigh, NC 27627

[@Pastors4NCkids](https://twitter.com/Pastors4NCkids)

Mobilizing Faith Communities to Advocate for Public Schools



<http://link.tr/Pastors4NCkids>



APCE Resource List:

- Lloyd, Lallie, ed. All Our Children: The Church's Call To Address Education Inequity. New York: Church Publishing. 2017.
- The Education Wars: A Citizen's Guide and Defense Manual by Jennifer C. Berkshire and Jack Schneider (NY: The New Press, 2024)
- Activating the Common Good: Reclaiming Control of Our Collective Well-Being by Peter Block (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishing, 2024);
- How To End Christian Nationalism by Amanda Tyler (Broadleaf Books, 2024);
- Church School Community: Forging Partnerships To Change The World by Lia McIntosh (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2021).

Partnership Resources

- Anderson, Jeffrey T. Barriers to Clergy Leadership in Church-Public School Partnerships. Omaha, NE: Creighton University Dissertation. 2016.
- Bomar, Chuck. Serving Local Schools: Bringing Christ's Compassion To The Core Of Your Community. Grand Rapids: Youth Specialties/Zondervan. 2017.
- McGlothin, Jake. The Mission-Minded Guide To Church And School Partnerships. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 2017.
-

Additional Resources

- Du Mez, Kristen Kobes. Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted A Faith And Fractured A Nation. New York: Liveright. 2020
- Rooks, Noliwe. Cutting School: The Segrenomics of American Education. New York: The New Press. 2020.
- Schneider, Jack & Jennifer Berkshire. A Wolf At The Schoolhouse Door: The Dismantling of Schools And The Future Of Public Education. New York: The New Press. 2023.
- Stewart, Katherine. The Power Worshippers: Inside The Dangerous Rise Of Religious Nationalism. New York: Bloomsbury Publisher. 2020.

Additional Resources

- Love, Bettina. Punished For Dreaming: How School Reform Harms Black Children And How We Heal. New York: St. Martin's Press. 2023.
- Love, Bettina. We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching And The Pursuit of Educational Freedom. Boston: Beacon Press. 2019.
- Lloyd, Lallie, ed. All Our Children: The Church's Call To Address Education Inequity. New York: Church Publishing. 2017.
- Tisby, Jemar. The Color of Compromise: The Truth About The American Church's Complicity in Racism. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 2020.

FAITH-BASED ADVOCACY 101 TRAINING

Workshop

“Do your little bits of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

Bishop
Desmond
Tutu

Is your community looking for ways to put faith into action? Do you want to speak out on behalf of our neighbors but are not sure how to get started? Does your congregation want to do more but how?

Presenter

Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller

I'm offering personalized in person or zoom workshops to introduce faith-based advocacy.

Topics can include:

- How and why churches should engage in advocacy?
- Politics vs. Partisanship--how do we navigate these differences as people of faith
- Using our faith to speak up and speak out
- Building coalitions to build power for change
- Calling Elected Officials, Letters to the Editor, OpEds
- Charity (material help) vs. Justice (systems change)
- Adding advocacy to the charity you are already doing

These topics and more...Have an idea for what you need, let's talk! My work has been primarily in public education, but I can customize it to include any number of advocacy areas!



Director@PastorsForNCchildren.org

919-346-6114

I'm a Moravian minister based in Raleigh but willing to travel up to 2 hours in person

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