

## BAD FAITH: VIEWER'S GUIDE

*White Christian Nationalism is an ethnocultural ideology that uses Christian symbolism to create a permission structure for the acquisition of political power and social control. Jemar Tisby*

### **Definitions**

Theocracy (from dictionary.com)

1. a form of government in which God or a deity is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, the God's or deity's laws being interpreted by the ecclesiastical authorities.
2. a system of government by priests claiming a divine commission.
3. a commonwealth or state under such a form or system of government.

Theocratic Christian nation

A theocracy based on Christian values and principles as defined by those in power; those narrowly defined "Christian" values order society not through personal choice but imposed obedience.

**Names and Faces: Featured Cast** (from badfaithdocumentary.com)

Elizabeth Neumann: Evangelical Christian / former homeland security officer in the George W. Bush and Trump Administrations; author of *Kingdom of Rage: The Rise of Christian Extremism and the Path Back to Peace* (2024).

Eboo Patel: founder and president of Interfaith America, is the author of *We Need to Build: Field Notes for Diverse Democracy* (2022) and the host of the new podcast "Interfaith America with Eboo Patel."

Steve Schmidt: former Republican campaign strategist and founder of THE WARNING. Schmidt has been on the front lines sounding the alarm that the Christian Nationalist Republican Party under Trump is openly seeking to destroy democracy.

Katherine Stewart: an investigative journalist and author who often writes about issues related to the separation of church and state, the rise of religious nationalism, and global movements against liberal democracy. Her books include *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children* (2012) and *The Power Worshippers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism* (2020).

Samuel Perry: sociologist and co-author of *Taking America Back For God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (2020). Perry co-wrote with Philip Gorski *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy* (2022). Perry is also an active member of Christians Against Christian Nationalism.

Randall Balmer: professor of religion at Dartmouth, prize-winning historian, and the author of *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America* (25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition 2014) and *Bad Faith: Race and the Rise of the Religious Right* (2021).

Russell Moore: Editor-in-Chief of Christianity Today, and the author of *Losing Our Religion: An Altar Call for Evangelical America* (2023). Moore, a conservative Evangelical, left his position at the powerful Southern Baptist Convention over profound disagreements with the Evangelical embrace of Trump. Moore calls Christian Nationalism "a heresy, the repudiation of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II: pastor and activist who co-founded the Poor People's Campaign, a National Call for Moral Revival. His organization was inspired by Martin Luther King Jr.'s last campaign in 1968, the Poor People's March on Washington demanding equal access to jobs and housing for the poor. His latest book, with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, is *White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class Can Reconstruct America* (2024).

Linda Gordon: Professor of history and University Professor of the Humanities at New York University, award-winning author of *The Second Coming of the KKK: the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (2017).

Jim Wallis: Founder of Sojourners, Chair in Faith & Justice Center, McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University. His latest book is *The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy* (2024).

Lisa Sharon Harper: activist, author, and founder of Freedom Road, dedicated to challenging the narrative gap in our nation's history; author of *The Very Good Gospel* (2016) and *Fortune: How Race Broke My Family and the World and How to Repair It All* (2022).

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove: activist, associate of Rev. Barber, and author of *Reconstructing the Gospel: Finding Freedom from Slaveholder Religion* (2020) and *Revolution of Values: Reclaiming Public Faith for the Common Good* (2019). Assistant Director at the Center for Public Theology and Public Policy at Yale Divinity School. His latest book, with Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, is *White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class Can Reconstruct America* (2024).

Anne Nelson: an award-winning investigative journalist who has written extensively about human rights and the defiance of totalitarian regimes. She is the author of *Shadow Network: Media, Money, and the Secret Hub of the Radical Right* (2019). The film's unprecedented exposé of the covert Council for National Policy and its top-secret membership rolls was made possible by her ground-breaking investigative work.

Brent Allpress: investigative journalist and researcher who accessed the CNP's recordings of their top-secret board meetings and membership files. His findings substantiate the claims in the film. His research has contributed to many leading reports on the Radical Right in America.

### **Christian Nationalists**

Paul Weyrich (1942-2008): (From NY Times obituary, Dec 18, 2008) conservative thinker and strategist whose iron principles, articulate fervor, and organization-building skills were instrumental in propelling the right wing of the Republican Party to power and prominence in the 1980s and '90s; distinguished fellow and co-founder of the Heritage Foundation (1973).

(from badfaithdocumentary.com) Weyrich founded the **COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL POLICY**, which officially does not exist. It operates clandestinely, its membership secret and its meetings closed to outsiders. With the CNP providing invisibility and vast amounts of money, Weyrich engineered the merger of conservative Evangelicals with the Republican Party into what became an armed Christian Nationalist movement intent on overthrowing democracy.

Rousas John Rushdoony (1916-2001): (from the website of the Chalcedon Foundation, founded by Rushdoony) was a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of biblical law to society. His *Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973) began the contemporary theonomy movement which posits the validity of Biblical law as God's standard of obedience for all... This broad Christian response he described as "Christian Reconstruction." He is credited with igniting the modern Christian school and homeschooling movements in the mid to late 20th century.

Lance Wallnau: business leader and Pentecostal pastor from Pennsylvania; used his business acumen and his charismatic call to promote the Seven Mountains Mandate; a member of Peter Wagner's Eagle's Vision Apostolic Team (New Apostolic Reformation movement).

Paula White: an American televangelist and a proponent of the prosperity theology. White was chair of the evangelical advisory board to Donald Trump's 2016 campaign. She delivered the invocation at his inauguration on January 20, 2017. She is the first female clergy member to deliver the invocation. (Wikipedia) Commonly seen as “Trump’s pastor.”

### **Concepts**

Dominionism/Dominion theology: a biblical interpretive lens that defines dominion as expressed in Genesis 1:28 as *control and power over* rather than *stewardship and care of* creation. This theological worldview is the foundation of a movement that seeks power and control over all nations and peoples in the name of God and in the manner of their understanding of divine morality, hierarchy, and practices. (The Seven Mountains Mandate) The struggle for that control is cast in a stark contrast of Good versus Evil. (See Keri Ladner, “The Quiet Rise of Christian Dominionism,” Christian Century, November 2022.)

The Seven Mountains Mandate: (New Apostolic Reformation, Lance Wallnau) The seven mountains of culture are: religion and church, family, education, government, media, arts and entertainment, and business and economics (also called commerce or science and technology). In this worldview, faithful Christians are called to join the battle for control over each of these “mountains.”

The Watchman Decree: written by Gene and Teri Bailey (Executive Director of Kenneth Copeland Ministries) and edited/endorsed by Dutch Sheets (givehim15.com); shared at a FlashPoint conference in Atlanta, GA on July 1, 2022. To “decree” is understood as speaking that which is believed to be God’s truth, thereby making it so. Sheets encouraged his followers to speak this decree “over our nation” daily. Text of the decree can be found here: <https://flashpoint.govictory.com/atlanta-declaration/>. A full recording of the Atlanta gathering can be found here: <https://flashpoint.govictory.com/episode/flashpoint-live-july-1st-2022/>.

Project Blitz: an organized effort by Christian Nationalist groups (National Prayer Caucus Foundation; Wall Builders; National Legal Foundation) to provide model bills for consideration by state legislatures that support the premise that the U.S. is a “Christian nation.” Those bills include, for example, mandates to display “In God We Trust” and include the teaching of the Bible in public schools; allowing taxpayer funded foster care and adoption agencies to apply religiously based restrictions in child placement; allowing health care professionals to refuse providing care based on personally held religious views. ([www.blitzwatch.org](http://www.blitzwatch.org))

The Great Replacement Theory: the accusation that non-white populations will “replace” or supplant white populations, either through genocide (an antisemitic trope) or illegal immigration, orchestrated by those who seek to usurp power from traditional (“God-ordained”) leaders. See: Anti-defamation League: “The Great Replacement:” an Explainer; <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/great-replacement-explainer>

*One final thought...*

**FROM “FOREWORD: A PROMISE TO AMERICA” KEVIN D. ROBERTS, PHD** (Heritage Foundation, Council for National Policy) (excerpted from *Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise*; **Project 2025**: Presidential Transition Project)

In reference to Promise #4: SECURE OUR GOD-GIVEN INDIVIDUAL RIGHT TO ENJOY “THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY.” When the Founders spoke of “pursuit of Happiness,” what they meant might be understood today as in essence “pursuit of Blessedness.” That is, an individual must be free to live as his Creator ordained—to flourish. Our Constitution grants each of us the liberty to do ***not what we want, but what we ought***. (emphasis added)

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- 1) Is “Christian Nationalism” a term you had heard before watching *Bad Faith*?
- 2) How are you feeling after viewing the film? What word or phrase describes your reaction to the documentary? In your opinion, what is the current state of democracy in the United States?
- 3) Was there a particular character in the film who you identified with? If so, who and why?
- 4) Have you experienced Christian Nationalist rhetoric in your community? If so, how did it make you feel?
- 5) Do you believe that America was founded as a Christian Nation? If so, how would you define that relationship?
- 6) What role should the Church/faith play in the governing of society? How would you define the separation of Church and State?
- 7) Looking towards the future:
  - a. What can our faith and/or community leaders do right now to challenge Christian Nationalism? Would your congregation be open to learning about Christian Nationalism? How can you encourage the conversation?
  - b. How might we engage with friends or relatives who are taken in by this blending of faith and politics? Are there particular topics or stories that friends and relatives might be more open to discussing?
  - c. How can we call into account and actionably challenge the legacy of systematic racism in the Christian Church in America?

### What You Can Do

- 1) Register and vote – and encourage those around you to do the same.
- 2) Learn more about Christian Nationalism. Check out the Bad Faith bibliography posted on [www.justiceadvocates.net](http://www.justiceadvocates.net) – including a listing of books by the film’s commentators and recent articles (with links).
- 3) Learn how to recognize subtle manifestations of the underlying philosophy of Christian Nationalism in political speech.
- 4) Pick an issue or a concern that is important to you that is threatened by Christian Nationalism and work to bring about change. Here are some organizations to consider (recommended by the film’s producers).
  - a. Good Faith Media’s Faith and Democracy Initiative.
  - b. Christians Against Christian Nationalism.
  - c. Americans United for the Separation of Church and State.
  - d. Interfaith Alliance.
- 5) Talk with others; share what you have learned along with your questions and concerns.
- 6) Make a public witness.

### More information about the sponsoring organizations.

- Justice Advocates in the Roanoke and New River Valleys: [www.justiceadvocates.net](http://www.justiceadvocates.net)
- Roanoke Reparations Group: <https://www.facebook.com/RoanokeReparationsGroup>

### Upcoming Events

- Hear [Eboo Patel](#) at Hollins University: *Building Bridges Across Difference*, Thursday, September 19, 7:00 p.m. Talmadge Recital Hall
- Faithful America is hosting a 3-part webinar series on Project 2025. Information at [www.faithfulamerica.org](http://www.faithfulamerica.org).
- Zoom event with [Matthew Taylor](#) – author of the forthcoming book *The Violent Take It By Force: The Christian Movement That is Threatening Our Democracy* and expert on the charismatic wing of Christian Nationalism that includes the Seven Mountains Mandate. Registration link at [www.justiceadvocates.net](http://www.justiceadvocates.net)