



Christian Nationalism

“the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way.” - Christianity Today

An open letter by Pastor Dan Skillman:

I'd like to go on record as denouncing Christian Nationalism as a theological heresy in direct contradiction to the essential Christian contention that “Jesus is Lord.”

Anyone claiming to be a Christian Nationalist has so distorted the historic Christian faith (displacing Jesus with nationalistic concerns, and co-opting Jesus for partisan political purposes) that I simply do not recognize them as Christian. I care about their well-being. I will continue to try to reach them. But I will do so as a Christian speaking to those who are not.

I call on every Christian, and especially those Christians in leadership positions, to similarly go on public record in the same way. It is important in moments of great crisis to clearly confess the faith.

That is what Martin Luther and the reformers did in the 16th century. That is what Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer did in the 1930s and 40s when Christian Nationalism took over Luther's homeland, Germany. And it is what we must do today.

We live at a time when national politicians claiming to be Christian are appropriating the symbols of the Christian faith for nationalist purposes—purposes that are almost always at odds with the life and message of Jesus. And sadly, all too many Christians in the pews, as well as Christian leaders are supporting those national politicians in their efforts.

In many places, including even some churches, the Christian faith has become almost indistinguishable from simply “being a good American.” And “being a good American” is being defined by varying partisan political interest groups. This is gravely concerning. And it is, as I said above, a theological heresy, hostile and fatally injurious to the Christian faith.

In the face of such profound public assault on the faith, we must speak boldly, clearly, and publicly. We must confess that **Jesus is Lord**, and **Caesar is not**. The world is watching. So is heaven.

Sincerely,

Daniel Skillman, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Berea, OH
The 7th Sunday After Trinity, 2022-07-31