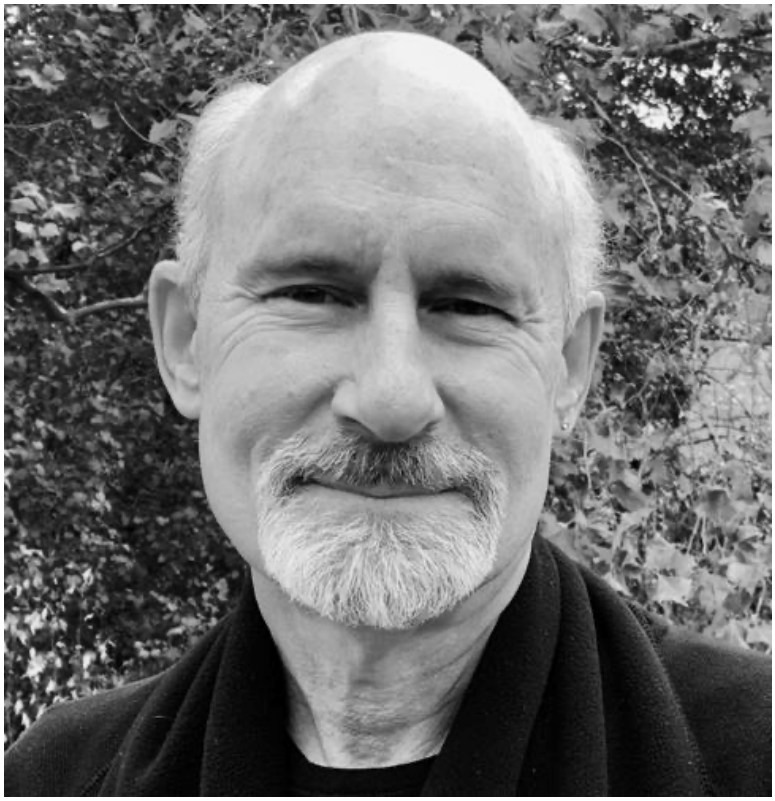
Support Rural Journalism!
Empower Voices in Rural Alabama
DONATE
Give Now!

https://www.blackbeltnewsnetwork.com/religion/friendly-freethinker-baptist-study-group-confronts-christian-supremacy/article_b2694af0-7be5-4537-a47f-f446438949d1.html

Friendly Freethinker: Baptist Study Group Confronts Christian Supremacy

By Chris Highland
Nov 3, 2026



Chris Highland

A study group in a local Baptist church invited me to provide a summary and background for the book, “Money, Lies and God,” by journalist Katherine Stewart. (More congregations ought to consider a study of this book, or Stewart’s other books on “The Power Worshippers” or “The Good News Club”). She goes deep into the ideology of the movement known as Christian Nationalism or Christian Supremacy that seeks to bestow privilege and give preference to an extreme form of the Christian faith in the public square. Power is their ultimate goal—to “take back” the country for their God through “spiritual warfare,” their violent framework that views everyone who doesn’t believe as they do as “satanic” or “demonic.” Once they demonize the rest of us, it’s an easy step to dehumanize us as well.

The self-proclaimed prophets and preachers of this dangerous movement present a masculine and muscular Christ intent on seizing every “mountain” of power in the culture. The King will accomplish this takeover through his “specially chosen” subjects on the battlefield of school boards, town councils, state legislatures, and the federal government. As we discussed in the Baptist group, this threatens not only democracy but also the Christian Church as a force for good in a civil (and secular) society. This destructive agenda also seeks to destroy religious freedom, while they cry “persecution!” every time they aren’t granted special privileges.

Some seem to think the government should tell us when and how to pray, what books we should read, whom we can discriminate against, and teach our kids morality—as they define it. National days of prayer, forcing the Bible and particularly the Ten Commandments into classrooms, demanding exemption from rules everyone else has to follow … all these are examples of the organized attack on freedom of thought and religion. When you think about it, assault on our freedoms suggests that the churches aren't doing a very good job of providing instruction and families are failing at teaching basic moral principles. By seeking to mold government on all levels into the image of a "Christian Nation," these warriors believe they and they alone know the will of God and therefore should rule in His Name. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." No surprise, Christian supremacists believe they are the appointed and anointed crusaders establishing that kingdom on earth.

Our study group at the Baptist church found hope in the "way forward" presented by Katherine Stewart. We took heart from her outline for confronting the threat:

—Those of us who believe in a secular democracy that welcomes diversity are still in the majority (we can defend the rights of minorities, while not allowing any one minority to dominate)



—They are divided (there are cracks in the Christian Nationalist coalition; some factions fight for religious freedom—primarily for themselves—and others imagine they are creating a theocracy—ruled by their particular God alone, through their divinely blessed leadership)

—Extreme Economic Inequality (we have to identify and expose the great wealth behind this movement, shining a bright light on dark money)

—Stand strong for the Separation of Church and State (this has never meant keeping people of faith from public office, only restricting those with extreme beliefs from imposing those beliefs on the population. The task is to block the funneling of taxpayer money to religious groups and schools)

—Stewart is Jewish, yet she calls for Christians to practice the religion of Jesus. “A key reform can come from within churches and religions. A great many Christians believe the religion of Jesus has more to do with loving thy neighbor than [persecuting the most vulnerable].” Here she echoes the call from Baptist leader Amanda Tyler and her organization: “Christians against Christian Nationalism.” Followers of the one who taught the Sermon on the Mount need to rise up and speak out.

—Knowledge is Power (it's essential to increase awareness of this dangerous and destructive movement, expose the extremism and create opportunities for more rational public discourse. Education is critical, especially right now)

Lastly, Stewart highlights perhaps the most obvious, yet often overlooked or avoided step forward:

—Organization Matters (those who are committed to preserving the Constitution, protecting democracy and true religious freedom for all, need to organize, to form local networks and coalitions, to think long-term and take action). We should know about the work of Americans United; Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty; Interfaith Alliance; and the American Humanist Association, to name a few.

Our book circle addressed the central question Stewart leaves in our hands: What can we do, as individuals, groups and congregations? The answer begins with the understanding that a democratic government with established Religious Freedom cannot be ruled by one religion or one God.

Chris Highland

Chris Highland was a minister and chaplain for many years. He is a writer and teacher in Asheville, NC. www.chighland.com, (chris.highland@gmail.com)