



From left: Vice President JD Vance, President Donald Trump, and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth

CHARLIE KIRK'S MEMORIAL WAS A WARNING

As Christian pastors, we condemn political assassinations — and declarations of holy war, too.

By [Rev. Dr. Caleb Lines](#), [Rev. Dr. Mark Sandlin](#) | October 2, 2025

His memorial may be over, but the message is not.

The political assassination of Charlie Kirk was a tragedy and reminder that political assassinations have no place in our country. At his memorial, America witnessed authentic grief — but we also saw something more: a chilling example of an empire wrapping itself in the pages of the Bible it never read.

Official after official [whipped up the crowd with some form of violence](#).

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said Kirk had realized “this is not a political war. It’s not even a cultural war. It’s a spiritual war.” Vice President JD Vance declared Kirk a “martyr for the Christian faith.” President Trump capped off the theatrics by repeatedly declaring “I hate my opponents” — with biblical conviction.

What should have been a somber service of honor and reflection weaponized grief. Not only is that one of the lowest moves religion can make, it’s a far cry from anything Jesus would have done. Kirk’s service turned heartbreak into the Christian nationalist’s playbook: turn tragedy into recruitment, pulpit into a political rally, and grief into a grievance.

As Christian pastors, we know we must speak out loudly against this political abuse of our faith. When our country has a Christian nationalism problem, Christianity itself has a Christian nationalism problem.

Christian nationalism is neither Christian nor patriotic. It violates the teachings of Jesus while spitting in the face of the First Amendment. At Kirk’s memorial, faith leaders and government

officials collapsed religion and politics into one distorted creed, realizing Kirk's own sentiment: "There is no Separation of Church and State. It's a fabrication, it's a fiction, it's not in the Constitution."

Charlie Kirk's death is being lionized to strengthen a distinctly Christian nationalist movement that thrives on division and fear, weaponizes the Christian faith, and tears up rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Any ideology that glorifies violence, domination, and exclusion fails the Gospel.

Jesus called his followers to something so different: radical nonviolence. The religion of Jesus is a movement of compassion, justice, and inclusion. He said "love your enemies" and warned "those who live by the sword will die by the sword."

The early Christians knew oppression. They lived under the heel of Roman occupations that demanded Caesar be worshiped as God. When Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's," we're pretty sure he didn't mean to meld them together and see how authoritarian you can make them.

We can't say it enough. Kirk's political assassination was wrong and dangerous. And so was his memorial when the parade of our nation's top officials openly erased the Constitutionally preserved lines between church and state, between Christianity and Christian nationalism.

They all but called for holy war. In such a worldview, Christianity turns political opponents into enemies of God. Compromise becomes impossible. Elections lose legitimacy. Authoritarianism takes root.

The danger is not hypothetical. When power is cloaked in piety, the result leaves our nation neither faithful nor free. The ideals of pluralism, democracy, and the separation of church and state are not optional — they are the guardrails that keep authoritarianism at bay.

Faithful Christians must speak clearly: Christian nationalism is a false gospel. To follow Jesus is not to seek domination, but to embody his compassion to the best of our ability and when we fail to try harder.

Like all of us, our leaders also have free speech. At Charlie Kirk's memorial they revealed their truth. His memorial was a warning. The real question is, will we heed it?



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