NEW COURSE FOR CONGREGATIONS

Faith, Power, and Politics:
Cultivating Religious Liberty as a Christian

What distinguishes the role of faith in public life from Christian nationalism?

During a time when Christian nationalism is seen in many forms, it can be difficult to know how to show up as a Christian. We believe that, in contrast to Christian nationalism, cultivating religious liberty offers a foundation to cultivate a just society that ensures dignity, pluralism, and democracy.

BJC's Organizing Team created this new six-session course to explore these principles, inviting Christians to consider the intersections of faith, power, and politics in U.S. society. Through reflection, storytelling, case studies, and collective learning, participants offer the gifts of their faith in solidarity and mutuality for a just society.

How to Use This Course

The principles in this course serve to establish fundamental groundwork for a disciplined and robust religious liberty in practice.

Who? This six-session course is for Christian congregations and faith communities who want to learn and practice offering the gifts of their faith while working for a more just society. Groups will need to gather in subsets of six participants at most. In identifying participants, extend invitations to those who can:

- Attend at least five of the six sessions and review content for any missed sessions.
- Commit to completing pre-work and weekly assignments.

What? By participating in this course, participants will be equipped to:

- Critically examine the relationship between faith and political power
- Cultivate practices of religious liberty, resisting the use of faith as a tool of coercive power
- Cultivate groundedness in faith and identity journeys in order to practice true interfaith solidarity

How? This course consists of six 90-minute sessions. We recommend meeting on a bi-weekly basis for in-person sessions.

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Session Overview and Learning Objectives

Pre-Work: Cultural Biography
The pre-work develops participants to be able to share and own their story from a place of acceptance and openness. Through individual preparation and mutual sharing each week, participants begin to cultivate their self-awareness regarding their racial and ethnic heritage in addition to their social and religious location.

Session 1: Disciplined Religious Liberty
In the first session, participants work to confront and restrain the desire for their beliefs to be privileged or codified in law. This will be developed through giving participants a lens to identify the undisciplined use of Scripture, faith, and religious beliefs in society.

Session 2: Faith-rooted Organizing
Participants explore their understanding and disposition towards power while gaining language to understand different types of power. In contrast to session one, in this session, participants learn about the constructive use of power in faith-rooted organizing through generations.

Session 3: Power of Interfaith Solidarity
Participants begin to understand the role of interfaith solidarity in social movements. To do this, they discern internal dissonance within their communities and within themselves that keep them from interfaith solidarity. Additionally, they develop the lens to engage and identify the next steps with which to build solidarity with less familiar communities.

Session 4: Owning Your Story
Participants learn to welcome dissonance as a part of cross-cultural relationship and healthy pluralism. Through engagement with different stories of faith-rooted organizers, participants learn that embracing their own story is one of the most important gifts to sustain their work in fighting Christian nationalism.

Session 5: Practices of Interfaith Solidarity
Participants work through practical situations to apply lessons learned through this curriculum. They engage in open and honest conversations to better understand themselves and their community, so as to imagine and practice interfaith solidarity.

Session 6: Next Steps
To conclude, participants reflect upon lessons learned and consider their next steps. They will also assess their understanding and practice of the Christian faith.

Interested in using the Faith, Power, and Politics course in your congregation?

Use the QR code to request the curriculum, and we'll send it to you!

Questions? Contact us at BJC@BJConline.org

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