

Disclaimer: Timothy Braatz a well-known member of the Human Rights Task Force and the member who writes their public releases in the local newspaper wrote this August 2022 document and then members of the Human Rights Task Force shared it. The intent was to discredit the library board recall efforts which is protected under Idaho Statute 34 Elections laws.

Christian Nationalism and North Idaho

by Timothy Braatz

Christian Nationalism is a combination of ultra-conservative Christianity and extreme rightwing politics. It is the belief that conservative Christians should run the country based on their religious beliefs and that anyone with different beliefs is a traitor and Evil.

Christian Nationalists are typically fearful and quick to believe conspiracy theories. They consider themselves victims and imagine they are being oppressed by liberals, Muslims, immigrants, Communists, Democrats, antifa, Black Lives Matter, scientists, teachers, and the federal government. In this logic, only white, conservative, U.S.-born Christians can be “true Americans.”

<https://theconversation.com/after-trump-christian-nationalist-ideas-are-going-mainstream-despite-a-history-of-violence-188055>

Christian Nationalist anger and paranoia were a driving force behind the January 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol, as explained in this report:

https://bjconline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Christian_Nationalism_and_the_Jan6_Insurrection-2-9-22.pdf

Politically speaking, Christian Nationalists are trying to control the Republican Party, but they are not conservatives. They want to destroy traditional freedoms, not preserve them. They denigrate traditional Republicans—people like Mitt Romney, John McCain, and George W. Bush—as “RINOs,” meaning “Republican in Name Only.”

The First Amendment to the Constitution begins, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” This basically means that government shouldn’t favor one religion over another.

Christian Nationalists want to use the power of government, via the Republican Party, to limit other religions and impose their own beliefs. They are often hostile to public schools and libraries, as these institutions encourage intellectual freedom rather than Christian Nationalist indoctrination.

The Christian Nationalist political strategy includes taking over Republican organizations, city councils, library and school boards, police and sheriff’s departments, and other institutions of local government. They tend to be highly motivated—they organize, run for office, vote, and disrupt meetings—because they believe they are in a fight against tyranny and Evil.

In north Idaho, Christian Nationalism is associated with the Redoubt Movement. *Redoubt* means fortress. Many Christian Nationalists want the Inland Northwest to be a fortress for them and only them, a separate state, where they can be safe from those people they wrongly imagine are out to take away their rights and destroy their churches.

This video examines Redoubt in Idaho: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qy6RQJQ6J5w>

Not all survivalists (“preppers”) who come to north Idaho are Christian Nationalists. Some just want to get away from the city, live off the grid, and be left alone. Most conservative Christians and most Republicans are not trying to turn the Inland Northwest into a separatist state, are not trying to force their beliefs on others, not trying to limit the rights of others.

But preppers and Republicans and conservative Christians can be vulnerable to the lies and fearmongering of Christian Nationalist politicians, who claim to represent traditional values. One of the current lies is that liberals, Democrats, and LGBTQs, even traditional Republicans, are pedophiles (“groomers”) or supporting pedophiles.

Christian Nationalists are vulnerable too. They are duped by con men like Infowars liar Alex Jones (currently on trial for defaming Sandy Hook victims) and **Owen Benjamin** (who spews bigotry and then

asks for donations to develop his property along the Moyie River). Violent militia groups like the neo-Nazi Patriot Front use Christian Nationalist language to recruit disaffected white males. You can read about it here:

<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/patriot-front>

On June 11, 2022, police in Coeur d'Alene arrested 31 Patriot Front members who were planning to attack a "Pride in the Park" event. One of the arrested claimed that "we were just there because they are grooming kids."

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/pack-your-stuff-and-get-out-of-my-house-says-patriot-front-members-mom?ref=home>

Possible Talking Points (for spreading the word)

Christian Nationalists claim to believe in freedom but want to impose their beliefs on others.

Christian Nationalists claim to be conservatives but want to use government to limit other people's freedoms.

The Taliban forces everyone in Afghanistan to live under their religious laws. Christian Nationalists want everyone in the USA to live under their religious laws.

Christian Nationalists are part of the Redoubt Movement which is attracting new residents to the in the Inland Northwest.

Christian Nationalists were major participants in the January 6 assault and attempted coup at the U.S. Capitol.

Don't fall for Christian Nationalist fearmongering and victimhood—it leads to violence.

Be aware of Boundary and Bonner county politicians aligned with Christian Nationalism, possibly including **Heather Scott, Scott Herndon, Todd Engel, and the Fioravanti family.**

Boundary County Library (BCL)

Christian Nationalists target public library boards and librarians. Their strategy is to pressure or replace board members in order to ban books that offend their own sexual or racist sensibilities.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gop-libraries-culture-war_n_62ed58cfe4b09fecea4defc3

HB 666, passed by the Idaho House of Representatives in March 2022, would make it possible to prosecute librarians (and teachers) for "disseminating material harmful to minors." The bill is unlikely to get a hearing in the State Senate, according to President Pro Tem, Senator Chuck Winder (R). "I think it is mischief," he said, "and something that doesn't need to happen."

Similar "mischief" is taking place in Coeur d'Alene and across the country.

<https://cdapress.com/news/2022/jul/29/criticism-library-contents-continues/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/06/books/book-ban-librarians.html?searchResultPosition=1>

And in Boundary County.

In early July, several residents (**Donna Capurso, Tiffany Nichols, Fay Almond, Adrienne Norris, Jana Moseley**) initiated the process to recall four BCL board trustees (Ken Blockhan Jr., Wendy McClintock, Robert Blanford, Lee Colson). Their preliminary petitions accuse the trustees of voting to bring "potentially sexualized, pornographic, pervasive [*] and deviant material into our library," (*Possibly they meant perverse.)

The recall organizers are lying. Their general lie is this: *We are protecting children from being groomed with pornography that the radical left is putting in our library.*

According to journalist Shawn Vestal of the *Spokesman-Review*, **Capurso** claimed that "They are planning to put pornographic editions into the library" and said she worried that "sex offenders would have the chance to prey on teenagers who might go to the library."

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2022/jul/17/shawn-vestal-the-war-on-libraries-roils-the-best-s/>

According to Vestal, the recall organizers have been meeting at the "Lordship Church," which is actually the Redoubt Surplus Store run by Warren Campbell, a white supremacist preacher.

<https://www.inlander.com/Bloglander/archives/2018/04/26/does-this-anti-sodomite-slavery-defending-holocaust-denying-idaho-pastor-lead-a-hate-group>

Writing in the *Redoubt News*, **Capurso** claims that she is “protecting our children” from “liberals” and “the far left.”

<https://redoubtnews.com/2022/07/its-about-protecting-our-children/>

Capurso has a record of fearmongering and encouraging discrimination. In late 2015, she was responsible for stoking fears of Syrian refugees bringing terrorism to Boundary County.

<https://redoubtnews.com/2016/02/donna-capurso-seeks-boundary-county-commissioners-seat/>

According to the Herald, **Norris** complained about a library book that she, admittedly, had not read and that isn't in the BCL collection.

<https://bonnersferryherald.com/news/2022/mar/25/library-collections-decided-patron-interest/>

Here is another story about false complaints:

https://9b.news/news/2022/07/19lawn_boy.htm

Here's another: During the BCL board meeting public comments period, on June 16, **Nichols** warned about “predators and groomers” and complained about three “graphic novels,” then admitted that these books “aren't in our library.”

In the *Redoubt News*, **Shari Dovale** wrote that the trustees “voted to allow all pornography to be included in the system and available to children.” She identified the enemy as “the Radical Left” and “groomers.”

In response to Dovale's lies, **Rene Holaday** made this hateful comment: “Here's a solution for all these library board pedophiles; how about publish ALL their names and home addresses publicly and let “nature” take it's course!!”

Holaday (who calls herself “Lady Liberty”) and Dovale are associated with disgraced former Washington state legislator **Matt Shea** and the more violent wing of the Redoubt movement.

<https://redoubtnews.com/2022/07/a-bipartisan-solution-to-porn-in-the-library/>

In an announcement on the BCL website, Library Director Kimber Glidden stated that “there has never been, nor will there ever be, any pornography in the collection. There is not and will never be sexually explicit materials in the Children's department.”

She added this: “We will not unlawfully discriminate against one group in order to protect the views of another.”

<https://www.boundarycountylibrary.com/>

At the June meeting, Trustee Colson said something similar: “Our job is not to support one group's rights over another. Our job is not to support one idea or another. Our job is to support all ideas. We are a public service. Our service is to provide public information.”

You can see how this fairness would offend Christian Nationalists who hope to censor and ban ideas they don't like.

When Kelly Bell, a teacher and advocate for abused children, spoke at the June meeting and described the library as a safe place for children, she was met with insults from the extremists in attendance.

The BCL staff have received emails and voice messages expressing opposition to pornographic books (that are not in the collection). One email asked that all books “be reviewed under God's standards and not of the world's standards” and add that “you are either for God or against him.” Other messages appear to be veiled threats.

Due to threats of violence, and at the recommendation of local law enforcement, the trustees canceled their July meeting.

So, on July 18, several dozen community members—mostly mothers and schoolchildren—wrote chalk messages on the BCL sidewalk. They were expressing appreciation for the library staff and opposition to book censorship. They were also taking a public stand against bullies who threaten and disrupt when they don't get their way.

<https://bonnersferryherald.com/news/2022/jul/21/library-shown-support-community-members/>

We need more people taking a public stand against the liars and bullies and other extremists who are attempting to take over our public institutions. No more staying quiet!

On August 16, Glidden, the library director, wrote this:

“Nothing in my background could have prepared me for the political atmosphere of extremism, militant Christian fundamentalism, intimidation tactics and threatening behavior currently being employed in the

community. Therefore it is with deepest regret that I am tendering my resignation effective September 10.”

Is this what Boundary County has become—a community where mean-spirited extremists drive decent people to quit working for the greater good?

Possible actions

If asked to sign a petition to stop pornography in the library, reply that there is no pornography in the library and you support the current library board. Tell others not to sign.

If Capurso and company get enough signatures for a recall election, encourage others to vote against the recall.

If the recall succeeds, recruit and support BCL board candidates who refuse to discriminate in favor of one group of library patrons.

The way to defeat the recall is 1) educate others about what is actually going on and 2) convince them that their voice matters and they must register to vote and then vote.

Possible Talking Points

The library board and staff do not allow pornography in the collection.

The recall campaign is based on lies.

The recall campaign is an attempt by dangerous extremists to take over the library.

Do you want extremists imposing their religious beliefs on you and your community?