

Rev. Dr. Amy Butler and the Founding of Invested Faith

About our Founder, Rev. Dr. Amy Butler

Dr. Butler believes deeply that courageous communities of people who live with tenacious love can change the world. She admits to having always been fascinated by this question: “What does it take to build community that can change the world?”

Much of her career has been spent helping build communities of radical witness in the institutional church. She has shattered barriers as the first female pastor in two historic pulpits.

Butler was the first woman to lead Calvary Baptist Church in Washington D.C., the founding church of American Baptists, as well as the first woman at the helm of The Riverside Church in the City of New York, where she served for five years as the seventh Senior Minister in the history of the church.

She currently leads National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C. as intentional interim Senior Minister.

Dr. Butler holds degrees from Baylor University, the International Baptist Theological Seminary, and Wesley Theological Seminary.

Perhaps more significantly, Dr. Butler brings the rich values of her Hawaiian ancestors to her work, both in building communities of radical witness within the institutional church and in creating Invested Faith, an opportunity for the church to create space for change beyond those walls. She lives in Washington, D.C.

Read more about [Dr. Butler here.](#)

Planting the Seeds for Invested Faith

Butler is the Founder of Invested Faith, a not-for-profit, faith-based organization that seeks to bridge the gap between social innovation and the resources of America’s religious institutions. Invested Faith is doing the work of building a fund to seed the future and provide support for social innovators who are working to change the world.

Though leading institutions of faith in this moment can be one of the most challenging leadership tasks around, Butler is optimistic about the impact faith communities have on the world, even and perhaps most of all when they face the end of their traditional institutional lives. This optimism led her to plant the seeds for Invested Faith.

In 2019, Butler came to believe that something new was needed in the religious landscape. “Anyone paying attention can see that church membership has been in decline for some time...and the church is pretty far behind when it comes to thinking outside the box,” said Butler.

A [recent Gallup report](#) noted that “Americans' membership in houses of worship continued to decline last year, dropping below 50% for the first time in Gallup's eight-decade trend. In 2020, 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque, down from 50% in 2018 and 70% in 1999.

“As the [narrative of the increasing and steady decline of institutional religion in America](#) grows more real with each new news story, people of faith are responding by defaulting to a theology of scarcity. We need a narrative of hope that helps us to see the abundant resources that are ours to steward and God's invitation to join in the work God is doing in the world - work that is not dead, but is bringing about healing and restoration of all things and a fullness of life often beyond the walls of the Church,” said Butler.

Butler's idea was simple. Institutions at the end of their life cycles needed a hopeful way to send their witness forward. “Instead of closing up shop and selling property and assets to the nearest developer...or even making a one-time gift to a local nonprofit, what if we could dream up a fund that would live in perpetuity and offer on-going support for entrepreneurs who were reimagining new expressions of God's work in the world? Closing congregations and other institutions at the end of their traditional lives could then offer their assets as a legacy project to live on, producing income that will continue the faithful work of God in the world.”

Butler found a fiscal sponsor in [ImpactAssets](#) and began looking for partners who shared her vision. Along with several committed individual donors, the [Baugh Family Foundation](#) gave a substantial gift to begin exploring this idea. Butler now heads a small team of Invested Faith Advisors and is beginning to make small grants to social entrepreneurs and to tell their stories in compelling ways.”

“Together we can bridge tradition and innovation to imagine a new way - and a new world!”

Read more about our mission at investedfaith.org.