

# Confronting White Christian Nationalism

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. *What is Christian Nationalism?*

Christian nationalism is a political ideology that seeks to merge Christian identity with American civic life and national identity. It asserts that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and should continue to be governed according to what its proponents see as Christian values or biblical principles.

Core Beliefs of Christian Nationalism:

- America is divinely chosen or specially blessed by God.
- U.S. laws and policies should reflect Christian beliefs, often from a conservative evangelical perspective.
- Christianity should have a privileged place in public life (e.g., in government, schools, monuments).
- The Founding Fathers intended for the U.S. to be explicitly Christian in governance (this is historical revisionism).

### 2. *How does Christian Nationalism undermine the church and Christianity?*

- Conflates religious and political authority in an idolatrous way
- Contradicts the teaching and example of Jesus
- Undermines pluralism and religious liberty
- Belies the New Testament, which offers no biblical precedent for a Christian nation
- Promotes oppression and exclusion of those deemed "unworthy"
- Distorts the mission of the Church from love of neighbor to love of power
- Confuses the kingdom of God with earthly nations and earthly power with spiritual calling
- Reduces Christianity to a narrow cultural identity over the universal tradition Jesus stands for

### 3. *Is the United States a "Christian nation" and can Christian theology be at the root of American public policy?*

The U.S. Constitution does not establish Christianity—or any religion—as a national religion. In fact, the First Amendment explicitly prohibits the government from establishing a religion and protects the free exercise of all religions:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.* ~First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

The first component of Christian nationalism is belief in a Christian nation. According to an article in *Christianity Today*,<sup>1</sup>

Christian nationalism is the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way. Christian nationalists assert that America is and must remain a "Christian nation."

### 4. *What qualifies as a Christian Nationalist action?*

One component of Christian nationalism is a political ideology that believes Christianity should have primacy in the public square in order to address so-called immorality. Christian nationalists do not call themselves by that name and do not work from a shared playbook. But the kind of policies that they espouse tell a clear story:

- Reinstating prayer in public schools
- Changing school curriculum to include biblical education
- Banning books from libraries if you disagree with the content
- Pushing for anti-immigrant policies that aim to stop demographic changes
- Discriminating against LGBTQ+ people, and more

### 5. *How does Christian Nationalism harm other people? Where does racism come in?*

Christian nationalism harms people by advancing a narrow, exclusive vision of American identity—Christian, white, conservative, and patriarchal—that marginalizes or actively discriminates against others. Christian nationalism is not just focused on holding Christianity above other faith traditions; rather, it uses state power to privilege Christians at the expense of all others.

Robert P. Jones, president and founder of Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), explains in his 2023 book, *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy*<sup>2</sup> that the United States was founded with a paradox at its heart, at once striving for a democratic society, but doing so on a foundation of mass racial violence through which the indigenous population was replaced. This paradox, Jones explains, survives today in the form of white Christian nationalism, privileging white Christians above all other US citizens.

### 6. *Are there other religious nationalisms?*

Religious nationalism is not exclusive to Christianity. It's a global pattern where religion becomes fused with political identity, ethnicity, and power, often leading to exclusionary or supremacist ideologies. The core issue is not the religion itself, but how it's co-opted for political and nationalist goals.

Prepared by GACEIR,  
General Assembly Committee on  
Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations



<sup>1</sup> Paul D. Miller, "What is Christian Nationalism?" *Christianity Today*, February 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Robert P. Jones, *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy* (Simon & Schuster, 2023).

# God of All

## *A Liturgical Witness Against Christian Nationalism*

### **Call to Worship**

*adapted from Psalm 96*

O sing to God a new song;  
sing to God, all the earth.

**For great is the Creator and greatly to be praised;  
God is to be revered above all gods.**

For all the gods of the peoples are idols,  
but God made the heavens.

**Say among the nations, "God reigns.**

**The world is firmly established;  
it shall never be moved.**

**God will judge the peoples with equity."**

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar and all that fills it;  
let the field exult and everything in it.

**Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy  
before the Creator, for God is coming,  
for God is coming to judge the earth.**

**God will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with truth.**

### **Call to Confession**

Come, draw near to the One who made you, the One who is beyond borders, beyond control and coercion. Come, draw near to the One who judges the world with righteousness, inviting us to be a people of truth and equity, reflecting the diverse abundance of God's grace.

### **Prayer of Confession**

God beyond borders,  
**though we are made in your image,  
so often we have tried to create you in ours.**

We have adorned our country's flags  
with the image of the cross,  
**desecrating that place where you conquered  
state power and sin once and for all  
with our own idolatrous nationalisms.**

We have confused our political preferences  
with your divine will.

**We have even dared to believe you love us best.  
What a mockery we make of your message  
of letting of letting the children of all nations  
come to you, Jesus.**

What harm we have caused upon bodies and faiths  
seen as less faithful, or less American,  
or less patriotic than our own.

**What violence we have worked  
in our collusion of state and religious power,  
the very same violence you subvert on the cross.  
Forgive our comfortable and profitable idolatries,  
and burst forth from all the boxes  
we have forced you into, bringing in your wake  
abundant life for all people, for all nations.**

(silent prayer of confession)

**Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news, and let it dwell in your body:

How things are, or how they have been, is not how they must always be.

The God of all nations is at work still, growing flowers in the cracks between the walls we build. All creation bears witness to a God beyond borders, a God on the move still working through ordinary people, like you and me, to claim and create abundant life for all people, for all nations, for all faiths. God is not held captive by our ideologies of idolatry; we need not be, either. We are a people made new! A forgiven people. A diverse people of grace in many languages. Thanks be to God!

### **Scripture**

Isaiah 56:1-8

John 18:28-40

Acts 10:34-38

Revelation 22:1-5

### **Prayers of the Congregation, Community, and World**

Loving God, you created all of humanity in your image, holy, beautiful, blessed. We thank you for founding the church through the power of the Holy Spirit and for welcoming us into the great cloud of witnesses and communion of saints, a sacred unity that knows no bounds.

You have charged us, as your people, to work for your reign on earth as it is in heaven. And since we have not yet brought that about, since that time has not yet come, we ask your forgiveness for when your name has been used not for love, peace, and truth, but misused and distorted for hatred, violence, misinformation, and greed. This has taken the form of racism, bigotry, misogyny, colonialism through the doctrine of discovery, and far too many abuses of power. We confess that these are in direct contradiction to the love and teachings of Jesus, which undermines the mission and joy of the church.

Rekindle within us a passion for the best of our history, the wisdom of our tradition, so that we might share the promise of resurrection with the world, and not the sin of Christian nationalism. For yours is the glory that empowers us to act as one, united in love, to correct our course and embody your grace, as we make a way in the wilderness for your love to spread to all the ends of the earth.

This we pray through the Holy Spirit and in the loving name of the risen Jesus Christ, Amen.

*Liturgy by*

*Rev. Dr. Whitney Wilkinson Arreche and*

*Rev. Dr. Jacob Bolton*

*with influence from Cole Arthur Riley*

*Prepared in 2025 by GACEIR,*

*General Assembly Committee*

*on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations*

