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**Welcome** to *EndTime Issues*...

Difficult to fathom is the prediction that the dragon (Satan) and a beast (antichrist) will be worshipped by the whole world (Revelation 13:4, 7b, 8). The powerful consorting force behind this worship is an earth beast (identified by many as the United States) (Revelation 13:11-12). This picture characterizes a focused religious movement that spreads globally. It becomes coercive through religious mandates.

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# Christian Nationalism

## A Worrisome Power

### Introduction

“Dominion Theology,” also known as “Dominionism,” is a collection of Christian political ideologies that seek to establish a national government by Christians based on their understanding of Biblical law.<sup>1</sup> Ideally, it would become a global magnet.

The Catholic form of this is called “Integralism.” Jesuit Antonio Spadaro and Protestant Marcelo Figueroa note that integralism is a nontraditional ecumenical alliance of those who share the same desire for religious influence in the political sphere, creating a *theocratic type of state*.

Dominionism makes it a “Christian duty to take control of a sinful secular society.” A contemporary form of Dominionism is *Christian Nationalism*, which has risen within the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Other countries/areas are looking favorably at its objectives.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.texasobserver.org/dominion-theology/>

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion\\_theology#:~:text=Dominion%20theology%2C%20also%20known%20as,acquiring%20governing%20authority%20are%20varied.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_theology#:~:text=Dominion%20theology%2C%20also%20known%20as,acquiring%20governing%20authority%20are%20varied.)

<sup>3</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_nationalism#:~:text=Christian%20nationalism%20is%20a%20type,in%20political%20and%20social%20life.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_nationalism#:~:text=Christian%20nationalism%20is%20a%20type,in%20political%20and%20social%20life.)

A recent study revealed that Christian Nationalism embodies these sentiments:

- God has called Christians to exercise dominion over all areas of American society.
- The U.S. government should declare America a Christian nation.
- Being Christian is an important part of being truly American.
- If the U.S. moves away from its Christian foundations, it will cease to be a country.
- All laws should be based on Christian values.<sup>4</sup>

These ideals are being infused almost surreptitiously into Trump's 2024 presidential campaign by the Christian Right.

He has run by pledging to defend Christianity against the Left, which he says wants to "tear down crosses." Speaking at the Religious Broadcasters' International Christian Media Convention, Trump pledged that in his new presidency, no one will "touch the cross of Christ!" Imprinted hats were passed out with the slogan "Make America Pray Again!"<sup>5</sup>

In a December campaign speech in Iowa, he said "Marxists and fascists" are "going hard" against Catholics. "Upon taking office, I will create a new federal task force on fighting anti-Christian bias to be led by a fully reformed Department of Justice that's fair and equitable" and that will "investigate all forms of illegal discrimination."

On the eve of the Iowa caucus, Trump promoted, in a social media video, that his campaign was actually on a "divine mission from God."

"It is a commitment to an institutional separation between church and state, but not the separation of Christianity from its influence on government and society," noting that such a framework "can lead to beneficial outcomes for our own communities, as well as individuals of all faiths."<sup>6,7</sup>

A backlash, however, has developed, urging caution. "Preserving the boundaries between Christianity and earthly kingdoms must be maintained." The Baptist Joint Committee on Religious Liberty and Public Affairs initiated a high-profile "Christians Against Christian Nationalism" effort in 2022.

- It qualified its concerns that in such a nationalism, "a good America" would have to be deeply Christian, which would be impossible.
- It would have to be a nation with laws fully consistent with Biblical principles. That, however, is of unequal understanding, making only selective enforced principles possible.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://baptistnews.com/article/the-threat-of-christian-nationalism-in-all-50-states-illustrated-in-eight-charts/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://twitter.com/AP/status/1760952704686338089>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ffcoalition.com/about/road-to-majority/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.prii.org/>

Within this framework, all faiths and those without would have to find solace and security in a very artificial unity. Many Christian Nationalists say that is possible. The Baptists see this as dangerous.

There is bonified concern that this might introduce social unrest. Fifty years ago, 90+% of Americans claimed to be Christian; in 2022, 63%.<sup>8,9</sup> Yet, committed Christians believe that civil Christian laws will bring chaos.

- In 1954 “One nation, under God” was added to the Pledge of Allegiance.
- In 1957 “In God we trust” was added to all currency as a national motto.

Commendable steps – generic for everyone – not coercive.

### **Compromised Religious Liberty?**

Christian Nationalism would actually become a threat to religious liberty. Last year, the Center for American Progress published an article with the title “Christian Nationalism is the ‘Single Biggest Threat’ to America’s Religious Freedom.” That typified the extreme caution that should be taken in dealing with this movement. By design, it would single out only certain beliefs.

A debate does reside within groups of Christian thought leaders: “Should this nation be restrained in promoting Christian ideals in secular and social life or should there be a fusion between church and state, strongly supported by Roman Catholicism? The questions grow louder: “What forms of Christianity would be promoted? Would ***their ideals restrict*** the free exercise of some faiths?”

Championing what has been: “It is the nation which through its Constitution created conditions in which religion could flourish; ... a nation that championed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the establishment of human rights as international norms; ... and a nation that in recent years has taken leadership in fighting AIDS in Africa and malaria worldwide.

“Christians in the United States thus are not wrong to take some pride in the accomplishments of their nation. That is not ‘Christian Nationalism,’ it is simply ‘patriotism,’ as Mark David Hall reminds us in his *Christian Reflections on Christian Nationalism(s)*. Nor are Christians wrong to seek to leverage the United States’ unique blessings – its tradition of religious liberty, its dedication to freedom and human rights, its economic and cultural power, to name but a few – for the advancement of the Gospel.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Christian Nationalism – A Deeper Look**

Congresswoman Lauren Boebert (R – Colorado) gave voice to this movement: “The church should direct the government. The government is not supposed to direct the church.... I’m tired of this separation of church and state ...”

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2022/09/17/1123508069/religion-christianity-muslim-atheist-agnostic-church-lds-pew>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/how-u-s-religious-composition-has-changed-in-recent-decades/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://washingtoninst.org/making-sense-of-christian-nationalism-part-ii/>

This congresswoman failed to evaluate how the United States Constitution enshrines the concept of church and state separation in the First Amendment. Christian Nationalism insists that religious beliefs must inform public policy for the entire country. This would impose a view that could endanger religious liberty and unique Christian beliefs of many denominations.

The Baptist Church, founded in 1635 by Roger Williams, notes that if you mix religion with politics you end up with politics.<sup>11</sup>

The National Council of Churches considers it vital to abjure the Christian Nationalism movement. It notes that this movement is dangerously characterized by the following religious affirmations that:

- The United States was founded solely as a Christian nation.
- America is exceptional. That is, God has given the United States particular blessings and privileges not available to people in other countries, and the nation must remain Christian in order for those blessings to continue.
- Only Christians are the proper custodians of this nation's heritage.
- Christianity (or a particular form of Christianity) should have privileged status in the United States, particularly in matters of law and political policy.
- Even when their presence is tolerated, people who practice other religions or none cannot be fully American. They are not to be trusted with political and cultural leadership.
- Christians in general and some Christians in particular should enjoy a level of legal protection not granted to those who practice other religions.
- Christians have been made to suffer unjustly, leaving them no alternative but to respond with revolutionary zeal to preserve the United States as a great Christian nation.

"This mindset of ***embattled righteousness*** is applied to the *perceived enemies* of the state (e.g., liberals, humanists, pluralists, atheists, and various minoritized communities) ... [T]rue believers are directed to employ any and all means, even undemocratic, in order to win political contests. In this quest for political power, Christian humility is lost, as is the message of God's love for all humanity."<sup>12</sup>

## **A Difference**

***Patriotism*** is the love of a country. It is defined by loyalty to its founding principles. It promotes activities that improve its operations. It holds its leaders to just and moral standards. Patriots will defend the country from threats to its existence. It supports religious pluralism.

***Nationalism*** stimulates pride within distinct cultural groups that feel compelled to govern the nation. In turn, the government protects those cohesive cultural groups. Other acceptable socially divisible groups must have restrictive boundaries.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://baptistnews.com/article/christian-nationalism-is-a-danger-to-our-nation/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness-ncc/the-dangers-of-christian-nationalism-in-the-united-states-a-policy-statement-of-the-national-council-of-churches/> (emphasis added, editorialized).

Christian Nationalists believe that America must be defined by Christianity. These individuals assert that America must remain Christian as a prescriptive function of government, even as a privileged position in the public square. The parameters of “Christians” have been “Anglo-Protestant.” Catholic interest in bonding with this movement is growing.

### **Perplexing Meaning**

Scholars, close to unanimously, conclude that such nationalism would trend toward authoritarianism and oppressive practice.

“Christian nationalists ... want the government to promote a specific cultural template as the official culture of the country. Some have advocated for an amendment to the Constitution to recognize America’s Christian heritage, others to reinstitute prayer in public schools. Some work to enshrine a Christian nationalist interpretation of American history in school curricula, including that America has a special relationship with God or has been ‘chosen’ by him to carry out a special mission on earth. Others advocate for immigration restrictions specifically to prevent a change to American religious and ethnic demographics or a change to American culture. Some want to empower the government to take stronger action to circumscribe immoral behavior.”<sup>13</sup>

Christian Nationalism uses the name of Christ for a secular political agenda. It is a unique political ideology that assumes this nation will become weaker without this driving force.<sup>14</sup>

Some conclude that this movement lacks a standard definition, permitting it to bundle “white supremacy” or “racism” with standard conservative views on marriage, family, and politics. That has mainly come from left-wing pundits wanting to deface this movement. It appears that the addition of the words “white” or “racist” is used by the media as a rhetorical tool to fragment and silence conservatives. Since Donald Trump’s surprising victory in 2016, a rash of articles, surveys, and books claimed Americans, especially in the flyover country, were Christian Nationalists who really had an anti-American agenda.<sup>15</sup>

The fear that state and/or federal power could subjugate America’s ideals, forcing its citizens into a “Christian” mold, is at the heart of this concern.

1. So many faiths reside here.
2. For secularists, Christianity seems to be political idolatry.
3. To the churched, the minority has a “right” theological identity.
4. To conservative Christians with deep historical Christian roots, nationalism will become a commanding narrative.

With some, the latter is strong enough to weaponize the churches’ mission. “It is a cultural and sociological *given* that America stands for Christian virtues. Christian Nationalism wants to defend that!”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/february-web-only/what-is-christian-nationalism.html>

<sup>14</sup> Miller, Paul D.; *Christianity Today*, “What is Christian Nationalism?”, Feb. 3, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/the-dog-whistle-christian-nationalism>

<sup>16</sup> <https://michellevanloon.com/2020/10/12/review-a-church-called-tov/>

Nationalistic pride can drive the soldier to enter a battle, risking his life. That is often expected when in military service. Many would also lay down their lives for wife, husband, or children. Mark records: *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it”* (Mark 8:35).

Is that a battle cry for Christian Nationalism?

There should be a loyalty to God and country. *Render unto God and country* (Matthew 22:21). A nation is not just an imagined area but a natural social structure with obligations and promises of help. Such a structure was even understood in God’s promises to Abraham: *“I will make of you a great nation”* (Genesis 12).

In the realm, however, of this burgeoning movement, patriotism and nationalism are inappropriately *equated!* Historically, however, when the purpose of a sovereign state becomes spiritual, even redemptive, driven by ostensibly well-meaning Christian leaders, tyranny follows. Ideals must be adhered to by a unified citizenry, or it doesn’t work. That requires force!

A blind “love for one another” will only temporarily cover the foibles of evil. The drive to make a nation the “kingdom of God” will fail. Its ideals [can] cover differences and evil only so long.<sup>17</sup>

### **First Amendment – for Some**

Christian Nationalism makes protection of religious freedom selective and political. This could circumvent the establishment clause of the first Amendment. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

- This would defeat the laws protecting our pluralistic democracy.
- There is no constitutional right to use anyone’s religion to discriminate against another.
- It should never be used as an excuse to mistreat another.<sup>18</sup> Yet, the warning sounds: “America’s precious freedom of religious belief and practice is in danger of being destroyed by those who would force the conscience of the minority to conform to the wishes of the majority.”<sup>19</sup>

This was demonstrated in February 2024, when the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that frozen embryos (not yet implanted in the uterus) are “extrauterine children” who are legally protected as any other child.

Christian views of the sanctity of life were invoked in that decision. Alabama Supreme Court Justice Tom Parker summarized the decision: “(1) God made every person in His image; (2) each person therefore has a value that far exceeds the ability of human beings to calculate;

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/evangelical-history/come-desire-of-nations-christian-nationalism-between-the-two-advents/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://atoday.org/religious-liberty-only-for-some/>

<sup>19</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

and (3) human life cannot be wrongfully destroyed without incurring the wrath of a holy God, who views the destruction of His image as an affront to Himself.”<sup>20</sup>

There are over 600,000 frozen embryos in storage according to the above sources. The implanting of one of these into a woman’s uterus (so she could have a pregnancy) represents approximately 100,000 births each year. If a few cell embryos should die in a physician’s hands (a delicate procedure), would that be murder?

The basis for this radical position comes from the conviction that life and human rights come from God and not any earthly authority. The Declaration of Independence asserts that we are endowed by “our Creator with unalienable rights.”<sup>21</sup>

What rights do embryos have outside of a living, breathing being? Are these laboratory miracle “creations” transcending God’s will? Since these scientific breakthroughs are beyond Biblical anticipation, are the rules of engagement simply opinions or are they an expression of control in the name of “Christianity?”

Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry conducted a major study on Christian Nationalism and published their findings in the book *Taking America Back for God*. A recent review of that book concluded that it “is not about religious revival but power and privilege over society.”

“Our work is one of taking responsibility for this moment and repairing the damage by offering the world a Christianity rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus (rather than a Christianity rooted in racialized and militarized state power).

“The good news is not that Jesus is taking America back for God. Rather, the good news is that Jesus, the Lord of Peace, is at work to create a global ‘fellowship of difference’ (to borrow a phrase from Scot). Indeed, there is only one Christian nation in the world, and that nation is called the *ekklesia* (the church) – it is multi-cultural, borderless, weaponless, and the primary context in which God is at work to pacify enmity between humans and God and humans and one another.”<sup>22</sup>

### **United States – God’s End-Time Israel?**

Historian Allen Guelzo saw Christian Nationalism as a “religious revival ... that would guarantee the success ... [over] liberal democracy.” He notes that Abraham Lincoln saw the American nation as a symbol of a righteous government. Lincoln’s unionism, he concluded, was a past symbol of Christian Nationalism.

- During World War I Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eighth president, believed that God commissioned America to lead the world into a Christian civilization.
- Secretary of State John Foster Dulles’ order helped to forge peace after World War II. Dulles became one of the world’s most powerful diplomats. He often

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/02/20/alabama-supreme-court-frozen-embryos-ruling-ivf/72662533007/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.infowars.com/posts/watch-msnbc-freaks-out-that-christian-nationalists-believe-their-rights-come-from-god/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.christianitytoday.com/scot-mcknight/2020/august/lets-talk-about-christian-nationalism.html>

reminded Americans that theirs was a Christian nation, founded on Christian principles, and a champion of civilization.

The “Christian America Thesis” seems to have been launched when Peter Marshall and David Manuel wrote *The Light and the Glory* in 1977. Hundreds of thousands were sold. They argued that America was God’s new Israel. “Chosen to be a light to the Gentiles.” The tapestry of those ideals birthed the Christian Nationalism movement.

Without religion, the ideals that are necessary to the American project are meaningless, an American Nationalism devoid of religion.<sup>23</sup>

A “conservative” think tank is *plotting* a Christian Nationalist Trump presidency. Russel Vaught, a former member of Trump’s cabinet, is an ally and a “proud” Christian Nationalist, who heads an organization named “Center for Renewing America.”<sup>24</sup> Danger lies ahead.

### **Final Thoughts**

**Conservative Christians’ views are established through persuasion.**

**Christian Nationalists’ views are established through power.**

Christian Nationalism:

- Requires power to function.
- Is fear-based.
- Takes the position that Christianity and American life should coalesce.
- All civic life in the United States should be according to particular tenants within conservative Christianity.<sup>25,26</sup>

In 2021 writer and Christian analogist Michael Brown joined with Dr. Joseph Mattenz, theologian and international Christian leader, and wrote a document recognizing the dangerous trends of Christian Nationalism. The following summation points speak with pristine clarity:

A nation is in spiritual danger when:

1. It wraps the gospel in the American flag (or any national or state flag).
2. It equates our country with the Kingdom of God.
3. It confuses patriotism with spirituality.
4. It compromises our ethics to keep our party (or leader) in power.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://lawliberty.org/features/the-many-faces-of-christian-nationalism/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.thedailybeast.com/conservative-think-tank-plots-a-christian-nationalist-trump-presidency>

<sup>25</sup> <https://anabaptistworld.org/i-was-a-christian-nationalist/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/good-bad-ugly-christian-nationalism/>



5. The church/denomination/ministry becomes an appendage of a political party.
6. It puts more trust in earthly methods than in spiritual methods.
7. It marries the cause of Christ to the cause of a political party (or leader) as if they were one and the same.
8. It becomes vulgar and rude in the political arena.
9. We look to the White House or any branch of government in any nation more than to God.
10. We make a human being into a political savior.
11. We equate loyalty to God (which should be unconditional) with loyalty to a party or political leader (which should be conditional).
12. Our prayers and our prophecies become politically partisan.

Finally, they concluded by contrasting the Kingdom of God with extreme nationalism:

- The Kingdom of God prioritizes the advancement of the gospel. Extreme nationalism prioritizes the advancement of its ideology even at the expense of the gospel.
- The Kingdom of God produces loyalty to Christ above all else. Extreme nationalism produces loyalty to one's nation above all else.
- The Kingdom of God raises the banner of Jesus above all else. Extreme nationalism raises the national flag above all else.
- The Kingdom of God promotes the interests of God above the world. Extreme nationalism promotes the interests of one's nation above the Kingdom.
- The Kingdom of God views the world through a biblical lens. Extreme nationalism views the world solely through a geopolitical lens.
- The Kingdom of God is dependent upon neither an earthly kingdom nor an earthly ruler but upon Jesus as the King of kings (Revelation 19:16). Extreme nationalism is dependent upon the ideology of both an earthly nation and its ruler.
- Followers of the Kingdom of God are passionate about a Christ-centered global awakening. Adherents of extreme nationalism are focused primarily on a political/ideological awakening.
- Christ-followers are primarily identified with the Kingdom of God. Extreme nationalists derive their primary identity from their nation.
- Christ-followers derive their primary value from being children of their heavenly Father (Romans 8:14-17). Extreme nationalists derive their primary value from being citizens of their country.<sup>27</sup>

Prophecy suggests that a form of Christian Nationalism will begin in the United States and spread globally (Revelation 13 – sea and land beast forces). The end will then be in sight.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.christianpost.com/voices/is-christian-nationalism-a-threat-to-democracy.html>

Within that final step: “The law of God, through the agency of Satan, is to be made void. In our land of boasted freedom, religious liberty will come to an end.”<sup>28</sup> A form of selective Dominion Theology will direct what worship means.

To God’s remnant: “The conflict that is right upon us will be the most terrible ever witnessed.”<sup>29</sup> Yet, “*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33).

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<sup>28</sup> *Evangelism*, p. 236.

<sup>29</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 407.