

Christian Nationalism

Five questions used to measure agreement with Christian nationalism:

- The US government should declare America as a Christian nation.
- US laws should be based on Christian values.
- If the US moves away from Christian values we won't be a country any more.
- Being a Christian is an important part of being truly American.
- God has called us to exercise dominion over all areas of American society.

<https://prri.org/research/a-christian-nation-understanding-the-threat-of-christian-nationalism-to-american-democracy-and-culture/> See this website for survey results and further discussion.

Some elements of Christian Nationalism:

- Traditional social hierarchy. Men lead, women follow. Two genders. Large families. Marriage between a man and a woman. Extreme: women should not vote.
- Traditional capitalism. No limits on wealth. Don't care for the poor because that encourages dependency.
- Emphasis on whiteness. White people should rule. Opposed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Education about the realities of racism, sexism etc. are dismissed as wokeness and are unnecessary.
- Authoritarianism. The government knows best and people must obey without question.
- Populism, victimhood, conspiracies. Distrust of science, academia, scholarship, reason, medical research. Government structures are bad and should be destroyed. Criticism of masks for Covid (not for ICE!) and vaccines.

Dominionism or the Seven Mountain Plan

This is a belief influenced by very conservative Reformed theology that Christians need to influence and dominate the seven mountains of culture: Family, Religion, Education, Media, Entertainment, Business and Government.

A Variety of Groups Involved Who Don't Agree on Everything:

- Pentecostals/Charismatics. Leaders are often considered prophets who receive messages from God, often that Trump would win.
- Non-religious people who want less government control, waste, supervision. Musk, DOGE. Project 2026 is related to this although there are religious roots.
- People opposed to public schools who hope to damage the schools and obtain vouchers and funding for private or for-profit schools.
- White supremacists who think America was destined by God to be a white Protestant country. Related: white people who fear that they will be replaced by people of color or Jews.
- People who think American culture/wokeness/diversity is corrupt.

Some Previous Religious Efforts to Reshape Society

Antislavery, Temperance/Prohibition, Progressivism (1900-1920), New Deal, Civil Rights, Bread for the World, Pacifism, Opposition to Vietnam, Critique of Nuclear Weapons. Dangers: these could be paternalistic and arrogant at times.

What Can Christians Offer in Response to Christian Nationalism?

- An emphasis on human dignity and equality and value. In Christian language, this appeals to Gen. 1-2 and the creation of humankind in God's image. In "secular" language it is the [imperfect] recognition in the Dec. of Independence and the Constitution of human dignity and equality and value.
- A recognition of human brokenness, not so much in a shaming and judgmental way, but recognizing that people do not always have the best interests of the whole at heart and will act in selfish ways that need to be checked.
- Asking who benefits from public policies, tax codes, Big Beautiful Bills, etc.
- Asking what the motivations are. Pro-life laws have not always been supportive of the lives of women having miscarriages. Are these laws interested in supporting new lives or in punishing women?
- Humility. Awareness of complexity, limits, different perspectives, blind spots, paternalism, racism.
- The awareness that our culture has lost a common understanding of truth.
- The awareness that our culture has lost a common understanding of virtue and the good life. Greed is good, for example.
- Some awareness of the economic system of the Bible. I'm not advocating going back to that necessarily, but both Testaments encourage sharing and equity. The Israelites were very careful to divide the land equally, and during Jubilee years, people who had lost their land could get it back.
- What does Jesus really say? Feed the hungry, heal the sick. Welcome the stranger, etc.
- Awareness of the dangers of authoritarianism and the fact that people are often drawn to certainty and the people who proclaim it.
- SALT, as in Gretchen's sermon last week. A positive, caring, grace-filled model of what it means to be Christian. A counter to meanness and punishment and deprivation.
- Empathy! Compassion, Kindness, Care.
- Courageous action, writing, speaking. Trying to shine light in dark places.
- Hope.