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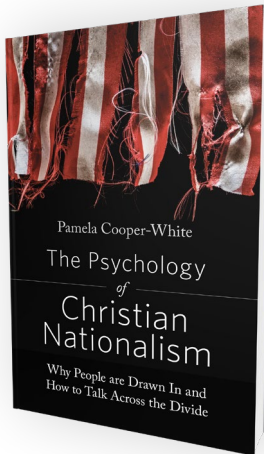
Pamela Cooper-White

Author of *The Psychology of Christian Nationalism*

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Excerpt from *The Psychology of Christian Nationalism: Why People Are Drawn In and How to Talk Across the Divide*

(9781506482118; Fortress Press, May 2022; pp. 41–56)

There are many conscious or at least close-to-the-surface feelings that people can describe about themselves—sometimes quite publicly—to explain why they adhere to Christian nationalist ideas. Prominent among these feelings, which are mutually conducive and mutually reinforcing, are

- evangelization and the need for belonging and a sense of purpose;
- fear of loss of white social status, resentment, and a desire for power;
- fear of loss of patriarchal authority; and
- the irrational allure of conspiracy theories.

In this sample, I will discuss the first two.

The Need for Belonging and Purpose: Surround-Sound Evangelization

The need for belonging is a deep-seated human desire and certainly not unique to Christian nationalists as a group. Nevertheless, it is one of the motivating factors underlying people's attraction to Christian nationalism as a movement. In addition to providing this social connection, which is a basic human need, the movement combines two features that can initially draw people in and then hold them tight: first, a strong sense of spiritual purpose and, second, a means of acting on that sense of purpose by engaging in a battle—even a cosmic battle between good and evil.

From my own observations, most people who become supporters of Christian nationalism do not begin as right-wing political activists first (although political leaders may cynically exploit Christian nationalists for their own white nationalist power campaigns). On the contrary, Christian nationalists start out as Christian first. Especially in the evangelical church realm, they are drawn into community by highly motivated evangelists who use such activities as food pantries to engage people in conversation, turn the conversation toward the ways in which people are hurting, and then in a confiding, personal statement, share how coming to faith transformed their own lives. An invitation follows to come and see what the church is all about: "No pressure, just come and check us out." And many people do.

Leaders who aspired to create megachurches in the 1980s and '90s realized that the next step after getting people in the door was to offer high-octane worship geared toward "seekers." Many smaller, often struggling churches, both evangelical and mainline Protestant, also began to learn from and emulate their approach.

Once in the door, people might find themselves “love bombed” by enthusiastic welcomers or emotionally captivated by the highly professional, theatrical quality of the worship production itself. (More will be said later about megachurches’ emotionally engulfing style of worship.) Surrounded by others with closed eyes and uplifted arms, it is difficult for a newcomer to resist the pull of communal ecstasy and to avoid feeling like part of something much bigger than oneself—something overpowering, warm, and wonderful.

Experts on evangelism also recognize the importance of forming personal relationships as soon as possible. Follow-up phone calls—especially by lay members, not by clergy—plant seeds of friendship and a sense of personal welcome. A 2016 Pew Research Center study determined that having friends or family in the congregation is a key factor in becoming and remaining a member for 45% of older adults and 62% of millennials.¹ This is accomplished by enrolling them into one or a myriad of small groups—many of which have the flavor of self-help groups. Other small groups focus on Bible study or on some form of “discipleship” (i.e., a ministry in the community). Many groups incorporate some combination of all three of these elements. Small-group participation, with its carefully chosen Bible studies and informational curricula, becomes the next step into an inner circle of like-minded friends and is the glue that will keep them coming. In this way, visiting “seekers” become inside “believers.”

All of this works psychologically to provide spiritual thrills that, with enough repetition, create a vibrant sense of community, a feeling of belonging to something special that transcends everyday life. The extent to which the people in the pews are actually inspired to become evangelists on their own is probably fairly limited. But the leaders know that by repeating essentially the same emotionally charged message week after week, amped up by the carefully planned rise and fall and rise again of excitement throughout the service, just getting people in the door a few times is already more than half the battle. For many, consuming Sunday productions, occasional revivals, and/or televangelist programming is enough to keep the fires for Jesus and the political right burning.

Fear of Loss of White Social Status, Resentment, and a Desire for Power

Another significant conscious factor behind white Christian nationalism is fear motivated by a recognition that one’s position at the top of the race hierarchy is being eroded. For average middle-class, working-class, and poor whites, the basic statement “they are taking our jobs” is a common refrain. It originates in, and reinforces, both racism against American-born people of color and anti-immigration xenophobia. While in professional and upper-class settings, anxiety about “letting in too many of *them*” is often cloaked in smooth, obfuscating rhetoric, or accomplished through behind-the-scenes networking, such subtle channels of influence are mostly inaccessible in the lives of average working Americans. Straight talk is what is valued, as is more overt aggression. This was one major reason white Christian nationalists overwhelmingly voted for Trump in 2016. His supporters often said, “He tells it like it is,” and many applaud his most overtly violent (supposedly side) comments.

Economically, for millions of white working-class and poor individuals and families, the “American dream” feels like a bait and switch. Hard work and physical labor no longer elevate large swaths of the population (if they ever did). The transformation of a labor economy to a technology and service economy further punctured the idea that one can, like Horatio Alger, work one’s way up the ladder to success (at least as defined by having enough money to enjoy life as more than a daily grind). The taste of the American dream has soured in the mouths of the working poor, especially those whose ancestors swallowed the myth that, as long as they were white, they still had someone else to look down on (people of color and the “indigent”). Their sense of personal dignity was built on the widely promoted myth of personal willpower and perseverance opening up

¹ David Masci, “What Do Americans Look for in a Church, and How Do They Find One? It Depends in Part on Their Age,” Pew Research Center, August 23, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/23/what-do-americans-look-for-in-a-church-and-how-do-they-find-one-it-depends-in-part-on-their-age/>.

opportunity for all. And there were just enough examples of people who made it from “rags to riches” to make the dream seem attainable.

This sense of futility is another reason so many poor and working-class people continue to idolize Donald Trump.² Ignoring the fact of his privileged upbringing, many believe (erroneously) his carefully constructed image as the kind of rough-talking, self-made man they aspire to be. “He’s one of us,” they conclude—even though he isn’t. The reality is that for any one individual, the odds of leaping up the economic ladder are not much better than winning the lottery. According to the Pew Research Center, “the wealth gap between America’s richest and poorer families more than doubled from 1989 to 2016.”³ According to the US Census Bureau, “By 2018, the [top] 20 percent was earning fully 52 percent of all U.S. income, while the bottom 20 percent, by contrast, only earned 3.1 percent.”⁴ The harsh and enduring truth for most working-class and poor whites is that white privilege mostly applies to wealthy whites already in power and not to those who subsist much lower in the economic pecking order.

This contributes to a feeling among many whites, even in the middle class, that the issue of “white privilege” is a myth fabricated by liberal elites. They do not *feel* privileged but rather see themselves as under siege. A number of economists and social scientists attribute the rural drug crisis, rising alcoholism, severe health disparities, and escalating suicide rates among poor and lower-educated Americans to the despair caused by the transformation of the US economy into “an engine of inequality and suffering.”⁵ From their own point of view, many Trump supporters were not voting against their own self-interest, as so many liberals misunderstood.⁶ They were voting for the promises Trump repeated about returning jobs to American farms and factories, convinced he would make good on them because they mistook his bluntness and bombast for honesty and business acumen.

Since the 17th century, when white slave holders began to separate European slaves from Africans, allowing white indentured servants to work off their debt but leaving African slaves in a state of permanent hereditary subjugation,⁷ many poor and working-class whites have tried to prop up a sense of dignity over and against Blacks. As time went on, what white working-class people also failed to see throughout the decades of Jim Crow and postwar prosperity—or didn’t want to see—is that whatever upward climb they could achieve was on the backs of people of color.

Because of systematic educational, housing, and employment discrimination, Blacks, Asians, Latinx, and Indigenous people have had to keep doing the jobs upwardly mobile white achievers no longer wanted to do. The biggest lie, or bait and switch, is not that white people were sold a bill of goods; it is rather that the story of upward mobility is supposedly for everyone, native-born, immigrant, and people of color alike. But for some, the ladder has always been broken or nonexistent (with the exception of a few granted honorary “white” status as tokens to fill ethnic quotas or jazz up a company’s image and expand its market). For others—a majority of people of color and the indigent poor—there has never been a ladder at all.

² E.g., see Jerrold M. Post with Stephanie Doucette, *Dangerous Charisma: The Political Psychology of Donald Trump and His Followers* (New York: Pegasus, 2019), 121–25.

³ Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, and Rakesh Kochhar, “Trends in Income and Wealth Inequality,” Pew Research Center, January 9, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/>.

⁴ Bandy X. Lee, *Profile of a Nation: Trump’s Mind, America’s Soul* (New York: World Mental Health Coalition, 2020), 91, citing the US Census Bureau’s report “Poverty in the United States.”

⁵ Anne Case and Angus Deaton, *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), cited in Lee, *Profile of a Nation*, 95.

⁶ Joan C. Williams, “What So Many People Don’t Get about the U.S. Working Class,” *Harvard Business Review*, November 10, 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/11/what-so-many-people-dont-get-about-the-u-s-working-class>; see also Joe Bageant, *Deer Hunting with Jesus: Dispatches from America’s Class War* (New York: Three Rivers, 2007).

⁷ “Historical Foundations of Race,” National Museum of African American History and Culture, December 16, 2021, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/historical-foundations-race>.

Angela Denker

Author of *Red State Christians*

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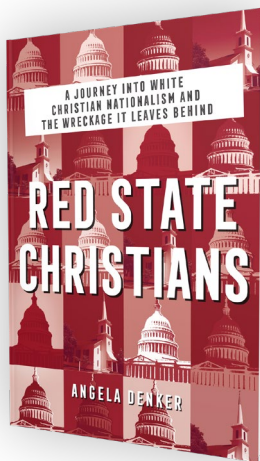


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Excerpt from *Red State Christians: A Journey into White Christian Nationalism and the Wreckage It Leaves Behind*

(9781506482507; Broadleaf Books, August 2022, pp. 11–13, 35–37)

Two years into Trump’s presidency, the Pew Research Council released a new religious typology to categorize American Christians.⁸ Among the 39 percent considered highly religious, 12 percent were called “God and Country Christians,” for whom American conservative values and national Christianity are most important.⁹ You can see this throughout the early twenty-first century at Southern Baptist churches across America, where even Christmas and Easter are subsumed by a sort of civic religion that worships God, Guns, and Country (really, the military), lifting up Veterans Day,

Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July to the same place of honor as religious high holy days.

Donald Trump is no devout Christian; he is no fundamentalist warrior or longtime pro-life activist, as is Vice President Mike Pence. Trump failed the Bible test when asked his favorite passage: “Two Corinthians?” he ventured, failing to realize that the biblical book is referred to as *Second* Corinthians. Trump is no Bible scholar, no pastor, no retreat leader, and no public pray-er, though he often assures his Evangelical fans that he is praying for them and for America.

Trump didn’t know much about the Bible or about Evangelical Christianity. But this new civic religion, popularized in Evangelical churches across America, especially in the South—with its unique blend of nostalgia plus a little misogyny and dog-whistle race politics on the side—well, that Trump understood well. He’d been winking and nodding at it for years, suggesting that Obama is neither an American citizen nor a Christian. Trump learned the lessons that McCain hadn’t. At one of his campaign events, McCain corrected a woman who said Obama was an Arab. Trump would never do such a thing. He understands instinctively the import of the connection between conservatism and Christianity, as well as the mystique of the inherent liberal threat that is not Christian and often not white. The voters who thought Obama was Muslim would be Trump voters,

⁸ “The Religious Typology,” Pew Research Center, August 29, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/ycgr8eka>.

⁹ Pew Research Center, “The Religious Typology.”

and Trump wasn't about to dissuade them.

For most Red State Christians, it didn't matter that Obama was a longtime attendee of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. It didn't matter when he took on the cadence of a black preacher and sang "Amazing Grace" from the pulpit in a service remembering the church massacre in Charleston, South Carolina, where a twenty-one-year-old Lutheran white supremacist gunned down nine African Americans after Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

It didn't matter because for most Red State Christians, Obama was the embodiment of the progressivism that threatened the America they'd known and loved for generations. Their fear, mixed with the sense that they are losing, results in a toxic, jingoistic stew. They were losing the culture wars, losing the young people at church, losing popular opinion, so things like actual church attendance and Bible knowledge mattered less than a politician's ability to catalog their list of perceived cultural wrongs and manufactured fears, like transgender persons using middle-school bathrooms or caravans of unruly migrants storming the southern border. Here Trump was on solid footing.

A movement had begun—quietly, first as a resistance to Obama and progressive politics, then as a reaction to lost culture wars and an attempt to reclaim American identity in the face of perceived retreat. Nationalism, the political lion we thought had died on the battlefields of World War II, had been resurrected, this time with religion mixed in. As churches fought battles with pastors to display the American flag on the altar in front of the cross, Christian Nationalism asserted its dominance on the national stage. In churches across Red State America, Christian Nationalism battled for preeminence with the universal (and not exclusively American) gospel of Jesus Christ.

Much to the consternation of national media, celebrities, and intelligentsia (most located on the coasts), Trump speaks a language that appeals to Red State Christians. I don't know if he understands them, but they definitely understand him. Ultimately, the unlikely love affair between Red State Christians and Trump comes down to a shared *language*.

What is most appealing about Trump to Red State Christians, however, is not his faith but his strength, a sign they see that God is behind Trump's presidency. "His commitment to America

First—we liked that. And he cannot be bullied. He is unafraid. He is unbulliable," [Keet] Lewis [a former national cochair for Senator Ted Cruz's presidential campaign and a formidable player in conservative Texas and national politics] told me in his moneyed Texas drawl, as we stood in front of Prestonwood Baptist Church's massive stage, surrounded by thousands of seats. "There could be implications drawn from that. And that goes into the Deep State, too. He's not obligated to either party, and that's what drives them crazy. He's doing what he said he'd do. None of these guys ever do what they say they're going to do. I've been working in politics for thirty years."

Lewis credits Cruz with negotiations that helped secure Trump's Supreme Court picks, saying that in order for Cruz to endorse Trump, the Trump campaign had to agree that he'd make public the Federalist Society's list of Supreme Court picks and promise that he'd make a choice from that list. Lewis said that Trump's campaign manager, Paul Manafort, who has since been convicted of tax fraud, balked at the idea, but when Manafort was replaced by Kellyanne Conway, she accepted. Minutes later, Cruz endorsed Trump.

Lewis offered a defense of Trump that seemed almost apologetic at times. "We had to choose the best of what's offered," added Lewis's wife, Margaret, who had been standing nearby during our conversation. "If Christians don't engage, we don't have a voice. If Christians show up and vote, we win." If Christians vote, they agreed, it is a boon for Republicans. The idea of Christians being influenced by their faith to vote Democratic was to them unimaginable, and I was reminded again of the organization gap between conservative Christians and liberal Christians, who not so long ago held political power and influence via mainline denominations.

Notably, Lewis admitted that many Christians voted for Obama in 2008; he was unique among the conservative leaders I interviewed to make such an admission. "But when it came to round two, they didn't," he

said, adding that he could see the huge tide of conservatism rising in 2010, largely ignored by the Democratic leadership, whose members were clustered in large cities and on the East and West Coasts.

Lewis is devoted to the idea that Trump is on a spiritual pilgrimage, and you can see how men like him—well off, white, older—might relate to a rehabbed, born-again Christian experience, excusing Trump for the type of behavior that they abhorred in Bill Clinton. Clinton never had the “come to Jesus moment” that many Red State Christians ascribe to Trump, despite the lack of concrete evidence of a conversion experience.

While many liberal Americans watch news networks and read articles decrying the lack of empathy in Trump’s policies and his indecorous language, conservatives are reading stories about Trump’s nascent Christianity. Lewis is convinced that Trump is researching his ancestral home in Scotland, where they held an Evangelical revival in 1948, because he wants to trace his Presbyterian faith background. I saw in Keet Lewis what I saw in so many Trump-supporting Christians I interviewed, from the halls of power in Washington to the hollers of Appalachia: a desire to “make Trump good,” a sense that they know that all is not right yet desperately want to believe that God has won in Trump, so they make all sorts of leaps. Despite these mental gymnastics regarding Trump, Lewis has a genuine love for Jesus and a desire that America might follow the Bible, at least as he understands it.

John Fanestil

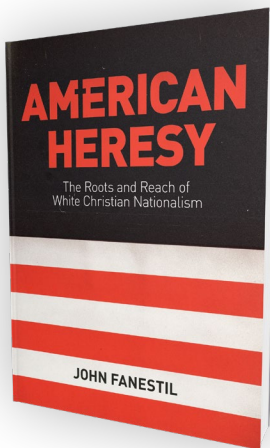
Author of *American Heresy*

JOHN FANESTIL holds a PhD in American history from the University of Southern California and studied as a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford. Fanestil's previous books include *Mrs. Hunter's Happy Death* (Doubleday, 2006) and *One Life to Give* (Fortress, 2021). An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, Fanestil serves as executive director of Via International, a nonprofit serving border communities in San Diego and Tijuana.



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Excerpt from *American Heresy: The Roots and Reach of White Christian Nationalism*

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To understand the revolutionaries in full dimension, then, we must accept that their aspirations were shaped by more than what today we comfortably characterize as secular concerns. We must take them on their own terms, which means taking them seriously as religious, as well as political and economic, actors. The revolutionary movement was inherently, intrinsically, both religious and political at the same time, and successive generations of Americans institutionalized and memorialized the Revolution as the fulfillment of this double destiny.

Instead of asking, “Was the US founded as a Christian nation?” it is more important to ask, “What role did religion play in the founding of the United States?” And even more critical is the necessary follow-up: “And what kind of religion was it?” These questions broaden the field of inquiry beyond the formal and institutional, challenging us to consider the cultural and spiritual inheritance that the founders bequeathed to their descendants, the people called “Americans.”

In response to this line of inquiry, most students of American history will rightly think of the “natural law tradition,” which leading revolutionaries conjured so frequently by invoking the writings of John Locke. But this tradition was by no means the dominant religious view in revolutionary America, and even those who embraced it did not understand themselves in doing so to be abandoning a larger stream of Christian thought and practice that prevailed among their peers. This larger stream was early English Protestantism, several branches of which had been transplanted by English colonists in North America across the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Through the middle decades of the eighteenth century, leading colonists found ways to forge bonds of solidarity across these many branches. The result was the flowering of a new Protestant vernacular that in many ways amounted to its own religious tradition. This American brand of early English Protestantism was fundamentally oppositional. It encouraged the devout to think of the life of faith as a perpetual spiritual battle, over and against an array of dark and sinister forces conspiring to extinguish American—which was to say Protestant—liberty. It took pride in fighting the good fight and considered dying for a sacred cause the very pinnacle of human achievement. It was rooted in a sense of providential destiny that encouraged many, perhaps most, to think of “American” as a religious and ethnic, as well as nationalist, identity.

In short, the American founding stemmed as much from the worldview of John Foxe, the early English martyrologist, as it did from the worldview of John Locke. The founders of the United States bequeathed this spiritual inheritance to their descendants—and to all of us who call ourselves white and American.

In a prior book, born from my curiosity about the revolutionary martyr Nathan Hale, I described this spiritual inheritance, in moral and spiritual terms, as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can inspire a profound sense of purpose and destiny, imbued with the dimension of the divine, rendering us capable of extraordinary sacrifice for causes greater than ourselves. This same inheritance, however, predisposes us to absolutize our every conflict and to demonize our every perceived enemy.

In this book I have used a different metaphor: the religious roots of the American experiment run deep, and their reach extends powerfully into our present life as a nation. From these religious roots still spring both sweet and bitter fruits. The sweet fruits—order, purpose, progress, innovation, liberty, and patriotism—are widely available and rightly celebrated in the United States today. Despite the fact that these fruits are not distributed fairly or shared equally, people from around the world still come to the United States in search of them, and many find them far more plentiful here than they were in the lands from which they came. But the bitter fruits—violence, nostalgia, racism, propaganda, conspiratorial thinking, and nationalism—also remain powerfully present in our public life. They continue to feed the demon that is white Christian nationalism, a Christian heresy.

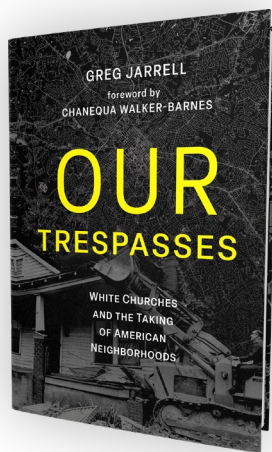
Greg Jarrell

Author of *Our Trespasses*

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Excerpt from *Our Trespasses: White Churches and the Taking of American Neighborhoods*

(9781506494920; Fortress Press, February 2024; pp. 136–139)

By 1965, First Baptist had spent years constructing and carefully curating their world around silence. They offered tacit acceptance of the political and economic world around them, including the violent domination system of white supremacy. The specter of silence kept them taciturn for generations. In the Gospel story from Mark 9, Jesus asks the boy's father how long the specter has afflicted the boy. "Since birth," the father replies, but he clarifies the effects of this silencing-as-social-haunting. "Help us," the father begs. The story is political. The specter moves across generations, forward and backward, disjoined from a linear progression of time. It

casts itself forward to the seventh generation; it flings itself backward for as long or more.

The story operating within First Baptist contained theological and political strategies that reproduced the silencing specter across more generations. One of the strategies to justify the coming trespass was the un-naming of their new place. Naming and renaming are one part of a strategy of conquest in settler-colonial regimes. By disregarding or changing a place name, a dominant group exerts power over how the place is remembered. It claims the authority to tell the official story.¹⁰ In the extant public communications from FBC, the word Brooklyn was only used a single time.¹¹ Instead, they called the area the "Urban Redevelopment Area." Only the "re-" in redevelopment hinted that the land was full of stories, filled with the memories of Brooklyn neighbors and of the Catawba and Sugaree people who lived there before there was a thing called Charlotte. FBC flattened the specificities and intimacies of the space into two letters, an R and an E. Nothing else remained. No story, no other Baptists, no other Christians, no persimmon trees, no school, no funeral home for the weeping, no juke joint for the reveler, no history of struggle, no artists or restaurateurs or preachers or hairstylists or builders or janitors or insurance agents or bank presidents or diplomats, no Abram and Annie North. Brooklyn was only generic government excess land, a place without a name, *tabula rasa* in

¹⁰ David Day, *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) is an exploration of the social, political, and geographical strategies by which societies conquer others in ventures to expand their territory. On "Claiming by Naming," see 49–68. See also Pekka Pitkanen, *A Commentary on Numbers: Narrative, Ritual, and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2018), 40–50.

¹¹ The occurrence happens in the announcement of a Future Program Committee forum in *Church Voice*, June 25, 1964. *Church Voice* was the newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Charlotte.

search of its Manifest Destiny.

When [Carl] Bates selected Numbers 13 as the Scripture text for the morning of the decisive vote, he made a theological decision that both reflected the congregation's past formation and reproduced that formation into future generations. He had himself been formed by his education at a Southern Baptist seminary, and by the institutions that supported his ministry, to read himself and his congregation into the biblical story in a strange way.

Eighteen months prior, Bates positioned himself as a Moses-like figure, leading his flock toward a "promised land." His people rejected his advice then, but Bates returned to the same source domain of metaphors and characters to instruct and inspire his people. In the story of the morning from the Bible's book of Numbers, Israel's long journey has taken them from the patriarchal promise made to Abram, into four centuries of slavery in Egypt, through liberation from Pharaoh, and into years of circling the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. In Numbers 13, the Israelites arrive at the borderlands of Canaan. The narrative portion of the Bible's first epic story is nearing its conclusion.

At the border of Canaan, Moses gives instructions to twelve men to go and spy out the land. Forty days later, the spies return. Along with them, they bring a cluster of grapes so large that it requires two men to carry it on poles stretched out between them (v. 23). The land, they said, "flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit" (v. 27). However, the reconnaissance team reports an issue: "The people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large" (v. 28). The problem is of huge proportion—those they saw were like giants, and to them the Israelites were but grasshoppers. All the people cry out loudly. They will have to turn back.

Caleb, one of the spies, encouraged the people to attempt conquest of the land anyway by saying, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it" (v. 30, italics mine).

"We are well able," Caleb told Moses and the people. Bates echoed Caleb. The advance team had already looked out from the First Union building. They had reported back, Bates was saying, and FBC was more than able to conquer this place. "We are well able to build the church of tomorrow in this city,"¹³ he said. "We are able financially. . . . We are able spiritually. . . . We are able historically."¹²

Bates read the story upside-down. He told his people that they were like a formerly enslaved, landless people wandering the wilderness and relying on God to work miracles for them to have a home. Nothing about the material conditions at FBC suggested any parallel with the Israelites. Bates could have been primed to see the injustice his church was participating in—he had grown up in a family of sharecroppers. Was he still driven by a childhood narrative of scarcity despite his present reality? For the first time in the record, Bates indicated some missionary purpose for FBC in their movement within the city. They were to be part of God's salvific plan for Charlotte, able to do "what no other church of any single denomination is now planning to do . . . God alone knows the end of the spiritual impact which shall be ours on the life of this city," he said. FBC's move stood in the legacy of white Christians who "joined visions of salvation to ideas of the transformation of lands and peoples and together formed visions of Christian missions," as theologian Willie Jennings has identified. "Whiteness formed at this joining."¹⁴

Bates's sermon wove together the tangled theology of Urban Renewal. On the one hand, the program and those who ran it in Charlotte and around the country operated from the legal and moral precedents established by the Doctrine of Discovery. Those complementary political and theological doctrines asserted

¹² FBC business meeting notes, February 28, 1965, 147H–I. The notes from that day appear to be a direct transcript of the meeting. The section cited does not have a heading indicating it is formally Bates's sermon, but it appears to be that. The notes claim that there is an audio recording, but I am unable to locate it.

¹³ FBC business meeting notes, February 28, 1965, 147H.

¹⁴ Jennings, "Can White People Be Saved?" in *Can "White" People Be Saved? Triangulating Race, Theology, and Mission*, ed. Love L. Sechrest, Johnny Ramirez-Johnson, and Amos Young (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018), 33.

the right to land and space by people who fit the category “white.” It is easy to see that doctrine operating across the program. Based on Discovery, whites had the right, or even the duty, to use their strength to subdue land and people. Doing so was not only a statement of political power but also an act of Christian charity. Every step that led to FBC’s move was consistent with this doctrine.

On the other hand, Bates was encouraging his congregation to see in themselves not strength but weakness. The words of Caleb that formed Bates’s refrain—“we are well able”—were spoken as exhortation to a politically weak people. Nothing about Israel’s situation indicated that they could conquer a land or a people. They had lived in precarity for many generations. Bates was genuinely caught up in the idea that FBC’s move was part of God’s work in the world. It was providential, an act of divine favor, not a manner of acting inside the legacy of white Christians taking and remaking places for their own purposes. “This is an open door which our Lord has set before us. We couldn’t have done this,” he said.¹⁵ In Bates’s words, and in the entire scenario at First Baptist, you can see “the way that race has persistently infiltrated and distorted Christian discernment of the work of divine Providence in the modern world.”¹⁶ Providence, as it often can be, was not so much God’s work in the world as simple self-justification.

Bates, with the work of Vernon Sawyer years before him, showed just how awry the theo-political moment had gone. First Baptist, the Charlotte Redevelopment Commission, and the municipal power of the City of Charlotte reproduced yet again the Doctrine of Discovery, using might to claim dominion over space. As they did, they claimed that God was choosing the politically weak—namely, the people of Friendship and of the whole Brooklyn neighborhood—to undergo redemptive suffering while playing the part of the strong. Friendship, Sawyer had said, was to “lead the city at this crucial hour.” And yet still, Bates and FBC and the whole system of power in the City of Charlotte advanced the idea that God was also choosing the politically strong at First Baptist to play the part of the weak, thus justifying the entire program as the miraculous work of God in renewing the world.

¹⁵ FBC business meeting notes, February 28, 1965, 147H.

¹⁶ Matt R. Jantzen, *God, Race, and History: Liberating Providence* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 17.

Bradley Onishi

Author of *Preparing for War*

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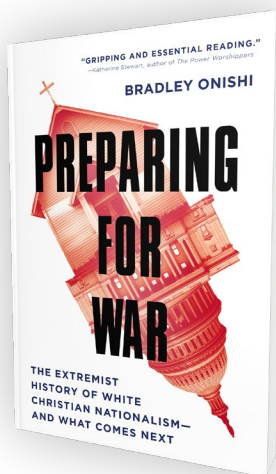
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Excerpt from *Preparing for The Extremist History of White Christian Nationalism—and What Comes Next*

(9781506482163; Broadleaf Books, January 2023; pp. 111–115)

Christian Nationalism: The Original Purity Culture

The singular obsession of purity culture is, of course, the body. As a teenager, I was taught that disciplining my mind and flesh were of the utmost importance to remaining pure. Any sexual thought was considered “adultery in your heart,” meaning that a lustful glance, a sexual urge, or even an extended hug could be on par with cheating on one’s future spouse. Always the zealot, I ritually removed any sexually explicit images from our household, including bikini ads from surfing magazines and the yearly swimsuit edition of *Sports Illustrated*. Girls in our youth

group were taught to wear modest clothing in order to prevent leading boys and men into sexual temptation. We were all instructed to avoid being alone together, to exercise regularly in order to expend energy and ward off arousal, and to do everything possible to avoid touching ourselves or others in any sexual way.

When I think of my own experience with purity culture in the context of Dobson’s theology and politics, it leads me to a simple yet startling conclusion: *Christian nationalism is America’s original purity culture*. It is the vehicle for constructing a “pure” nation and society. In its essence, purity culture is a projection of all the gendered, racial, and societal fears that White Christian nationalists harbor onto the canvas of teenage flesh. The wager is that if we can discipline the virile teenage body into submission to a patriarchal, heteronormative, and often racialized mode of being, then those bodies will be the foundation of a rightly ordered national body. By tracing the roots of Dobson’s family values to Popenoe’s eugenicist project and Gilder’s patriarchal views of sex, marriage, and civilization, we can see that purity culture was cultivated in a decades-long culture war waged by White Christian men against people of color, women, and queer folks.

This is the argument my podcast cohost Daniel Miller makes in *Queer Democracy: Desire, Dysphoria, and the Body Politic*. Throughout the book, Miller shows that for millennia, the body has been a metaphor for how people groups and nations have envisioned their collective character and virtue. In other words, most countries and communities imagine their collective self as looking a certain way—as having a certain type of

body. The nation-as-body metaphor is centuries old. Christian nationalists envision the American social body as straight, White, Christian, native born (and thus English speaking), and patriarchal. When White Christian nationalists imagine the “real American,” they think of John Wayne or Donald Trump or Nancy Reagan, a woman who abides by patriarchal norms. They do not imagine Barack Obama, Kamala Harris, or Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, much less a trans teenager of color or a queer immigrant. Their model American looks a certain way and has a certain body. Its phenotype, sexuality, gender, and religious practice are rolled into a singular vision of the American anatomy.

“American Christian nationalism therefore expresses a desire for a return to a mythologized social and political order,” Miller writes.¹⁷ In other words, White Christian nationalists want to reimpose on the nation a hierarchy in which “real Americans occupy positions of social and political authority while all other, merely nominal, Americans properly occupy subordinate places within it.” It’s not that people of color and immigrants aren’t allowed here. It’s just that they need to know their place in the American *corpus*. To extend the body metaphor here: they are subordinate members who take orders from the central nervous system, frontal cortex, and other executive organs and parts. If they try to topple this order and become a central part of the American physique—or worse, become the commander in chief of its armed forces like Obama did when he was elected president—the White Christian nationalist will view the American body as out of whack. It will “feel” like something is wrong—as if there is a sickness plaguing the nation.

Within the White Christian nationalist imagination, pluralism and multiculturalism, and the expansion of representation and civil rights to minoritized groups, writes Miller, “[represent] the American social body’s monstrous and grotesque transmogrification.”¹⁸ For White Christian nationalists, gains made by historically excluded constituencies don’t represent the expansion of freedom but the ruining of the American body. Their goal becomes reshaping society into the model they feel is right. “Christian nationalism therefore represents a socially dysphoric effort to preserve or reinstate real Americans’ position atop the American-national hierarchy,” Miller argues.¹⁹

Viewing themselves as the “real Americans,” then, White Christian nationalists feel entitled to occupy the top of the social and political hierarchies throughout the country. They see it as “natural” that White Christians would maintain power up and down the political and social systems. This corresponds to the ways Dobson and his predecessors envisioned the “natural” family as a heterosexual, patriarchal unit designed by God. Purity culture, inspired by Dobson and the “family values” movements, maps directly onto Christian nationalists’ understanding of the natural order of the American social body as a straight, White, Christian male who holds dominion over all aspects of the nation. “The historical privileging of those recognized as embodying the idealized prototype of the ‘real’ American is presented as a natural occurrence, giving the American national body its ‘natural’ shape,” Miller writes. In that sense, he says, “contemporary departures from its normative contours can only be ‘unnatural’ and, therefore, pathological.”²⁰

What happens when historically excluded groups such as BIPOC communities, LGBTQ individuals, and feminists begin to change the shape of the American social body by working toward greater civil rights and legal protections? Christian nationalists experience this as the pollution of the American body—the introduction of impurities into the national DNA in a way that will lead to its destruction. This is why Miller calls Christian nationalism a “socially dysphoric reaction to the queerness of the American social body.” Any deviation from the straight, White, male Christian makeup of the national body image is felt and seen as social body dysphoria. In other words, it feels like the soul of the nation isn’t lining up with its body. It also explains

¹⁷ Daniel Miller, introduction to *Queer Democracy: Desire, Dysphoria, and the Body Politic* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

¹⁸ Miller, introduction to *Queer Democracy*.

¹⁹ Miller, *Queer Democracy*, chap. 5.

²⁰ Miller, *Queer Democracy*, chap. 5.

why White Christian nationalists often feel as if something is “wrong” before they can put words to their discomfort.

Seen through this lens, the purity culture movement that shaped my teenage years can be understood as an attempt to regulate the national social anatomy through the regulation of White teenage bodies. Our sexual purity was the road back to a pure America—the right America. Dobson consistently links the fate of the nation to the sexual regulation of teenagers because, in his mind, the next generation must be molded into the proper social form in order for he and other Christian nationalists to win “the civil war of values.”²¹

²¹ See Dobson’s lecture, “A Civil War of Values,” given at Prestonwoods Baptist Church, accessed December 2021, <https://www.dobsonlibrary.com/resource/audio/7d5962a1-f4e6-49f4-995e-9b0f8f2b640c>.

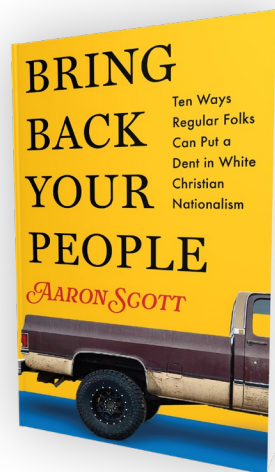
Aaron Scott

Author of *Bring Back Your People*

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Excerpt from *Bring Back Your People: Ten Ways Regular Folks Can Put a Dent in White Christian Nationalism*

(9781506494555; Broadleaf Books, January 2025; pp. 37–41)

What are the dangers of White Christian nationalism going unchecked?

History's answer to that question is littered with bodies: the Trails of Tears, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the Shoah. If you picked up this book, your mind is probably already going down those roads a bit—and rightly so. New headlines every morning point that way, from the wave of states banning medical care for trans youth to surging Patriot Front activity.

But here is a version of that question that might seem weird or counterintuitive:

What is the danger to [your proverbial cousin] Randy of White Christian nationalism going unchecked?

I'm not asking this question because Randy is more important or special or deserving of life and dignity than people who are even worse off and in greater danger than he is. Nope, not that. I'm putting this question out there because White Christian nationalism will win if we cannot answer it.

I can't tell whether it's fear or loathing, but there's definitely a deep-seated something among liberals that makes them recoil when I say, "You need to bring your cousin Randy to this party." I'm not saying you need to make nice with him or pretend to agree with him; quite the opposite. I'm saying that ceding Randy and forgoing engagement with him because he's "problematic" is handing him over, gift-wrapped with a sparkly bow, to White Christian nationalism.

Does that mean that you should invite Randy over for a beer and then proceed to yell at him for two hours straight about all the ways he's wrong? No. This is also a doomed strategy. But—short of Randy having been pulled so far into the QAnon swirl that you legitimately fear for your safety around him—there is still ground to be gained in maintaining your relationship through real listening. Progressives often come across like they're afraid they'll give credence to White Christian nationalism merely by being within thirty feet of Randy, let alone listening to him talk about his longings and ideas. Believe me when I say, from very personal experience, that treating someone like a contaminant is not going to endear you or your beliefs to them. Especially if that person is facing real struggles.

Randy isn't a more important part of the struggle for justice than any other demographic. But due to lack of progressive investment and organizing in Randyland, he represents a seriously underdeveloped front of struggle. And that's a problem, because most of America (by square mile) is Randyland.

It's also a problem because Randyland holds vastly disproportionate sway over our electoral system. But

the vast majority of Randys in those broad swaths of Randyland are not presently organized. The big red blotches on our electoral maps don't actually represent a high level of engaged, politicized, empowered Randys. Rather, they most often represent areas with deep poverty along with high levels of voter intimidation, voter suppression, and low rates of voter registration and turnout. Red counties and red states are not as "unwinnable" as the Democratic Party has lazily framed them up to be. They are uncontested and unorganized.

And there's a "sleeping giant," as we say in the Poor People's Campaign, within those regions. There's a whole army of Randys, Brandys, and Andys with everything to gain in countering White Christian nationalism.

YOU: Like what?

ME: How about not dying in poverty before they reach retirement age?

Case in point: West Virginia, at 93.5 percent White, is consistently ranked in the top five poorest states and has some of the lowest voter turnout in the nation. What if poor White West Virginians, en masse, saw poor Black West Virginians, and poor West Virginian immigrants, and other dispossessed West Virginians not as enemies but as people with whom they have common cause? What might happen then? This isn't a pie-in-the-sky question, either; it's one that countless West Virginians themselves are pushing forward through their own organization with groups like the West Virginia Poor People's Campaign, West Virginia Can't Wait, Keeper of the Mountains, and more.

A lot of people think poor folks are powerless. A lot of people think poor folks are ignorant. A lot of people think poor folks are poor because they've made morally wrong choices. This is pretty much how people talk about Randy. It's also basically the same narrative America spews about poor people across racial lines, across history. Of course, there's always some fairytale of a "good" or "exceptional" type of poor person, propped up in the media or in our churches, basically as a way to smear the rest of us and say we got what we deserved.

Why is it so essential in this society for the wealthy (and the politicians who serve them) to keep poor people down? Not just materially but also psychologically and socially? Easy: they're scared of us.

Here's the thing about poor people that scares the shit out of White Christian nationalism: there's more of us, and our ranks are growing. What poor people are going through today is coming for the rest of the country tomorrow. In other words, most Americans are gonna have to figure out how to survive like poor Americans have all this time. Our economy has been undergoing—and will only continue to undergo—big economic transformations, from outsourcing, to globalization, to automation. We live in a downwardly mobile economy, and the free fall to the bottom is speeding up daily. It's getting harder and harder to hide that reality.

And this is where our power lies—if we can come together despite all the traps set to turn us against each other.

White Christian nationalism's trap for poor people says, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. See those queers over there? Those transgender people? Those baby killers? Those junkies? Those criminals? Those freeloaders? They're the reason your life is shitty. Any policy and politician not attacking them is attacking you."

There are a lot of ways we, as poor people, fall for this lie. Sometimes we fall for it by voting for politicians who ape a working-class aesthetic and racist dogwhistling while passing policies that further immiserate our communities. Sometimes we fall for it by consuming media that plays into these same biases and further brainwashes us into thinking that anyone at the top has our interests in mind. Sometimes we fall for it by turning on other poor people: our relatives struggling with addiction, our neighbors who are already living on the street while we're still one paycheck away.

And sometimes we fall for it by turning on ourselves, believing the lies constantly told about our immorality and our undeservingness.

But what's more important than anything is that sometimes we don't fall for it. Sometimes, and this happens more often than anyone in power wants you to know, even Randy himself ain't falling for it.

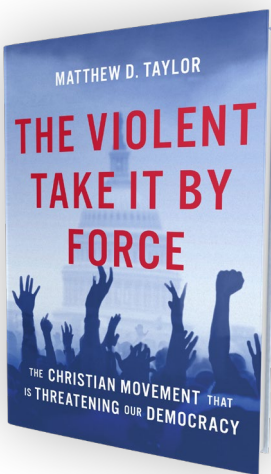
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Author of *The Violent Take It by Force*

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Excerpt from *The Violent Take It by Force: The Christian Movement That Is Threatening Our Democracy*

(9781506497785; Broadleaf Books, September 2024, pp. 6–13)

Beyond the Capitol Riot and its Independent Charismatic Christian instigators, this is a book about a series of tectonic shifts that have occurred in recent decades, a subterranean yet exceedingly significant revolution in the leadership of the religious right in America. We will explore this little understood world of Independent Charismatic Christianity, an ethos and a segment of evangelicalism that is rapidly expanding both nationally and globally. Through interviews with dozens of NAR [New Apostolic Reformation] and other Independent Charismatic leaders, some of

whom were there on January 6, and through archival research, I have gained an unprecedented level of access to how they understand themselves, the relational and social dynamics among these leaders, and what motivates them.

Many observers are accustomed to sorting American Christianity into simple buckets such as Catholic, evangelical, mainline Protestant, Historically Black Protestant, and Orthodox. But as I'll lay out with more complexity in the first chapter, the world of the Pentecostal-charismatic, sometimes just called *charismatic*, movements overlaps with all those categories. In conversations with some American religion reporters, several of them have told me that these Pentecostal-charismatic folks are the most difficult to write about and report on because, while demographically sizable and important, they hold supernatural beliefs and practice a mystical spirituality that is peculiar and virtually unintelligible to outsiders.

And even within the *mélange* of Pentecostals and charismatics, the action of this book takes place among the amorphous nondenominational segment of charismatic Christianity, where there are few boundaries or overarching institutions. This is a distinct subculture *within* the evangelical subculture—the realm of nondenominational megachurches, of televangelism channels, of prophecy conferences, of healing revivals and prosperity gospel preachers, of free-range evangelists and exorcists. Starting in the 1980s, some leaders in this Independent Charismatic sector began arguing that God is reconstituting the early-church roles of apostles and prophets to lead the modern church, giving rise to what we can call the Apostolic and Prophetic

movement, a speedily growing global trend of nondenominational churches aligning themselves with these apostles and prophets. The NAR is one set of networks—the most influential and controversial one—within that global Apostolic and Prophetic movement.

The Violent Take It by Force tells the story of how a cohort of respected NAR leaders embraced the candidacy of Donald Trump early on in the 2016 election cycle. By constructing creative theologies and biblical rationales for supporting a debauched real-estate mogul, they prodded and harnessed the latent power of a previously politically disjointed Independent Charismatic world. These seemingly fringe theologies—some with catchy titles like the Seven Mountain Mandate or the Cyrus Anointing—have leached into broader American evangelicalism, engendering aggressive and chauvinistic visions of Christian supremacy.

The events I describe in these pages have brought about a sea change in the leadership of right-wing Christianity in America. Independent Charismatic leaders, who twenty years ago would have been mocked by mainstream religious right leaders, are now frontline captains in the American culture wars. Amid the 2016 campaign and Trump's victory, George W. Bush's former chief of staff, Andrew Card, commented that "the rug of American politics used to have more rug than fringe. Today, the rug seems to have little rug and a lot of fringe."²² Card was describing the radicalization of politics on the right in general, but we could use the same analogy to describe the radicalization and charismaticization of the religious right. Indeed, by the time Trump was inaugurated and running the country, the fringe had become the carpet.

My narrow focus on what used to be the evangelical fringe—Independent Charismatics and the NAR—is not intended to excuse or exonerate broader American evangelicalism for its authoritarian turn. Rather, it is to narrate the route by which a once purportedly principled and values-driven evangelical religiopolitical movement became obsessed with an autocratic and principleless individual. These are the leading-edge charismatic pastors and leaders who threw open the doors of evangelicalism to Trump. They have served as the early adopters, most ardent advocates, and die-hard avengers of Christian Trumpism. And the NAR leaders' militant theologies, violent rhetoric, and Christian mobilization efforts were inextricable from the happenings at the Capitol Riot.

As someone who grew up proximal to this NAR movement and who has the theological and academic background to make some sense of it, I felt a certain responsibility to write this book. My analysis is rooted in the disciplines of religious studies, theology, and history, and I make every effort to be even-handed. But these pages do not contain some dispassionate, arm's-length rendering. The book's very title should signal that I am out to warn against these ideas and the hyper-politicization of charismatic theology as a civic menace to American democracy. Yet I do not disdain these leaders. Given my background, I sympathize and even, on some level, identify with the NAR leaders and followers. I know how electrifying and life-altering an exciting new theological paradigm or charismatic experience can be. I understand how perceived manifestations of the supernatural—as mediated through truly captivating and talented human beings—can inspire deep-seated devotion.

If you read what critics write online about the NAR, you'll soon discover ill-informed opinions galore. Some people depict the NAR leaders as a kind of charismatic Illuminati, spookily manipulating American politics. Some Christians think the NAR leaders are heretics, others a cult. Still other commentators will say that the NAR leaders are frauds—hucksters out to grab power and money. I disagree with all these assessments. The NAR, and the broader Independent Charismatic arena in which it operates, offers a very plausible, popular, and even evangelical interpretation of Christianity. You will find the characters of this book citing the Bible with a facility and familiarity that rival most other Christian leaders. To many of their followers and fans, the characters of this book have unparalleled access to the mind and power of God.

²² Nikita Bakhru, "Leadership Lessons from Former White House Chief of Staff, Andrew Card," Dartmouth College—Rockefeller Center, November 2016, <https://rockefeller.dartmouth.edu/news/2016/11/leadership-lessons-former-white-house-chief-staff-andrew-card>.

My hope is to humanize these leaders—in both directions. That is, to their admirers and devotees, I try to situate them historically, locating their ideas and their supernatural claims within the realm of social forces and human motivations. But to their legion of critics, I'm also attempting to make intelligible a set of beliefs, practices, and ambitions that frequently seem bizarre to the uninitiated. I hope by the end of this book, you both understand what motivates the NAR leaders and recognize the grave peril their theological vision poses to pluralism and democracy in the United States and around the globe.




In this book, we'll ask: How does a group of talented, intelligent, and very capable people get religiously and politically radicalized? How do they come to believe they are God's anointed leaders in our time, hearing directly from God and battling against the devil? How do millions of people trust such leaders, even to the point of mobilizing to storm the US Capitol? And could they do it again?

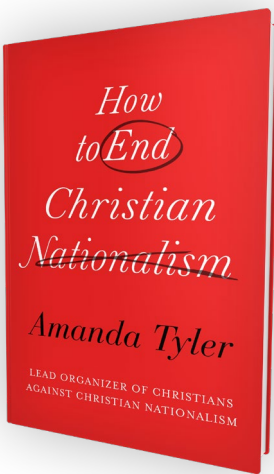
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Excerpt from *How to End Christian Nationalism*

(9781506498287; Broadleaf Books, October 2024; pp. 126–129)

Patriotism and Nationalism

Taking again our definition of Christian nationalism—the merging of American and Christian identities—gets us to the question of patriotism. Patriotism itself is not inherently a problem; rather, the ways in which it is misunderstood and used to silence dissent and insist on conformity are problems.

Patriotism is a love of country. People express patriotism in both symbolic and substantive ways. Waving an American flag, voting and helping others to vote, and exercising First Amendment rights are all ways that one can express a healthy sense of patriotism. Patriotism is also not forced. One is not required to love one's country.

Nationalism is an extreme form of patriotism that demands a position of superiority over all other allegiances. Inherent in nationalism are authoritarian tendencies that require conformity. Nationalism demands ultimate and unquestioning allegiance. There is no room for dissent or disagreement.

In her book *This America: The Case for the Nation*, scholar and historian Dr. Jill Lepore gives this helpful explanation on the divergence between patriotism and nationalism: “By the early decades of the twentieth century, with the rise of fascism in Europe, nationalism had come to mean something different from patriotism, something fierce, something violent: less a love for your own country than a hatred of other countries and their people and a hatred of people within your own country who don’t belong to an ethnic, racial, or religious majority.” The difference between the two is stark, she writes: “Patriotism is animated by love, nationalism by hatred. To confuse the one for the other is to pretend that hate is love and fear is courage.”ⁱ

How can you tell the difference between patriotism and nationalism? One way is to ask yourself: Does my patriotism require me to minimize or sacrifice my theological convictions or my commitment to the way of Christ? If so, it's not patriotism; it's nationalism. While our faith should certainly inform our political activism, the mission of the church should remain distinct from the domestic and foreign policies of the United States. When we align our identities as Americans and Christians to the point that there is no discernible difference between the two, we lose the ability to critique the actions of the state.

ⁱ Jill Lepore, *This America: The Case for the Nation* (New York: Liveright, 2019), 23.

It's also important to note that not all nationalism is as obvious and egregious as what I witnessed at ReAwaken America. Much of Christian nationalism is more subtle—and thus, arguably, even more pernicious. “In God We Trust” appears on our currency. “Under God” was added to the pledge of allegiance that many children say in school each day. Flags in churches that feel like patriotism to some congregants reek of nationalism to others.

The bleeding of patriotism into nationalism can appear subtle, but it is dangerous. At what point do worshipping God and honoring nations become indistinguishable? How do we know what level of respect for our country is appropriate? Are all expressions of patriotism in our religious spaces problematic? If yes, then how so? How can we stop our healthy love of country from crossing over to a worship of country and hatred of other countries and peoples or hatred of people within our own country who are not members of a racial, ethnic, or religious majority?

To answer these questions, people who belong to congregations should consider what message a particular symbol or celebration sends about the mission of the church and its service to the community and the world. For instance, if the pageantry of a July 4 Sunday replaces communal worship of God with the worship of one's country, then it's a problem. Such services can confuse our allegiances to the point of idolatry and twist our theology to make it seem as if Jesus died 2,000 years ago to save America, not the entire world.

When I joined a new church in 2023, the congregation graciously gave me a hymnal for my home library. I was surprised to find a section near the back of the book titled “National Songs,” which included “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “O Canada,” “My Country, 'Tis of Thee,” and “America the Beautiful.” Patriotic songs certainly have their time and place, but to me, in this book of sacred music, they seem jarringly out of place.

We can learn from our past and choose a better way to express our patriotism and our fidelity to Christ. These are two distinct parts of our identity: American. Christian. When we gather with the body of Christ, let's worship God together, and let's save the patriotic songs and fireworks for our community celebrations in the park or at the beach.

Additional Resources

Christians Against Christian Nationalism:

<https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org>

Red State Christians Discussion Guide:

https://www.broadleafbooks.com/media/fp/downloads/DiscussionGuide_Denker_RedStateChristians.pdf

Preparing for War Discussion Guide:

https://www.broadleafbooks.com/media/downloads/PFW_DiscussionGuide.pdf