

CALLING THE CHURCH TO OPPOSE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

(Sense-of-the-Assembly)

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism is a cultural framework that fuses a radically exclusionary form of Christian supremacist identity with the political and civic participation of a nation’s citizens through the appropriation of Christian language and imagery to amass political power; and

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism, while present in varying degrees throughout modern history, has taken on more aggressive and overt form in contemporary United States and Canadian public life; and

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism promotes, with violent rhetoric and authoritarian approaches to civic life and public policy, an extremist ideology of social hierarchy, including white supremacy, antisemitism (and other forms of religious bigotry), xenophobia, persecution and scapegoating of LGBTQ+ persons, misogyny, and ableism; and

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism appropriates the name of Jesus Christ and the language and imagery of scripture to promote this ideology, in direct contradiction to the gospel Jesus preached, a liberative and loving gospel that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) cherishes (Luke 4:16-21); and

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism in practice denies the imago Dei in every human being (Genesis 1:26-27) as it seeks to diminish, control, subjugate, and even erase persons and points of view that do not concur with or conform to its ideology; and

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism misrepresents our faith to our neighbors, thereby, turning people away from the life-giving love of God, by identifying Christianity with hate, social hierarchy, fear of the “other,” and violence; and

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism runs counter to the very heart of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) identity by promoting division and stratification of the human family to the detriment of the unity and equality that our baptisms beget (Galatians 3:28) and the Lord’s Table celebrates (1 Corinthians 11:17-34); and

41 **WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism is currently making significant inroads as an effective
42 political ideology, seizing power in civic life from hyper-local expressions of government
43 to the halls of national policy-making institutions, as evidenced in a dramatic rise in
44 book-banning, LGBTQ+ erasure in public life, revisionist histories and curricula that
45 refuse to reckon with systemic and individual racism, and many other institutionalized
46 forms of bigotry and bullying:

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48 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
49 denounces Christian Nationalism in all its forms as a distortion of the Christian faith, and
50 commits to opposing it wherever it appears, for the sake of the gospel and the good of
51 the human family; and

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53 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Church in all its expressions commit to educating
54 ourselves and our constituencies about the societal and spiritual dangers of Christian
55 Nationalism, how to talk about Christian Nationalism theologically, and how to counter it
56 in both ecclesial and public life; and

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58 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the general and regional expressions of the
59 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada will work to
60 equip congregations and pastors with information and resources to faithfully oppose
61 Christian Nationalism; and

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63 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Church in all its expressions will continue to
64 prayerfully discern, confess, and repent of our own complicity with Christian
65 Nationalism; and

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67 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Church calls on its leaders and members to take
68 every possible opportunity to speak out and act boldly against Christian Nationalism,
69 ensuring that the love of God known to us in Jesus Christ may not be distorted by this
70 ugly and false appropriation of our faith, but proclaimed with generosity and grace to all
71 peoples, from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

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74 Brentwood Christian Church, Springfield, MO
75 Central Christian Church, Great Falls, MT
76 Christ Church Uniting, Kailua, HI
77 Douglass Boulevard Christian Church, Louisville, KY
78 Downey Avenue Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN
79 First Christian Church, Fullerton, CA
80 First Christian Church, Portland, OR
81 First Christian Church, San Bernardino, CA
82 Galileo Christian Church, Ft. Worth, TX

83 Lake Washington Christian Church, Kirkland, WA
84 Palm Lake Christian Church, St. Petersburg, FL
85 Vista La Mesa Christian Church, La Mesa, CA
86 Welcome Table Christian Church, Arlington, TX
87 Yale Avenue Christian Church, Tulsa, OK
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90 **BACKGROUND**

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92 Christian Nationalism is a cultural framework that fuses a radically exclusionary form of
93 Christian identity with the public political and civic participation of a nation's citizens.
94 Christian Nationalism contends that government and public policy at every level of civic
95 life (from national government to state and provincial legislatures to hyper-local boards,
96 such as school boards, library boards, city councils, and the like) should reflect values
97 identified with an extremely restrictive Christian ideology that upholds nativism, white
98 supremacy, xenophobia, and heteropatriarchy. Christian Nationalism asserts that this
99 form of Christianity should be privileged in public life over other belief systems, and that
100 power belongs in the hands of persons who are white, natural-born citizens.

101 In most cases, individuals and institutions that subscribe to Christian Nationalism do not
102 call themselves "nationalists" (although some public figures have begun defiantly
103 claiming the identity as it gains political traction). The Christian Nationalist ideology is
104 most often asserted in the public square as "patriotism" or "pride in (or love for) my
105 country." But Christian Nationalism is quite distinct from true patriotism.
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107 Patriotism entails love and appreciation for one's homeland and certain features of its
108 existence, including the highest ideals of its founders and the shared possibilities for its
109 good future; and produces humble gratitude for one's citizenship, honesty about the
110 nation's shortcomings, a commitment to work for the common good of fellow citizens,
111 and a spirit of generous sharing of the gifts afforded by one's citizenship.
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113 Christian Nationalism, by contrast, privileges certain citizens over others; imagines
114 one's homeland to be under constant threat of "takeover" by those who do not share the
115 privileged identity; and produces protectionist rhetoric, policy, and even violence in
116 service of establishing social hierarchies and safeguarding privilege.
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118 Patriotism operates from and engenders love for one's nation and neighbors; Christian
119 Nationalism operates out of fear and actively seeks diminishment unto disappearance of
120 the "other."
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122 As Christian Nationalism has gained a foothold in the governments, policies, and
123 political discourse at every level of public life in the United States, and its influence is
124 growing in Canada, many organizations have formed or have expanded their work to
125 combat its toxic influence in public life and its ugly distortion of Christian faith, identity,
126 and theology. Organizations that are leading this work include:
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- Faithful America, an ecumenical association “organizing the faithful to challenge Christian nationalism and white supremacy and to renew the church’s prophetic role in building a more free and just society.” <https://www.faithfulamerica.org>
 - Christians Against Christian Nationalism, a project of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. <https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org>
 - Public Religion Research Institute, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to conducting independent research at the intersection of religion, culture, and public policy, which has made Christian Nationalism a focus of recent reporting. <https://www.ppri.org>
 - Word and Way, a publication dedicated to consideration of Christian witness in U.S. American civic life, with Disciples pastor Beau Underwood as a contributing editor and Disciples pastor Robert Cornwall is a regular book reviewer. <https://wordandway.org>
 - Christian Nationalism has been the topic of any number of books by theologians, sociologists, journalists, political theorists, and historians with the aim of disclosing and opposing its toxic influence on both public civic life and Christian public witness. Among the most recent and helpful books are these:
 - Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry (sociologists of religion), *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*, 2022.
 - Pamela Cooper-White (professor of pastoral care), *The Psychology of Christian Nationalism: Why People are Drawn In and How to Talk Across the Divide*, 2022.
 - Angela Denker (Lutheran pastor and journalist), *Red State Christians: A Journey into White Christian Nationalism and the Wreckage it Leaves Behind*, 2022.
 - Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry (sociologists of religion), *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy*, 2022.
 - Paul Miller (Christian scholar and political theorist), *The Religion of American Greatness: What’s Wrong with Christian Nationalism*, 2022. (Especially helpful on the difference between nationalism and patriotism.)

172 • Anthea Butler (historian of U.S. American and African-American
173 Christianity), *White Evangelical Racism: The Politics of Morality in*
174 *America*, 2021.

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176 Christian Nationalism is the topic of any number of articles, reports, discussion guides,
177 and podcasts, such as these:

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179 • Andrew Whitehead’s articles from Time:
180 [https://time.com/6214724/christian-nationalism-threats-united-](https://time.com/6214724/christian-nationalism-threats-united-states/?fbclid=IwAR13yxpHFqxlf2dMgZziT30DIN5PGJWPOZu0uRmdAqD0gBYcfH8q2cWNYuE)
181 [states/?fbclid=IwAR13yxpHFqxlf2dMgZziT30DIN5PGJWPOZu0uRmdAqD](https://time.com/6214724/christian-nationalism-threats-united-states/?fbclid=IwAR13yxpHFqxlf2dMgZziT30DIN5PGJWPOZu0uRmdAqD0gBYcfH8q2cWNYuE)
182 [0gBYcfH8q2cWNYuE](https://time.com/6214724/christian-nationalism-threats-united-states/?fbclid=IwAR13yxpHFqxlf2dMgZziT30DIN5PGJWPOZu0uRmdAqD0gBYcfH8q2cWNYuE)
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184 • <https://time.com/6052051/anti-democratic-threat-christian-nationalism/>
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186 • Diana Butler Bass’ 3-part series, articles with discussion questions for
187 small groups: [https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/understanding-](https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/understanding-christian-nationalism?utm_source=substack&utm_campaign=post_embed&utm_medium=email)
188 [christian-](https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/understanding-christian-nationalism?utm_source=substack&utm_campaign=post_embed&utm_medium=email)
189 [nationalism?utm_source=substack&utm_campaign=post_embed&utm_me](https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/understanding-christian-nationalism?utm_source=substack&utm_campaign=post_embed&utm_medium=email)
190 [dium=email](https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/understanding-christian-nationalism?utm_source=substack&utm_campaign=post_embed&utm_medium=email)
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192 • Word and Way podcast episode featuring Lutheran pastor & journalist
193 Angela Denker: [https://wordandway.org/2022/09/14/angela-denker-on-](https://wordandway.org/2022/09/14/angela-denker-on-white-christian-nationalism/)
194 [white-christian-nationalism/](https://wordandway.org/2022/09/14/angela-denker-on-white-christian-nationalism/)
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196 • “Christian Nationalism 101” from Word & Way:
197 <https://wordandway.org/2022/09/15/christian-nationalism-101/>
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199 • “White Nation Under God,” five podcast/video episodes from pastor and
200 public historian Jemar Tisby: [https://jemartisby.substack.com/p/wnug-ep-](https://jemartisby.substack.com/p/wnug-ep-5-how-i-escaped-the-web-of)
201 [5-how-i-escaped-the-web-of](https://jemartisby.substack.com/p/wnug-ep-5-how-i-escaped-the-web-of)
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203 • “Canadian Christian nationalism not Christian, it’s not Canadian, or
204 patriotic either,” by Michael Coren
205 [https://www.thestar.com/amp/opinion/contributors/2022/08/17/canadian-](https://www.thestar.com/amp/opinion/contributors/2022/08/17/canadian-christian-nationalism-not-christian-its-not-canadian-or-patriotic-either.html)
206 [christian-nationalism-not-christian-its-not-canadian-or-patriotic-either.html](https://www.thestar.com/amp/opinion/contributors/2022/08/17/canadian-christian-nationalism-not-christian-its-not-canadian-or-patriotic-either.html)
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209 These resources (and so many more) are essential to unmask the principles of
210 Christian Nationalism as profoundly not Christian and profoundly dangerous to the
211 health, well-being, and common good of the human family in the United States and
212 Canada.

**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2341.
(Discussion Time: 24 minutes)**