

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM?



Christian nationalism is a cultural framework that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life. Christian nationalism contends that America has been and should always be distinctively “Christian” from top to bottom – in its self-identity, interpretations of its own history, sacred symbols, cherished values, and public policies – and it aims to keep it that way.

But the “Christian” in Christian nationalism is more about identity than religion. It carries with it assumptions about nativism, white supremacy, authoritarianism, patriarchy, and militarism.

How does Christian nationalism show up in politics and policy?

According to multiple academic studies using large, nationally representative surveys, Americans who embrace Christian nationalism are more likely to:

- Approve of authoritarian tactics like demanding people show respect for national symbols and traditions
- Fear and distrust religious minorities, including Muslims, Atheists, and Jewish people
- Condone police violence toward Black Americans and distrust accounts of racial inequality in the criminal justice system
- Believe racial inequality is due to the personal shortcomings of minority groups
- Report being “very uncomfortable” with both interracial marriage and transracial adoption
- Hold anti-immigrant views
- Fear refugees
- Oppose scientists and science education in schools
- Believe that men are better suited for all leadership roles while women are better suited to care for children and the home

Information from *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*, by Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry (Oxford University Press, 2020).

How do researchers identify Christian nationalism?

Americans who embrace Christian nationalism strongly agree with statements like:

“The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation.”

“The success of the United States is part of God’s plan.”

“The federal government should advocate Christian values.”