

TLP CLEAR – DISSEMINATION UNLIMITED



In Obscura

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(TLP-C) Christian Nationalism, and Why Now? 3 May 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Obscura has provided several reports and analyses of the combined global hegemonic efforts of the Islamist-Communist allied axis (Red Green Alliance) moving to overthrow, subordinate or destroy Western governments. A very prominent attack vector is the persecution and destruction of Christians, of which only a small part of this operation ever makes it to open source media coverage. This article below, I discovered after prayer this morning as I searched for open source intelligence. I am quite familiar with this intellectual pursuit of deception in influencing millions of people to accept that America craves to become a Christian dictatorship, by hammering the term that signals Christians are nazis by adding the term “Nationalism.” The escalation of Biblical Prophecy fulfillment I have cited before is real and graphic. The effort depicted below is one such aspect of weakening the U.S. and the West.

“...Our Nation’s origin and system of government bear the imprint of a Christian worldview and ethic, even as its laws protect religious pluralism. Christian beliefs, in conjunction with contemporary political thought and economic realities, influenced colonial settlers in their decision to overthrow tyranny and pursue independence. After the Revolutionary War, Christians then informed the structure and contents of the United States Constitution, its amendments, and contemporaneous state constitutions.

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But, when Christian beliefs about morality and human nature conflicted with the Biden Administration’s views, religious rights often suffered...”¹

PROVIDENCE

Why Christian Nationalism, and Why Now?

By Darryl Hart on February 3, 2026

<https://providencemag.com/2026/02/why-christian-nationalism-and-why-now/>

Was the academic interest in (or fear of) Christian nationalism that proliferated in the years between Trump’s first term and the Biden administration, brief though it was, a self-fulfilling prophecy? Nationalism itself became a concern among scholars during the first Donald Trump presidency when MAGA populism was a clear volley against the thrust of a reigning liberal internationalism. Some historians like Jill Lepore in *This America: The Case for the Nation* (2019) used the moment to remind U.S. historians that their academic fields originated precisely in the study of modern nation-states, even as she wanted to keep nationalism away from illegitimate appropriators. For much of Trump’s first administration, the preferred term was “white nationalism.”

After the January 6th riots, with the protesters’ use of religious images, the language shifted to “white Christian nationalism,” which then became merely “[Christian nationalism](#)” (whiteness assumed). Around this time sociologists and historians provided relatively short monographic assessments of how large and deep this phenomenon was. The set of books (for starters) published seemingly in response to the white Christianity permeating MAGA circles included Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (2020); Philip Gorski and Samuel L. Perry, *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American*

¹ The 2026 Report by the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias Pursuant to Executive Order 14202 Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias within the Federal Government, US Department of Justice, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/task-force-publishes-report-eradicating-anti-christian-bias-and-restoring-religious-liberty>, **REPORT Download:** <https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1438506/dl?inline>

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Democracy (2022); and David Hollinger, *Christianity’s American Fate: How Religion Became More Conservative and Society More Secular* (2024).

All of this scholarship came before any single author had set out to explain what Christian nationalism is or why it might be desirable. Before Stephen Wolfe wrote *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (2022), scholars relied mainly on opinion poll data, selectively interpreted to fit preconceived definitions of the subject. But Wolfe broke through with an argument for a Christian nation, not only as a “necessary alternative to secularism” but as the best way to cultivate a just society. His publisher, Canon Press, is connected to Doug Wilson’s church and academy. Wilson himself came out with a book, *Mere Christendom: The Case for Bringing Christianity Back into Modern Culture* (2023) which according to publicity confronts “the prevailing secularism in modern culture and its impact on . . . Christian witness.”

More recently, James Baird, a pastor in the PCA, has written a primer on government’s duty to promote Christianity as a public good. [*King of Kings: A Reformed Guide to Christian Government*](#) (2025) calls Christians to call upon their government to promote Christianity as the only true religion for the public good. All of this theorizing in conservative Presbyterian and Baptist circles has prompted the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) to appoint a [committee](#) to study and make recommendations about the best ways for pastors and officers to understand and react to Christian nationalism.

This brief overview of recent history indicates that scholars were studying a subject that did not really exist in a coherent way before Christian nationalist authors began writing their own books on the subject. That history does not, however, explain why Christian nationalism has become an appealing way to think about government and its duties since 2022.

The short answer is that conservative Christians (especially Protestants in the United States) have understood secularization and moral relativism as the consequences of the nation abandoning its Christian heritage and founding.

Among evangelical and Presbyterian-leaning Protestants, the first iteration of Christian nationalism came with Francis Schaeffer’s transformation from the philosophical guru at a small Christian study center in Switzerland into the public intellectual behind the New

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Christian Right. His documentary series and book, “How Shall We Then Live?”, alerted evangelicals to the dangers of secularization and moral relativism that drove many social ills, chief among them abortion.

Embedded in Schaeffer’s outlook was the idea that America had a Christian founding that depended on ideas and institutions from the Protestant Reformation. Schaeffer inspired Jerry Falwell’s political activism in the short-lived Moral Majority (1979-1987). Schaeffer also inspired a group of young evangelical historians, George Marsden, Mark Noll, and Nathan Hatch to write a book, *The Search for Christian America*, that pushed back at least on Schaeffer’s historical claims about America’s Christian character. Ironically, those historians, while dubious about the United States’ Christian origins, left room for those who desired a Christian nation.

In the book’s conclusion, the authors wrote that “Christians still must labor without ceasing for truth and morality in the midst of our own age.” That message may not have necessarily included approval of the Moral Majority’s politics, but it still added legitimacy to Christians who wanted American society to reflect Christian ideals.

At roughly the same time that Schaeffer was tapping Christian nationalist sentiments, Chuck Colson and Richard John Neuhaus were teaming up to rally Protestants and Roman Catholics in an informal alliance against secularism. Neuhaus’s book, *The Naked Public Square* (1984) was a thoughtful version of Schaeffer’s critique that resonated with Colson’s *Kingdoms in Conflict* (1987), a book that popularized worldview thinking, or the idea that a person’s basic beliefs influence his or her perspective on all aspects of life.

That particular understanding of belief as a controlling principle in human experience added momentum to the idea that secular government was a myth. Neutrality was impossible. Government would inevitably be religious in some way, either positively or negatively. This understanding of society and the role of religion received even greater plausibility when James Davison Hunter, then a young sociologist at the University of Virginia, wrote *Culture Wars* (1991), a widely read book about the religious divide in the United States between theologically orthodox and progressive Americans. What was notable about the 1980s and 1990s version of a religious, if not per se *Christian* nationalism, was its inter-faith character.

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Hunter envisioned a set of policy matters that united conservative Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Mormons while Neuhaus and Colson initiated the pan-Christian conferences, “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.”

The culmination of such cooperative efforts was one factor in the election of George W. Bush, arguably the most evangelical of any Republican president since World War II. Bush’s “[Compassionate Conservatism](#)” was the title of a book by the conservative evangelical and current editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today*, Marvin Olasky, who taught journalism at the University of Texas and was an advisor to Bush while governor of Texas. The hope among many Christian conservatives, especially in the Neuhaus and Colson orbit, was that Bush as president would add vigor to a faith-based set of policies and reduce the secular outlook that had dominated American politics since the 1960s. The 9/11 terror attacks, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and Great Recession of 2007-2008 knocked Compassionate Conservatism off the Bush administration’s list of priorities. The challenges of the war in Iraq, in turn, were too much for some evangelical leaders (academic and ministry) who experienced Bush-fatigue and left the world of conservative politics.

It might have made sense for advocates of Christian nationalism to surface around 2010 when both the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street offered alternatives to the status quo of both major political parties. But it took until 2022 after three presidents, two with ties to mainline Protestants (Obama and Trump) and one a Roman Catholic (Biden), took no clear side in the secular-sacred divide. Obama might have been able to code-switch and sound like a black preacher or break out and sing “Amazing Grace,” Trump might have sought the blessing of Prosperity Gospel Protestants, and Biden may have diligently attended Mass and avoided criticisms from his bishops, but none of those administrations sent clear signals about the place of faith in politics or America’s traditional mix of separating church and state while nurturing high levels of religiosity.

The likeliest explanation for the 2022 origins of Christian nationalism was the remarkable cultural chaos that started in 2020 amid protests over George Floyd’s death at the hands of Minneapolis police, the restrictions on ordinary life during the COVID lockdowns, the aggressive activism for trans rights, and the sometime hysteria over climate

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apocalypse. Anyone observing the United States might well imagine that Christians living in that setting would say, “enough is enough and let’s return to the basics of faith and good government.”

As sensible as a plea for a return to older playbooks might seem, the favorite era chosen by Christian nationalists for inspiration comes across like the awkwardness of the autistic kid in class who knows way more than his classmates but has no sense of how he comes across in classroom banter. Today’s Christian nationalists often advocate that the uninitiated “do the reading” in early modern Protestant politics. As such they promote the Reformers, seventeenth-century Protestant scholastics, American Protestants at the time of the American Founding, and some Protestants from the nineteenth century who still maintained that religion was necessary for moral and social order.

Unlike the faith-based politics proposed by Roman Catholics and evangelicals in the 1980s and 1990s, today’s turn to religion shows little ecumenical instincts. The current version of Christian nationalism is interdenominational (mainly Presbyterian, Baptist, with a few Anglicans) but aggressively Protestant.

This is an odd turn among Christian reactions to secularism if only because the American public of 2026 is not monolithic. Whatever the merits or faults of U.S. immigration policy since 1870, the United States is a diverse country that for at least a century after the Civil War did remarkably well in assimilating people from many parts of the world. Christian nationalists either ignore American demographics or imply that immigrants from non-Protestant backgrounds are out of place. Some proponents of Christian nationalism even say that we need “Protestant politics for a Protestant country.” Such an assertion might have made sense, and did to Josiah Strong, the Social Gospel author of *Our Country* (1885), at the time of unprecedented immigration from southern and eastern Europe. But 130 years later those sentiments are tone deaf.

One way to make sense of such naiveté about Christian government and American religious diversity comes from a [recent essay](#) by Trevin Wax in *First Things*. Though not written with the current debates over Christian nationalism in mind, Wax, a Southern Baptist, explains what it was like to grow up in the 1990s and 2000s in an environment dominated by church youth group activities, Christian television and radio shows, and evangelical contemporary music.

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Wax writes that “seven of the top twenty movies in 1999 were rated R, including lewd teen comedies and salacious blockbusters” and “the nihilism in rock music, the sensuality in pop, the promiscuity normalized in *Friends*, one of the decade’s biggest TV shows” prompted parents to look for safe alternatives for their children. In response, “evangelical culture-makers stepped into the gap, providing music, media, books, and even outlets for activism.”

Later in the essay, Wax describes how all-encompassing this evangelical culture was. The length of this quotation suggests how little exposure evangelical teens may have had to non-Christian Americans:

A fifteen-year-old kid wakes up in the morning and reads a Bible passage in a student study Bible recommended by his favorite Christian band. On the way to school, *Adventures in Odyssey* is playing—an episode about responding with generosity to someone who insults you. He arrives at school early in the morning chill, where he joins a tight circle of believers around the cold metal flagpole, hands clasped and prayers whispered into misty air, a demonstration of his desire to be salt and light. During study hall, he finds time to read a few pages of the Christian fiction novel he bought at the bookstore the week before.

After school, he heads home, listening to Christian radio on the way. The songs warn against sin, champion Christ’s redemption, and speak about standing out as a believer in the world. It’s Wednesday, so there’s church that evening, and CCM is pumping through the stereo system when he arrives for worship, friendship, and Bible teaching. These are his people, the ones who tell him he’s not alone, that others are seeking the Lord and living the great adventure of faith. After church, there’s a hangout for the youth group at a friend’s house.

Teens cluster around the TV; a familiar circle of friends are laughing at *VeggieTales* as pizza grease stains paper plates. . . . Before bed, he slides off his faded WWJD bracelet, tossing it onto his bedside table beside his battered Bible, whispering a prayer beneath posters of his favorite Christian bands taped to the bedroom wall. Another day over. A new one ready to begin.

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Wax himself is grateful for having grown up in this isolated culture. “I feel profound gratitude . . . an evangelical subculture that earnestly sought to offer my generation a vision of faithfulness amidst cultural upheaval.” Whatever the merits of that kind of cultural submersion, it may – I stress, may – explain why some generations of American Protestants have little feel for living in a society with non-Protestants.

Could it be that today’s Christian nationalists, whose mocking of Boomers suggests an age group weighted toward Millennials or Gen-Z who grew up like Wax? On one level, the question seems preposterous. How could anyone online, streaming audio, watching professional sports on cable TV, or studying American history be unaware of America’s religious and ethnic diversity?

At the same time, how could anyone who did know of and appreciated the contributions Roman Catholics and Jews have made to American society, from stand-up comedy to intellectual conservatism, consider Protestant politics a realistic proposal for contemporary America? In theory, perhaps, or maybe once upon a time in the United States. But in the current moment a return to Cotton Mather or Hugo Grotius comes across as a combination of cosplay and LARPing.

Whatever the explanation, Christian nationalism has added to the mix of influencers who gain followers by disrupting perceived norms. Ironically, by riling the (primarily) young men who quickly attribute the worst motives to other points of view, Christian nationalism discourages the peaceful and quiet life that the Apostle Paul recommended to early Christians when their society was ruled not by Protestants but by pagans.

[American History](#) | [Christian Nationalism](#) | [Protestants](#) | [The Latest](#)

D. G. Hart teaches history at Hillsdale College and is the author most recently of *Benjamin Franklin: Cultural Protestant* (2021).

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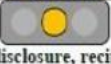


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