

Title: On Taking Action to Repudiate Christian Nationalism and Affirm Our Faith Commitments

The Presbytery of San Jose respectfully overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) to:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the Book of Order to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall F-1.0404 be amended as follows: "The church shall not align with any ideology that seeks to privilege Christianity in public life or conflate religious identity with national or ethnic supremacy. Christian Nationalism, in all its forms, which seeks to privilege a singular religious-cultural framework in civic life, is: incompatible with the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, a theological error, a threat to faithful witness, and contrary to the church.";

2. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Moderator to issue a joint statement calling attention to the dangers and distortions of Christian Nationalism as an urgent theological and social concern of our time, providing moral clarity and guidance for the Church and the larger society.
3. Engage with other faith traditions to form a coalition to: speak out against Christian Nationalism, engage in a collective actions, and deconstruct practices, theologies, and patterns of Christian Nationalism in the Church and society at large.

## Rationale

Christian Nationalism is a dangerous and increasingly pervasive ideology that seeks to merge national identity with Christian identity, distorting both faith and politics. The requested actions in this overture aim to affirm the church's unwavering commitment to a gospel that stands in opposition to exclusionary political power and theologies that distort the example and teachings of Christ.

Christian Nationalism contradicts the foundational commitments and public witness of our church: love, equality, inclusion, peace, religious freedom and the *imago dei* of all beings. It substitutes the call of Christ to love our neighbor with a coercive and divisive ideology of fear and violence. As followers of Jesus Christ and members of the Reformed tradition, we cannot remain silent in the face of this threat.

## The Growing Threat of Christian Nationalism

Christian Nationalism has been steadily gaining ground in the United States, with political figures invoking religious language to justify harmful policies that marginalize immigrants, people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, religious minorities, women, children, and other vulnerable populations.

Public opinion research, including a Pew Research report from February 2025, found that 54% of Mainline Protestants support the idea of declaring the U.S. a "Christian nation." While the term "Christian nation" has been popularized in media and political discourse, this belief often signals a desire for the state to reflect and privilege a particular religious identity, rather than simply a moral framework. This conflation of national identity with Christian identity runs counter to the principles of religious freedom and pluralism to which the PCUSA is already committed, and that form the foundation of democratic societies.

In addition, 57% of Mainline Protestants favor allowing prayer in public schools, specifically in Jesus' name, 63% support prayer to "God" in public settings, and 60% favor allowing cities and towns to display religious symbols on public property. These trends reflect a desire to embed Christianity into the civic sphere, reinforcing the dangerous assumption that the state has the authority to promote a singular religious framework, at the expense of other faith traditions and non-believers.

This rising trend must be met with a strong and public response from the church. Christian Nationalism not only distorts the gospel, but does so in its aim to reshape society in a way that contradict the gospel values of justice, inclusion, and equality.

## Theological and Confessional Rejection of Christian Nationalism

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long affirmed its commitment to justice, religious freedom, and the separation of church and state. This commitment is rooted in our confessional documents, which reject any theology that seeks to elevate national or political power above the sovereignty of God.

- The Barmen Declaration (1934) affirms that the church must not align itself with any political ideology, rejecting the attempt to merge Christian faith with state power.
- The Confession of 1967 calls for the church to stand against systemic injustice and racism.
- The Belhar Confession (1986) explicitly rejects any form of theology that promotes national or racial superiority.
- A Brief Statement of Faith (1991) affirms that "we trust in the one triune God, whom alone we worship and serve."

These confessions remind us that the church's loyalty is to God alone, and any attempt to merge Christian faith with political power is a form of idolatry that distorts the gospel. Christian Nationalism directly contradicts these theological commitments and the example set by Jesus Christ, who called his followers to love their neighbors without regard to nationality, race, gender, status, or creed.

### The Church's Call to Act

The PC(USA) has repeatedly affirmed the importance of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. In addition, the Church has a long history of public witness and commitment to racial justice, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, immigrant protection, and interfaith solidarity. Christian nationalism violates each of these principles; it is a distortion of the gospel that undermines the church's prophetic voice in the world. In the face of these threats, silence is not an option.

Christian Nationalism presents a clear and present danger to both the integrity of Christian faith and the health of democracy. It distorts the gospel and seeks to impose a singular religious identity on a pluralistic society. The PCUSA is called to witness to the truth of the gospel, which is one of radical inclusion, justice, and love for all people. The actions requested in this overture—to amend the Book of Order, issue a public statement, and seek to be a contributing member of a broad-based coalition—are necessary steps in dismantling the theological distortions and political ideologies that have sought to merge Christianity with state power.

Now, more than ever, the church must stand firm in its commitment to the gospel and to the values of democracy and justice. We must reject Christian Nationalism in all its forms and act decisively to protect both our faith and our democracy.

## Supporting Resources

### Books

- Amanda Tyler, *How to End Christian Nationalism*. BJC, 2022.
- Brian Kaylor and Beau Underwood, *Baptizing America: How Mainline Protestants Helped Build Christian Nationalism*. Chalice Press, 2024.
- Robert P. Jones, *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity* (2020); *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy and the Path to a Shared American Future* (2023).
- Samuel L. Perry and Andrew L. Whitehead, *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (2020).

### Reports & Articles

- Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) – Reports on Christian Nationalism, Religion & Politics, Race, and Democracy. <https://www.prri.org>
  - *American Beliefs about Christian Nationalism and its Threat to Democracy*, 2021.
  - *Religion's Role in Public Life*, 2025
- GACEIR, *Confronting White Christian Nationalism*. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2025.
- National Council of Churches, *Christian Nationalism Policy Statement*, 2022.
- PC(USA) General Assembly Statements on Immigration, Religious Freedom, LGBTQIA+ Inclusion, Human Rights, Anti-Racism and White Christian Nationalism, in particular:
  - *Facing Racism*, 222nd General Assembly, 2016.
  - *A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination*, 223rd General Assembly 2018
  - *White Christian Nationalism Recommended Study*, 226th General Assembly, 2024
- Sojourners, "ICE Quotes the Bible in a New Propaganda Video," Sojourners, July 11, 2025, <https://sojo.net/articles/opinion/ice-quotes-bible-new-propaganda-video>

### Organizations & Websites

- Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) – [prri.org](https://prri.org)
- Faithful America – [faithfulamerica.org](https://faithfulamerica.org)
- Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC) – [bjconline.org](https://bjconline.org)
- Christians Against Christian Nationalism – [christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org](https://christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org)

