

We have just concluded one of the most sacred seasons in the life of the Christian Church as Christian communities across the globe celebrated Easter. It is a time to remember the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Christians are asked to embrace fully the values taught by this Jewish rabbi- mercy, compassion, forgiveness, peace, love, hope and justice. Consequently, this may be an odd time to consider the rise and role of Christian Nationalism in our country.

Once again, our culture and Madison Avenue marketing have turned our focus away from a brutal crucifixion and remarkable resurrection toward bunnies, eggs, chocolate and chicks. Just as the real meaning of Easter and the joy of new life have been misappropriated by our commercial ways and our tendency toward sentimentality, the Christian Nationalism movement in the United States also has sorely misappropriated an understanding of who Jesus was and is. Christian Nationalism, while present in varying degrees throughout modern history, has taken on a more aggressive and overt form in contemporary United States public life.

There is nothing about Christian Nationalism or its despicable partner White Supremacy that is either Christian or patriotic or supreme. It is a dangerous ideology designed to divide our country further and to discriminate against the very people to whom Jesus ministered during his lifetime. We all need to be aware of what Christian Nationalism is all about because it continues to impose itself upon our culture in frightening ways. Here is what it is about according to a resolution opposing it passed by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada at its 2023 General Assembly held in Louisville this past summer:

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.

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

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).

The key to a healthy democracy and society is a well-informed citizenry. Those promoting Christian Nationalism and White Supremacy are trying to remove from our schools, libraries and public media the truth about this sinister movement that falsely claims to be related to the teachings of Jesus Christ. They must be stopped before the precepts of Christian Nationalism seep into the lifeblood of American culture, one built on equality, democracy, truth-telling and the common good.

Those proclaiming the falsehoods of Christian Nationalism and White Supremacy are not to be mistaken for either followers of Jesus Christ or patriots.

It's not too late for all of us, whether followers of Jesus or believers in the democratic principles of the United States of America's Constitution and the rule of law upholding it, to speak out, resist and condemn vile ideologies like Christian Nationalism and White Supremacy that threaten our common good as a nation.

***The Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Ministry of the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky***