

American Council of Christian Churches
81st Convention, October 25-27, 2022
Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA
Resolution on Secularism and Christian Nationalism

On January 6, 2021, a number of rioters vandalized federal property, assaulted police officers, and stormed the United States Capitol Building in an attempt to halt Congress from certifying the Electoral College votes. A handful of these rioters carried religious imagery and utilized “Christian” rhetoric during the uprising, proclaiming “Christ is king” and “Jesus 2020.”

Most Christians condemned the Capitol riot, just as they did the social justice riots across the country from the year before. Political and religious liberals, however, weaponized the January 6 event to guilt evangelicalism into association with “Christian Nationalism.” On January 15, a *HuffPost* article accused Abeka and Bob Jones University Press of publishing textbooks which created “conditions that lead to events like last week’s riot at the U. S. Capitol.” These textbooks, the author alleged, used language that “overlaps with the rhetoric of Christian nationalism, often with overtones of nativism, militarism and racism as well.”¹ A year later, Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry published *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy*, which claimed to focus on the “white Christian nationalism” that fueled the Capitol riot. Instead of examining the actual rioters, the authors investigated white Christian nationalists in the “abstraction” and tried to link John MacArthur (among others) with a supposed movement that is opposed to a “multiracial democracy.”² Then in an NPR interview on July 11, 2022, Andrew Whitehead (co-author of *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*) condemned so-called Christian nationalists for purportedly

“redefin[ng] . . . religious liberty as the right to bring privately held religious beliefs into the public square.”³

The problem with these criticisms is that they all stem from a redefinition of the label “Christian Nationalism.” The term ought to describe a movement that conflates an earthly kingdom with a spiritual kingdom. But secularists, detesting conservative moral beliefs⁴ in the public square, broadly redefine Christian Nationalism so as to incorporate all who desire Scripturally informed laws.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches at its 81st annual convention, October 25-27, 2022, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA resolves to rebuke secularists for their hatred of the Word and the duly constituted spheres of church and state. God ordained civil authorities “to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” against other citizens (Rom. 13:1-4, Gen. 9:6), and His Word is the absolute standard for defining that evil. Left to the imagination of their own hearts (Gen. 6:5, Jer. 17:9), men would do right in their own eyes (Judg. 21:25) and call evil good and good evil (Isa. 5:20). Therefore, we exhort our civil leaders to “be instructed” in God’s Word and “serve the LORD with fear” (Ps. 2:10-11). We also remind genuine Christian nationalists that Christ’s “kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), and as such, it is advanced by the proclamation of the gospel, not by violence (John 18:10-11, I Pet. 4:14-15) or the establishment of a state-sponsored church.



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¹ Rebecca Klein, “These Textbooks In Thousands Of K-12 Schools Echo Trump’s Talking Points,” *HuffPost* (January 15, 2021): https://www.huffpost.com/entry/christian-textbooks-trump-capitol-riot_n_6000bce3c5b62c0057bb711f. See also Kathleen Wellman, *Hijacking History: How the Christian Right Teaches History and Why It Matters* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021).

² D. G. Hart, “‘The Flag and the Cross’ Review: Defining Christian Nationalism,” *The Wall Street Journal* (April 1, 2022): <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-flag-and-the-cross-book-review-finding-and-defining-christian-nationalism-11648826801>.

³ Emphasis added. Giovanni Del Piero, “NPR Interviewees: ‘Anti-Democratic’ Christian Nationalists ‘Dominate’ Republican Party,” *Juicy Ecumenism* (July 12, 2022): <https://juicyecumenism.com/2022/07/12/christian-nationalists-andrew-whitehead/>.

⁴ Especially those pertaining to abortion, sexuality, and education.