



The media has given considerable attention to the rise of what has come to be known as “**Christian Nationalism**,” or alternatively, “White Christian Nationalism.” The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty issued a statement – Christians Against Christian Nationalism – that provides a clear definition:

*Christian nationalism seeks to **merge Christian and American identities**, distorting both the Christian faith and America’s constitutional democracy. Christian nationalism demands Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must be Christian. It often overlaps with and provides cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation. We reject this damaging political ideology and invite our Christian brothers and sisters to join us in opposing this threat to our faith and to our nation.*

What are Seventh-day Adventists to make of Christian Nationalism?

Is it merely a reaction to excessive over-reach by a liberal elite? Or does it have deeper, darker roots, and prophetic significance?

The Church State Council rejects Christian Nationalism. We have long advocated for a vigorous separation of church and state. We believe Christian Nationalism misrepresents the character of God as exclusive and hateful, and that the Jesus of Christian Nationalism bears little resemblance to the one written about in the four gospels. “That” Jesus does not teach his followers to beat their swords into plowshares, to become the meek who will inherit the earth, to love their enemies, or even to love their neighbor as themselves. “That” Jesus is made in their own image, to justify their pursuit of power, and their desire to impose their values and beliefs on others. “That Jesus” does not teach them that true greatness is found



in becoming as a servant, but in becoming the master. That Jesus is a counterfeit, a fraud, an imposter.

Christian Nationalism bears a striking resemblance to the final apostasy of the last days before the return of Christ, when church and state will unite to persecute dissenters and enforce the mark of the beast. Those who are called of God, chosen and faithful have a duty to become the messengers, the angels of Revelation 14, who warn the world about the fall of Babylon, and the imminent wrath of God to fall on those who worship a counterfeit Christ, in place of the true Christ, the One who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.



CHURCH STATE COUNCIL

Est. 1964

The Church State Council is committed to protecting the rights of persons of all faiths to fully participate in American life without discrimination. We believe Christian Nationalism is a dangerous heresy, and a threat to both church and state.



Christian
NATIONALISM

A Return to Christendom?



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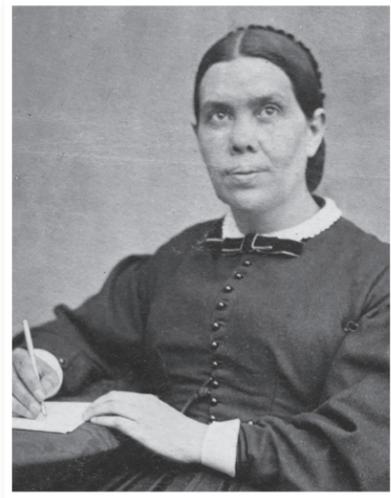
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Adventists have long identified the biblical symbol of Babylon, the harlot riding on the beast, with the Constantinian church state arrangements that dominated the west for more than twelve centuries. By the time Babylon appears in Revelation 17, the powerful church state union is in a resurrected form, having survived a fatal wound. The imagery of the woman riding on the beast clearly conveys the message that the harlot is the one holding the reins, calling the shots.

The warnings sounded by the second and third angel's messages are warnings against a reunited church and state using political power to punish religious dissent. Secular hostility to conservative religious values, however intolerant, is inconsistent with prophecy. The biblical text portrays a corrupt, idolatrous church in bed with the state. Those who prosecute Christians for refusing services to same sex weddings simply do not fit the prophetic picture.

Jesus warned that the final deceptions would be in His name, Mt 24, and in closing the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned about those who profess to do marvelous deeds in His name, but do not know Jesus. The final apostasy that places humanity beyond the possibility of repentance and redemption creates its own Jesus in its own image, and worships a counterfeit Jesus who expects His people to assert God's authority on earth. **Ellen White** saw clearly:



The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world...today in the religious world, there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion...They expect [Christ] to rule through legal enactments enforced by human authority...Not by

the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies... is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. Desire of Ages 509.

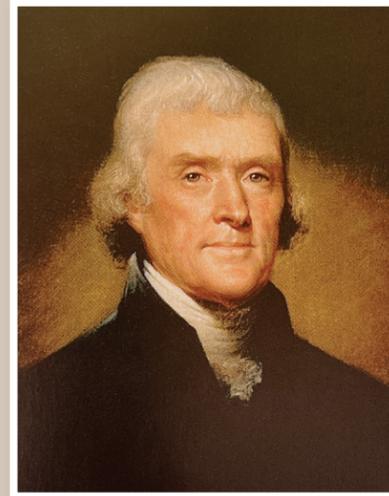
Lauren Boebert (R-CO) summed up the Christian Nationalist ethos succinctly at a political rally in a church in the summer of 2022. Boebert preached:

"The church is supposed to direct the government. The government is not supposed to direct the church. That is not how our Founding Fathers intended it." She added: "I'm tired of this separation of church and state junk that's not in the Constitution. It was in a stinking letter, and it means nothing like what they say it does."

Washington Post, June 28, 2022

The church directing the government is the very thing the Second and Third Angels' messages warn *against!*

The "stinking letter" she referenced was a new year's missive from Thomas Jefferson to a Baptist community in Danbury, Connecticut, who had expressed concern about their religious freedom. Jefferson sought to reassure them:



Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise

thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

Thomas Jefferson, Jan 1, 1802.

Jefferson's concept of religious liberty – that one's duty to worship God is owed to God alone, not to the state – represented an historic break from centuries of what historians call "Christendom," in which one's good standing before God and the state became virtually one and the same.

This integration of church and state can be traced back to the Emperor Constantine. Constantine completely altered the relationship between the church and the imperial government, thereby beginning a process that eventually made Christianity the official religion of the empire. ... By the end of the 4th century, therefore, Christianity had been transformed from a persecuted sect to the dominant faith of the empire, in the process becoming intertwined with the imperial government.

Encyclopedia Britannica, "The alliance between church and empire"

"In the end, the emperor was in submission to the church as its son, not its master," concluded the Encyclopedia article.

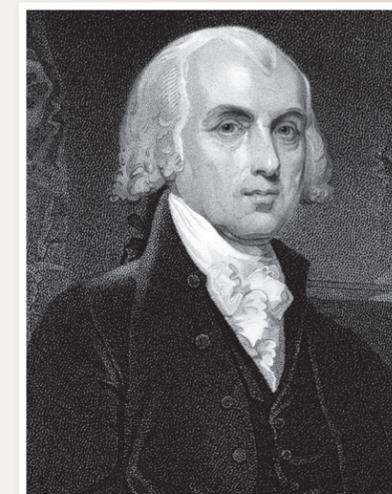
Today, religious liberty doesn't mean what it used to mean. The separation of church and state that Jefferson saw as the product of both religion clauses of the First Amendment has been relegated to the historical ash heap. It has been replaced by what some scholars

now call "most favored nation" status for religion. Religious liberty is rapidly returning to a Constantinian model of church and state relations. Seventh-day Adventists view these developments through a prophetic lens. We see this is a prophetic fulfillment of America's destiny – that her lamb like separation between the powers of church and state that safeguards religious liberty will eventually succumb to a uniting of church and state that exercises dragon-like authority to persecute dissenters.

Although Christian Nationalism is a political ideology rather than a religious one, it draws strength from perverse theological strains, including Calvinism and Reconstructionism. It is a theology of exclusion – only the "elect" few are chosen, know the will of the Almighty, and are destined to enforce God's will upon the nation. It is accompanied by a presumptive millennialism, that by taking political power, they will establish the kingdom of God. As witnessed publicly at Reawaken America rallies across the country, supporters are engaged in a "spiritual" and "political" war that can become violent, as witnessed at our nation's Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Adventists have long understood that spiritualism would play a role in last day events. But we are slow to understand that modern day spiritualism has less to do with occult practices, than with a presumption that one's own motives and goals are those of the Holy Spirit. The modern day Pentecostal emphasis on the gifts of the spirit has led to an explosion of self proclaimed prophets who boldly insist that the Holy Spirit has shown them whom God has chosen to be president of the United States. And they don't back down, even when their chosen candidate loses. The apostles of Christian Nationalism have proclaimed a "holy" war that has occasionally broken out into actual violence. They literally demonize their political enemies – yes, that means they regard their enemies as literally demonic, not just socialists or pedophiles, but demonic. But even more alarming, charismatic preachers claim the very "fire" John saw coming down from heaven to earth in the sight of men to deceive them into enforcing the mark of the beast. They claim this fire is the holy spirit and is active in healing people at their worship services.

James Madison was an astute student of history, and the primary architect of the American approach to church state relations. He summed up his observations of the Constantinian model:



During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution.

James Madison,
A Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments, 1785