

STANDING AGAINST WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

INTRODUCTION

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to [develop a new policy and study guide about white Christian nationalism](#) (WCN), given WCN's powerful and pervasive distortion of Christian faith and its urgent threat to values and freedoms in the United States in the twenty-first century. Although WCN is not new, its current rise calls for a renewed examination and repudiation by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Indeed, in this 250th anniversary year of the nation's founding, it is important to be reminded of our nation's ideals and the Christian's relationship to the state, and to reject the ideology of WCN that warps them both.

Christian nationalism is a political ideology that seeks to merge Christian identity with U.S. civic life and national identity. It asserts that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and should continue to be governed according to what its proponents see as Christian values or biblical principles.ⁱ Because these statements can be understood in myriad ways, clearer definitions are warranted.

First, “nationalism” emphasizes the importance of the “homeland” and a shared ethnic identity among its citizens. Simultaneously, a powerful (but largely mythological) narrative of the past glorifies the nation's exceptionalism, its inherent goodness and righteousness, and its “real” citizenry.ⁱⁱ In this narrative in the United States, God established and sanctified the nation as a political and moral exemplar for the world — John Winthrop's “City on a Hill.” Because of this origin and mission, the nation itself is seen as above reproach, and even its most heinous acts are justified to align with God's will. A unified system of cultural norms serves to embody the nationalist shared identity and mythological history: social patterns that enforce dominant values, morals, beliefs, and behaviors; a single language (English); and a legal system that punishes deviance. The expectation is that all true citizens should and will support nationalist policies, venerate its leaders, and fulfill their duties to the nation, especially through military service. Those who resist are not real patriots.

It is important to distinguish between *patriotism* and *nationalism*. Patriotism, which offers appreciation and support for the United States and commits to its ideals, is appropriate for the believer. By contrast, the belief that the nation has a unique relation to God that should grant Christians special power in the nation — or that the United States has been selected by God for supremacy over other nations because of its inherent goodness — is not.

Second, nationalism becomes “Christian” when coupled with the conviction that the nation is or should be a “Christian nation.” In such a Christian nation, only Christians are understood to be qualified or morally equipped for leadership, laws should manifest Christian values and beliefs and uphold behavior believed to be consonant with Christianity, and Christianity should be privileged over other religious groups. Within this construct, freedom of religious practice beyond a particular form of conservative Christianity would be restricted, and non-Christians would have fewer rights than Christians. In the United States, this movement is already evident in efforts to place religious artifacts like the Ten Commandments in schools and other public spaces.

Third, Christian Nationalism becomes “white” when it suggests that those of northern European ancestry are inherently more capable, intelligent, moral, and able to lead — and are thus the only “true Americans” and “true Christians.” In an effort to maximize their power in the public sphere, white Christian nationalist movements seek to restrict the rights of people of color and other marginalized groups, deny equal justice, hamper efforts for equal opportunity, and intimidate and threaten those who resist. Immigrants are often demonized and scapegoated, and legal immigration — especially for people of color — is tightened or eliminated. WCN purposely and overtly promotes racial, ethnic, and non-Christian discrimination as positive goods for the country. Nationalism and Christian nationalism exist in all parts of the world, and virtually universally the idea of “blood purity” is essential to defining the “in” group. In the United States, nationalism's relationship with the concept of whiteness creates a unique and dangerous interplay of prejudice and discrimination.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long opposed various forms of discrimination and anti-democratic practices (described below) like those espoused by WCN. See, for example: “[Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform](#)” (2008, updated 2016 and 2022); “[Religious Freedom Without Discrimination](#)” (2018); and “[Honest Patriotism](#)” (2018), which also includes the resolutions, “[A Christian Declaration Against Autocracy](#)” and “[A Resolution Against Racist Nationalism](#).”

PRESBYTERIAN INVOLVEMENT: A BRIEF RECOUNTING

Manifestations of white Christian nationalism have marked the United States since its colonial beginnings. Indeed, colonialism itself embodied the idea that Indigenous peoples who inhabited North America should either convert to Christianity and become “civilized” and “enculturated,” or be removed.ⁱⁱⁱ Early colonies such as Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Virginia established state religions, and nonconformists were not welcomed — for example, between 1659–1661, four Quakers were hanged on Boston Common for preaching their beliefs. At the nation's founding, free men of African descent were denied full citizenship; meanwhile, chattel slavery denied even basic humanity to the enslaved millions. Throughout the nineteenth century, xenophobia resulted in discrimination and violence against immigrant groups, especially Jews, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and Roman Catholics and Orthodox from eastern or

southern Europe. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 prohibited Asian immigration outright. Formal and informal segregation followed the Civil War and Reconstruction. Such practices and policies persist into the present.

Presbyterians are complicit in this history.^{iv} Presbyterian missionaries played a prominent role in establishing schools and mission sites with the goal of assimilating Indigenous people to Christianity and “white” civilization. Our Presbyterian predecessors North and South acquiesced in government policies of removal of Indigenous people from their land. Presbyterians were enslavers of other human beings, and the denomination made only tepid statements against slaveholding, which were never enforced. In the South, Presbyterians such as James Henley Thornwell and Robert L. Dabney provided popular theological and biblical arguments in favor of the institution of slavery prior to the formation of the Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States of America. The doctrine of the “spirituality of the church,” prominent in the (southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States, justified the nation’s racism deep into the twentieth century. The doctrine taught that the church must remain silent on social issues because it only exists to promote the gospel’s spiritual teachings. Consequently, the church acquiesced to racism. Presbyterians held membership in groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens’ Councils. Across the nation, Presbyterians accepted segregation through practices such as redlining (real estate agreements that excluded Blacks from home ownership), and employment discrimination.

Presbyterian anti-Catholicism and xenophobia were also common. In 1835, Lyman Beecher, president of Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, published *A Plea For the West*, a tract in which he argued that the monarchical structure of Catholicism and its education by indoctrination that discouraged freedom of thought were dangers to U.S. democracy and social well-being.^v In 1885 Josiah Strong, a leading Congregationalist pastor, spoke for all mainline denominations in *Our Country*, in which he argued that immigration endangered the United States if people were not helped to become “Anglo-Saxon” and to share the middle-class values that dominated Protestant culture.^{vi} (Clearly, the “our” in *Our Country* referred primarily to people of northern European Protestant stock.)

Although the United States disestablished religion in the First Amendment to the Constitution, throughout these decades the nation’s population was predominantly Protestant Christian. The result was, as Sidney Ahlstrom famously dubbed it, a “Protestant quasi-establishment.”^{vii} Protestant Christianity was assumed to be the norm. From the nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth centuries, public schools sponsored prayer and Bible reading — i.e., the Lord’s Prayer in its Protestant form and always the King James Bible, not a Catholic translation. Laws prohibited businesses to open on Sunday, which put Jewish owners at a disadvantage if they chose to close on their Saturday Sabbath. Further, as we have seen, to be Christian was to be “white,” either racially or by assimilation into the dominant culture. The PC(USA) has in recent decades sought a new course toward healthy loyalty to the nation, along with confession to the injustice we have enacted.^{viii}

WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM CHARACTERISTICS AND MANIFESTATIONS

Characteristics

While white Christian nationalism is a political ideology, it is often identified by and measured through adherence to particular convictions about the United States and Christianity. Sociologists Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry name the following seven beliefs as characteristic of white Christian nationalism:

- The founding documents of the U.S., such as the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were divinely inspired.
- The U.S. and its success are a part of God’s plan.
- The U.S. government should declare the United States a Christian nation.
- The government should advocate for Christian values.
- The government should not enforce strict separation of church and state.
- The government should allow displays of religious symbols in public spaces.
- The government should allow sponsored prayer in public schools.^{ix}

A recent National Council of Churches statement further articulated that WCN regards people of European descent as the American “norm,” a belief supported by various forms of racism and xenophobia. Within WCN ideology, other religions, races, and backgrounds may be tolerated, but can never be regarded as equal to white Christians. Additional WCN beliefs include the conviction that Christianity has been under assault in U.S. culture, and that Christians deserve privileged status in society.

As noted above, WCN is rooted in a mythology of the origin and history of the United States. This nostalgic, fictional narrative of western European’s manifest destiny brings together elements of ethnic identity, power, and religion to uphold the traditional dominance of white Christians in the nation’s leadership and power structures.^x Within this framework, people who are not white and Christian are unable to be “true Americans.” The conservative Claremont Institute, for instance, has argued that “most people living in the United States today — certainly more than half — are not Americans in any meaningful sense of the term...not real men and women who love truth and beauty.”^{xi}

Manifestations

Freedom of Religion

Because the ideology of white Christian nationalism includes the belief that the United States should be a Christian country, proponents of this viewpoint seek to establish Christianity as a national religion — or at least to ensure that Christian churches secure privileged power within governmental structures. The most extreme form of this impulse is dominionism, the belief that Christians should control all areas and institutions of national life, including government (see, for example, the *Seven Mountains Mandate*).^{xii}

In 2025, under pressure from religious groups, the Internal Revenue Service overturned provisions of the Johnson Amendment that prohibited tax-exempt charitable organizations (including churches) from publicly endorsing candidates for political office or making financial contributions to their campaigns — a policy in place for seven decades. While this change appears to offer religious “freedom,” the likely result is an increase in religious influence in the halls of government, including governmental preference for some religious groups over others. This kind of establishment of governmental religious “preference” is exactly what the First Amendment is designed to prevent.

Recent legislation and judicial cases reflect efforts of some Christian groups to exert their religious rights in ways that would codify “Christian” values in the legal system. The 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* case that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, state measures to restrict abortion and women’s health care, and legislation to limit or rescind the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons, often emerge from Christian groups seeking to enshrine their religious commitments and beliefs in U.S. law. In 2022 in *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, the Supreme Court decided that prohibiting an assistant football coach from praying on the football field following a game would unduly restrict his free exercise of religion, disregarding that such a practice by a school employee on school property promotes religion. Some cases have used the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to assert the right to Christian belief even when it denies rights to others.^{xiii} The 2014 Supreme Court case *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, which allowed the company to deny health care coverage for contraceptives on the basis of religious convictions, built on that argument. In both Supreme Court decisions, the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment superseded the Establishment Clause.^{xiv}

The WCN perception of anti-Christian bias in society is foundational to these efforts. The nation’s growing racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity is seen as a threat to the “idealized” understanding of the inherently Christian nature of the United States. Popular support for “immoral” practices (reproductive health care or gay marriage, for example) are seen as foisted on Christians; the displacement of some public symbols of Christianity (such as the elimination of sponsored prayer in public schools, or replacing “Merry Christmas” with “Happy Holidays”) is perceived as an attack on Christianity. Even more, there is a sense of being marginalized and victimized by “others” (immigrants, people of color) who receive the rewards (jobs, benefits, rights) of being “American” to which only white Christians are truly “entitled.” This gives rise to the sense of discrimination against Christians. As Gorski and Perry write, “...not only is the language of ‘religious liberty’ or ‘religious freedom’ dog-whistle language for conservative Christian supremacy, it also reflects a belief that Christians are the true victims in American society. Their idea of freedom means ‘freedom for us.’”^{xv} Because these freedoms must be defended, white Christian nationalists feel entitled to use whatever means necessary — coercion, intimidation, and even violence — to maintain them.^{xvi}

Education

For white Christian nationalists, public schools (often referred to as “government schools”) constitute a threat because public education is perceived to indoctrinate students into multiculturalism and liberalism.^{xvii} Because of these concerns, many with white Christian nationalist leanings advocate private Christian education or home schooling, and often support legislation that shifts funding for K–12 public education into vouchers for private education. This trajectory mirrors the broad expansion of (white) private Christian schools from the 1950s to the 1980s during desegregation.^{xviii}

A growing movement within education bears mentioning: “released time” for religious instruction. Released time allows a religious group to offer religious instruction to public school students during the school day, so long as the program is privately funded, off campus, and permitted by parents. The Supreme Court ruled that such programs do not violate the Establishment Clause if those conditions are met (*Zorach v. Clauson*, 1952). In many places where released time has been implemented, the prominent curricula align with elements of the white Christian nationalist agenda, such as the myth that the United States is a “Christian” nation presented as factual history, a supremacist or supersessionist understanding of Christianity, or a heteronormative and patriarchal understanding of gender. Released time programs also engender divisions; students who do not participate can feel left out or “wrong,” while the students who attend are taught that some members of society should not be accepted as “equal.” Released time efforts, like WCN in general, have promoted privilege and supremacy for one group, and loss of dignity and rights for others.

Finally, WCN focuses strongly on what can be taught or even discussed in public school classrooms and on college campuses. In recent years, laws have been proposed in a majority of states to limit what can be taught in regard to race, American history, politics, sexual orientation and gender identity. Legislation has taken the form of “gag orders,” in which particular topics are strictly limited or banned outright (like critical race theory), as well as more general policies to limit diversity, equity, and inclusion or the study of “divisive” topics that could threaten “institutional neutrality.”^{xix} Often, these measures limit access to the scholarship, writings, or stories of persons of color or other minoritized groups, and penalize teachers who would emphasize the need for their inclusion. The educational system is another way white Christian nationalist agendas seek to control the narrative of what is “true” about the nation’s history, what topics are appropriate or welcome, and what is protected by freedom of speech or expression.

Immigration

Because WCN promotes the supremacy of those of European heritage, immigrants are a frequent target for blame, derision, and demonization. Although such xenophobia is not new in U.S. history, immigrants and even refugees are again being blamed for national problems such as crime, costs of health care, unemployment, and even the national deficit.^{xx} Immigrants who are non-white or non-English speaking are specifically demonized as ethically and morally inferior, inherently lazy or unwilling to work, and unable to “assimilate” into white American culture when they bring religion, customs, and languages from their countries of origin — despite extensive data that refutes these claims. So-called “replacement theory,” a particular stream of white racism that suggests white people will be “replaced” by an inferior and destructive non-white majority, has been put forward in the November 2025 “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” which predicts the “civilizational erasure” of Europe that will render the continent “unrecognizable in 20 years or less,” because of the loss of its Western “identity.”^{xxi}

WCN is demonstrated in anti-immigrant rhetoric, stereotyping, and hate speech. In the current era, it is being exercised through the dramatic increase in ICE activity and the denial of civil rights to migrants, and the unfettered targeting of anyone who “looks like” an immigrant for questioning, arrest, and deportation. The attempts to bar paths to citizenship, the false refrain that immigrants draw public dollars without contributing economically, and the demonization of immigrants all demonstrate fear of the “other,” the stranger whom we are called to love and welcome in Christ. This stands in sharp contrast to the denomination’s stance that diversity and inclusivity are a manifestation of God’s creative will, as well as beneficial for the nation. As Presbyterian Christians, we reject the implicit and explicit white supremacy of WCN.

Democratic Processes

The attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 — when a mass of insurrectionists attempted to overturn the results of a free and fair presidential election — is the foremost WCN effort to obstruct democratic processes. Other efforts have been more subtle. The false claim that noncitizens vote illegally has been used to limit voting rights in general, and to cast doubt on the citizenship and voting rights of naturalized citizens and of people of color specifically. The requirement to have government-issued picture identification for voting disproportionately affects people of color and all lower-income people, who may not have a driver’s license and often have difficulty obtaining government-issued identification. Although studies demonstrate that voter malpractice and corruption are minimal, false claims of their ubiquity has led to increased limitations on mail-in ballots (despite their long-standing use in some states), and hindrances to voter participation such as providing only one drop box for mail-in ballots per county. Extensive “cleansing” of voter rolls has led to rejecting registered voters at the polls. Gerrymandering of voting districts unfairly tilt the electoral scales in one party’s direction, effectively disenfranchising many citizens. Recently proposed legislation requires that a person’s voting identification must match the name on their birth certificate, which will mean women and others who have changed their names due to marriage and other life events are required to get additional identification to vote. We must be vigilant against the use of our legal and governmental system to achieve anti-democratic ends.^{xxii}

REFORMED BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASES TO REJECT WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Presbyterians look to scripture and Reformed theology as we seek to grow beyond our own racist past and reject WCN in the United States. Here we focus on three theological affirmations that stand against white Christian nationalism: the sovereignty of God, freedom of conscience, and diversity and inclusivity as God’s will for humanity.

First, any form of nationalism is a direct violation of the first and second commandments: worship of God alone (Ex. 20:2–6) and the prohibition of idolatry — not just the making of idols, but giving any earthly power priority over God. The sovereign claim of God that renders all other loyalties secondary is fundamental to the biblical story. Deuteronomy 6:4 reminds us that “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” Jesus, when tempted with power over all the earth in Luke 4, told Satan “Worship the Lord your God and serve only (God).” The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins: “What is the chief and highest end of (humans)? To glorify God and fully to enjoy God forever.” The Barmen Declaration 8.23, written in the face of the deep racism and nationalism of Nazi Germany, rejects “the false doctrine, as though the State, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life.” Nationalism replaces the call to God’s kin-dom of love and community with a claim to human power over society, using a false image of God to sanction it. The nation replaces God as the measure of what is good, demanding our undivided loyalty. Giving ultimate devotion to the United States in place of the worship of our providential God rejects God’s claim on our lives.

Second, the Westminster Confession affirms that God alone is Lord of the conscience.^{xxiii} In its attempt to impose Christian beliefs and practices onto the nation’s legal, cultural, and social systems, WCN directly violates this principle. “God alone is Lord of the conscience” means that the conscience of the believer is bound only by God’s Word, and no earthly power.^{xxiv} This is a corollary to the fundamental premise of disestablishment in the First Amendment to the Constitution. The framers understood that everyone should be free to believe and act in accord with their convictions, and the only way to do so was to protect the individual’s conscience. WCN not only contradicts the principle of disestablishment enshrined in our Constitution, it flies in the face of our Reformed conviction that a person shall be free to follow their conscience in matters of faith and action.^{xxv}

A related but broader issue than we cannot adequately treat here is the relationship of Reformed thought and the bases of republican forms of government, of which liberty of conscience is one good example. Michael Walzer argued decades ago that the Reformed

tradition was a key impetus for the rise of republican thought in the West.^{xxvi} Presbyterian John Witherspoon was an important influence on the thought of James Madison, central to the writing of the Constitution; Abraham Lincoln learned much from Presbyterians that he brought to his political thought; folks like John Rankin and Elijah Parish Lovejoy were strong antislavery proponents; and in the twentieth century Eugene Carson Blake and the (non-Presbyterian but Reformed) brothers Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr were important figures in the political thought and action in the nation. Although Presbyterians have been complicit in WCN, we have also contributed to forces seeking to negate it — and we should draw on and perpetuate that heritage.^{xxvii}

Finally, a basic assertion of scripture and the confessions is that God loves all creation equally and desires justice for all. That has two important implications for this discussion. First, it means that white Christians are no more God's children than anyone else, nor loved by God more than others. Any WCN claim to supremacy opposes Paul's assertion that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The idea of equality before God pervades scripture, but we note Acts 10:34, in which Peter affirms that God is no respecter of persons; and I John 4:7–8 ("Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God").

The second implication follows the first: the WCN grasp for power and the exclusion of the "other" are inherently sinful because God created diversity and enjoins us to embrace difference and to love even the stranger. This is clearly affirmed in Ex. 22:21–27, in which God requires fairness for resident aliens, widows, orphans, and the poor — those most vulnerable and easily marginalized. Scripture affirms that God's will is for all humans to live in a community of justice, love, and equity in the midst of our differences. There is value and goodness in the diversity of the human family, and God includes all in God's beloved community.

Welcoming of the stranger, inclusion of difference, and love between and for all people are prominent in our confessions. The Heidelberg Catechism affirms that "God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves, to be patient, peace-loving, gentle...[and] to protect them from harm as much as we can" (Question 107). The Confession of 1967, in 9.44, affirms that the "church is called to bring all [people] to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in *employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights*" (emphasis added). Finally, the Belhar Confession holds that any teaching which promotes separation of people "out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, [and] must be considered ideology and false doctrine" (10.5). We have not always lived as disciples of Christ in these matters, but the call is clear as we repent of our past and seek to reject WCN.

We agree with the National Council of Churches when it asserts:

Where the Bible has at its core the story of a people committed to welcoming aliens and strangers because they themselves were aliens and strangers, and to defending the oppressed because they themselves were once oppressed, the Christian nationalist narrative rejects the stranger.... Where the Bible declares that all human beings are made in the image of God, American Christian nationalists regard only certain people — "advanced," white Christian, English-speaking — to have the full measure of God's image.^{xxviii}

CONCLUSION

This policy statement makes clear that white Christian nationalism is a political ideology that merges Christian and national identity in order to control social, cultural, judicial, and governmental systems and institutions. Asserting that the United States is a Christian nation privileges a particular form of Christianity over all other religious beliefs, and claims authority over the nation's institutions in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution. Further, WCN denies basic human dignity and civil and human rights to those not considered "real Americans." Racism and xenophobia manifest themselves in attempts to the demonization of immigrants and those of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. We reject white Christian nationalism categorically as a denial of fundamental Reformed understanding of scripture and theology and urge the whole church to join in repudiating this dangerous and harmful ideology.

ⁱ "[Confronting White Christian Nationalism: Frequently Asked Questions and a Liturgy](#)," prepared by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, June 18, 2025.

ⁱⁱ For a brief presentation of the question of the nation's origins, see Rick Nutt, "How the Religious Right Views History — and Why," *Soundings* 72 (Fall/Summer 1989): 527–549.

ⁱⁱⁱ See for example "[Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC\(USA\) and Support for Native American Sovereignty](#)," approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

^{iv} See William Yoo, *Reckoning with History: Settler Colonialism, Slavery, and the Making of American Christianity* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2025).

^v Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1835).

^{vi} Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: The American Home Missionary Society, 1885).

^{vii} Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972).

^{viii} See "[Honest Patriotism](#)," approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

^{ix} Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry, *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 15–16. We note that Gorski and Perry write the fifth value statement positively, as "The federal government *should* enforce a strict separation of church and state." They then assess opposition to this value in their survey responses. Since this framing would be confusing for our purposes, we've chosen to summarize this value in the negative ("should not") to better align with the other six value statements.

^x Gorski and Perry refer to this as “ethno-traditionalism” (Ibid., 27).

^{xi} Ibid., 101.

^{xii} Jipson, Art. “[What is the ‘Seven Mountains Mandate’ and how is it linked to political extremism in the US?](#)” *Ohio Capital Journal*, July 10, 2025;

Boedy, Matthew, *The Seven Mountains Mandate*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2025.

^{xiii} See “[Religious Freedom Without Discrimination](#),” approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

^{xiv} For more on how the PC(USA) has understood the issues of the First Amendment in previous policies, see “[Reformed Faith and Politics](#)” (1983), “[God Alone is Lord of the Conscience](#)” (1988), and “[Religious Freedom without Discrimination](#)” (2018).

^{xv} Gorski and Perry, *The Flag and the Cross*, 91.

^{xvi} Ibid., 91–96.

^{xvii} See, for instance, Corey A. DeAngelis, *The Parent Revolution: Rescuing Your Kids from the Radicals Ruining Our Schools* (Nashville: Center Street Books, 2024). DeAngelis, a right-wing activist and scholar, writes, “Government schools have been captured by the political left.... And at its core, the left is socialist” (66). He also cites the pastor Voddie Baucham Jr., who asserts, “Thirteen years of government indoctrination immensely harms society. Conservatives...must strike back.” (67)

^{xviii} See “A History of Private Schools and Race in the American South,” *Southern Education Foundation*, <https://southerneducation.org/publications/history-of-private-schools-and-race-in-the-american-south/>.

^{xix} See the 2024 Report “[America’s Censored Classrooms](#),” from PEN America, an organization promoting the freedom of expression.

^{xx} Wolf, Zachary B. “The Civil Rights law that Stephen Miller says ruined America,” CNN Politics, December 11, 2025,

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/12/11/politics/stephen-miller-trump-immigration-law-somalia>.

^{xxi} National Security Strategy of the United States of America, November 2025: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf>

^{xxii} The PC(USA) has spoken to this question indirectly in “[Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform](#),” first approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and updated in 2016 and 2022.

^{xxiii} The Westminster Confession of Faith, XX.2 (6.109) and following.

^{xxiv} “[Lord of the Conscience: A Balancing Act](#),” by Margo G. Houts (originally published in *Presbyterians Today*, March 2003).

^{xxv} See, for instance, James Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments” (1785),

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0163>.

^{xxvi} See Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

^{xxvii} For a more comprehensive overview of the Reformed tradition and religious liberty, see “[God Alone is Lord of the Conscience](#),” adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988), especially 60–71.

^{xxviii} National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., “The Dangers of Christian Nationalism in the United States: A Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches,” April 20, 2021: <https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness/the-dangers-of-christian-nationalism-in-the-united-states-a-policy-statement-of-the-national-council-of-churches/>.