

NOTE: I wrote this article in January before I was aware of any of the controversy surrounding certain Lutheran Twitter users espousing white nationalist sentiments. I stand by everything I wrote here, but I do wish to distance myself from them.

Dear Friends in Christ,

If the Fed isn't spying on me yet, they will be after this one...

The term "Christian Nationalism" has had a little bit of a revival as of late. Most use it as a way to deride Christians, in particular white Christians in America. Those who invaded the capitol on January 6th were labeled as "Christian Nationalists."

Like fascism, nobody seems to know what the term means. For many, Christian Nationalism is anything to the right of Susan Collins, the moderate Republican Senator from Maine (this is a joke. Although not really...). Others take the term and combine it with white nationalism. Of course white supremacism is a sin. But most of the talk about race in our day is bait. So don't take the bait. Right now, we don't need a newsletter article decrying white supremacy. The difference between salad and garbage is time. One thing may be true, but if you say it at the wrong time, it's unhelpful.

What we do need is somebody to defend Christianity and to provide clarity on the separation of church and state. When many people describe the separation of church and state, they mean the separation of morality and state. They mean that absolutely no Christian values should be put into law. Well this is crazy talk. Every universally accepted societal law goes back to the 10 Commandments. Get rid of Christianity, and you'll get rid of society.

Here's what the separation of church and state really means - church and state have different governments. This is wise and prudent. The church has its own government. In the Missouri Synod, we have circuits then districts then the Synod. There's a clear hierarchy. The Governor of Minnesota has no business coming into the church's District Office and calling pastors and telling them what to preach. In the same way, our District President has no business going into the Governor's office and signing legislation. This is well and good. When you confuse these things, you get the Pope in the Middle Ages, or you get hate speech laws in Canada which apply to the pulpit.

Church and state have different governing systems, but both are under God's authority. This is important. When people say separation of church and state, they often mean the separation of God and state. This is disastrous. Don't be so cynical when I ask this next question - do you want our political leaders to be godless? (Okay, many of them already are, and it's precisely because we've separated God and state.)

Okay, so back to Christian Nationalism. You might find the term unhelpful since it's been so tarred and feathered. Fine - suggest a new term. Stephen Wolfe in his recent book *The Case for Christian Nationalism* defines the term well, and it is what we should aim for. He says Christian Nationalism is "a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs, conducted by a Christian nation as a Christian nation, in order to procure for itself both earthly and heavenly good in Christ." Yes, the government should have laws that align with the Bible. The civil law should define marriage how the Bible does. The civil law should defend life like the Bible does.

People might say, "There's no such thing as a Christian Nation." Then why did Jesus say to go make disciples of all nations? (Matt 28:19) I, with Paul, wish that everyone would become Christians. Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, and God wants everyone to receive that salvation. If someone argues that Christianity is fine, but other religions are good for the sake of diversity, then that person really doesn't believe what Christianity teaches.

"And [Herod] Agrippa said to Paul, 'In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?' And Paul said, 'Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am - except for these chains'" (Acts 26:28-29).

Sincerely,

Pastor