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CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM: BLESSING OR CURSE?

And He has made from one blood every nation of men
to dwell on all the face of the earth,
and has determined their pre-appointed times
and the boundaries of their habitation,
so that they should seek the Lord,
in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him,
though He is not far from each one of us;
for in Him we live and move and have our being.

Acts 17:26-28

By Dr. David Schnittger

There has been much in the news of late regarding the issue of “Christian Nationalism” (CN). It has been smeared as “white nationalism” or even “Christo-fascism.” It has been linked to advocates of an “America First” political agenda, such as Marjorie Taylor Greene and Doug Mastriano. In this article, I would like to deal with the various connotations attached to this term, and then suggest my interpretation of this term.

MAINSTREAM MEDIA’S DEFINITION

First, let me give a sampling of mainstream America’s interpretation of Christian nationalism. The September 26, 2022 edition of *Time* magazine carried an article entitled, “3 Threats Christian Nationalism Poses to the United States.” In this article, *Time* defined it this way:

“Christian nationalism refers to an ideology that asserts all civic life in the U.S. should be organized according to a particularly conservative and ethnocentric expression of Christianity. Christian nationalism is more than theological or religious beliefs. It includes several cultural assumptions including:

- Strict moral traditionalism focused on sustaining social hierarchies.
- Comfort with authoritarian control - exercised by the “right” people - that includes the threat and use of violence.
- A desire for strict ethno-racial boundaries around who is a “true” American, where non-white and non-natural born citizens are viewed as unworthy of full participation in American civic life (This is why many label it *white* Christian nationalism).”

This definition is further developed in a February 29, 2024 article on *NPR* entitled, “Tracing the rise of Christian nationalism, from Trump to the Atlanta Supreme Court.” In this article Bradley Onishi, a professor of religion, states: “. . . Christian nationalism is the idea that Christian people should be privileged in the United States in some way - economically, socially, politically - and that that influence and that privilege is a result of the country being founded by and for Christians . . . here is a core belief that the story of the United States is one where it has been elected by God to play an exceptional role in human history, and as being chosen by God, it’s the duty of Christian people to carry out his will on Earth.”

TORBA AND ISKER’S DEFINITION

Andrew Torba and Andrew Isker recently published a book entitled, *Christian Nationalism: A Biblical Guide To Taking Dominion And Discipling Nations*¹. In their book, they define Christian Nationalism as: “Christian Nationalism is loving your neighbor. Who is our neighbor? Our fellow citizen and especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. Loving them means protecting them from foreign interests, alien worldviews, and hostile invaders. Christian Nationalism means placing the interest of your neighbor and your home above the interest of foreigners in foreign nations. This doesn’t mean we neglect foreign nations or do not extend love to them, but rather that we place the interests and worldview of our home above foreign ones” (xxiv).

Torba and Isker define CN further: “As Christian Nationalists, we understand these United States of America were once a Union of Protestant Christian states. This is revealed in the original intent of the First Amendment (Bill of Rights) that prohibited the establishment of a federal religion, so as to respect the establishment of state religions which already existed before, during and after the United States were founded as a Union. These United States were founded as a Christian Nation” (xx).

Torba and Isker also clarify that the concept of CN does not involve the establishment of either a national or state Christian church: “No longer do Christian Nationalists in America seek to establish official state churches or religions, but rather we seek to reestablish states that recognize Jesus Christ as King, the general Christian faith as the foundation of state laws that reflect (in every way possible and reasonable) Christian morality and charity” (xxi).

¹ Andrew Torba, Andrew Isker, *Christian Nationalism*, (Gab AI Inc, 2022).

TORBA AND ISKER'S ATTACKS ON PRETRIBULATIONALISM

I am in hearty agreement with everything Torba and Isker have stated thus far. However, the authors then proceed to exclude a significant portion of Christians from the CN vision. Let us hear them speak for themselves:

“The idea that the world is going to keep getting worse until Jesus comes back to airlift all the Christians out and then come back yet again to establish a 1,000- year reign is a concept that does not have a single historical antecedent before 1830. No one in the entire history of the Christian Church . . . believes in something called the “rapture” or the concept of two second comings before Christ’s kingdom is established. Before 1830, when John Nelson Darby invented the concept . . . no Christian had ever heard of the rapture” (41).

After totally misrepresenting church history on this point, the authors proceed to deliver an ad hominem attack on those who hold to the pretribulation rapture doctrine: “The biblical arguments that Doomers rely on to make their case that the world is going to end any minute now, on the other hand, are extremely weak” (44).

The authors go on to say: “Any movement determined to obey Christ’s command to disciple our nation cannot be rooted in pessimism and an expectation of failure. You cannot simultaneously hope for a revival of Christian faithfulness in our nation while expecting the world to end at any moment” (44).

In this quote the authors commit two logical fallacies. First, they engage in an ad hominem attack. This is committed when, instead of trying to disprove the truth of what is asserted, one attacks the man who made the assertion. This is the ridiculous claim that those who believe in the pretribulation Rapture of the Church are “doomers.”

The second logical fallacy is that of misrepresentation. The pretribulation view is mischaracterized as believing that the “world is going to end any minute now.” Anyone who is even remotely familiar with pretribulation theology knows that this is a gross misrepresentation of this view. The world certainly does not end after the Rapture (see Revelation 4-22). I have a Master of Theology degree in Theology, and have read dozens of books supporting the pretribulation Rapture of the church. I have NEVER read a pretribulation Rapture advocate claim that the Rapture will mark “the end of the world.” That is a remarkably ignorant and absurd claim to make.

THE HISTORICITY OF PREMILLENNIAL FAITH

According to the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, “The premillennialist believes that the kingdom of Christ will be inaugurated in a cataclysmic way and that divine control will be exercised in a most supernatural manner than does the postmillennialist.”²

² Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theological*. Baker, 1984.

By the way, the pretribulation Rapture doctrine is a subset of the broader doctrine known as *premillennialism* and the Rapture has been taught concurrently with premillennialism throughout church history.

For lack of space, I will confine my comments in regard to premillennialism to the scholarly book, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?*³ “Premillennialism was not contradicted by a single orthodox church father until the beginning of the third century when Gaus first launched an attack. Gaus is the first one in recorded church history who interpreted the thousand years symbolically” (204). In fact, premillennialism was so universally believed during the patristic period (A.D. 100-312) that this doctrine was included in the first church creed at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. “. . . we look forward to new heavens and a new earth according to the Holy Scriptures: the appearance of our Great God and Savior, who will become visible to us” (206).

If church history is indeed the basis for judging orthodoxy, postmillennialists are at a definite disadvantage: “Postmillennialism was in fact the last of the three major eschatological systems to be developed . . . It did not originate as a system until the early 1700s . . . First expressed in the works of certain Puritan scholars, it received its most influential formulation in the writings of the Anglican commentator Daniel Whitby” (208, 209).

“Daniel Whitby first put forth his views in a popular work entitled *Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* (1703). It was at the end of this work that he first set forth what he calls in his own words, “A New Hypothesis” on the millennial reign of Christ” (209).

This “new hypothesis”, developed in the 18th century, posited that “Christ’s second coming will occur after the Millennium. The preaching of the gospel by the church will bring about a time of peace and prosperity, and the knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole earth.”⁴

This “new hypothesis” has waxed and waned in popularity, dependent on world events. For example, it grew in popularity for a period prior to WWI, but waned after this brutal conflagration. Likewise, it waxed during the Reagan years, but has waned afterwards due to the globalist presidents that followed. Having followed this movement for some 40 years (I actually wrote a book interacting with postmillennial views -*Christian Reconstruction From a Pretribulation Perspective*, Southwest Radio Church, 1986), I have concluded that its leaders are guilty of an arrogant exclusivism featuring ad hominem attacks and mischaracterization of premillennialists, and especially, pretribulationists. This kind of superior, divisive spirit is self-defeating and, ironically, displays the same kind of censorious spirit of the very globalists they hope to defeat.

³ H. Wayne House/Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* Multnomah Press, 1988.

⁴ *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*. Moody Press, 1975.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is my view that Christian Nationalism is not tied to any particular eschatology. It is, rather, a simple declaration that Christians of all eschatological backgrounds believe that God has established the nation-state as a buffer and defense against godless global government. Whether we look back to the Tower of Babel or look forward to the destruction of Babylon the Great (Revelation 18 and 19), it is clear that God opposes global government until He institutes His own global government during the Millennium (Revelation 20).

Therefore, as American Christians, we should unapologetically espouse positions that advance the peace and prosperity of the American people. Likewise, Christian citizens of other nations should advance the peace and prosperity of their nation, and positions which seek to advancement of the gospel in their nation.

Paul stated in Acts 17:26, 27: “And (God) hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all that face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.” These verses teach that God raises nations up and puts them down, as He chooses, in accordance with their faithfulness to His respective purposes for them. The purposes of these nations, when they are rightly related to God, is to cause their citizens to “. . . seek the Lord.”

This accords with the truth of Psalm 33:12, which states, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.” Contrariwise, God issues a warning to nations which violate His purpose: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17).

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Having delivered a critique of Torba and Isker’s theology, I do want, in the spirit of fairness, to recommend the practical ramifications of Christian Nationalism that they advocate.

Torba and Isker flesh out the ramifications of CN in a practical way: “Christian Nationalism is more than a political movement. It is also a social and economic movement. It is not enough to simply boycott businesses that oppose our values. As Christian Nationalists, we pledge to support the businesses of other Christians, strengthening our community, and helping each other prosper” (xxi).

Torba and Isker summarize their vision of CN thusly: “Our primary goal is to build a parallel Christian society, economy, and infrastructure which will fill the vacuum of the failed secular state when it falls” (xxvii).

Let me give a current example. New York Attorney General Letitia James filed a \$370 million-dollar civil lawsuit against Trump, his company, and his business associates for alleged fraud, claiming Trump and his codefendants fraudulently misstated the value of their assets. Judge Arthur Engoron unilaterally found the former president and his codefendant liable for fraud, and levied a penalty of

over \$400 million dollars. In response, many patriotic truckers are now boycotting deliveries to NYC. Also, patriots around the country are boycotting all businesses in New York (including me!).

When you consider that the over 100 million patriots in America generate over seven trillion dollars in wealth yearly, we have considerable clout in punishing liberal states and companies, as well as rewarding America First states and businesses. All of this is part of building a Christian Nationalist parallel economy.

If someone tries to shame you for being a Christian Nationalist, suggest to them that the opposite is being a *Satanic Globalist*. Which would you rather be?

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