

Exhibit

Action: That the Etown CoB place an ad in LNP (Lancaster Newspaper) on Wednesday, October 19, or Sunday, October 23.

Background/Notes:

- All costs will be covered by private donors. The date and size of the ad will be reported at the special council meeting.
- The Witness Commission proposed the statement as a way for our congregation to speak out against the perils of “Christian Nationalism.” Silence is often assumed to be consent. We choose not to be silent. We call on the whole congregation as voiced through Church Council to approve this public witness which reflects our understanding of the true message of Jesus.
- We are pleased that Lancaster Interchurch Peace Witness has endorsed the statement. Their support will upscale our efforts by distributing an email to 400 religious leaders in the Lancaster area and eventually to the PA Council of Churches statewide.
- See attached Statement: The Perils of Christian Nationalism

The Perils of Christian Nationalism

“Our Christian faith is too expansive to be defined by any national identity—even a nation as beloved as America—and our embrace of American values of equality and inclusion, are too profound, to privilege any religion, even one as beloved as Christianity.” (1)

--Bishop W. Darin Moore

America’s Promise: Freedom of Religion

The founders ensured our freedom of religion in the First Amendment of the Constitution. They declared that our government could not *establish* a religion and that every faith could *freely exercise* (practice) its religion. All religions were equal; the government had no favorites. Regardless of where they worshipped—in a cathedral, mosque, synagogue, church, or temple—all religions would enjoy the same status and protection in the eyes of the government.

Christian Nationalism is a *political ideology*. It is not a religion, a denomination, or an organization. It's a label for a movement that advocates Christian superiority over other religions.

This ideology gives extremist groups a license for bigotry and violence. Some politicians exploit its sentiments for political gain. And for others, it is a strong heartfelt conviction.

Key Beliefs of Christian Nationalism

America is God's chosen nation.

America was born a Christian nation.

Christianity is woven into the fabric of America.

Governments should make laws to keep America Christian.

Christianity should be privileged above other religions.

Christian symbols should be dominant in the public square.

A small minority of Christians, mostly white, hold these beliefs. Some of them decry the waning influence of Christianity in American life, and in their mind, the rising persecution of Christians. And some fear being outnumbered by non-Caucasian people.

Transforming and Fighting

Christian nationalists seek to transform society by infusing their values and policies into all levels of government. This vision energizes some politicians who believe they are called, even anointed by God, to promote Christian nationalism. They debunk the separation of church and state as an old myth. In their mind, Church and State are one.

More worrisome is a crusading mentality. With God by their side, Christian nationalists feel empowered to fight a cosmic battle between Good and Evil. Thus, Christian superiority may embolden some zealots to use violence in the name of God.

Christian Nationalism Threatens Religious Freedom by:

Eroding the principle of the separation of church and state.

Defying the First Amendment (establishment and free exercise clauses).

Treating non-Christian religions and their members as second-class.

Restricting the rights of non-Christian religions in the public square.

Threatening to impose Christian nationalist policies on all US citizens.

Subverting America's promise of religious pluralism, justice, and equality.

“Christian nationalism is the single biggest threat to religious freedom in America,” says Baptist leader Amanda Tyler. (2)

Which Jesus?

Christian nationalism prizes power, domination, and exclusion. Their American-made Jesus is militant, hardnosed, and domineering. He's a Jesus who carries a sword and smites his foes. This political ideology flips the core values of the Christian faith upside down.

The Jesus of the Gospels rejected nationalism. He refused to retaliate when beaten and nailed to a cross. He preached love for enemies. He blessed peacemakers and urged his followers to love their neighbor as themselves. He emphatically replaced domination with servanthood.

Jesus invited *everyone* to the table: Jews and non-Jews, prostitutes and scribes, tax collectors and Samaritans. All were welcome.

Jesus established a global kingdom that transcends national boundaries. The God of Jesus has no favorite nation. His sun shines on the evil and the good; his rain falls on the just and unjust.

So to whom do we pledge our allegiance? To the “Jesus” of Christian nationalism or the Jesus of the Gospels?

Protecting America’s Promise

The cost of silence compels us to speak out. We deplore Christian Nationalism. Our Christian duty calls us to stand strong and tall for the country that we love and the faith that we cherish. We applaud America’s promise to protect religious freedom so that every faith is treated with dignity and equality.

Sponsored by the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren

<https://www.etowncob.org/>

Endorsed and supported by Lancaster Interchurch Peace Witness

<https://lancasterinterchurchpeacewitness.org/>

Notes: (1) Bishop W. Darin Moore is the Presiding Prelate of the mid-Atlantic Episcopal District, the AME Zion Church. (2) Amanda Tyler is executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Freedom (BJC).

Resources: Lancaster area Christian leaders speak out against Christian Nationalism;

["These Local Christian Leaders Reject Christian Nationalism."](#)

Statement by prominent evangelical leaders nationwide:

<https://saynotochristiannationalism.org/>

Christians Against Christian Nationalism:

<https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/statement>

Professor Greg Carey, Lancaster Theological Seminary Lecture on Christian Nationalism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a51SsrsRY5k>