



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND AGAINST CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

We, the undersigned, urge the federal government to protect the religious liberty of all people, and we strongly condemn the rise of Christian Nationalism, a dangerous conflation of fundamentalist Christianity, conservative politics, and fierce patriotism that distorts what it means to be an American citizen and an engaged Christian in society.

An executive order signed by President Trump on February 6th established a new “Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias.” This Task Force has the duty to “identify any unlawful anti-Christian policies, practices, or conduct by an agency.”¹ This executive order is a threat to the religious pluralism enshrined in the constitution and does not protect Christians; rather it aligns the federal government with Christian Nationalism.

With the executive order for “Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias”, the federal government has given itself the authority and mandate to define what might be considered “anti-Christian,” and therefore also the authority to define what is Christian - a power which belongs to the Church alone, not the federal government. This executive order violates religious freedom, corrupts the separation of Church and State, and creates a more hostile environment for Christians and all citizens who believe differently than the current administration and its religious advisors.

As Christians, we follow Jesus’ command to love God and love others.² Christian Nationalism, which does not speak for all Christians, distorts the Gospel and turns Jesus and Christianity into a weapon for power and division instead of a movement towards love and justice. As U.S. Citizens, we uphold a system of government that tries to keep the common good central, defends religious freedom, and protects the rights of all. The dangerous ideology of Christian Nationalism demands that a particular brand of Christianity be privileged by the state and impose that singular belief system in order to be a “good American”.

In order to protect religious freedom, the federal government must not align with one religious ideology but rather honor the constitutional mandate to defend space for religious pluralism and ensure that each member of society is free to practice their religion, or no religion, while keeping the peace and working together for the common good.

We call on the President of the United States and all elected officials to protect religious freedom in our country and uphold the constitution of the United States of America.

Faithfully,

Bishop Paul Erickson, Greater Milwaukee Synod ELCA
Bishop Anne Edison-Albright, East Central Synod of Wisconsin ELCA
Bishop Felix Malpica, La Crosse Area Synod ELCA
Bishop Martin Halom, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin ELCA
Bishop Katherine Finegan, Northern Great Lakes Synod ELCA
Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin ELCA
The Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter, Episcopal Diocese of Wisconsin
The Rt. Rev. Rayford Ray, Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan

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Dan Schwerin, Bishop, Northern Illinois-Wisconsin Area United Methodist Church
Rev. Jane B. Anderson, United Church of Christ
Rev. Rachel Bauman, United Church of Christ
Rev. Michael D. Jones, United Church of Christ
Rev. Franz Rigert, Wisconsin Conference Minister, United Church of Christ
Rev'd Dr. Christian D. Boyd, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Milwaukee, PC(USA)
Rev. Dr. Dave Colby, General Presbyter for Winnebago Presbytery, PC (USA)
Rev. Devon M. Reynolds, Executive Presbyter for the John Knox Presbytery, PC(USA)
Walt Wiltschek, District Executive Minister, IL/WI District Church of the Brethren
Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, Regional Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin
Lynne Smith, OSB, Prioress of Holy Wisdom Monastery, Middleton, WI
Fr. Yeprem Kelegian, WI Representative to the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern)
Manuel Ramminger, Co-Founder Ethical Trade Co
Rev. Kerri Parker, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of Churches
Rev. Joy Gallmon, D. Ed.Min., Board President, Wisconsin Council of Churches
Rev. Valerie Showalter, Board Member, Wisconsin Council of Churches
The Rev. Dr. Matthew L. Sauer, Manitowoc Cooperative Ministry, PCUSA/UCC
The Rev. Donald M. Fleischman, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Milwaukee WI
Rev. Nii Addo Abrahams, Board Member, Wisconsin Council of Churches

signers at release of statement, March 11, 2025
additional signers at wchurches.org

NOTES:

1. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/eradicating-anti-christian-bias/>
2. [Matthew 22:36-40](#), [Luke 6:27-36](#), [Matthew 5:43-48](#), [Mark 12: 28-31](#), [Luke 10:25-28](#), [Romans 13:8-10](#), [Galatians 5:13-14](#), Christians Against Christian Nationalism Statement:

“As Christians, we are bound to Christ, not by citizenship, but by faith. We believe that:

- People of all faiths and none have the right and responsibility to engage constructively in the public square.
- Patriotism does not require us to minimize our religious convictions.
- One’s religious affiliation, or lack thereof, should be irrelevant to one’s standing in the civic community.
- Government should not prefer one religion over another or religion over nonreligion.
- America’s historic commitment to religious pluralism enables faith communities to live in civic harmony with one another without sacrificing our theological convictions.
- Conflating religious authority with political authority is idolatrous and often leads to oppression of minority and other marginalized groups as well as the spiritual impoverishment of religion.
- We must stand up to and speak out against Christian nationalism, especially when it inspires acts of violence and intimidation against religious communities at home and abroad.

Whether we worship at a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple, America has no second-class faiths, including among Christians. All are equal under the U.S. Constitution. As Christians, we must speak in one voice condemning Christian nationalism as a distortion of the gospel of Jesus and a threat to American democracy.”³

3. <https://www.christiansagainatchristiannationalism.org/statement>