

No Christian Nationalism

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Christian nationalists bear false witness to God.

Now let me dissect that sentence.

A Christian is a person who devotes themselves to the revelations about God found in the person of Jesus and the ongoing presence of the Christ with the strength of the Holy Spirit. That revelation is most clearly stated in what is called the *mandatum novum*, or new commandment, found in what we call the Good News of Jesus Christ according to John, chapter 13, verses 34 to 35: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

It's not really such a new commandment as love, respect and neighborliness are already enshrined in the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments/Teachings in the Hebrew Bible's book of Exodus.

In that portion of our story, after working with God to free themselves from an oppressive state, the Hebrew people received lessons on how to survive as a community. These lessons included not killing or stealing or lying or being greedy for what's on the other side of your neighbor's fence. The tools for survival were entirely relational, rather than personal or national.

But over time, our stories tell us, the descendants of the escaped slaves got antsy for a king, someone who could get them into the international market, make them a real player in the region. A prophet of the God of freedom, in a book called Samuel, warns them a king will make their children into tools for war and profit and indulgence, a king will take their personal resources for his personal gain, laughing all the way to the bank. (I added that last part.) And then all of that happens to the people.

Both the Hebrew and Christian testaments to God are about that cycle of freedom, blowing it and working on freedom again. So a Christian is, by definition, a public lover and freedom-worker unconcerned with bolstering state identity because states ultimately only care for themselves.

A nationalist, on the other hand, has loyalty to the state — one, and only one, state. Nationalism is the promoting of that one and only state over and above all others, even over and above all other people in the state. It is not to God — which if there is such a force, must transcend not only state but planet — it is to a temporal, human-made, human-corrupted, human-destroying state that nationalists pledge their allegiance.

So when an organization like Project Blitz (the people trying to slap In God We Trust all over public spaces, reverse *United States v. Windsor*, and allow doctors to refuse to treat people who happen to be female or queer) describes itself as Christian nationalist, it is betraying the God of Moses and Jesus, both.

It is making itself into a Pharaoh by attempting to enslave a nation by making its theology law and it is refusing to heal the sick as Jesus did, preferring to nail bodies again and again and again onto the very cross Jesus put to shame.

In this nation, we may choose to trust God, under any name, or not. We may choose to accept the teachings of science, or not. But we may not, as a matter of faith or matter of law, continue to create second-class citizens through cultural or legal violence.

Christians are to be known by the love that we show for all people. Christian nationalists only show love for people like themselves. As someone who continues to stake her life on these stories (truly, given the types of shootings that now happen daily), I gladly profess my devotion to God over nation, and to all of God's people, which are absolutely all people. And from that place of risk and joy I say again, Christian nationalists bear false witness to God.

Eileen Gebbie is the senior minister at Ames United Church of Christ.