



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC45 ARW01 Rejecting Christian Nationalism for Summer 2025

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1. What is the issue? Why is it important?

In the tradition of our forebears and the Christian traditions that came together to form the United Church 100 years ago, we believe God is calling the Church in our day to lift a prophetic voice, both encouraging and examining the nation, supporting it when we can, and challenging it when necessary.

The scriptures are clear about this call and filled with examples of people of faith speaking truth to power and calling the nation to self-examination and faithful witness.

Christian Nationalism is defined as *an anti-democratic notion that a nation is to be governed by Christian principles and uphold Christian values, all for the benefit of Christian people*. It also leads to discrimination, and at times violence, against religious minorities and the non-religious. (Center for American Progress).

The modern Church is seeing a rise in Christian Nationalism worldwide, manifesting itself in political contexts throughout Europe and, most evidently, in North America. We are also seeing the roots of Christian Nationalism take hold in the Canadian socio-political context. The Church needs to speak to this issue with prophetic faithfulness and grace.

2. What is happening now?

At its core, Christian Nationalism threatens the principle of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is commonly understood as a contributing ideology in the misuse of religious liberty as a rationale for circumventing laws and regulations aimed at protecting a pluralistic democracy, such as non-discrimination protections for 2SLGBTQI+ people, women, and religious minorities.

Moreover, the Supreme Court has stated on many occasions that freedom of religion can be limited where it interferes with the fundamental rights of others (Ross, *supra* at paragraph 72; B.(R.), *supra* at page 385; Big M, *supra* at page 337; Amselem, *supra* at paragraph 62).

Why is this important? First and foremost, its importance lies in what we believe to be a faithful witness to the teaching of Christ and the calling of our Baptisms. In Baptism, we are reminded of the sacred worth of the individual and that each of us is created in the image of God. Christian Nationalism asserts an inflated value of the divine image in Christians over others. The covenant between people of faith (in this case, Christians) and God calls them to a place of “chosen-ness,” setting them apart for privilege. It is precisely this misunderstanding of Covenant (Berith) as a privilege that has led to a dangerous theology resulting in dominionism, colonialism, and centuries of oppression that continues to this day.

A secondary yet no less important issue is the decline of those identifying with Christianity today. A growing segment of society sees the problem of conflating Christian faith with a history of privilege and oppression, making it impossible for them to see faithful consistency between the values of Jesus and the message of his Church. If the Church is to remain faithful to the call of our Baptism and the witness of Christ, we must speak, and now is the time.

3. What is the recommendation?

We recommend that the General Council adopt a statement explicitly proclaiming that the United Church rejects the values of Christian Nationalism and that we call on the Church, its people, and local faith communities to examine their calling to support and encourage Canada and its leaders, while simultaneously calling it to account for policies and understandings which are contrary to the Gospel values of grace, mercy, and radical inclusion given to us by Christ.

We further call on the General Council to encourage local faith communities to examine ways they can better understand the dangers of Christian Nationalism and, through discussion, book studies, prayer and discernment, and the like, foster a healthier understanding of what it means to be a people of God called to uplift the Divine Image in ourselves, our neighbours, and our world.

4. Background information:

Christian Nationalism has been taking root in Western Christianity for decades. The recent documentaries *Bad Faith* and *God and Country: The Rise of Christian Nationalism*, as well as recent books like Kristen Kobes Du Mez's *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* and Tim Alberta's *The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory: American Evangelicals in an Age of Extremism*, demonstrate how the power of the Church has been used to influence policies and legislation in ways that intentionally marginalize others who may disagree with dominant Christian values.

We have seen these most notably on the rise in the United States. Still, it can not be denied that similar ideology is making its way into Canada, as evidenced by protests and proposed legislation regarding the COVID-19 lockdown, vaccination mandates, gender-affirming care, 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion programming in local schools, and rising anti-immigrant/refugee sentiments.

The geopolitical ramifications of Christian Nationalism can be easily seen in the rise of Zionist Christians who preach that: "A Christian nation stands with Israel" and that "Anyone who stands with Israel stands with God." (Evangelical Televangelist John Hagee) or "There's no such thing as Palestine" (Baptist Pastor Mike Huckabee, now Ambassador to Israel). Christian Nationalism prioritizes nation and faith. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, which we have inherited through the God of the Bible, prioritizes justice and shalom for all people.

With elections in the United States and other countries in Europe reflecting the influence of Christian Nationalism, there is rightful concern that such worldviews are also gaining hold in Canada.

5. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

“We all want to be brave when it counts. To be the one who steps up, leans in, does the right thing when it matters most...to speak with clarity and conviction in a pivotal situation.”, writes the Right Rev Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of Washington, in her book *How We Learn to Be Brave*. The United Church has a history of leading the way in speaking bravely with clarity and conviction. Speaking up to clarify gospel values of inclusion and love from those who would use the gospel to divide and cause harm is imperative if we are to be authentic to the calling of our faith. By setting ourselves apart from those who espouse a faith mired in the Christian Nationalist agenda and boldly proclaiming a different way, we stand firmly in the prophetic tradition, loving our nation and church enough to call it to its best self. Standing for principles of justice and inclusion for the oppressed and the marginalized is precisely what it means to live into the church’s commitment to equity.

The nation is watching. We believe the United Church is uniquely poised to stand for a faith that reflects Gospel values that work for justice and peace for all people. The time is now.

For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Please select the appropriate option and provide the key discussion points for items being forwarded to the General Council:

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree without forwarding to the General Council
- ☐ Disagree and forwarding to the General Council

Comments:

- Use of clear concise language should be used in any statement put forward by The UCC so that it is accessible to all.
- The statement created should recognize The United Church of Canada’s own role in Christian Nationalism, specifically pertaining to the Canadian Residential School system.

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to: GCinfo@united-church.ca

Document Type: [Proposal](#)

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