



Christian Nationalism **A New Approach**

December 2023



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Acknowledgements

This report was written by Chris Stackaruk, PhD, Kevin Singer, and Peter Licari, PhD on behalf of Neighborly Faith. A special thanks to our Research Advisory Board: Sam Abrams, Daniel Bennett, Ryan Burge, Angela Denker, Mark David Hall, Branden Polk, Kaitlyn Scheiss, and Desair Shaw, and to the Democracy Fund for their support.

Introduction

Christian Nationalism has garnered significant attention in recent years, owing to the potential dangers it poses for American democracy. Its specter has spurred newfound interest in the role of religion in American public life with fresh considerations of familiar questions: Is religion resurging as a force in politics? Will America's Christian majority restrict the rights of religious minorities? Is Christian nationalism a real threat, or a small, extreme faction with outsized press coverage?

Despite the importance of these questions, measuring, describing, and gauging the specific dangers of Christian Nationalism remains difficult. In order to better understand Christian Nationalism and the challenges it poses for America's democracy, Neighborly Faith partnered with Technites¹ to conduct a national survey among 2,006 US adults and an oversample of 303 Evangelical youth aged 18–25 for a total of 2,309 respondents.² The survey was fielded between June 16 and June 21, 2023.³

This study gauged Americans' attitudes about faith and government, prejudice toward outgroups and political opponents, and willingness to work across faiths. By doing so, it paints a newly clear picture of how Americans are negotiating their faith with politics, including a detailed profile of who Christian Nationalists are, what they want, and their potential to increase their influence on American life.

¹ Technites is a research consulting firm with the mission of making tailor-made solutions and advanced analytics accessible to businesses, nonprofits, and research groups.

² This oversample was fielded to ensure that we had enough young Evangelical respondents to make inferences about this audience, critical to Neighborly Faith's mission. Surveys with oversamples can still provide accurate estimates of the full population so long as the oversampled respondents are weighted accordingly.

³ The survey has a design-adjusted margin of error of +/- 2.5% percentage points. These values reflect the margin of error at points equal to 50%. The margin of error shrinks as values go closer to 0 or toward 100%. The survey was weighted to be representative of American adults on the following characteristics: 2020 vote choice, marital status, parental status, home ownership, 4-point Census region, interaction of gender by age, interaction of race by education, urban/rural identification, Evangelical self-identification, an interaction of Evangelical self-identification and age, and rates of church attendance. The weighting targets for these estimates came from the US Census (predominantly the five-year American Community Survey), the 2022 Cooperative Election Study, and the US Elections Project.



Summary of Our Findings

Although Christian Nationalism (hereafter, CN) is widely reported in American media, we found that very few Americans identify with this term. **Only 5% of our sample self-reported as ever having identified themselves as a Christian Nationalist or sympathizing with Christian Nationalism as a movement.** We hypothesized this would be the case at the outset of our study, so we primarily measured its prevalence in other ways.

To more precisely gauge its prevalence and identify the specific threats of CN for American society, we developed a new instrument specifically for the purpose of measuring CN. Building on previous research, we created an expanded battery of questions to measure whether Americans fit the profile of a CN based upon their beliefs and attitudes. We coupled this expanded survey with advanced statistical analyses that better capture the multifaceted nature of the ideology.

Major Contributions

Our new methodology produced a clearer picture of CN, as well as the impact of religion on American public life. Major findings include a more precise gauge of the prevalence of CN, a clearer picture of its threat to American society, and a new model of six classifications for how Americans negotiate religion and civic life.

The Prevalence of Christian Nationalism

Within our model, just 11% of respondents are classified as Christian Nationalists, or what we call CN “Adherents.” A further 19% are sympathetic to the worldview, or what we call CN “Sympathizers.” Our model suggests that a combined total of 30% of American adults are either CN Adherents or Sympathizers.

Six Classifications of Americans

Our study revealed significant trends among the other 70% of Americans who do not identify as CN Adherents or Sympathizers but responded to the same battery of questions about their views on religion and public life. Using these responses and Latent Class Analysis, we classified Americans into four groups in addition to *Adherents* and *Sympathizers*. These groups are: *Christian Spectators*, *Pluralistic Believers*, *Zealous Separationists*, and *Undecideds*.

Respondents from all six groups signaled the enduring strength of American society and civic life. By and large, Americans are broadly committed to civic and religious pluralism and are willing to welcome and work with others across divides to make the nation better. For example, 60% of participants agree with the statement, “America’s openness to people from all over the world is essential to who we are as a nation.” 93% are either “moderately” or “very” willing to work with others of different faiths to improve society. 54% agree that “the United States should take in civilian refugees from countries where people are trying to escape persecution, violence, and war – even if I do not share all of the same beliefs as them.”⁴

⁴ This study was fielded prior to the unfolding tragedy surrounding Israel and Palestine. It is likely that attitudes toward this topic have shifted – and will continue to shift – in light of new developments on this front.



Adherents
11%



Sympathizers
19%



Christian Spectators
18%



Pluralistic Believers
19%



Zealous Separationists
17%



Undecideds
16%

Christian Nationalism's Threat

In contrast, CN Adherents and Sympathizers generally lack the aforementioned commitments so essential to a pluralistic society. These respondents are more likely than others to dehumanize their political opponents, express the highest preference for a “strong leader who does not have to deal with Congress and elections,” exhibit a tendency to dislike many outgroups, and prefer their government to favor Christianity over other faiths. We also gauged the potential for CN to grow by investigating their levels of civic and community engagement, as well as the proportion of persuadable Americans.

Surprising Findings about Christian Nationalists

Nevertheless, our study also turned up many surprises. For example, CN Adherents are more favorable toward groups like Jews, Asian Americans, and African Americans than non-Adherents. Additionally, by most of our measures, CN Adherents are equally willing to engage in civic work with those of different faiths as others. There are even a handful of activities (such as gathering to discuss solutions to community issues and raising money or organizing help for victims of natural disasters) where they are actually more willing to do so than the average American.

Our findings point to the need for further study on CN and other popular movements shaping how Americans approach religion and civic life. They also better our understanding of CN in America today and signal ways America’s religious and political mainstreams can better engage these groups.



Report Procedure

In Chapter 1 of this report, we first explicitly define what we mean by Christian Nationalism and explain why it has been so difficult to measure. Chapter 2 introduces our novel methodology for measuring CN, which combines previous work with stronger modeling and an expanded criteria. Chapter 3 introduces six group classifications for how Americans negotiate religion and public life: *Christian Nationalism Adherents*, *Christian Nationalism Sympathizers*, *Christian Spectators*, *Pluralistic Believers*, *Zealous Separationists*, and *Undecideds*. Chapter 4 paints an in-depth profile of CN Adherents—their worldview, what they want, and the dangers they pose for American society. Chapter 5 gauges the threat CN poses to American society. Chapter 6 explores how nonprofits, governments, and philanthropists can weaken the appeal of CN among its sympathizers.





— “Christian Nationalism [is] the belief that God intended America to be a new promised land for European Christians.”

Robert Jones, President & Founder, Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI).

— “Just because someone describes themselves as a Christian Nationalist is no cause to start church discipline proceedings. Similarly, just because someone expresses concerns with Christian Nationalism doesn’t mean they’re a woke progressive Christian. Much of the disagreement is between good people who hold different definitions of the term.”

Josh Daws, “Christian Nationalism: A Primer for the Layman,” American Reformer.

1

Defining and Measuring Christian Nationalism: Everywhere, Yet Nowhere?

Before delving into our findings, it is important we define CN. Despite significant media attention, our survey indicates that only 28% of Americans have even heard of CN. Even experts disagree on what it is.⁵ Though most definitions share basic themes, they often reflect varying approaches to the topic taken by scholars in different fields.

Defining Christian Nationalism and Its Threats

After analyzing CN scholarship, we arrived at the following definition: Christian Nationalism is a movement advancing a vision of America's past, present, and future that excludes people of non-Christian religions and non-Western cultures. Christian Nationalists romanticize Christianity's influence on America's development, attributing the nation's historical provenance to God's special favor toward its rightful inhabitants. Some scholars identify a relationship between CN and White Nationalism. Although not inextricably bound together, the two often relate and reinforce each other throughout history.⁶

Likewise, for a Christian Nationalist, the Christianity that contributes to America's success is now being corrupted by external threats (such as immigration and globalization), and also by internal ones (liberalism, secularism, LGBTQ+ groups, and feminism). Christian Nationalists aspire to a future in which Christians overcome these forces and regain control of America's culture and civic institutions.

Naturally, CN threatens institutions, legislation, and cultural norms that protect or promote pluralism in its many forms—such as religious diversity, multiculturalism, etc. We believe CN's threats are most pronounced in three areas: (1) personal animus or violence toward perceived outgroups, especially minorities; (2) concentrated political advocacy for a non-plural democracy; and (3) normalizing their values in America's broader culture and growing the CN movement.

⁵ See, Jesse Smith and Gary Adler Jr., "What Isn't Christian Nationalism? A Call for Conceptual and Empirical Splitting," *Socius* 8 (2022), Sage Journals, <https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231221124492>.

⁶ See, as examples informing this definition, *The Everyday Crusade* by Eric McDaniel, Irfan Nooruddin, and Allyson Shortle; *Lift High the Cross* by Ann Burlein; *American Covenant* by Philip Gorski; *The Flag and the Cross* by Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry; journal article titled "Christian Nationalism and Political Violence: Victimization, Racial Identity, Conspiracy, and Support for the Capitol Attacks" by Miles Aramay, David Buckley, and Adam Enders; article titled "The Dangers of Christian Nationalism in the United States: A Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches" by National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; and *Taking America Back for God* by Samuel Perry and Andrew Whitehead.



Finally, our study considers one of the greatest threats of CN to be its growth potential in America's polarized religious and political culture. Although, by our measures, only 11% of Americans are CN Adherents, a further 19% are CN Sympathizers who may join the more extreme faction. By doing so, CN's influence over America's culture and institutions would grow substantially.

The Challenges of Measuring Christian Nationalism

Despite its popularity among scholars and commentators, CN is difficult to measure, and many studies to date have been constrained by limited measures and methodologies.

Although these studies have done well to signal that CN is a problem, most have not been able to say much empirically about what Christian Nationalists want, who exactly they are, who among Americans are sympathetic, and how organizations (such as Neighborly Faith) can weaken its most authoritarian factions. While CN's specter looms large in the media, think tanks, and philanthropy, less is known than should be about its specific threats and what can be done about them.

Everyday Americans know even less about CN—indeed, few Americans have heard of it, and Christian Nationalists themselves do not self-identify with the term. Case in point, only 8% of our respondents who have heard of CN identify as Christian Nationalists. A further 9% percent of those who have heard of CN identify as "sympathetic." **Altogether, just 5% of Americans identify as "Christian Nationalist" or would say they are sympathetic to it.** Researchers must look beyond the label itself and toward the beliefs that people hold.

The Six-Question Scale

CN is best characterized as a collection of related beliefs and attitudes—less so as a dogmatic worldview or holistic personal identity. Acknowledging this, previous researchers have leaned on how much respondents (dis)agree with statements about the relationship between Christianity and the state, rather than their identification with a group or identity.

In particular, researchers have focused on six statements as "defining" criteria for CN:

- 1 The federal government should declare the United States as a Christian nation.
- 2 The federal government should advocate Christian values.
- 3 The federal government should enforce strict separation of church and state.
- 4 The federal government should allow the display of religious symbols in public spaces.
- 5 The success of the United States is part of God's plan.
- 6 The federal government should allow prayer in public schools.

How researchers choose to analyze Americans' responses to these answers significantly influences their conclusions about the prevalence and threat of CN. For example, researchers Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry translate responses to these six questions into a linear, 25-point scale of CN adherence. They conclude that 20% of Americans are Christian Nationalists, with a further 31% at least "sympathetic" toward it.



A 2023 PRRI/Brookings survey takes a similar approach to interpreting the same scale, but with different thresholds, and estimates that 10% of Americans are CN Adherents, with an additional 19% as CN Sympathizers.⁷ A 2022 Pew Research study, eschewing the term “Christian Nationalism,” uses a different six-item scale and different coding schema to find that 14% of Americans are “church-state integrationists,” with Pew noting similar correlations between their measure and those traditionally seen in research into “Christian Nationalism.”⁸ Given the range in these estimates, it is clear that much of CN research depends upon the scale they use and how they analyze their results.

Limitations of Past Studies

Some historians and researchers have pointed out that CN is multidimensional—and involves much more than Americans’ beliefs about topics related to these six questions.⁹ It also engages one’s identity, view of history, and desire to exercise power, to name only a few. These six questions, which were not originally designed to measure CN, provide a partial picture. Though advanced analyses have been performed on these six items by other researchers, the prevailing tendency has been for researchers to restrict themselves to a simplified additive scale rather than embrace the topic’s multidimensional nature. A single additive scale cannot capture what is really going on with Christian Nationalism in America.¹⁰

Taken together, studies to date have painted an incomplete picture of the CN worldview and adherents, its sympathizers and opponents, and, overall, the specific threats it poses to America’s democracy. If we coded our survey responses as previous studies have (using solely our version of these six questions), we would conclude that 59% of Americans are at least sympathetic to CN, which is almost double what we found through our more multidimensional approach (30%).

Our study uses measures and analysis designed for CN to provide a more accurate view of its prevalence in the nation’s religious landscape. We now turn to how we designed, implemented, and analyzed the study.



⁷ Though this team comes to a similar overall figure as ours, the use of a single-dimension scale has been shown to misclassify many respondents. So while the overall numbers are similar, our estimates and theirs may differ in the actual people they identify as Christian Nationalists (and, consequently, may report different attitudes and behaviors for this group).

⁸ See Pew Research Center, “In U.S., Far More Support Than Oppose Separation of Church and State,” October 28, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/10/28/in-u-s-far-more-support-than-oppose-separation-of-church-and-state/>.

⁹ See, Smith and Adler, “What Isn’t Christian Nationalism?” as well as Kelefa Sanneh “How Christian Is Christian Nationalism?”, and Mark David Hall “Is Christian Nationalism an Existential Threat to America?”

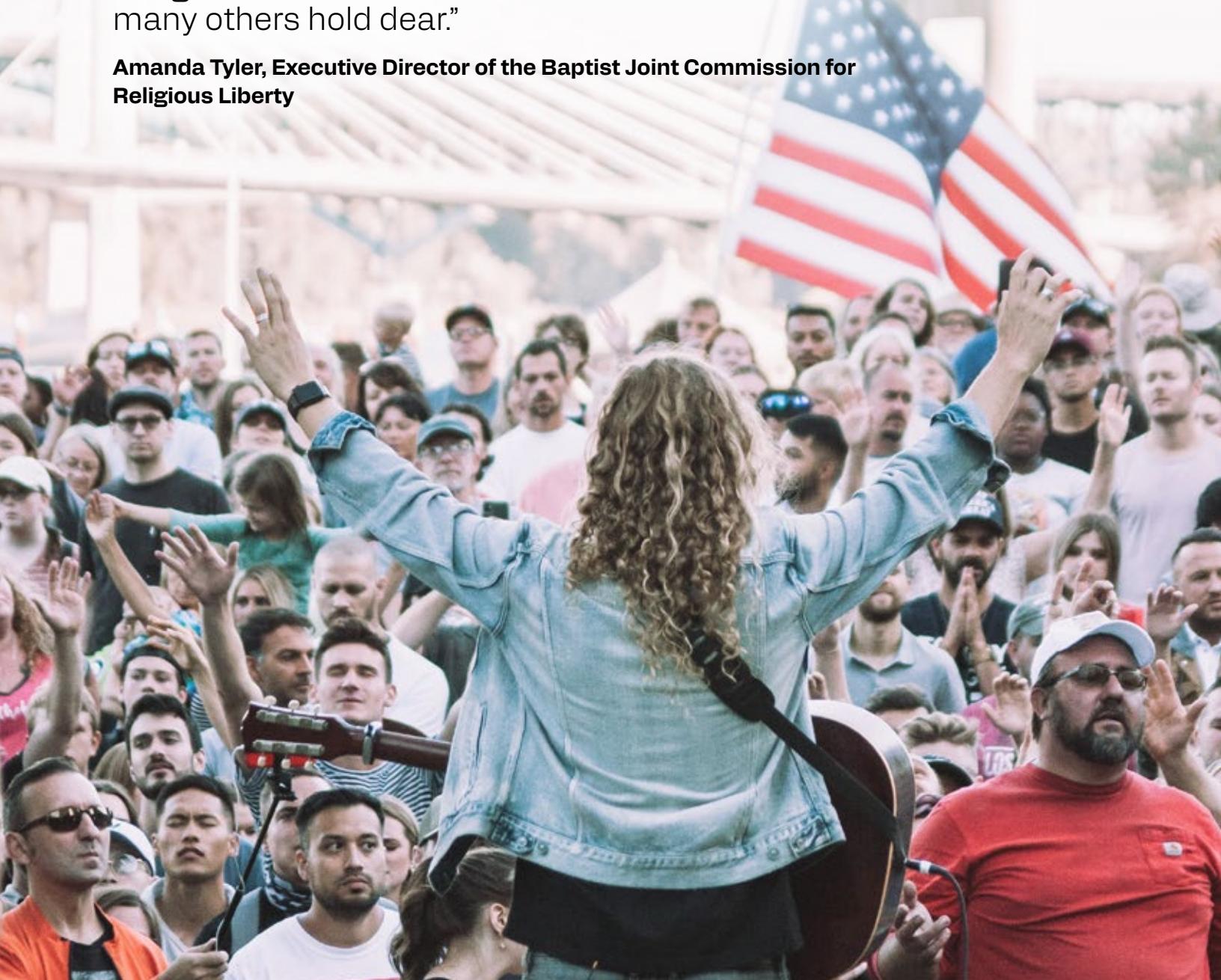
¹⁰ See, Nicholas T. Davis, “The Psychometric Properties of the Christian Nationalism Scale,” *Politics and Religion* 16, no. 1 (March 2023): 10–14, Cambridge Core, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048322000256>; and Smith and Adler, “What Isn’t Christian Nationalism?”

— “Our American tradition does not preclude the normalization of Christianity in institutions and culture... That is, we ought to make secularist and non-Christian positions the exceptions—let the atheists request the exemption. In many places in this country, what stops us is not majorities but the will of majorities to Christianize. It only takes one local jurisdiction to resist and spark a movement across the country.”

Stephen Wolfe, The Case for Christian Nationalism

— “Christian Nationalism...suggests that ‘real Americans’ are Christians and that true Christians hold a particular set of political beliefs. Christian Nationalism is a gross distortion of the Christian faith that I and many others hold dear.”

Amanda Tyler, Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Commission for Religious Liberty



2

How We Measured Christian Nationalism



Neighborly Faith and Technites set out to improve our understanding of CN in America. We did so in five key ways:

- 1 **Improved Measurement of CN with a broader definition, drawing from the plurality of CN scholarship to date.**
- 2 **Enhanced Analysis of CN using latent class analysis, a supervised machine learning technique, to better classify CN ideology and identify its adherents.**
- 3 **Classified All Americans into Six Groups according to their view of religion in public life, to show CN and its threats in context and competition with other groups in America.**
- 4 **Explicitly Gauged CN's Threats with sufficient specificity to guide educators, philanthropists, and policymakers.**
- 5 **Validated Results against Theoretical Expectations to ensure the accuracy and field utility of our data.**

Improved Measurement of CN

We improve the standard six-question scale used by other CN researchers with improved language that orients statements toward a theoretical basis of Christian Nationalism, which draws upon the best of CN scholarship to date. For example, instead of asking respondents whether they agree with the statement, “The federal government should advocate *Christian values*,” we asked: “... advocate *uniquely Christian values*.” Rather than ask respondents whether they support “prayer in public schools,” we asked about their support for “teachers/coaches [leading or encouraging] students in *Christian prayer*.” In addition to asking about whether religious symbols could be displayed in public places, we asked whether “*Christian symbols ... should be the only religious symbols allowed in government buildings*.” Among other things, these tweaks better gauge the exclusive and exclusionary nature of CN reported in scholarship to date.

We also expanded the scale from six to 14 items to explore or validate the potency of CN beliefs in more domains of American life, such as history, politics, multiculturalism, and religious pluralism. The additional items are directly linked to the theoretical underpinnings of Christian Nationalism in CN scholarship. Examples include the beliefs/attitudes that:

- America has a special God-ordained purpose
- America’s culture is fundamentally Christian
- “Christian values” should be solely and explicitly endorsed by the government



- Christian symbols and practices should be exclusively featured in public life
- Desire to live in a religiously homogeneous society
- Disdain for multiculturalism

We approach each of these dimensions with multiple measures to improve the reliability of our measurement. Full question wording is in the appendix.

Enhanced Analysis of CN

Our survey questions approach Christian Nationalism as a multidimensional phenomenon spanning diverse beliefs and attitudes and, therefore, used Latent Class Analysis (LCA) rather than a simple additive scale to analyze responses. LCA is a semi-supervised machine learning procedure that uses often subtle patterns to identify subpopulations within datasets.

The idea behind LCA is that there are some occasions where the values observed for a whole “population” actually reflect a mixture of distinct subgroups. Guided by researcher input, the procedure identifies these groups by finding complex patterns of associations among the items fed into the LCA process (in this case, respondents’ answers to the 14 questions on our Christian Nationalism scale). This provides researchers with means of classifying respondents into one of these groups and estimates for how different groups, on average, respond to each individual item.

Classifying All Americans into Six Groups

We ran multiple candidate models, ascertaining the best fit among each, and arrived at a solution that sorted Americans into six groups. Then we analyzed how these groups tended to respond to all 14 questions to qualitatively extract meaningful labels and descriptions for them. From these, we were not only able to identify a group that was broadly consistent with the attitudes of Christian Nationalism, but we were also able to get a broader appreciation of America’s religious landscape outside of this subgroup via the remaining five groups.

The six groups we identified through this process are:

- 1 Christian Nationalist Adherents (CN Adherents for short)
- 2 Christian Nationalist Sympathizers (CN Sympathizers for short)
- 3 Christian Spectators
- 4 Pluralistic Believers
- 5 Zealous Separationists
- 6 Undecideds

These groups are considered in-depth in the next chapter. Technical details on the model are included in the appendix.



Explicitly Gauging CN's Threats

To gauge the relative threat of CN to American society, we hypothesized three main ways Christian Nationalists may threaten America's social fabric. These are: (1) personal animus or violence toward perceived outgroups, especially minorities; (2) concentrated political advocacy for a non-plural democracy; and (3) normalizing their values in America's broader culture and growing the CN movement.

We asked respondents questions to assess whether they held these tendencies and compared them to other Americans. We also gauged favorability toward different religious, racial, ethnic, and political groups as well as the degree to which respondents think these groups have too much/too little influence in American society.

We measured willingness to use dehumanizing language about political opposition by seeing how willingly respondents labeled opponents as "not even human" or "like animals." We also asked them about their preferences toward different forms of government, including one where "a strong leader" did not have to worry about Congress or elections, one where Christian clergy "review and advise on laws," and one where America's "Judeo-Christian founding [is] explicitly established in the Constitution." The results allow us to specifically quantify attitudes that threaten America's pluralistic norms, laws, and institutions.

Validating against Theoretical Expectations

One weakness we observed in CN studies to date is how little they conformed to theoretical expectations. For example, it is difficult to believe that the majority of Americans adhere or are sympathetic to a dangerous form of CN or that Black Americans are more likely than any other group to be "ambassadors" of CN, as claimed by Whitehead and Perry.¹¹ To improve on past studies and to strengthen the LCA model, we took the important step of testing convergent validity to ensure that our scale is measuring what it was intended for.¹² We tested for this kind of validity against more than 25 different measures also included in our survey. With very limited exceptions, the model's outputs cohere with these and other expectations. We elaborate on some of these findings in the next chapter.

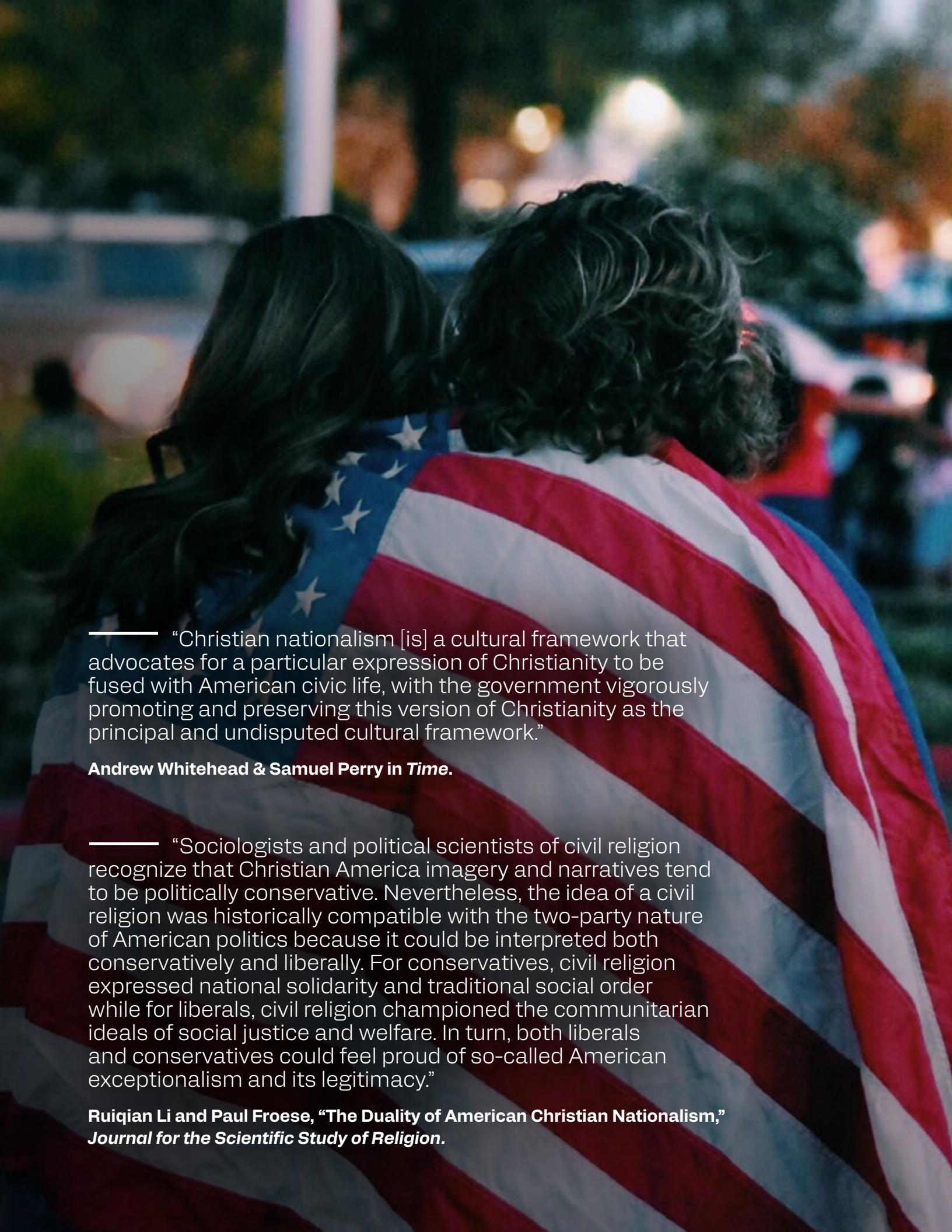
No measure of religious attitudes is perfect. Our estimation of six groupings is not to be taken to mean that members of these groups are in lockstep. Our classifications reflect general tendencies observed in our data, not ironclad predictions of Americans' beliefs and attitudes.¹³



¹¹ See, *Taking America Back for God* by Samuel Perry and Andrew Whitehead.

¹² For example, one would expect "Zealous Separationists" to contain far more religiously unaffiliated people than other groups and for Christian Nationalists to have more Evangelical Christians (which is not to say that most Evangelical Christians are identified as Adherents; only 23% of self-identified Evangelicals are classified as such). One would expect church attendance to be higher among Christian Nationalists and lower for Zealous Separationists—and for Nationalist Sympathizers to fall in between, albeit closer to the former.

¹³ For that matter, tendencies shouldn't be mistaken to mean that all members of the group are ardent; a tendency toward something is different than an enthusiastic endorsement of it. But these tendencies and patterns illuminate the landscape of Americans' attitudes toward faith and government in a way that implicitly acknowledges that such attitudes will be complex and multifaceted.



— “Christian nationalism [is] a cultural framework that advocates for a particular expression of Christianity to be fused with American civic life, with the government vigorously promoting and preserving this version of Christianity as the principal and undisputed cultural framework.”

Andrew Whitehead & Samuel Perry in *Time*.

— “Sociologists and political scientists of civil religion recognize that Christian America imagery and narratives tend to be politically conservative. Nevertheless, the idea of a civil religion was historically compatible with the two-party nature of American politics because it could be interpreted both conservatively and liberally. For conservatives, civil religion expressed national solidarity and traditional social order while for liberals, civil religion championed the communitarian ideals of social justice and welfare. In turn, both liberals and conservatives could feel proud of so-called American exceptionalism and its legitimacy.”

Ruiqian Li and Paul Froese, “The Duality of American Christian Nationalism,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.

3

America's Civic and Religious Landscape in Six Groups

Our survey and analysis found that most Americans can be classified in one of six groups when it comes to faith and society: Christian Nationalist Adherents, Christian Nationalist Sympathizers, Christian Spectators, Pluralist Believers, Zealous Separationists, and Undecideds.

Defining the Six Groups



- 1 **Christian Nationalist Adherents** (11% of the sample): Christian Nationalist Adherents strongly couple Christianity and government. These individuals tend to identify as Evangelicals and are the most likely to explicitly self-identify as a Christian Nationalist in name. They are also the most likely to identify Jewish, Black, and LGBTQ Americans as having “too much influence” in the United States and the most likely to endorse dehumanizing language about their political opponents.



- 2 **Christian Nationalist Sympathizers** (19% of the sample): Christian Nationalist Sympathizers hold many of the same positions and propensities as Christian Nationalist Adherents, only with less certainty and force. This group is only second behind CN Adherents in the proportion that self-identify as Christian Nationalists in name or report favorable feelings toward CN.



- 3 **Christian Spectators** (18% of sample): Christian Spectators are more likely than the average American to be Christian, sympathetic toward traditional Christian views, and visit church and pray. Meanwhile, they are less likely to engage politically and in their community.



- 4 **Pluralistic Believers** (19% of the sample): While more religious than the average American, Pluralistic Believers oppose an exclusive government endorsement of Christianity. Meanwhile, they are warm toward symbols of multiple faith traditions in public life and toward the notion that faith makes for better citizens. While religious, they value tolerance and pluralism more than others.



- 5 **Zealous Separationists** (17% of the sample): Zealous Separationists strongly oppose the comingling of church and state. This group is least favorable toward religious groups, and most disagree that faith makes for better citizens. They are generally irreligious and politically liberal.



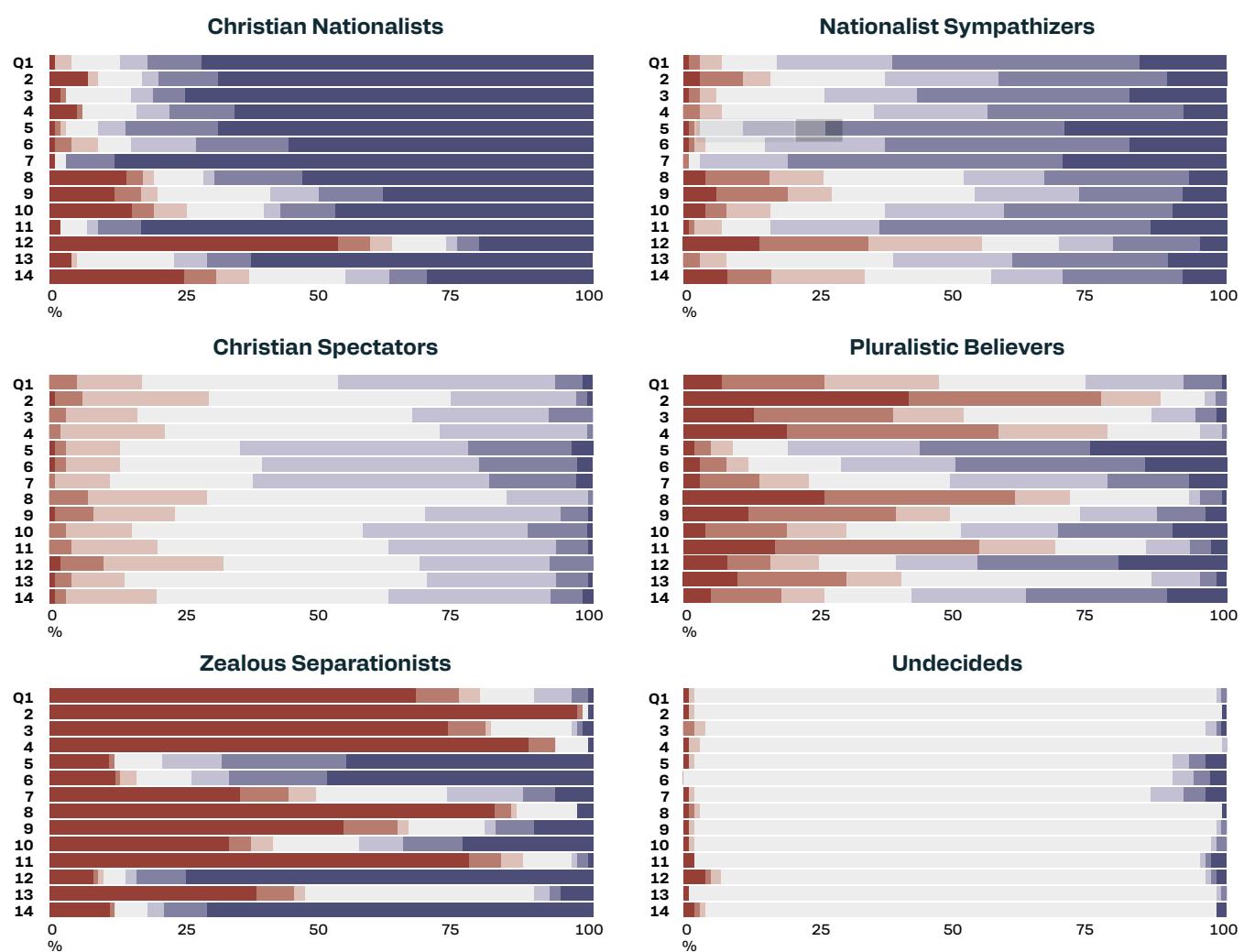
- 6 **Undecideds** (16% of the sample): Undecideds frequently responded “neither agree or disagree” to questions about religion and society. They are ambivalent or undecided about these questions.



The image below shows how each of these groups, on average, respond to the 14 items of our Christian Nationalism scale.

Fig 1 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- 1 The true culture of United States is fundamentally Christian
 - 2 The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation
 - 3 The success of the United States is a critical part of God's plan
 - 4 The federal government should advocate uniquely Christian values
 - 5 We who live in the United States have a moral obligation to face its shortcomings and try to do better
 - 6 We live in a nation of laws, even laws that are not consistent with my faith, and people should respect them
 - 7 Faith can make people better citizens
 - 8 Christian symbols, like the cross, the Bible, or the Ten Commandments, should be the only religious symbols allowed in governmental buildings
 - 9 In allowing different kinds of people to live in the US, the Federal Government is promoting divisiveness
 - 10 The federal government should allow all faiths to display religious symbols in public spaces
 - 11 Public schools should allow teachers/coaches to lead or encourage students in Christian prayer
 - 12 Religion has no place in government
 - 13 I would prefer if someone from my own faith tradition was elected president of the United States
 - 14 The federal government should enforce strict separation of church and state
- | |
|----------------------------|
| Strongly disagree |
| Disagree |
| Somewhat disagree |
| Neither agree nor disagree |
| Somewhat agree |
| Agree |
| Strongly agree |





Digging Deeper into the Six Groups

In this section, we look deeper into how the six groups responded to questions about faith and society. Though we mention CN Adherents, greater attention is dedicated to them in the next chapter. We start with the groups' religious backgrounds and beliefs, look at their willingness to work with and welcome others, move to who they believe has "too much" or "too little" influence in society, and conclude with a discussion surrounding some respondents' beliefs and anxieties about the future of American Christianity.

Religious Background and Beliefs

Religious beliefs and practices vary among the six groups. CN Sympathizers are the most likely to report that religion is either somewhat or very important in their lives (82%), followed by CN Adherents (79%), Christian Spectators (65%), Undecided (48%), Pluralistic Believers (47%), and Zealous Separationists (24%). CN Adherents are most likely to report attending church at least weekly (52%), followed by CN Sympathizers (45%), Christian Spectators (19%), Pluralistic Believers (17%), Undecideds (13%), and Zealous Separationists (8%). Praying weekly is more prevalent among the six groups; 90% of CN Adherents report praying at least weekly (with 68% saying they pray multiple times a day), compared to 83% of CN Sympathizers, 62% of Christian Spectators, 53% of Pluralistic Believers, 44% of Undecideds, and 32% of Zealous Separationists.

Fig 2 People practice their religion in different ways. Outside of attending religious services, how often do you pray?

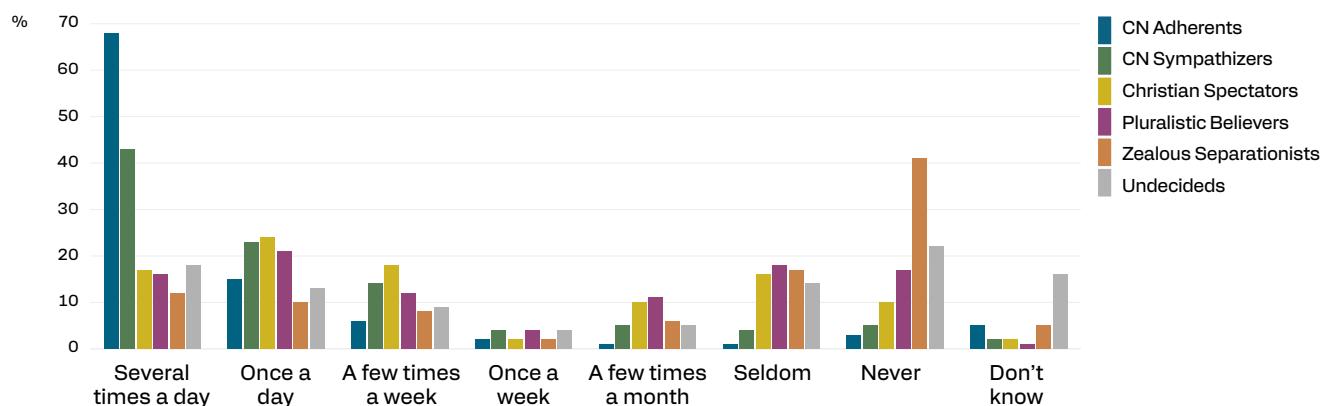


Fig 3 How important is religion in your life?

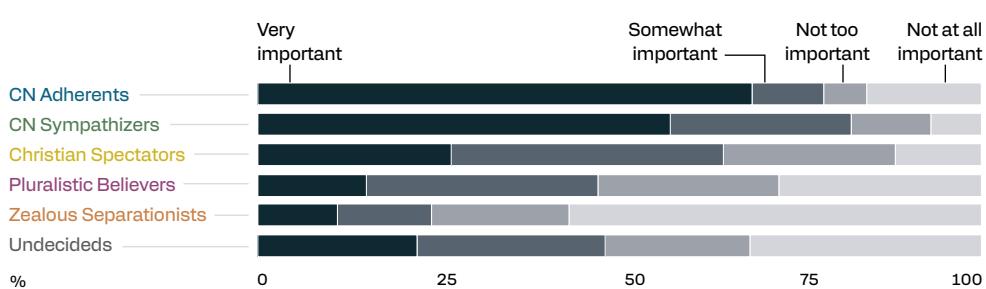
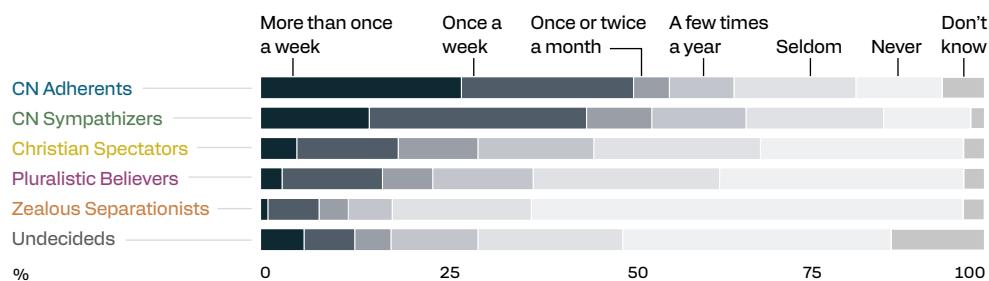


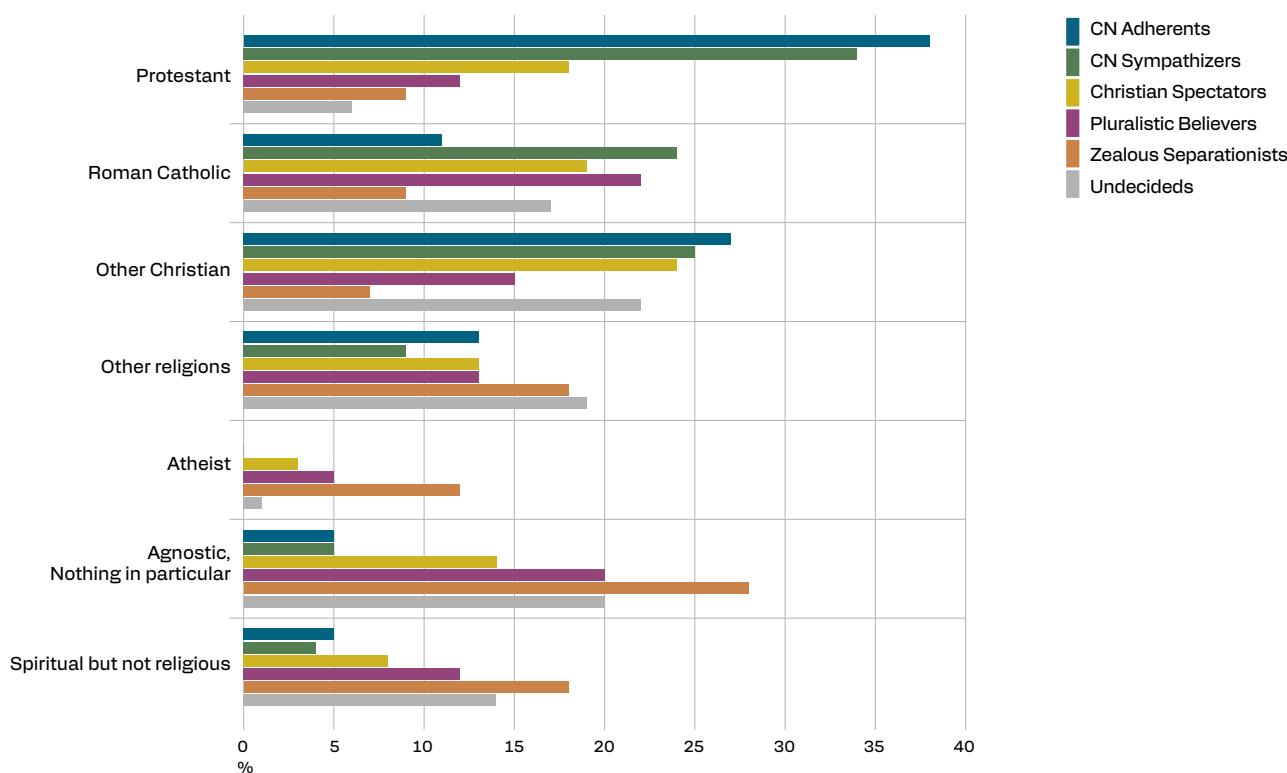


Fig 4 Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?



As one might expect, CN Adherents, CN Sympathizers, and Christian Spectators are the most likely to identify as Christian: 77% of Adherents, 82% of Sympathizers, and 62% of Christian Spectators.¹⁴ CN Adherents have the largest concentration of self-proclaimed born-again or Evangelical Christians (71%), followed by CN Sympathizers (60%), Christian Spectators (35%), Undecideds (21%), Pluralistic Believers (15%), and Zealous Separationists (7%). Only 25% of Zealous Separationists identify as Christian. While Pluralistic Believers have a relatively high proportion of Christian identifiers (49%), they also contain the largest number of non-Christian religious practitioners (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Wiccan) of any group in the sample.

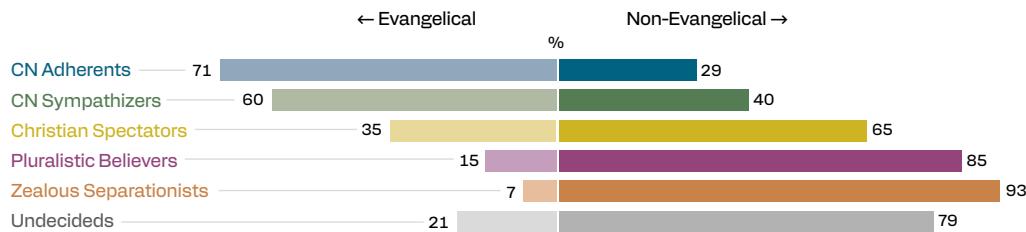
Fig 5 What is your present religion, if any?



¹⁴ Defined as indicating their religion to be either Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Eastern or Greek Orthodox, or "Christian, other than above." Identifying as Evangelical or born-again is selected in another question.



Fig 6 Would you describe yourself as a “born-again” or evangelical Christian, or not?



A lot has been written in the study of religion in America on the increasing number of nonreligious individuals (or “the *nones15 These are individuals who responded being atheist, agnostic, nothing in particular, spiritual but not religious, or “something else” in our survey. Of the six groups, the *nones* are most prevalent within Zealous Separationists, comprising 65% of that group. This is followed by Undecideds (49%), Pluralistic Believers (41%), Christian Spectators (31%), CN Adherents (17%) and CN Sympathizers (16%).*

All in all, it is clear that the spiritual practices and traditions of the six groups vary. However, it is interesting to note that being firmly nonreligious is the prevailing tendency in only one group. Most individuals at least *identify* with a spiritual tradition, even if they engage in spiritual *practice* less frequently.

Willingness to Work With and Welcome Others

Overall, Americans are very willing to work across faiths. In our survey, 93% of adults say that they are either moderately or very willing to work with others of different faiths to improve society. CN Adherents are the most likely (apart from Undecideds) to say they are “not at all willing” to this prompt (13%). A whopping 88% of CN Adherents still assert that they would be at least moderately willing to cooperate with other faiths to improve society.

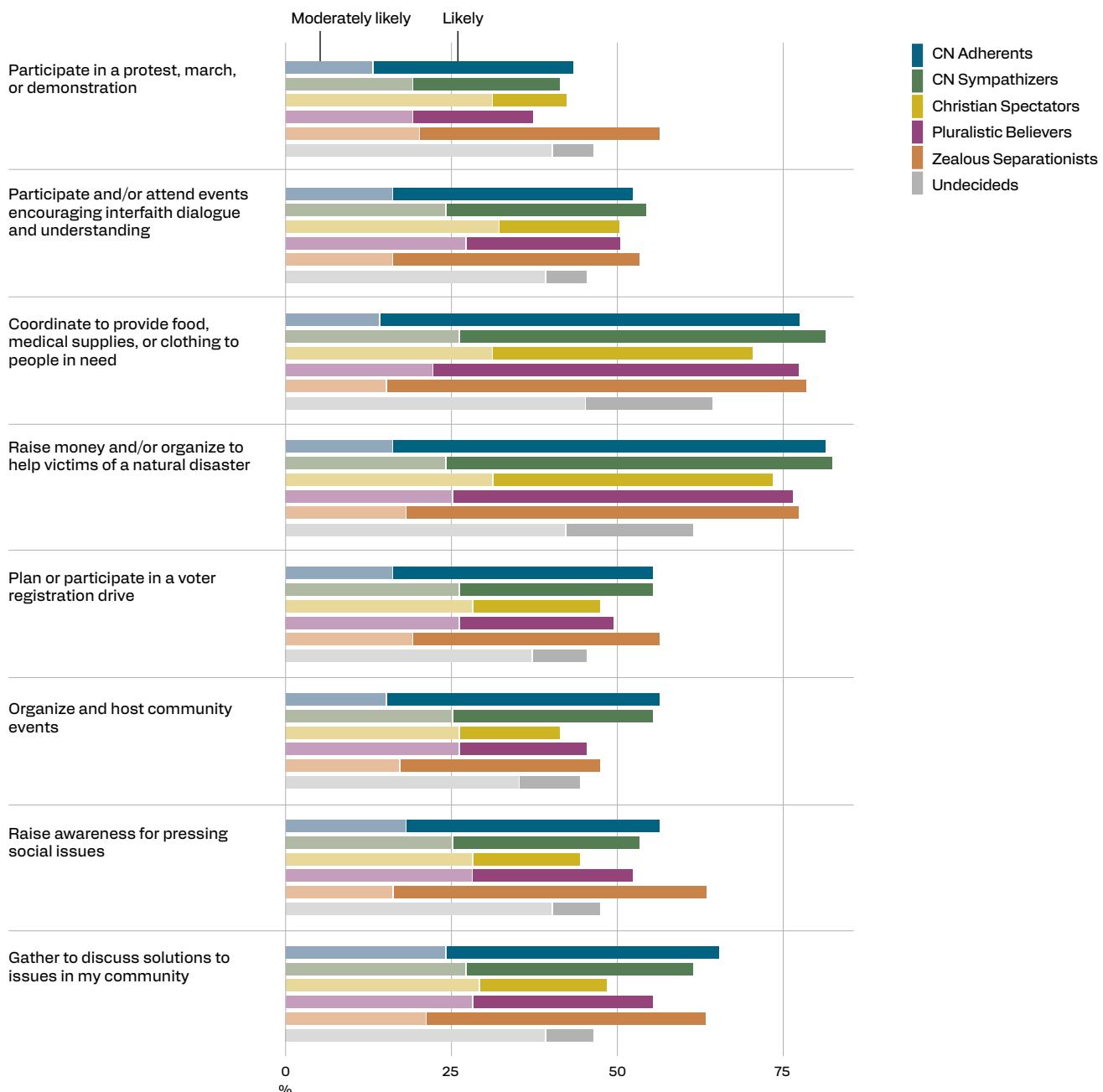
Interestingly, Americans are less willing to engage across faith when asked about specific activities.¹⁶ Charitable and nonpolitical activities are more popular (e.g., raising money for natural disaster victims—75%—and providing food, medical supplies, or clothing to people in need—75%), while more politically oriented activities are less popular (such as participating in a voter registration drive—51%—participating in a protest, march, or demonstration—44%—or organizing and hosting a community event—47%).

¹⁵ See, for example, *The Nones: Where They Came From, Who They Are, and Where They Are Going* by Ryan Burge.

¹⁶ This sort of finding is common in social science research; it can reflect pro-social biases among Americans to want to appear helpful and cooperative, as well as the selection of activities that were presented.



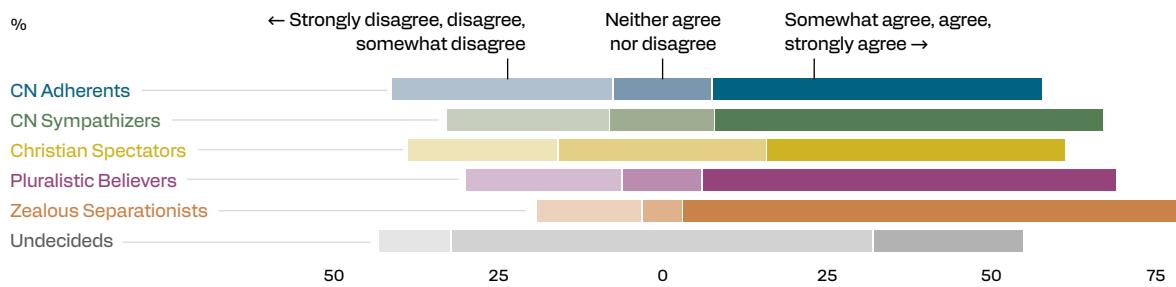
Fig 7 How likely are you to engage in the following activities with someone of another faith, or of no faith, if presented with the opportunity?



In our survey, 54% of American adults agree that “the United States should take in civilian refugees from countries where people are trying to escape persecution, violence, and war—even if I do not share all of the same beliefs as them.” 63% of those categorized as Pluralistic Believers, 60% of CN Sympathizers, and 77% of Zealous Separationists endorse the claim. CN Adherents are less likely to do so (51%).

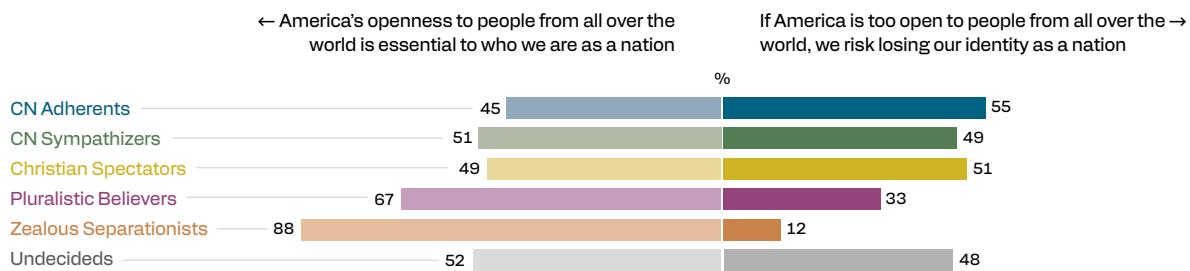


Fig 8 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The United States should take in civilian refugees from countries where people are trying to escape persecution, violence, and war—even if I do not share all of the same beliefs as them



60% of adults surveyed agree with the statement, “America’s openness to people from all over the world is essential to who we are as a nation.” This enjoyed the highest levels of support from Zealous Separationists (88%) and Pluralistic Believers (67%). CN Adherents, Sympathizers, and Christian Spectators, however, are more likely to endorse the statement that “if America is too open to people from all over the world, we risk losing our identity as a nation” (55%, 51%, and 49%, respectively). CN Adherents and Sympathizers are also the most likely to agree with the statement, “Efforts to increase diversity almost always comes at the expense of people like me” at 66% and 59%, respectively. In contrast, only 17% of Zealous Separationists, 27% of Pluralistic Believers, and 33% of Christian Spectators believe that increased diversity comes at a cost to people like them.

Fig 9 Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is entirely right



Who Has Too Much or Too Little Say in America?

We provided respondents with a list of 18 groups and asked them whether they believe each group has too much influence, too little influence, or the right amount of influence in America today.

CN Adherents and Sympathizers were the most likely to identify traditionally progressive groups as having “too much influence” and traditionally conservative groups as having “too little” influence. For example, 60% of Adherents and 55% of Sympathizers say that



Liberals have too much influence in the United States today; similar percentages claim that LGBTQ people have too much influence (59% for Adherents and 55% for Sympathizers). Not surprisingly, 46% of Adherents and 45% of Sympathizers feel that “Conservatives” have too little influence. Similarly, 45% of Adherents and 40% of Sympathizers say Evangelical Christians have too little influence.

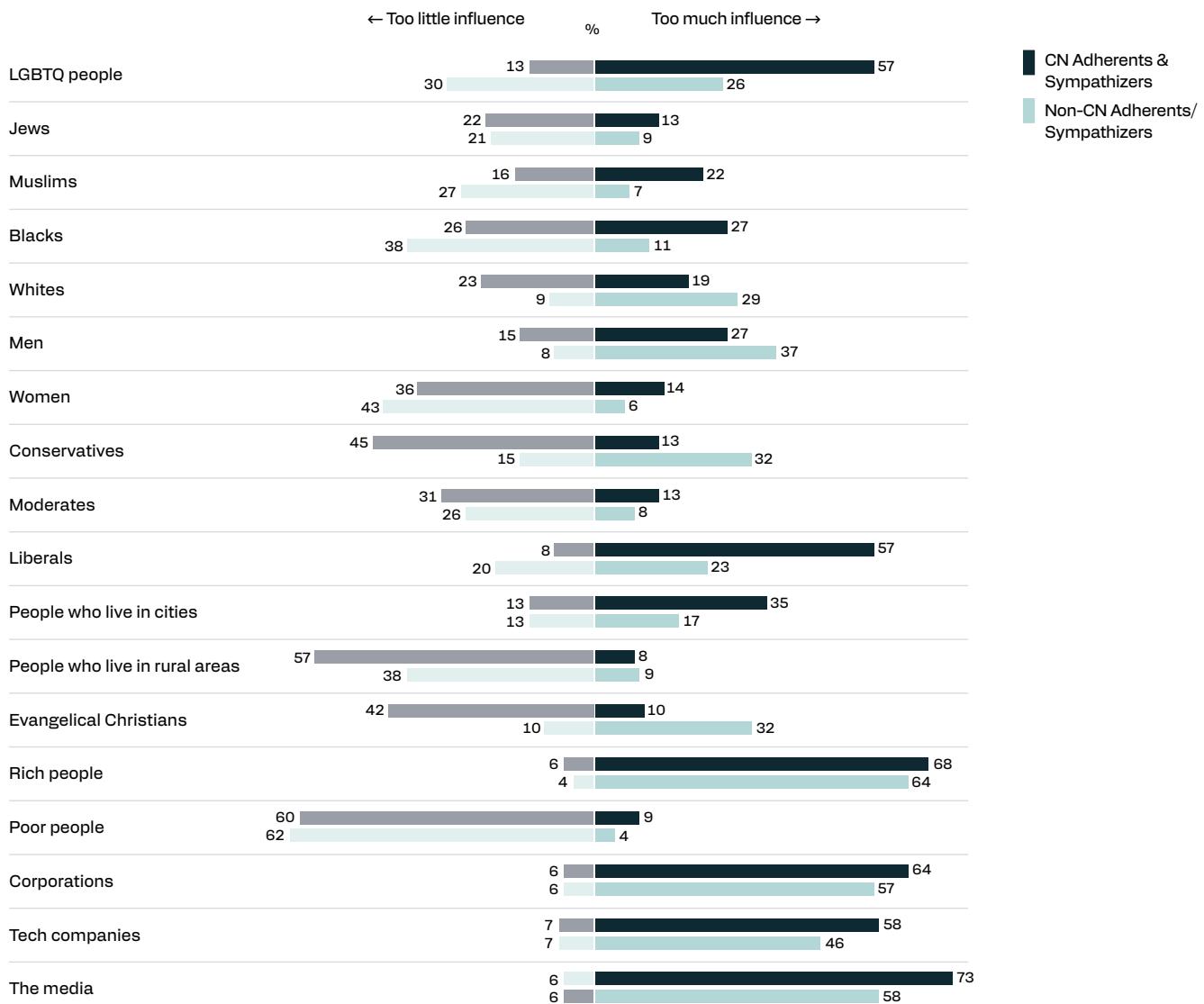
There are cases where CN Adherents and Sympathizers are *more likely* than others to express that some groups have too much/little influence, but those who express these opinions are a minority in their own group. For example, more CN Adherents and Sympathizers endorse the view that Black Americans have “too much” influence compared to any other group (29% and 25%, respectively, compared to 12% for the next highest group)—but 43% of Adherents and Sympathizers say Black Americans have “the right amount” or “too little influence.” This suggests that even among Adherents and Sympathizers, outright intolerance is a minority position. Similar patterns exist in their views of Jews, Muslims, and women.

Zealous Separationists exhibit similar tendencies, but in the opposite direction. They feel Conservative-aligned groups have too much influence (White Americans at 59%; men at 63%; Evangelicals at 74%) and those aligning with Liberals have too little (women at 65%; LGBTQ people at 54%).

Pluralistic Believers tend to exhibit a slight liberal lean, while Christian Spectators exhibit a slight conservative lean—mostly characterized by whom they tend to feel has “too much” influence. The plurality of Christian Spectators think LGBTQ people and Liberals have too much influence (36% and 30%, respectively), while Pluralistic Believers feel this way about Evangelical Christians and Conservatives (33% and 35%, respectively). However, all groups (apart from the Undecideds) had the largest plurality of people claim that rich people, tech companies, corporations, and the media all have too much influence.



Fig 10 Thinking about the United States today, would you say that the following groups have too much influence, too little influence, or the right amount of influence

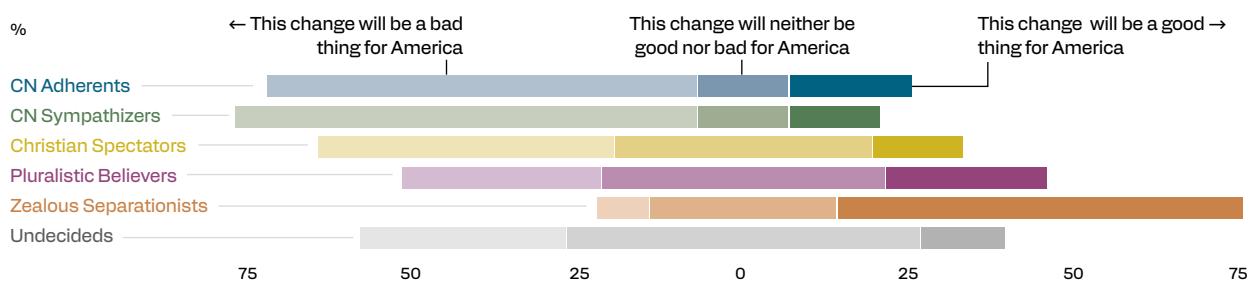




Anxieties about Christianity's Future in America

Respondents read a paragraph describing how demographers believe that, in the coming decades, the proportion of Americans who identify as Christians will shrink, while the proportion who identify with no religion will grow. When asked if they agree with the assessment, 83% of respondents agree with at least “some of it.” When asked if this scenario would be “a bad thing for America,” 67% of those categorized as CN Adherents and 72% of Sympathizers say that it would. Christian Spectators are torn between it being a bad thing (46%) and it being neither a good nor bad thing (40%). Pluralistic Believers are the most likely apart from Undecideds to say it will be neither good nor bad (44%). Zealous Separationists are the only group where a majority said that a drop in Americans identifying as Christians and a growth in those identifying with no religion would be a good thing for America (63%).

Fig 11 Which of the following best describes your belief, even if none are exactly correct?



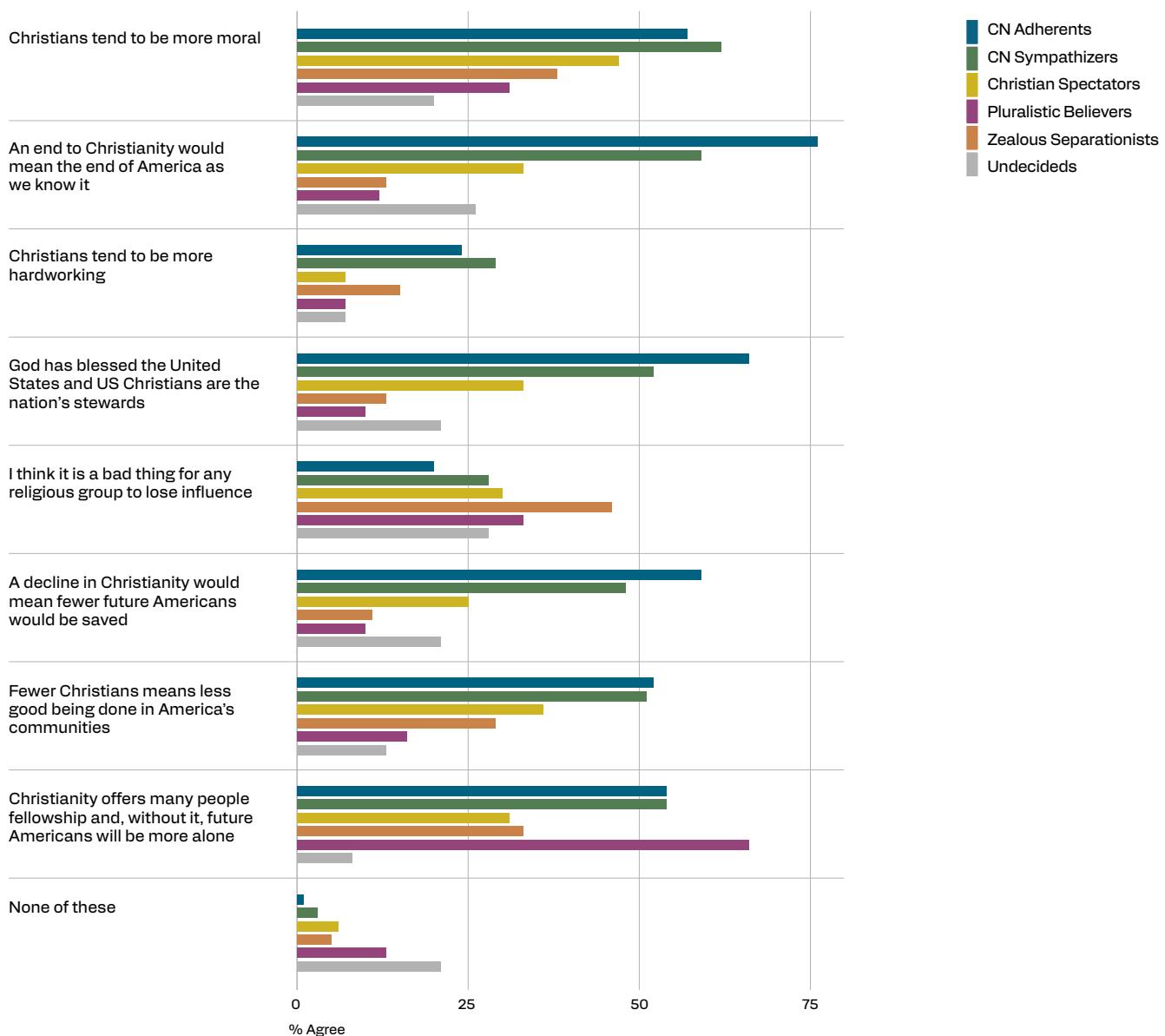
Those who said the scenario would be a “bad thing for America” were also asked why. Respondents were provided with eight possible answers and asked to select all that applied (including believing that Christians are more moral, that Christianity’s decline would mean fewer Americans saved, that it would be bad for any religious group to lose influence, and that an end to Christianity would mean “an end to America as we know it”). 74% of CN Adherents and 59% of Sympathizers agree with the statement that “an end to Christianity would mean the end of America as we know it.” 66% of CN Adherents say it is because “God has blessed the United States and US Christians are the nation’s stewards.”

In contrast, only 28% cite it being bad for any faith to lose influence, and 24% cite it being bad due to Christians being more hardworking. Christian Spectators who saw the decline of Christianity as a bad thing were the most likely to cite the belief that Christians tend to be more moral (53%) and that Christianity’s end would mean “the end of America as we know it” (67%).

Christian Spectators are the least likely to cite a belief in Christians being more hardworking (7%). Pluralistic Believers are the most likely to say they believe that it’s bad for any group to lose influence (46%).



Fig 12 Previously, you said that you believed that it would be a bad thing for the number of Christians to decline in the United States. Why do you feel this way? Please select all that apply.





— “It will suffice to say that often the same people denouncing Christian influence in politics are quite willing to embrace it when it aligns with their ideology, partisan affiliation, and preferred political objectives.”

James R. Wood, Assistant Professor of Ministry, Redeemer University. In A Modest Defense of (a Form of) Christian Nationalism, Providence Magazine.

— “Folks these days use the phrase ‘Christian nationalism’ and ‘Christian nation’ in one of two ways. Some mean that Christianity should influence the nation and its laws. Others mean that the nation and its government should actually identify as Christian. The problem is, many people...don’t recognize the difference, which is one reason I believe we should drop the label altogether.”

Jonathan Leeman, Editorial Director for 9 Marks. In Christian Nationalism Misrepresents Jesus. So We Should Reject It.

4

Who Are Christian Nationalists?

This chapter provides a profile of a CN Adherent that draws from our expanded questionnaire and enhanced analysis using Latent Class Analysis (LCA). Our goal in this chapter is to provide educators, philanthropists, journalists, and nonprofits a better understanding of CN. Chapter 5 turns to examine the specific threats they pose to America's democracy and Chapter 6 considers what can be done to mitigate these threats.¹⁷

Profile of a Christian Nationalist

Those classified as CN Adherents in our study exhibit some interesting demographic differences compared to other Americans:



53% identify as male and 46% female, compared to 48% male and 51% female for the rest of the sample.

62% report being married, compared to 49% of the rest of the sample.

70% identify as non-Hispanic White vs. 64% of the rest of the sample. **14% identify as Hispanic, and 9% identify as non-Hispanic Black,** compared to 16% and 12%, respectively, for non-CN Adherents.

Adherents are **less likely to have a household income of over \$120,000 a year** (7.5% vs. 12.1%) and **slightly more likely to be making less than \$40,000 a year** (43% vs. 41%) than the rest of the sample.

48% report being interested in government, society, and public affairs “most of the time,” compared to 33% of the rest of the sample.

71% self-report being “born-again or Evangelical Christian,” compared to 28% of the rest of the sample.

76% report their religion as some form of Christianity, with much of the remainder (17%) concentrated among what would be typically described as nonreligious or the “nones” (atheists, agnostics, nothing in particular, spiritual but not religious, or something else).¹⁸ Among the rest of the sample, 53% identify as Christian and 40% are nonreligious.

Adherents exhibit similar levels of education as the rest of the sample, with **26% attaining at least a four-year degree** (vs. 31% of the rest of the sample).

¹⁷ Keep in mind for these analyses that the design-adjusted margin of error for this subpopulation is +/- 7.8 percentage points. For non-Adherents, the design-adjusted margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points. We make this advisory to appropriately convey the uncertainty around our point estimates as all surveys involve unavoidable uncertainty. However, most of the notable differences we convey fall outside of this margin of error.

¹⁸ It is important to note though that among individuals categorized as CN Adherents, 0 report being an atheist or agnostic. The nonreligious (or “nones”) among this group consist entirely of “nothing in particular,” “spiritual but not religious,” or “something else.”



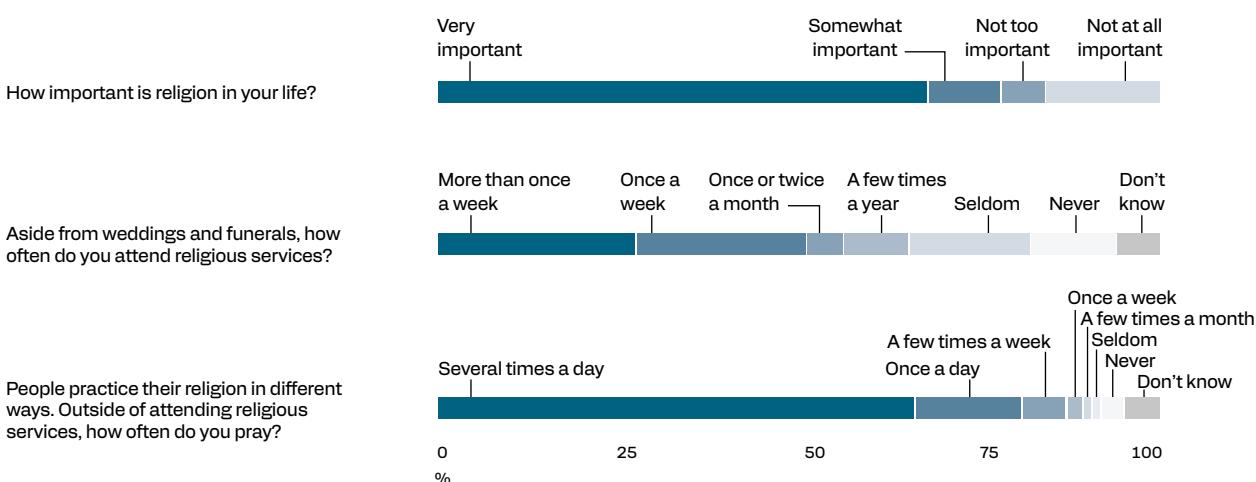
The CN Worldview

Though a number of our findings reinforce prior investigations into Christian Nationalism, others are surprising and show the need for more thorough study.

Religiosity

Perhaps unsurprisingly, CN Adherents are more spiritual and religiously active than others. Out of those classified as CN Adherents, 70% say religion is “somewhat” or “very” important to their lives, compared to 53% of the rest of the sample. 52% say they attend church at least weekly; 82% say that they pray at least daily; 63% say that they read the Bible at least a few times a week; and 33% report having participated in a Bible study group over the last 12 months (compared to 21% for church attendance, 40% for daily prayer, 11% reading the Bible, and 16% having participated in a Bible study group for non-CN Adherents).

Fig 13 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Showing CN Adherents



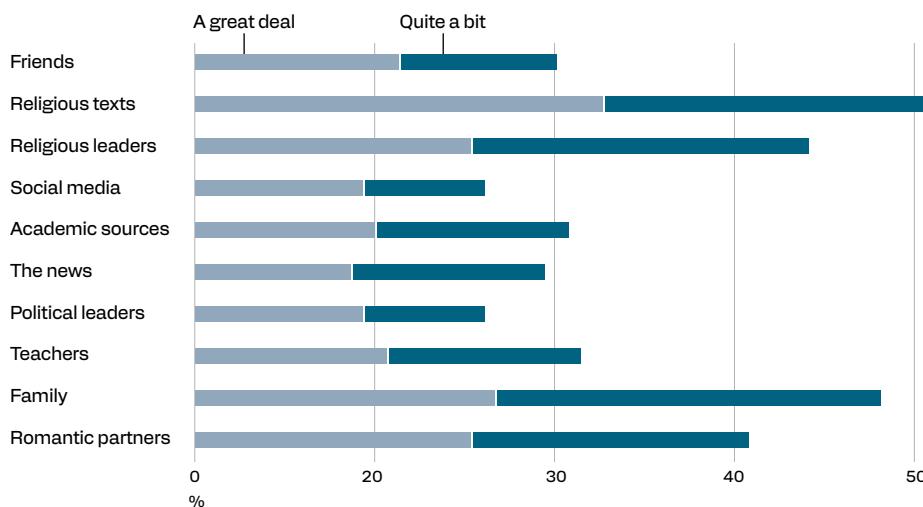
Additionally, CN Adherents are far more likely to say that various religious figures serve as their mentors: 56% claim that “religious leaders overall” are mentors, versus 24% of non-CN Adherents.

Political and Community Influences

We asked respondents to identify the types of individuals who influence their opinions on political issues and community engagement. Both CN Adherents and non-CN Adherents report a variety of sources influencing them “quite a bit” or “a great deal”: Friends (30% Adherents vs. 27% non-Adherents), social media (24% vs. 17%), academic sources (31% vs. 28%), the news (29% vs. 24%), and political leaders (24% vs. 19%). However, CN Adherents are more likely to be influenced by religious texts (61% vs. 19%), religious leaders (51% vs. 18%), family (56% vs. 41%), and romantic partners (46% vs. 36%).



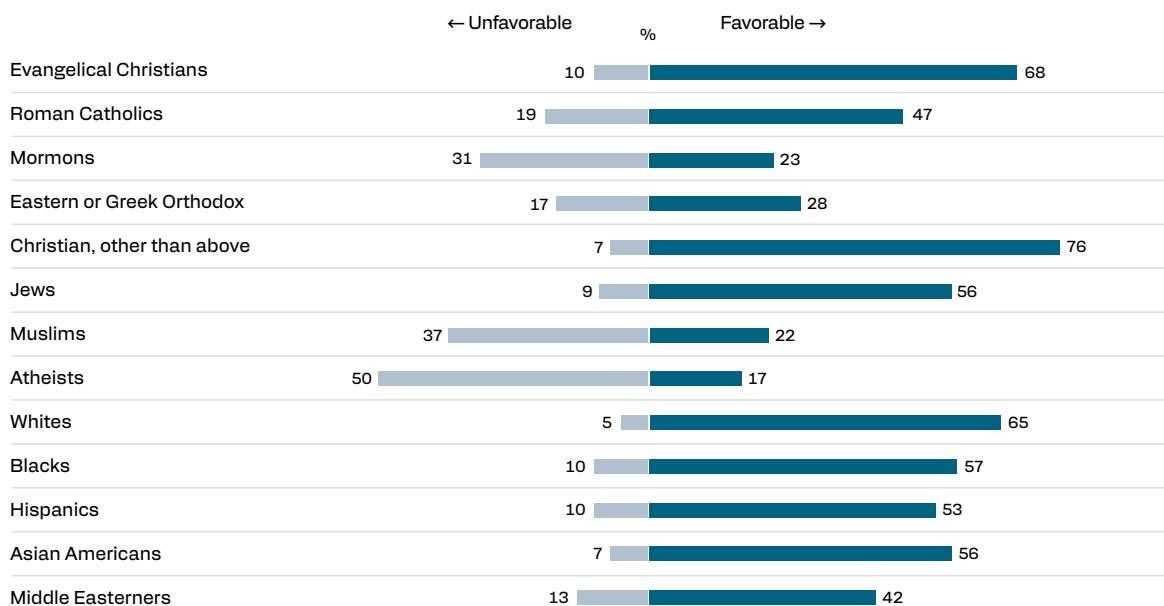
Fig 14 To what extent do each of the following influence your opinions about political issues and community engagement? Showing CN Adherents



Group Attitudes

CN Adherents have more favorable views than others of Whites, Evangelicals, and Christians. 69% of CN Adherents feel favorably toward Evangelicals (vs. 28% non-Adherents); 76% feel favorable toward “Christians” other than the groups explicitly listed (Mormons, Orthodox, and Catholics, vs. 44% among non-CN Adherents); and 65% feel favorable toward Whites (vs. 48% of non-CN Adherents). In keeping with the theoretical expectation that CN Adherents will feel embattled by various secular trends, CN Adherents are far more likely to report that “efforts to increase diversity almost always come at the expense of people like me” (65% vs. 29% for non-Adherents).

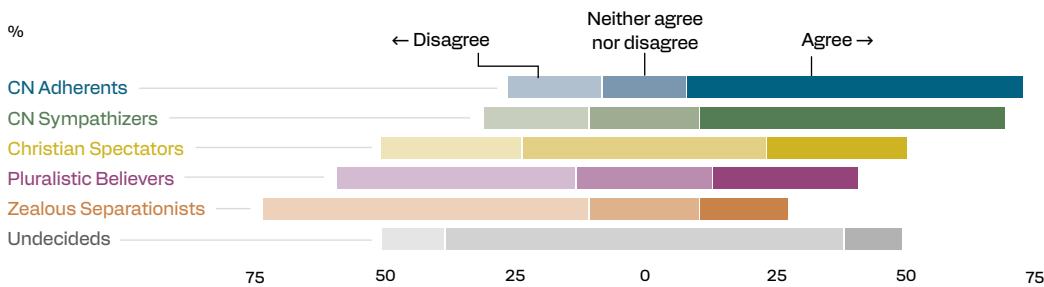
Fig 15 Please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable view of each of the following groups? Showing CN Adherents





One might expect CN Adherents to have less favorable attitudes toward certain groups such as Muslims, Hispanics, Blacks, and Jews. We used a variety of approaches to measure this. Our results were mixed. While CN Adherents are more likely than others to say that Jews, Blacks, and Muslims have “too much influence” (21% report this for Jews vs. 9% for non-Adherents, 29% for Blacks vs. 14%, and 32% for Muslims vs. 9%), they are not more likely to feel unfavorable toward these groups. Those we categorize as CN Adherents are no more likely to self-report unfavorable attitudes toward Jews, Blacks, Hispanics, and Middle Easterners than the average American. Indeed, compared to others, they are slightly *more* favorable of Jews and Blacks.¹⁹

Fig 16 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Efforts to increase diversity almost always comes at the expense of people like me”



It is also important to contextualize the findings regarding perceptions of influence: While CN Adherents are *more* likely to hold these negative attitudes, positive and neutral attitudes are more pronounced than negative ones. **The majority position among CN Adherents for all of these groups is that they have either the right amount or not enough influence.**

Anti-Democratic Attitudes

We asked respondents about whether they delegitimize and dehumanize their political opponents.²⁰ Of those surveyed, 62% of CN Adherents report that the political other is a “serious threat to the United States and its people” versus 40% of non-CN Adherents. 65% of CN Adherents agree with the statement that the opposite political party “are downright evil” (vs. 31% for non-CN Adherents), and 54% say the opposing party “lack[s] the traits to be considered fully human—they behave like animals” (vs. 24% of non-CN Adherents). Those classified as CN Adherents, then, exhibit strong tendencies toward delegitimizing and dehumanizing their political opposition.

¹⁹ We did not ask whether respondents felt Hispanics or Middle Easterners had “too much” or “too little” influence.

²⁰ Republicans, and Independents who leaned Republican, were asked these questions about Democrats; Democrats and Democratic leaners were asked about Republicans; and non-leaning Independents were randomly assigned to answer about one or the other.



Fig 17 Would you say that [OPPOSITE POLITICAL PARTY] are a serious threat to the United States and its people?

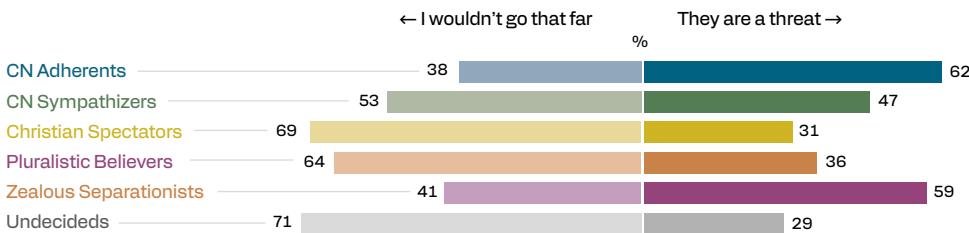


Fig 18 [OPPOSITE POLITICAL PARTY] are not just worse for politics—they are downright evil

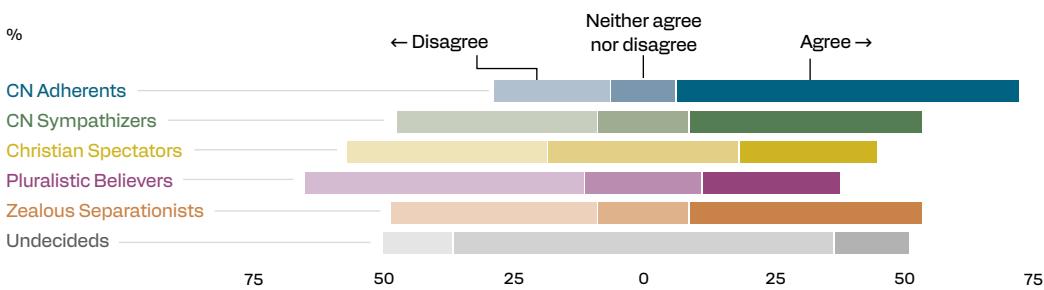
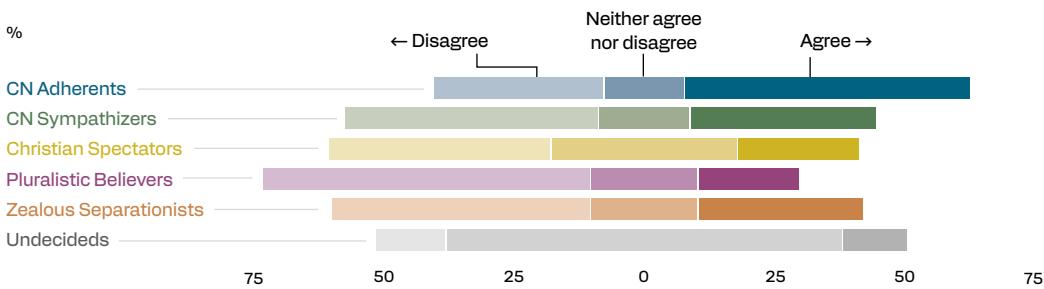


Fig 19 Many [OPPOSITE POLITICAL PARTY] lack the traits to be considered fully human—they behave like animals



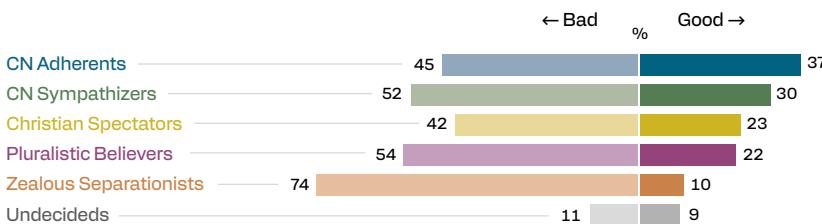
We also asked about their preference toward different forms of government or changes to America's government. Adherents are more likely to see a system featuring a "strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections" as a good thing (37%) than the rest of the sample (19%), though the largest plurality of both Adherents and non-Adherents feel that it is a bad thing (45% and 47%, respectively).

CN Adherents are also more likely to prefer having "experts, not politicians, making decisions according to what they think is best for the country" (55%), though this is also the most favored position among the rest of the sample as well (42%). CN Adherents strongly favor the idea of having Christian clergy review and advise on laws (59% vs. 17% of the rest of the sample) and having "America's Judeo-Christian founding explicitly established in the Constitution" (49% vs. 18% of the rest of the sample). Notably, they are also modestly more likely to see a government that "redistribute[s] resources to ensure equal opportunities and social outcomes" as a good thing (50%) than non-CN Adherents (39%).

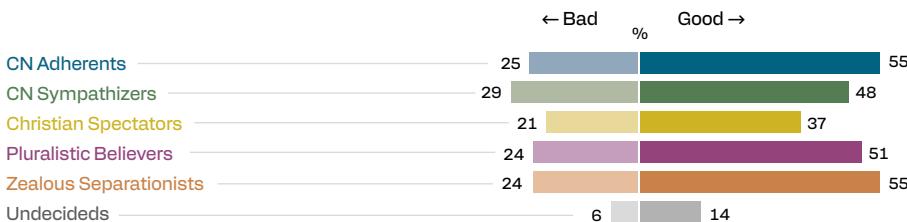


Fig 20 Various types of political systems are described below. Please think about each choice of governing this country and indicate if you think it would be a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing the United States

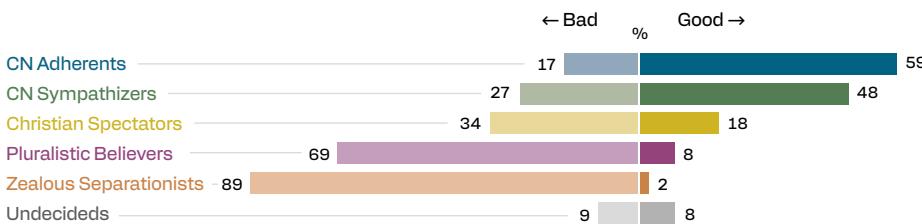
Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections



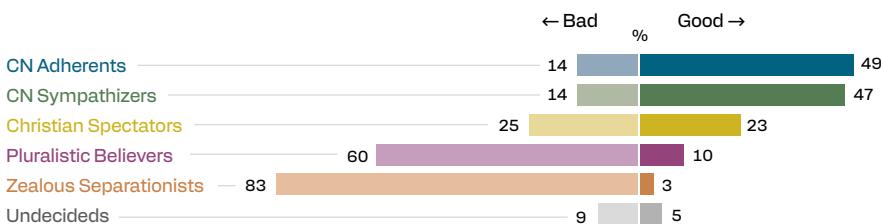
Having experts, not politicians, making decisions according to what they think is best for the country



Having Christian clergy review and advise on laws



Have America's Judeo-Christian founding explicitly established in the Constitution



Are All Christian Nationalists the Same?

Throughout this section, we have shown that, generally, CN Adherents are more likely than non-Adherents to endorse discriminatory attitudes toward certain groups, more likely to endorse dehumanizing language of their political opponents, and more likely to prefer having a “strong leader” in charge rather than dealing with Congress and elections. But how consistent are they in these beliefs? In many of the examples discussed above,



CN Adherents are *more likely* to hold a problematic view—but this view is, in most cases, a minority position within the group as a whole. What percentage of CN Adherents are behind most or all of these positions? Is it possible that, even within this worldview where members are more likely to endorse more extreme positions, there are varying levels of enthusiasm?

In order to investigate this, we identified 14 items that we felt were the most emblematic of the potential harms we outlined earlier in the report: Believing the political other is a “serious threat”; believing the political other to be “downright evil”; believing the political other to be “less than human”; establishing America’s Judeo-Christian founding in the Constitution; preferring a strong leader over Congress and elections; expressing feeling unfavorable views toward Hispanics, Middle Easterners, Jews; and feeling that LGBTQ Americans, Jews, and women have “too much” influence. By tallying how many of these positions respondents endorse, we can identify how consistently they adhere to the more harmful attitudes that we measured.

Compared to non-Adherents, CN Adherents agree to more of these positions than non-Adherents. On average, CN Adherents respond to 5.1 statements in a way consistent with Christian Nationalism versus 2.6 statements for non-Adherents.²¹ However, this is 5.1 on a scale ranging as high as 14—meaning that those classified as CN Adherents may agree with more items than non-Adherents, but they typically do not even agree with *half* of the statements we associate with Christian Nationalism. Indeed, there were zero CN Adherents who answered all 14 in the “expected” direction, and only 31% answered more than seven questions in the expected direction. While this is substantially larger than non-Adherents (7%), it still leaves 69% of those categorized as CN Adherents answering fewer than seven questions in a way consistent with what we would expect to see given previous research on the topic.

This sort of finding is consistent with previous political science research on *ideological constraint*. In general, it finds that very few Americans are completely ideologically aligned on all of their views: The majority of Liberals also hold some conservative positions, and the majority of Conservatives also hold some liberal positions. Though *groups* may tend toward positions, individuals range in their ideological consistency. Even among CN Adherents then, only a minority of individuals consistently hold even a majority of the most pernicious attitudes we tested in the survey.

²¹ The modal number of statements agreed to was six for CN Adherents (14%) and zero for non-Adherents (23%).

— “Anti-CNPs need to stop assuming the worst of CNPs exploring these ideas. We’re told in Scripture not to be conformed to the world. Most of us have grown up with assumptions about how the world works and what the best form of government is that are not directly derived from God’s word. It would serve us all well to identify those assumptions and hold them up for closer scrutiny. Whether or not they come to the right conclusions or not, this is one thing these CNPs do well.”

Josh Daws, “Christian Nationalism: A Primer for the Layman,” *American Reformer*.

— “Just because Christian nationalism and religious conservatism are theoretically and empirically separable does not mean that they are in fact cleanly separated. Given the high correlations between these dimensions, we might instead picture a substantially overlapping Venn diagram...The results of studies suggest that while colorblindness and individualism among religious conservatives may serve as checks on overt racism, they also breed resistance to recognizing and grappling with the country’s racial sins.”

Jesse Smith, Professor of Sociology, Benedictine College. In “A Gentler Christian Nationalism,” *Public Discourse*.



5

Precise Threats of Christian Nationalism

In Chapter 1, we noted three ways that CN poses a threat to America’s democracy: (1) personal animus or violence toward perceived outgroups, especially minorities; (2) concentrated political advocacy for a non-plural democracy; and (3) normalizing their values in America’s broader culture and growing the CN movement. We used a variety of instruments to gauge the severity of each of these threats. The sections that follow will review each of these threats, in turn, to gauge their severity.

Threat 1: Personal Animus or Violence toward Outgroups

CN Adherents are more likely than others to strongly dislike perceived outgroups and dehumanize them. While we found that Adherents are no more likely to say that they are “unfavorable” toward Jews, Blacks, Middle Easterners, or Hispanics than non-Adherents, they are more likely to believe these groups to have “too much influence” in the United States. We found that Adherents are twice as likely as non-Adherents to say that Jews and Blacks have “too much influence” (21% vs. 9% for Jews and 29% vs. 14% for Blacks), three times more likely to say the same for women (21% vs. 7%), and four times more likely to say the same for Muslims (32% vs. 9%). And while they do not report any heightened unfavorability toward ethnic and racial groups, they do exhibit substantially more unfavorability toward *religious* outgroups than non-Adherents. 50% of CN Adherents report feeling unfavorably toward atheists (versus 26% of non-Adherents); 37% report unfavorability toward Muslims (versus 17% for non-Adherents); 32% report unfavorability toward Buddhists (compared to 11% for non-Adherents); and 32% report unfavorability toward Hindus (compared to 12% for non-Adherents).

CN Adherents are substantially more likely than non-Adherents to say that their political opponents are “a serious threat to the United States and its People” (62% vs. 40%), that they are “downright evil” (65% vs. 31%), and that they “lack the traits to be considered fully human” (54% vs. 24%). While we do not ask about actual participation in violent actions (due to the difficulty with measuring that accurately in surveys), dehumanization and negative sentiment are two consistently robust predictors of violence. While not all who dehumanize and feel negatively toward outgroups will perpetrate violence against them, many deliberate acts of violence stem from such dehumanization and animus.

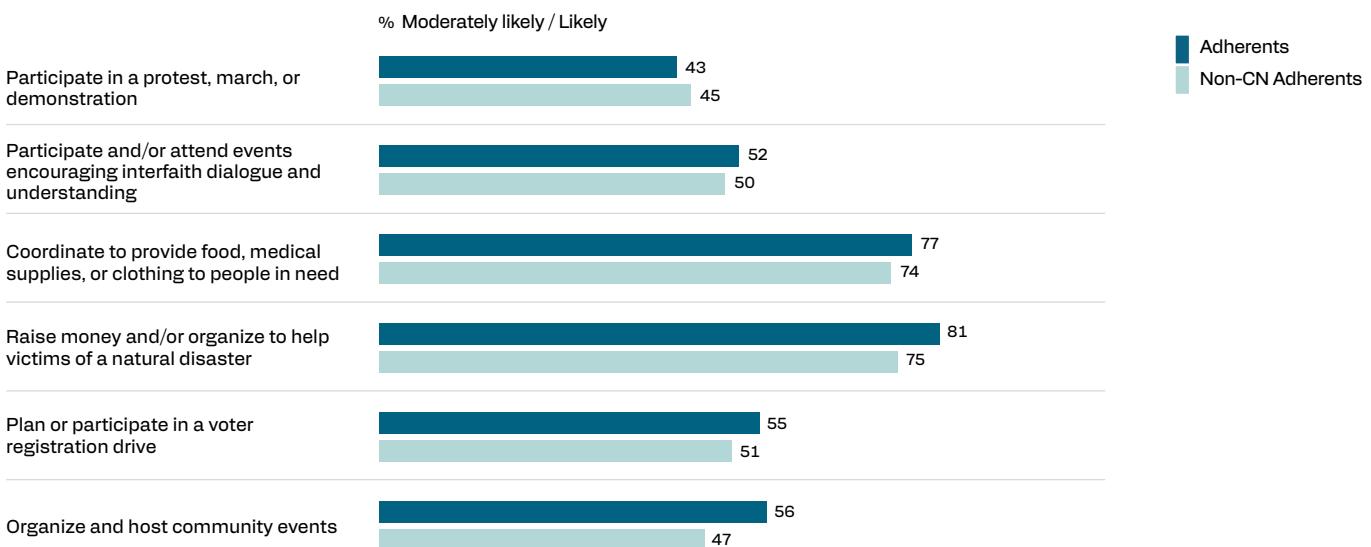


One surprising finding in our study is that CN Adherents report highly civic and pro-social attitudes. They are highly likely to say that they would work across faith lines to improve society (88%). They are among the most likely Americans to claim interest in working together with people of other religions on specific things like interfaith dialogues (52%); providing food, medical supplies, or clothing to those in need (77%); and discussing local issues and solutions (65%).

Fig 21 How willing are you to cooperate with others of different faiths and beliefs to improve society?



Fig 22 How likely are you to engage in the following activities with someone of another faith, or of no faith, if presented with the opportunity?



While they overwhelmingly endorse the idea that Christian symbols should be the only religious symbols displayed (71%), a majority also endorse having the government allow all faiths to display symbols (60%).

Only 11% of Americans are CN Adherents. This is far from a majority of Americans—and far from the majority of American Christians. The threat of personal animus and violence among this slice of society should be cause for concern. Yet this problem is likely less severe than American media and researchers have reported in recent years. If, as other scholars have reported, around 50% of Americans are CN Adherents or Sympathizers, this would warrant severe concern for America's democracy and civic life. Yet our improved scale and methodology has shown that the most serious CN Adherents are a much smaller group of Americans than has been reported, and that they exhibit many prosocial tendencies.



Threat 2: Concentrated Political Advocacy for a Non-Pluralist Democracy

CN Adherents support a variety of changes to America's society or government that may harm others and run counter to America's pluralist democratic traditions. Case in point, 89% simultaneously believe that (a) Christianity reflects the nation's true culture; (b) that Christians need more influence over government; and (c) that the decline of Christianity in America is a problem. They are more likely to prefer "Christian clergy review[ing] and advis[ing] on laws" (59% vs. 17% for non-Adherents), having "America's Judeo-Christian founding explicitly established in the Constitution" (49% vs. 18%), and a "strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections" (37% vs. 19%).

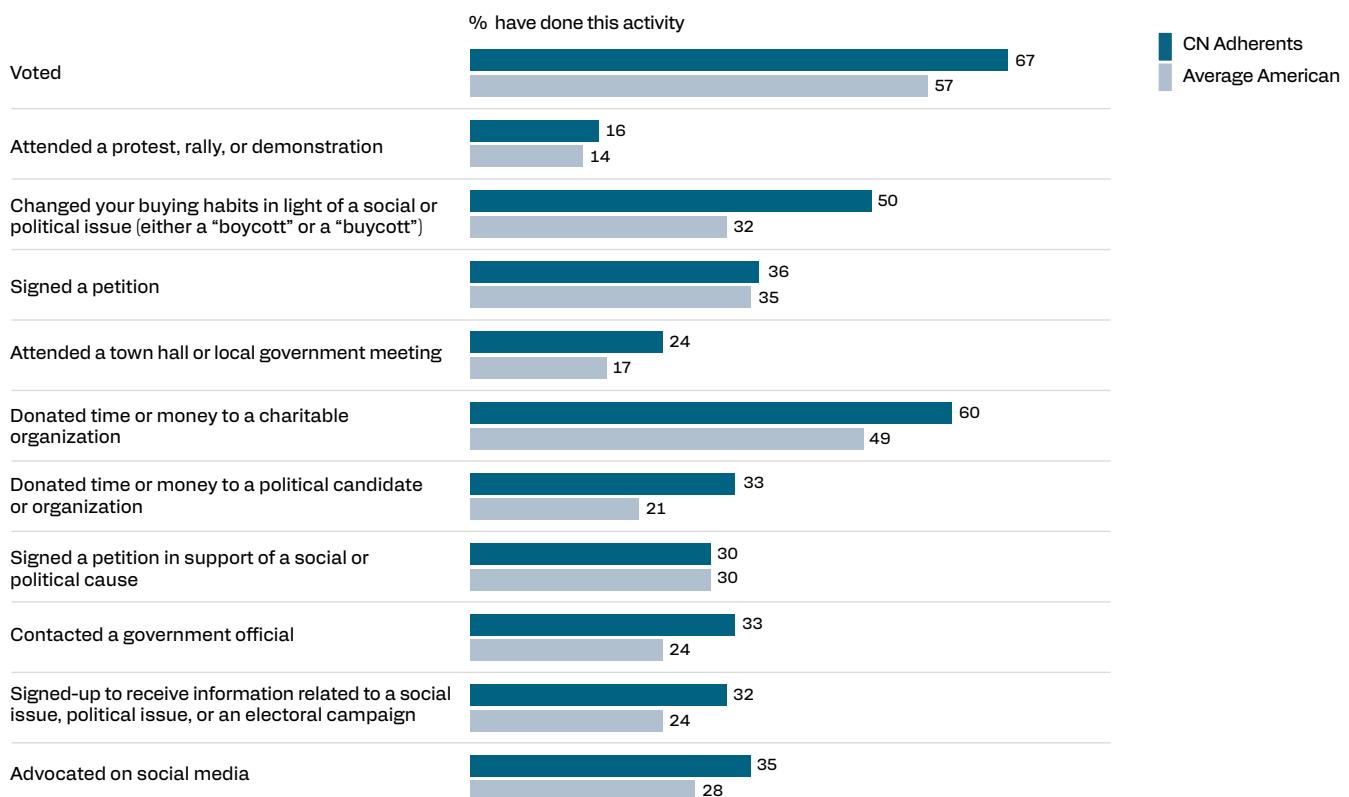
However, CN Adherents may find it difficult to enact their full vision for America's government and society. They comprise only 11% of America's population and are divided between America's political parties. Though CN Adherents are more likely to lean Conservative and Republican than non-Adherents (61% of Adherents identify as "Conservative" vs. 32% of non-Adherents; and 60% of Adherents identify as, or lean toward, Republican vs. 34% of non-Adherents), they are far from a political monolith. Additionally, CN Adherents who do not identify with the Republican Party (24% identify or lean Democrat, and 16% are Independents) are quite critical of it. When CN Adherents were asked, they feel Republicans are a threat to the United States (50%), are downright evil (58%), and "[lack] the traits to be fully human" (47%). Political dehumanization is thus not universally directed at specific groups but rather appears to be against those who an *individual* CN Adherent identifies as *their* political opposition.

Additionally, just because a large proportion of CN Adherents reside within a particular party does not mean they are a large proportion of that party overall. Only 17% of those identifying as Republicans or leaning Republican are classified as a CN Adherent. Certainly, the Republican Party does frequently pursue policies favorable to conservative Christians, but this is likely due to the fact that it also has a high percentage of Christian Spectators and CN Sympathizers (22% and 30%, respectively). Similarly, the stronger secular orientation of the Democratic Party probably owes a lot to the fact that about 55% of Democratic identifiers and leaners are classified as Zealous Separationists or Pluralistic Believers. These present more moderating forces on the political ambitions of CN Adherents, though this can change should CN Adherents successfully recruit Sympathizers, Undecideds, and Christian Spectators to their cause.

Meanwhile, Adherents may comprise a larger share of America's electorate and grassroots civic landscape than their numbers suggest due to uncharacteristically high levels of engagement. Adherents are more likely than the average American to vote (67% vs. 56%), engage in either a boycott or "buycott" (50% vs. 30%), attend a town hall meeting (24% vs. 17%), donate time or money to a charitable organization (60% vs. 40%), donate time or money to a political candidate or organization (33% vs. 20%), contact a government official (33% vs. 23%), and advocate on social media (35% vs. 27%).



Fig 23 Thinking about the last 12 months, how often have you done any of the following activities?



While they are small in number, CN Adherents may be more active in shaping America's civic landscape and elections than their limited numbers suggest.



Threat 3: Normalizing Values and Growing the CN Movement

There are a variety of ways CN Adherents may grow their movement to become a larger force in American life. While CN Adherents' pro-social behaviors (see "Threat 1" above) do suggest they are less prone to violence and bigotry, activities like volunteering, giving to charity, and attending town hall meetings do provide platforms for sharing their ideas. Additionally, CN Adherents are more civically engaged than other Americans (see "Threat 2"), more willing to work across divides, and more likely to come to the needs of their neighbors.

CN Adherents are also more active than others in America's non-civic public spaces. They are more likely than other Americans to participate weekly in a league, club, or sports organization (23% vs. 17%); attend church at least once per week (52% vs. 21%); and be part of a Bible study (36% vs. 16%). They also report being more willing to "gather to discuss solutions to issues in my community" (41% vs. 26%). These activities and spaces likely give them opportunities to share their beliefs with others.²²

Fig 24 Over the last 12 months, have you participated in a bible study group?



The most serious threat CN poses to American society today is likely its potential to grow: from 11% percent of Americans to a quarter or more by persuading Sympathizers (19%), as well as Christian Spectators (18%), or those who are Undecided (16%). Many Americans hold at least some attitudes that are consistent with Christian Nationalism. Looking back at the 14 items that we used to classify the groups, we found that 83% agree with at least one item; 71% agree with at least two to five items; 31% agree with at least six to 10 items; and 3% agree with 11 to 14 items. These figures are similar to what we see among non-Adherents specifically: 82% agree with at least one item; 68% agree with at least two to five items; 25% agree with at least six to 10 items; and 1% agree with 11 to 14 items.

²² See previous sections, Threat 1 and Threat 2.



However, the numbers varied among our six groups. 98% of Zealous Separationists and 94% of Pluralistic Believers agree with five or fewer items, as do 100% of Undecideds. 91% of CN Adherents and 85% of Sympathizers, in contrast, agree with *at least* six items, with 16% of Adherents and 6% of Sympathizers agreeing with 11 to 14 items. Christian Spectators fall in between these two divisions; 70% agree with five or fewer items, and 30% agree with six or more. They do not agree to as many items as the CN Adherents or Sympathizers but also do not refuse as many as the Zealous Separationists, Pluralistic Believers, or Undecideds.

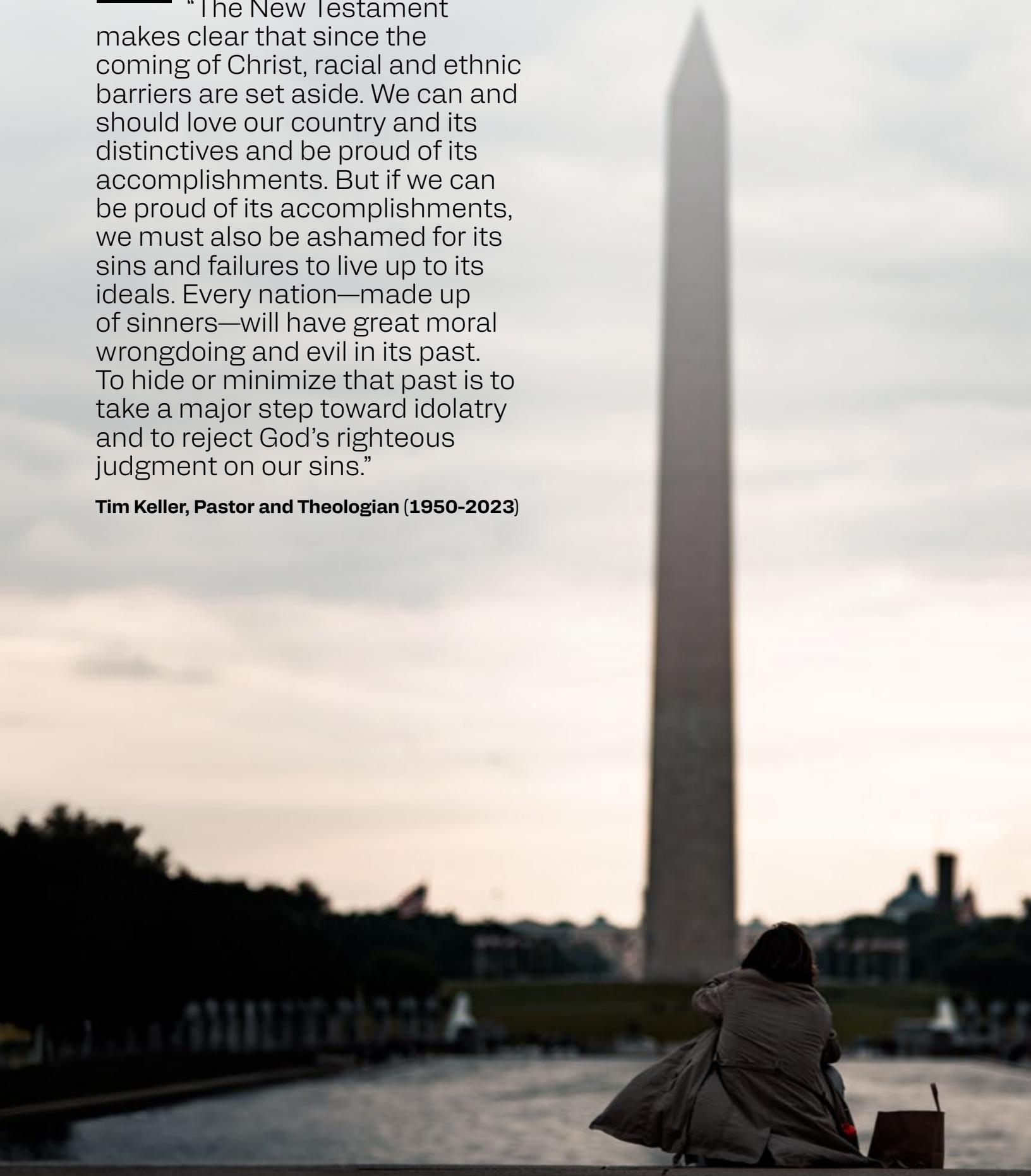
In short, then, many Americans hold some attitudes that may serve as initial “common ground” for later persuasion by CN Adherents, with some individuals (namely CN Sympathizers and Christian Spectators) agreeing with more items than Zealous Separationists and Pluralistic Believers. Of course, the reasons why CN Sympathizers and Christian Spectators overlap with CN Adherents are likely more innocuous than sinister; many Christian Americans would probably prefer to live in a society that largely aligns with their deeply held beliefs because most Americans would prefer to live in a society that largely aligns with their deeply held beliefs, Christian or otherwise. But the overlap may provide CN Adherents with opportunities to gradually persuade these individuals of other more democratically threatening beliefs.

Our findings point to the need to study the growth (or decline) of CN and the causes of this “switching.” Today, Christian Nationalists do not appear to pose a potent threat to America’s democracy, but an open question remains of whether America’s polarized climate will push Americans toward CN.



— “The New Testament makes clear that since the coming of Christ, racial and ethnic barriers are set aside. We can and should love our country and its distinctives and be proud of its accomplishments. But if we can be proud of its accomplishments, we must also be ashamed for its sins and failures to live up to its ideals. Every nation—made up of sinners—will have great moral wrongdoing and evil in its past. To hide or minimize that past is to take a major step toward idolatry and to reject God’s righteous judgment on our sins.”

Tim Keller, Pastor and Theologian (1950-2023)



6

Beyond Christian Nationalism

Given the challenges CN poses to America's democracy and culture of pluralism, how can its most serious threats be mitigated? Is it possible to encourage CN Adherents toward more appreciative views of their neighbors, or even their political opponents? Also, can CN Sympathizers be prevented from adopting more extreme beliefs and attitudes? Our survey attempted to answer these questions in a variety of ways.

Leaving Christian Nationalism

In our study, we identified a number of respondents who formerly identified with CN. We asked them to briefly explain why they no longer identify with it. Though the number of responses we received was very small (due to the small proportion of people who knew about Christian Nationalism, let alone ever identified with it), they signaled potential “off ramps” for CN Adherents.

Many respondents reported having experiences that opened their mind to the outside world, such as “college” or “getting older and [becoming] familiar with the world.” In some cases, this broadening of experience either made them realize that they didn’t actually understand what Christian Nationalism truly was, revealed hypocrisy in the movement, and/or precipitated realizations of how discriminatory and harmful the ideology can be.

Many respondents insisted that they were still Christian but linked a faith-driven conviction that all people are fundamentally equal as a motivation for leaving. One respondent noted, “Respect for other people and their [beliefs] (whether you agree with them or not) is part of my religious belief.” Others noted the degree to which CN is not sufficiently Christian—“They don’t always put God before America.”

These responses signaled potential interventions, such as contact with others of different faiths and perspectives, to broaden the horizons of those on the fringe of the movement. However, knowledge about others is likely not sufficient unless it is coupled with perceived dissonance between CN ideology and their faith. The significant extent to which religious leaders serve as influences and mentors to those identified as Christian Nationalists points to opportunities for religious leaders to try and establish that connection.



Preventing Sympathizers from Becoming Adherents

We also asked individuals who say that they identify with Christian Nationalism why they do so. What we found was that many individuals appeared to not have a clear understanding of what they were agreeing with. While a few individuals cited reactions consistent with Christian Nationalism (“That secular humanism is being taught in schools”; “the decline of [Christian] influence in society”; “Christians should be normalized”; “Christianity should be more nationalistic”) many simply cited their current belief in God or that they were brought up to believe in Christianity. Some respondents were quite upfront about their confusion (“I do not even know what that means”; “[I]t was something I thought I identified at the time because I understood it”) and others relayed statements that are actually anathema to the movement such as “we are all one body and should unite as one” and “[G]od’s acceptance of everyone.”

Part of this likely comes from the fact that the phrase “Christian Nationalism” combines terms that may seem innocuous or even favorable to many Christian Americans. After all, many people are proud to identify as Christians and are also patriotic. As one respondent asked, “[I]s it the same as [being] Christian?” Without being explicitly taught about the term, and about the ideology’s history and anti-democratic aspirations, people may find themselves identifying with the ideology on the basis of an initial misunderstanding.

While it is easy to dismiss these nominal attachments as inconsequential misunderstandings to a survey question, researchers of radicalization point to the surprising effectiveness of initial nominal attachments for recruiting people into extremist belief systems.²³ Said attachments provide true adherents an “in” with potential recruits, for them to start a dialogue that gradually pulls them deeper and deeper into the ideology. Given America’s polarization, there is potential for many of the 19% of respondents we identify as CN Sympathizers to become CN Adherents, and for CN Adherents to deepen ideological commitments.



²³ See Helen Young, “Extremists Use Video Games to Recruit Vulnerable Youth. Here’s What Parents and Gamers Need to Know,” *The Conversation*, November 9, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/extremists-use-video-games-to-recruit-vulnerable-youth-heres-what-parents-and-gamers-need-to-know-193110>; Joel Finkelstein, Alex Goldenberg, Sean Stevens, Lee Jussim, John Farmer, John Donohue, and Pamela Paresky, “Network-Enabled Anarchy: How Militant Anarcho-Socialist Networks Use Social Media to Instigate Widespread Violence against Political Opponents and Law Enforcement,” NCRI, September 14, 2020, <https://networkcontagion.us/reports/network-enabled-anarchy/>; and The Anti-Defamation League, “Propaganda, Extremism and Online Recruitment Tactics,” April 4, 2016, <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/propaganda-extremism-and-online-recruitment-tactics>.

Expert Responses



Pastors: Model Faithful Christian Witness in Public

by Kaitlyn Scheiss

Kaitlyn Scheiss is the author of *The Ballot and the Bible* (Brazos, 2023) and *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of Our Neighbor* (IVP, 2020). Her writing has appeared in Christianity Today, The New York Times, Christ and Pop Culture, RELEVANT, and Sojourners. She has a Master of Theology (ThM) in Systematic Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary and is currently a doctoral student in Political Theology at Duke Divinity School.

Many pastors, Sunday school teachers, and regular churchgoers are distraught about the rise of Christian Nationalism in America. They watch their friends and family members fall into rabbit holes on the internet, quickly sliding from orthodox Christian belief into a web of conspiracy theories, hateful rhetoric, and political extremism. This study not only clarifies different relationships to Christian Nationalism, it highlights some paths for church leaders who want to more faithfully guide their people.

According to the study, many people who appear interested in Christian Nationalism or use Christian Nationalist language might be part of the more sizable chunk of “sympathizers” rather than outright adherents to Christian Nationalism. When church leaders hear concerning language or ideas in their church, they should ask questions rather than jumping to conclusions, learning more about what their congregants mean by the words they’re using. Asking open-ended questions about what elements of Christian Nationalism sound appealing, what problems in the country concern them the most, and what solutions they find viable can open up better conversations about pluralism and Christianity.

Even amongst Christian Nationalism adherents, the study found a willingness to engage in civic work with people of different faiths. This provides an important opening for church leaders. Some Christian Nationalism adherents or sympathizers might be concerned that America will not remain open to the public contributions of people of faith, and their concerns can be channeled not into a radicalizing internet group but into dialogue and cooperation with other faith communities. As the study showed, some former Christian Nationalists found their way into a healthier form of Christianity as they broadened their relationships, experiences, and perspectives over time. Exposure—and eventually deep relationship—across religious lines can help sympathizers see their common cause with people of other faiths and help them experience cooperation across difference.

There might be no more crucial a task for church leaders today than articulating a positive vision of Christianity in public that can stand up against the perversions currently on offer. While church leaders can learn to articulate nuanced criticisms of Christian Nationalism,



it is much more important that they describe and model faithful Christian witness in public. People searching for the social and political meaning of Christianity will find plenty of voices happy to sell them violent, xenophobic, and politically extremist meanings. It is incumbent upon church leaders to clearly distinguish between the ideologies bearing the Christian name in public and the true gospel of Jesus Christ—a gospel that brings freedom to the captive and sets the oppressed free.



The Christian Nationalism Discussion is More Nuanced than Talking Heads or Columnists Allow

by Andrew T. Walker

Andrew T. Walker, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics and Public Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is an Associate Dean in the School of Theology and the Executive Director of the Carl F. H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement at Southern Seminary. Walker is also a Fellow in Christian Political Thought at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and serves as the Managing Editor of WORLD Opinions. He is the author of several books related to Christian ethics and public theology.

Never in my life have I seen a label move from a marginal academic discussion to the very center of American life as I have the discussion of “Christian Nationalism.” The phrase “Christian Nationalist” is invoked for a wide array of purposes. Most uses, it seems, are for denunciation by cultural elites. If I thought those criticisms were simply about denouncing illiberal forms of Christianity and not doctrinally and socially conservative expressions of Christianity, I would take those criticisms with greater merit. But as I see the conversation unfolding, left to elite usage, Christian Nationalism is just yet another epithet meant to censure values that progressives find distasteful and unenlightened. At the same time, a growing chorus of Christian Nationalists do self-identify with the label, and their ideas are ones that I find not only inconsistent with America’s founding but discordant with biblical Christianity.

I am on record in numerous spaces voicing my strong concern with Christian Nationalism when concretely defined in ways that I think are theologically problematic as a Baptist theologian. I need not rehash all those concerns here. But therein is the dilemma of the Christian Nationalism discussion: Who are the individuals defining it?

Such a question is a reason I’m grateful for the report issued by Neighborly Faith. Anytime an organization expends resources to bring specifying and statistical clarity to a conversation, it is deeply welcome. To that end, even if I would press for greater theological clarity at certain points (no poll ever satisfies a theologian!), by my estimation, Neighborly Faith’s more expansive definitions and categories for what constitutes Christian Nationalism are the best



I've seen to date. They build off prior research I've written about and criticized that too often left too many questions dangling in thin air. This report goes deeper.

As they've asked more clarifying questions than previous studies have (and, I should add, ask the questions more unbiasedly than how I see others engage in this conversation), they've done yeoman's work in diving even deeper to clarify the terms. This report confirms what I have thought all along: The Christian Nationalism discussion is internecine and more nuanced than that for which talking heads or columnists allow. It is, at the same time, very vocal yet numerically small. Five percent of Americans self-identify as "Christian Nationalists," while eleven percent fall under the poll's data as "Christian Nationalists." There are ideas within the "Adherents" camp that I do find problematic as both an American and as a Christian, but even still, Christian Nationalism is an idea that we should continue to understand, engage, and, where justified, counteract with Christian democracy. As America secularizes, we should be asking deeper and more probing questions about the role of religion in society. Inasmuch as Christian Nationalism is seeking to re-invigorate American public life with religion, I welcome its voice even as I seek to challenge it and learn from it.



Why we shouldn't be dismissive toward the threat of Christian Nationalism

by Angela Denker

Angela Denker is a Lutheran pastor and veteran journalist. She has written for many publications, including Sports Illustrated, The Washington Post, and FORTUNE magazine. Denker has appeared on CNN, BBC and SkyNews to share her research on politics and Christian Nationalism in the U.S. Her book, *Red State Christians: Understanding the Voters who elected Donald Trump*, was the 2019 Silver Foreword Indies award-winner for political and social sciences.

I recently met with a group of church leaders in the rural Midwest to facilitate a conversation on Christian Nationalism. I asked them how they see this ideology playing out in their own communities, if at all. What I was struck by was not how commonplace or well-understood the ideology is among Christians in these communities, but exactly the opposite: Only a small minority of church members were perceived as holding the most extreme views. However, though their numbers are small, their impact is great: In many of these churches, adherents of CN are fostering an atmosphere of fear, anxiety, and intimidation. One clergy member shared a story of a high school baccalaureate service that was hijacked by a local pastor who used the entire length of the ceremony to rail against LGBTQ people and other minorities. This pastor didn't allow any students or school staff to be involved in the service. For families who came to celebrate their student's accomplishments that day, they were met with a representation of the Christian faith marked by anger and hatred.



I share this story as a warning sign of what can happen if Christian leaders become overly dismissive or lax toward Christian Nationalism, even if its wholesale ideology is strongly held only by a small minority of Christians. Our temptation might be to point the finger directly at those who we perceive to be unlike ourselves, especially in the realm of politics. Are they a Christian Nationalist? However, as this study has shown, there are aspects of CN ideology that receive agreement across a wide swath of American Christianity. Though some lean toward and some lean away, many Christians at risk of being persuaded or intimidated into CN views. This is not a they problem, this is an us problem.

My recommendation then to church leaders studying this data is two-pronged: First, Christian Nationalism should not be used primarily as a pejorative tool to denigrate or villainize Christians who you perceive to be unlike you. What Christians need is a clear alternative to understand how their faith can operate in a diverse society. As they feel confident about their own faith and its place in America, their fear, anxiety, and need to limit other groups' expression will dissipate. Second, there is no excuse for Christian leaders not to clearly rebuke the violence, fear, and anxiety promoted by CN ideology, especially as it deviated from the radically welcoming and grace-filled Gospel of Jesus.



Aren't Christian Nationalists secular Republicans? Not so fast.

by Ryan Burge

Ryan Burge is an associate professor of political science at Eastern Illinois University, where he also serves as the graduate coordinator. He has authored over thirty peer-reviewed articles and book chapters alongside four books about religion and politics in the United States. He has written for the New York Times, POLITICO, and the Wall Street Journal. He has also appeared in an NBC Documentary, on Full Frontal with Samantha Bee, as well as 60 Minutes which called him, "one of the country's leading data analysts on religion and politics." He has served as a pastor in the American Baptist Church for over twenty years and has been married to his wife Jacqueline for over fifteen years. They have two boys - Holden and Reid.

As the concept of Christian Nationalism continues to develop in the empirical literature, our understanding of it continues to evolve and expand. One significant nuance that this report adds to the conversation is that Christian Nationalism does not just encompass Republican voters. Instead, this survey data indicates that 40% of all Christian Nationalists adherents are Independents (16%) or Democrats (24%). While the most public facing expressions of Christian Nationalism tend to come from members of the GOP, there is a significant contingent of Americans who embrace that tenets of Christian Nationalism without embracing the Republican Party.



In fact among adherents to Christian Nationalism, half felt that the Republican party was a threat to the United States and a majority indicated that the GOP was downright evil. The overriding sense that emerges from these survey results is not that Christian Nationalists are intolerant of Democrats or liberals. Instead, it's that Christian Nationalists are intolerant of the "other" political party.

Another set of findings that should help to bring Christian Nationalism into sharper focus is just how religious Adherents are compared to the rest of the sample. They were twice as likely to say that they pray daily compared to the rest of the sample (82% vs 40%). When it comes to Bible reading and study, CN Adherents report incredible levels of religious engagement. Among non-adherents of CN, just one in ten reported reading the Bible every day. It was 63% of CN adherents. Additionally, CN Adherents were twice as likely to say that they participated in a Bible study compared to the rest of the sample (33% vs 16%).

The notion that Christian Nationalism is a product of mere cultural Christians finds no empirical support from this study - just the opposite, in fact. In a time of rapid secularization when just a quarter of the overall population indicates weekly attendance, it's half of those who this report identifies as Christian Nationalist Adherents. Christian Nationalism is not just a mere cultural notion for its adherents. Instead, CN Adherents are leaning into an increased level of religious engagement to clearly stand apart from a society that they see is drifting further away from their values and way of life.



Appendix

Survey Methodology

The data in this analysis stem from a national survey Technites fielded among 2006 American Adults with an additional oversample of 303 young (18–25-year-old) Evangelicals fielded between June 16 and June 21, 2023. The sample was weighted to be representative of US adults on the following dimensions: 2020 vote choice, marital status, parental status, home ownership, 4-point Census region, interaction of gender by age, interaction of race by education, urban/rural identification, Evangelical self-identification, an interaction of Evangelical self-identification and age, and rates of church attendance. The weighting targets for these estimates came from the US Census (predominantly the 5-year American Community Survey), the 2022 Cooperative Election Study, and the US Elections Project. The estimated design effect is 1.54. The estimated 95% margin of error based off the effective sample size is 3 percentage points. Subsamples will have larger margins of error.

The survey was collected online with opt-in sampling from the PureSpectrum marketplace. Respondents in the main sample were based on stratified sampling targets for the interaction of age and gender and the interaction of ethnoracial identity and education. Targets were based upon estimates from the 2021 5-year American Community Survey. Respondents in the oversample were stratified based on race and gender. The survey contained multiple attention checks; only respondents that failed no more than three were retained. All survey questions were forced to choose to avoid missing data; survey drop-off (as measured by the percentage of those who entered and did not return to the panel provider as either a complete or terminate flag) was minor (approximately 8%).

Full Christian Nationalism Scale

The Christian Nationalism scale used to power the Latent Class Analysis is reported below. For each question, respondents were presented with the following seven options: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat agree, Agree, and Strongly agree. The scale's reliability, as measured by Cronbach's α , is 0.79.

- 1 The true culture of the United States is fundamentally Christian.
- 2 The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation.
- 3 The success of the United States is a critical part of God's plan.
- 4 The federal government should advocate uniquely Christian values.
- 5 We who live in the United States have a moral obligation to face its shortcomings and try to do better.
- 6 We live in a nation of laws, even laws that are not consistent with my faith, and people should respect them.
- 7 Faith can make people better citizens.
- 8 Christian symbols, like the cross, the Bible, or the Ten Commandments, should be the only religious symbols allowed in governmental buildings



- 9 In allowing different kinds of people to live in the US, the Federal Government is promoting divisiveness.
- 10 The federal government should allow all faiths to display religious symbols in public spaces.
- 11 Public schools should allow teachers/coaches to lead or encourage students in Christian prayer.
- 12 Religion has no place in government.
- 13 I would prefer if someone from my own faith tradition was elected president of the United States.
- 14 The federal government should enforce strict separation of church and state.

Additional Methodological Details on the LCA Procedure

The LCA was performed in R, version 4.2.2 via the poLCA R package. Though LCA allows researchers to partition out subgroups in the manifest variables, the procedure does not provide researchers with a measure for the “correct” number of latent classes. There are measures that allow researchers to compare whether more/fewer classes “better” explain the patterns in the data, to be balanced against other considerations such as internal consistency, construct validity, and theoretical fit. We tested model fits of up to 10 subgroups using 6 fit metrics: BIC, aBIC cAIC, AWE, smallest group probability, and relative entropy. Our six-category classification scheme had the majority support across the different fit metrics.



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