

Is Christian Nationalism the Solution to America's Societal Decline

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

Is Christian Nationalism the Solution to America's Societal Decline?

That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian worldview is a nonprofit listener supported radio ministry. We are able to reach believers and non believers with that mission through the radio station, website or podcast platform on which you are listening today because of the support of listeners like you. Thank you for your prayer, encouragement, and support. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

As we celebrate Independence Day, which commemorates the signing in 1776 of the Declaration of Independence, when the original 13 colonies declared their autonomy from British colonial rule, John Adams was a signer of the Declaration. He was also one of the framers of the US Constitution, which came out in 1789, and was also the second President of the United States. Most likely not a born again Christian, but rather a Deist - one who believes in a supreme being who is uninvolved in the affairs of mankind. Adams wrote the following about the link between morality and civil society.

He said, "Should the people of America once become capable of that deep simulation (pretending) towards one another, which assumes the language of justice and moderation while it is practicing iniquity and extravagance, while it is rioting in rapine, (in other words, violent seizure of property and insolence or rude behavior), this country will be the most miserable habitation in the world; because we have no government armed with power, capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

That from John Adams, our second president. We are seeing John Adams warning prove true in America today. We are at a low point in our nation when laws are passed, granting "the freedom to kill a child anytime during the nine months of pregnancy," or when the "degrading passions" of homosexuality are normalized and codified as "marriage," when adults parade openly and lewdly down the streets in front of children, and when children are led into the sin of cross-dressing and

physical mutilation in the name of "gender affirming care." Wicked depravity is now tolerated and affirmed in our nation. The predictable results are division, confusion, chaos, violence, harm and hatred. So what are Christians to do? Who, like Lot living in Sodom *"felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds,"* from 2 Peter chapter 2. Most Christians would say that our nation desperately needs to reclaim our biblical foundations and establish laws and policies based on the truths of Christianity. But how would that take place? Is that scriptures call for Christians in the church, to work to "Christianized government?" Today on The Christian Worldview, Scott Aniol, Editor in Chief of G3 Ministries, and Professor of Pastoral Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary, joins us to discuss Christian nationalism, a term that means different things to different people.

To some Christians, it means electing representatives who advocate for biblical principles and government. Other believers see Christian nationalism as a biblical mandate to work toward Christian rule over government and all institutions in society to take dominion, while non believers view Christian nationalism as just religious extremists trying to institute a theocracy and to oppress non believers. We hope you gain from today's discussion on Christian nationalism and what the Bible says about Christians in government. Scott, we've been looking forward to having you come on The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

Before we get into our topic of Christian nationalism today, just tell us how and why you became a follower of Christ and what your life is like now?

Guest: Scott Aniol 05:05

Thanks so much for having me. My parents were Christians, so I grew up very much exposed to the gospel in church at a young age. At a very young age, I made a profession of faith. Looking back that clearly was simply out of fear of hell, but also out of a desire to please my parents. I thought it was the thing to do. It really wasn't until my high school years that I began to recognize that I had never fully submitted myself to Christ. Having discussions with my parents, and them confronting me about sin issues, I recognized my need of salvation. I recognized that I was worthy of judgment by God, but I desired to serve Him and believe by faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice.

So when I was 13, I trusted Christ saw a lot of internal change, but a lot externally didn't change, because I was regularly in church and a Christian school and all of that. Definitely my internal desires changed, and I found a real desire to serve the Lord with the rest of my life. That changed me and changed the trajectory of where I was headed in my high school and college years.

Host: David Wheaton 06:12

Thank you for sharing your faith story with us. Scott Aniol with us today, here on The Christian Worldview. He's a Professor of Pastoral Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary. Let's get into our topic today. I titled the program, Is Christian Nationalism the Solution to America's Societal Decline? Watching the radical God rejection, I think is all that you can call it, of our society today, has led some Christians to call for what's termed, Christian Nationalism.

That means lots of different definitions to different people. We'll get into that in a second, as opposed to the kind of secular globalism or secular humanism that runs our country today. That's the ethic of our country today. They'll say, secular humanism is a worldview, even a religion. Why shouldn't Christianity be represented and indeed, foremost, in our leaders and laws?

We want a Christian nation and we'd rather have that in a secular nation. I saw that there are two conferences coming up. One of them is a conference that you're associated with, G3 Ministries, because you work for that organization. That conference is in September called, The Gospel and the State, Christian nationalism, Theonomy, and Baptist Free Church Doctrine. Then there's another conference coming up called, Blueprints For Christendom 2.0. Seven Doctrines For Ruling The World. Men like Doug Wilson, Brian Suave, I think his name is, Joe Boot, Joel Webbon, Michael Foster, Dale Partridge, all these men are a part of that conference. These camps, so to speak, have two very different viewpoints on the role of Christianity in government and society. All Bible believing Christians want government to do as Romans 13 says, to promote good and punish evil. We all want that. But maybe you could explain some of the big bullet point divides between these two groups of Christians.

Guest: Scott Aniol 08:06

I think part of the problem here is how the discussion is being framed, and it even was reflected a little bit in comparing, for example, Christian nationalism on the one hand, and a secularists globalism on the other hand. Part of the problem is, that those two are not the only options. I think there are a lot of good conservative Christians who are against the secular globalism, amen. They're also grieving over the rise of LGBTQ+, the transitioning of kids, and abortion, and all of these horrendous things that are happening in our society. They sort of portray then the only solution being Christian nationalism, which I agree with a lot of what those men want and what they emphasize.

The problem is that when you read or listen to the main Christian nationalists, and this other conference that you mentioned is illustrative of this, it's rooted in a post millennial eschatology that sees the role of the church in spreading the gospel, but also expects and anticipates that Christians ought to, in a sense, take over the magistrates or have the magistrates enforce biblical Christianity, biblical morality.

All 10 commandments for example, ought to be enforced by the state. That's really where the divide lies. What is the role and purpose of government and what is the role and purpose of the church? Those of us in the Pre Conference connected with GBTS take a much more Baptist, historically Baptist position, and very much a non post millennial position that says that church and state have different roles in this age. One day in the future kingdom when Christ is ruling and reigning, church and state will be united. Christianity, Christian morality will be enforced with a rod of iron from the throne itself. During this present age, what some would call the age of the Gentile rulers, the state does have a role, a God given role as Romans 13 says, God did Institute government for a particular

reason. Mainly, I'll get back to this in a moment, mainly to preserve peace and order in a sin cursed world prior to the time when the king does come.

The church as the church, as the institutional church, has a different role and that role is to make disciples, to spread the Gospel and to disciple new believers. The problem is, I think sometimes again, with this artificial binary that is presented, the argument by a lot of these Christian nationalists is the only alternative to what they are saying is a secularist globalism, or what they sometimes describe as anabaptism or pietism, where Christians want to privatize their faith and not speak out in the public sphere, for example. You do find Christians like that. The David French's and the Russell Moore's of the world who really are conservative Christians doctrinally, but they really don't think we should speak out strongly, for instance, against homosexuality, or some of these things in the public sphere.

What we're trying to say is no, there's a middle position. We absolutely believe that as Christians, we ought to be active in the public sphere. We believe nations have been created by God for a purpose. We're against globalism. We believe that we ought to vote in such a way that we're electing magistrates that will uphold morality for the good of society. We ought to stand up for life. We ought to stand against homosexuality and transgenderism and all of these. We've got to be very public with our Christianity and be as active as we can be.

That doesn't mean that it is the government's role to enforce all of the 10 commandments, for example. The government does have a role, we would say, to enforce what is sometimes called, The Second Table of the Law. That is, those moral standards that involve the relations between people because that's what God designed government to be. God designed government to maintain peace and order among people within a society in an age in which there is sin and corruption and evil. As Romans 13 says, God instituted that and in as much as governing officials, even pagan governing officials, in as much as they do that, they punish wrong, they punish murder, as God instituted in Genesis nine, they punish sins committed one person to another.

As much as they do that, they are servants of God, they're doing what God intended for them to do. But again, that's different from saying that the government ought to enforce true worship, or the government ought to punish blasphemy, or the government ought to enforce worship on the Lord's day for example. That's where the division lies. It's in either seeing it as a binary in which you're either all in Christian nationalism or you're just a secularist, globalist. Whereas we're saying no, there's a middle position where we are active, we are very public about our faith, and we believe government does have a role, but at the same time, the full enforcement by the magistrate of Christian morality will not happen until Jesus comes again.

Host: David Wheaton 13:54

Scott Aniol is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview. He's the Professor of Pastoral Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary, also the Executive Vice President and Editor in Chief

of G3 Ministries. Their website is G3min.org. We also have it linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

You said a lot there. One of the things early on was about how the eschatology of those pushing for Christian nationalism drives their viewpoint. As a matter of fact, in the conference that I mentioned earlier, Blueprints for Christendom 2.0 Seven Doctrines For Ruling The World, one of the speakers, Joel Webbon, tweeted this about promoting the conference. He put some bullet points down, it's about Reformed theology. It's about covenant succession. It's about biblical patriarchy. It's about presuppositional apologetics. It's about Christian nationalism. It's about Theonomy, and finally, it's about post millennialism.

We recognize some of those terms, Reformed theology, the doctrines of grace came out of the Reformation and so forth. You've talked about the idea of Christian nationalism. Pick one or two of the other ones to help us understand which of these are important to understand covenant succession, biblical patriarchy, presuppositional apologetics, Theonomy, maybe even explain a little more what post millennialism is.

Guest: Scott Aniol 15:1

I think he's describing the various aspects of his theology. Several of those categories I would fully agree with, but I think the ones that are germane to this particular issue are,

A: Post millennialism and

B: Theonomy.

These men argue for what they call a general equity Theonomy, meaning that we take the laws of the Law of Moses, and while they don't transfer over directly in our day and age, because we are not under the Law of Moses, nevertheless, we can learn general principles that can apply to our laws even today.

There's a sense in which I would agree with even that to a certain extent. Nevertheless, I would say there are limits to what the government has been appointed by God to do. That's the key. In as much as the government is doing what God has appointed it to do in maintaining peace and order between human beings in society, then I think absolutely we can look at the general equity of principles within the Mosaic Law and learn from those.

Similarly, the apostle Paul even does this in the New Testament. We can look at laws in the Mosaic Law, we can discern principles that apply even to the church. For instance, Paul, when he argues that pastors ought to be paid, pastors are worthy of being paid, he quotes the Mosaic law as a general equity principle there. So I don't disagree with that generally, but Theonomy specifically means more than that, and again, it means that a human government ought to get to the point where we are enforcing all aspects of God's moral law, deriving principles, general equity principles from the Mosaic

law. It's not necessarily directly tied to post millennialism, and let me be clear, not all Christian nationalists are post millennial. Although, I think all of the men in that particular conference are, but there are men who are, for instance, amill and perhaps even premill, who would consider themselves Christian nationalists.

What I've tried to demonstrate is that even for those men, I think they're being inconsistent with their eschatology. Again, what post millennialism will say, and there are various shades, so I'm speaking of the most conservative evangelical versions, which would be represented in that conference that you mentioned. They believe that the church's role right now is to spread the gospel and make disciples of all nations, amen. At the same time, they also would argue that as more and more Christians are in a society, at a certain point, those Christians ought to establish what they call Christendom. That is the formal state affirmation that Christ is Lord over this country and therefore we ought to enforce biblical morality in every respect. Again, all 10 of the 10 Commandments ought to be enforced by the state.

Even among those men, you might get some differences. I recently reviewed Doug Wilson's book, *Mere Christendom*. Interestingly, he even as a post millennial Theonomist says, At this point, government ought not to punish blasphemy, because we don't want to give sinful government leaders the power to enforce that. The minute that we do, they're going to blaspheme themselves and take that to an extent that we never would want them to. So I appreciate him defending, for instance, free speech in that book, but I think what he would say is that in a society, there's going to be a tipping point where there are enough Christians, to where then we can begin to enforce punishment against blasphemy. Part of the problem is you try to ask these guys, okay, when is that tipping point? They never really have a good answer. That's usually something like, let's just aim for that and see what happens. Again, I want to root us in the New Testament, and then what the New Testament promises. I don't see any promise in the New Testament that things are going to get better and better and better to the point where full societies and even full nations will become Christian as nations. I think what the New Testament promises is that yes, more and more people will come to faith, more and more people will be added to the church, the gates of hell will not be able to stand against the church. At the same time, society will wax worse and worse, and we should expect persecution and we should expect oppression even.

Not that we want that and not that there are not times in which there are glimmers of light and better societies than others, there absolutely are and we should strive for that. At the same time, we ought not be striving for something like a Christian nation or Christendom because the New Testament does not actually prescribe that that is what we ought to be doing or that that's what government ought to be doing in this age before Jesus comes again.

Host: David Wheaton 20:09

Scott Aniol is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program as we talk about his Christian nationalism solution to America's societal decline. He is the Professor of Pastoral Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary. He also works for G3 Ministries. We'll have more with Scott

after this short break. You are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: Dangerous Affirmation The Threat of Gay Christianity 20:34

It's critical for Christians to understand the moral depravity that has taken captive our nation. The LGBTQ movement is loud and proud on our main streets. But even more troubling, has pushed into Evangelical churches under what's called, "Gay Christianity." M.D. Perkins book, Dangerous Affirmation, The Threat of "Gay Christianity" explains "the way Gay Christian activists are rethinking theology, biblical interpretation and the nature and purpose of the church in order to infiltrate conservative evangelicalism" The only antidote is to know and stand firm on the truth of God's word.

Dangerous Affirmation is 239 pages, softcover, and retails for \$24.99. For a limited time, you can order it for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Upcoming Event: TCW Golf Event 2022 21:34

David Wheaton here inviting you to The Christian Worldview golf event on Monday, September 18th at Woodhill Country Club in Wayzata, Minnesota. This is a rare opportunity to experience a classic course in immaculate condition with challenging greens in a beautiful setting, all in support of The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Golfer Registration includes lunch on the lawn, practice range, player gift, and 18 holes with cart followed by appetizers and awards. Bring a foursome or we can fit you into a group. Also, contact us about sponsor opportunities, whether or not you are attending or local to Minnesota.

We hope to see you Monday, September 18th. Registration deadline is Labor Day. To find out more and to register, visit TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2233 or [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org).

Host: David Wheaton 22:41

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Scott Aniol is our guest today. He's a Professor of Pastoral Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary. He also works for G3 Ministries as well. We're discussing the question, Is Christian nationalism the solution to America's societal decline? William Wolf, I think you probably know who he is. He'd consider himself a Christian nationalist. He was a former Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Department of Defense during Donald Trump's administration. He's also a visiting fellow, I think it's at the American Renewal Center. Correct me if I'm wrong. He tweeted this. He said, "It's not hard to make a strong biblical case for Christian nationalism. What's impossible is making a biblical case for godless secular globalism."

Again, he's creating that binary like there's nothing in between. He included some passages of scripture here. He says, Some Scriptural support for Christian nationalism, not exhaustive he says, Psalm 2, *Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord [it's a command here-serve the Lord] with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son, or he will be angry, and your way will lead to your destruction.* He gets into Romans 13.

Then he writes as a note, Paul twice repeats the teaching that government is God's servant, and particularly that this servant of God must exercise his derivative authority for the good of the people he governs. He says, Consider this. In order for servants to be faithful, they must, 1.) Know who their master is, God. 2.) Know what their master expects of them. 3.) Discharge their duties faithfully. He says, Should we be globalists? No, that's an effort to rebuild Babel. Therefore, we should be nationalists. What kind of nationalist should we be? He says. Christian. Then he goes into quoting the Great Commission as well.

You've already alluded to this, Scott, that there's that perspective of the Christian nationalist perspective. By the way, even outside conservative Christianity, there's more aggressive versions of Christian nationalism than probably he represents there, taking up arms and so forth, in the way that the Biden administration would represent who Christians are. They think there's going to be an insurrection at every turn here. On the one hand, you have that version that I read from William Wolf. On the other hand, it has been what you've been describing, where Christ and the apostles and the early church didn't pursue civil Christianity, I don't think even at all, but rather a personal and ecclesial Christianity. Talk more about how your comment or the phrase you use that, we're called to have Christian faithfulness, rather than Christian nationalists.

Guest: Scott Aniol 25:47

Right. Again, I think there's a false binary presented there. The alternative to Christian nationalism is not secularist globalism. How I've articulated it in some articles is that I would say it's Christian faithfulness. Again, we ought to be Christian in the public sphere. God commands us to be holy, commands us to render to Caesar what is Caesar's, commands us to pray for magistrates, commands us to do good unto all men, commands us to live peaceably with all. So we should vote, we should stand up, if you want to quote Psalm 2, amen. Right? I think we should call kings and magistrates to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish in the way, but what does that mean?

That means submission in repentant faith to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Unfortunately, what we often see with these Christian nationalists is they almost want the magistrates to affirm Jesus as Lord, but without actually believing it in their heart.

Again, as a Baptist, I want to say, no, we absolutely want to call them to faith. We regularly pray for President Biden, that he would come to faith in Jesus Christ, we pray that that happens. We ought to call them to faith. But then when they come to faith, then absolutely they ought to be Christian in the

public sphere, they don't hide their Christianity under a bushel. But then they also will recognize as government officials who are Christian. They want to do what God has prescribed government to do. Again, I would argue that in this New Testament age, God has not prescribed government to enforce all of the commands that God requires of Christians.

Christians are required to obey the commands of the Lord and unbelievers are required to, but they can't until they believe in repentant faith. It's not the government's job to do that. So the big point of disagreement that I would have there on Romans 13, what is important to recognize there, is that Romans 13, calls magistrates servants of God, not because the pagan Roman governors that Paul is talking about, acknowledge that fact, not because they recognize it, or even are intentionally trying to be servants of God, they didn't believe it.

They were servants of God, Paul said, when they carried out God's wrath. I think similarly to how the Lord called King Cyrus, in Isaiah 45:1 his anointed, because he used Cyrus to send his people back to the promised land. God appoints governors and when governors do punish evil and reward good, when they obey what God has prescribed, for example, in Genesis 9 in capital punishment against murder, they are servants of God, whether or not they acknowledge it, or even believe it.

There's no mandate there, the mandate is that they believe in Jesus Christ. And then yes, if they come to faith, that they live out that Christian faith in the sphere of life, to which God has called them, in this case, the civil magistrate. But again, that is different from saying, it's the magistrates role as one Christian nationalist author said, to lead people into the Heavenly Presence of God. That's not the magistrates role to enforce Biblical Christianity. That's the church's role to spread the gospel, to see people come to faith and discipled, and to then live out their Christian faithfulness in every sphere of life, family, church, and in the public sphere and in human vocations. Every sphere of life, our Christianity ought to impact and influence every single thing that we do.

Host: David Wheaton 29:35

Amen to that. Scott Aniol with us today here on The Christian Worldview. Scott, you take it a step further in the series of articles, and we have these linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. We really encourage listeners to read these articles. Very thought provoking and I think they're very good. You say there are definite benefits to having a "Christian nation." The issues of freedom. I mean, Western civilization was formed and shaped and blessed by having a Christian general ethic going on The freedoms, the morality, the cultural things that took place, the beauty of art and so forth. You explained the benefits of what those things were like in parts of Europe and England specifically, maybe earlier time in America. But you also say there are weaknesses of when a kind of Christendom or Christian nationalism takes hold in a country.

For instance, you write, these very external blessings, freedom, morality, culture, and so forth, also possess a devastating effect. Christendom creates a cultural Christianity that actually hinders the church's mission of making disciples. Since in a Christian nation, the very fabric of society is

considered, "Christian," citizens of such a nation do not recognize their inherent depravity, and need to repent of their sin and put their unreserved faith in Christ alone for their salvation. In the consciousness of such citizens, "Christian nations," they are Christian by virtue of their citizenship. I'm born in America. So I'm a Christian, right? I was born and baptized in the church when I was an infant, and I'm buried in a Christian church later on in life, they would say. There is no opt in, you write, to Christianity and Christendom.

Citizens have already been baptized into the Christian community. Just a couple more sentences here. Consider the Bible Belt in the southern United States, for example. How many people failed to put their trust in Christ because they do not even recognize their need, due to the fact that a form of cultural Christianity still dominates in much of the south? How many Evangelical mega churches are filled with nominal cultural Christians? Then you even talk about the theocracy of Israel. People forced into conformity of God's law wasn't enough to bring them into a true saving faith. The pushback on this is well, yeah, that's true. There is a dulling when there's a Christian culture all around us. It makes nominal cultural Christians who aren't truly saved. At the same rate, our culture right now, that's hugely secular, sin isn't even viewed as sin now. People don't even realize that they call what is sinful, good. They don't have any conviction of sin either. They don't see their need for salvation, they think they're going the right way. So doesn't God work sovereignly whether you're in a nominal cultural Christianity situation, or in a society of today, that we are just pagan, secular, globalist Marxist worldview?

Guest: Scott Aniol 32:26

Absolutely. I mean, I think we affirm God's sovereignty and God can work in whatever situation and does work in whatever situation. That's not a question whatsoever. Also, what's not a question. I tried to articulate this in that particular article in which I'm evaluating this Christendom. You mentioned this conference, Christendom 2.0, well, they're pointing back to Christendom 1.0. When Church and State were united because of Constantine, and especially Emperor Theodosius in the fourth century, which had a lot of effects in western civilization. What's not in question is whether or not that's better than a secular pagan society in which there's transing kids and abortion and all these horrible things. Of course, it's better. There's people commonly saying online, Christian nationalism is better than transing kids. Well, of course it is. But that's not the question. The question is, what are we permitted to do as God's people and what is government committed to do? That's what I'm evaluating there. We see the benefits of Christendom 1.0. There were benefits, but I would actually argue that the negatives outweigh the benefits in that it created a lot of people who thought they were Christian by virtue of their culture, by virtue of them being in a Christian nation, who nevertheless went to hell, because they did not believe in their hearts.

You read the line there about using the idea of baptism. Along with post millennialism the other sort of foundational principle that I think is at the heart of Christian nationalist is a sort of paedobaptist underlying theology. That doesn't mean all Christian nationalists are paedobaptists, but they do in a sense, apply the same logic, and that is, you establish a culture of Christianity, you in a sense,

baptize people into a Christian community in which Christian morality is enforced, hoping that that will contribute to them actually coming to personal faith in Christ down the road.

What we've seen historically is that is simply not the case. In fact, I would say let's look at our country in which every US president in my lifetime has claimed to be a Christian, and, arguably not a single one of them has. Maybe one. But why is that the case? It's because we live in a "Christian nation," where being a Christian gains you political capital, to where even a Barack Obama and a Bill and Hillary Clinton claim to be Christian and we've weakened the nature of what Christianity is. We've come to define Christianity as simply a label, and a cultural Christianity, a civic Christianity, which actually hinders our ability to spread the gospel.

You mentioned people today live in sin and don't recognize it. But actually, that's better for the sake of the Gospel, because we can then preach the gospel to them. We can show them from the law of God, how they do not match up to God's standard, and then the Holy Spirit will take that and will convict them of sin, lead them to trust and faith in Christ. The problem is when you try to evangelize your neighbor, and because they grew up in a Christian nation, they say, Well, I'm a Christian, of course I'm a Christian. You almost have to get them unsaved before you can get them saved. I would fully admit I'm thankful for the influence of cultural Christianity. Just from a purely pragmatic perspective I'm thankful for it. For the sake of the gospel,

A) It's not what has been allowed or permitted or mandated for us in the New Testament?

B) It actually hinders the spread of the gospel, because a lot of people are nominal Christians when they don't actually believe in their hearts in Jesus Christ.

Host: David Wheaton 36:16

Yes, that's reminiscent of Jesus warning in the Sermon on the Mount when he says, Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. There are many who profess, but far less who actually possess genuine saving faith. Our guest is Scott Aniol today from G3 Ministries. We'll take a quick break. More coming up on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: Dangerous Affirmation The Threat of Gay Christianity 36:39

It's critical for Christians to understand the moral depravity that has taken captive our nation. The LGBTQ movement is loud and proud on our main streets. But even more troubling, has pushed into Evangelical churches under what's called, "Gay Christianity." M.D. Perkins book, Dangerous Affirmation The Threat of "Gay Christianity" explains "the way Gay Christian activists are rethinking theology, biblical interpretation and the nature and purpose of the church in order to infiltrate conservative evangelicalism" The only antidote is to know and stand firm on the truth of God's word.

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Host: David Wheaton 38:46

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Scott Aniol is our guest today. He's a Professor of Pastoral Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary. We're discussing the question, Is Christian nationalism the solution to America societal decline?

I understand the Bible that teaches that Christ will reign for a literal 1000 years on earth. Toward the end of the column we've been discussing, you say, the problem is that many Christians today are unwilling to be content with the tensions that God has ordained during this already not yet period until Jesus comes again. You've been talking about this middle ground between Christian nationalism and the radical, secular humanism we see today. We long for Christ's kingdom on earth and that is a good longing. We ought to pursue the moral blessings of Christ's kingdom in our homes and in our churches, but God has not promised the blessings of Christ's kingdom for nations of unregenerate people.

Those blessings will come when Jesus comes again and takes dominion overall. When every knee will bow to him, when every citizen of His earthly kingdom will also be a regenerate citizen of his heavenly kingdom. So I think you're saying, the Millennium starts with 100% believers. That changes over time, but that's how it starts. Until Jesus comes again, we live in the tensions portrayed for us in the New Testament. Ultimately, we must recognize that the mandate given to us as churches is not to take dominion and established Christendom. Our mandate is to make disciples from every nation, Matthew 28 and Revelation 5 you quote. Baptizing those who have been regenerated by the Spirit through the proclamation of the gospel, adding them to our number, and teaching them to observe everything Christ commanded.

A two part question here. What is it going to look like when Jesus reigns during the Millennium? How is he going to deal with the sinfulness that will eventually crop up during his reign? The second part of that question is kind of the Francis Schaeffer question. So how should we then live, Christians living today, what should be a few things we should take away from our discussion?

Guest: Scott Aniol 41:05

Premillennialists and amillennialists are going to differ to a certain extent as to how Christ is going to reign after he comes again. Premillennialists, as you summarized, believe that it will be 1000 year reign on this earth that will start with believers, believers will have children, and then those children will grow up and they will need to also put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, and therefore there will be sin and sinners. Again, from a pre millennial standpoint, Christ will rule with a rod of iron. So exactly what the Christian nationalists are pushing for will be the case in a premillennial schema during that kingdom.

From an amillennial standpoint, they don't believe in a literal Millennium on this earth, but they would say that Jesus will reign on the New Earth. Both agree, premillennialists and amillennialists, that the reign though, and the rule from the top, doesn't happen until Jesus comes again. Again, differing from post millennialism that wants to see that happen before Christ comes again. Interestingly, post millennialism and premillennialism agree that Jesus will reign on this earth. The difference being that post millennialists say that he's reigning on this earth right now through the church, and eventually, as the church influences the magistrate. So there's interesting areas of overlap.

But you know, to answer your question, again, from a pre millennial schema, Jesus will rule with a rod of iron. When there is sin, it won't be able to take root in anywhere near the same way that it does during this age, because church and state will be united. Because there will be one ruler who is enforcing all of the moral law of God, punishing blasphemy and forcing true worship of God and so forth. Then when from the premillennial view, at the end, when there's a final uprising, again, it's not going to be long, Jesus is going to simply defeat it. So that's again, the big divide eschatologically, and where on this issue a pre millennial position and amillennial position would have a lot in common, arguing that the rule of Christ over the civic sphere will not take place in its totality until Jesus comes again.

What should we be doing now? Again, this is what the New Testament teaches us. As Christians, we ought to be spreading the gospel, making disciples from every nation, seeing people added to our church and discipled in biblical truth and doctrine, doing that within our own families, and then living out what it means to be a disciple. That's what I mean by Christian faithfulness in every sphere of life. If you're a Christian, and you're a mayor, if you're a Christian, and you get to be president of the United States, you don't hide your Christianity, you publicly proclaim it, you live out your Christian faith, also recognizing that it's not your role to enforce the first commandment or the second commandment or the third commandment. But you still live out your Christian faith. As those of us

who are not in government roles, we live out our Christian beliefs in whatever vocation God has called us to. We are to be public about our Christianity, we call our leaders to repentance. Again, we vote for the best possible scenarios we can manage, to hold back the full extent of depravity in our society, stand up for equal justice under the law for preborn, all of that. We are to be faithful as God has commanded us to. Fully expecting that there will be persecution as Christ has promised and longing for the day, when our King, Jesus, will come again and will establish His kingdom on earth. In that day, we can look forward to all of God's moral law being enforced by the king.

Host: David Wheaton 44:55

We do look forward to that day, especially living in the society we do today. Scott, thank you so much for your faithfulness to God's Word, your ability, your God given ability to really dig into these issues and articulate some of the distinctions and what the Word of God says. It's an important conversation and I think it's become really prominent as our society has declined so much morally. Thank you again for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. All of God's best to you, your family, Grace Bible Theological Seminary, and G3 Ministries as well.

Guest: Scott Aniol 45:28

Thanks so much for having me. I enjoyed it.

Host: David Wheaton 45:29

Again, our guest was Scott Aniol. We have links to him at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. We also have links to three columns that are relevant to what we discussed today on Christian nationalism. Some concluding thoughts on this issue. The first one is, How did we get to the point that we are currently at in America? The simple answer is this. Sin is just like leaven that you put in bread. It permeates, it expands, it corrupts everything. Over time as the church has been compromised, and as there are more and more unregenerate non believing people in our nation, unregenerate people make foolish decisions. They have unrepentant wickedness in their life and then they vote for those who represent their life and viewpoints.

America started with some true Christians, and others who at least respected the Christian religion. They enacted laws and policies that reflected their worldview. That's why children were taught the Bible in school. Can you imagine that? People went to church on Sundays. Things like sodomy and prostitution were illegal, and certainly drug use was not legalized. Now, the controlling institutions of our society are basically described by Romans chapter one.

But getting to the question of the day, Is Christian nationalism the solution to America's societal decline? Christian based government would be good for our nation, and for our people. God's will and ways always promote human flourishing. But the problem is, how to achieve that. Is that even possible anymore with the degree of the corruption and sin in our country? Where else has a kind of Christian nationalism been tried? Has it worked? Has it lasted? Would there be anything neglected if

all Christians were all in on working for a Christian nationalistic government? Where's the basis in the New Testament to work toward a Christian government?

There are prescriptions for what leaders should do, they should promote good and punish evil, like it says in Romans 13, but we find no command for Christians to put at the top of the priority list to Christianize government. Just consider what Jesus said and did during his ministry. He never spent one moment working to Christianize government, but he spent all his time evangelizing and discipling people. Consider what the apostles did when the Church Age started. They did the same as Jesus, they worked to start churches and disciple believers and proclaim the gospel to unbelievers. They spent no time trying to change or Christianize the Roman government. Consider how the Roman Empire ended up when it did become a Christian government, and ended up merging with the Roman Catholic Church, and how much corruption and abuse that brought forth. Or consider how Great Britain has done having an official Protestant Church, the Church of England. That country is basically the same as America today, even though it does have a "Christian government" and "Christian laws." They are basically ignored and compromised.

Also consider what the book of Revelation says. What the world will be like before Christ returns. There's no picture there of anything to do with a Christianized world, so we know what Jesus commanded in his last words. He said, in the Great Commission, in Matthew 28, *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

Now he could have said, Go and make your governments and laws Christian, but he didn't. He said, to make disciples and teach them. So the Christian life is about prioritizing God's commands. God commands us to be saved and sanctified. He commands us to be evangelizing and discipling, the Great Commission. He commands believers to be engaged in a local church, to have strong marriages and to raise children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. He commands us to work and provide for our own and for others. Those are the big priorities that scripture commands. Each of us has a finite amount of time and energy. If political activism tried to Christianize government, causes any of these greater priorities to lack, it's really disobedience to God's commands.

That being said, if you have time or a calling to work toward Christian leaders and laws, you by all means should do it. All of us should be informed and vote and support candidates and laws that promote good and punish evil at minimum. Because really, we don't have a government problem. We have a people problem, a sinner problem. The only way those sinners, whether regular citizens, or those who lead us will change, is if they believe the gospel. The only way Christians will be elected in majority numbers will be if there are more like minded Christians to elect them. So let's be reminded what God's word says in 1 Timothy 2. *I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior,*

who desires all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all the testimony given at the proper time.

So we pray, Oh, Lord, creator of heaven and earth, who rules over the universe and determines the rise and fall of nations, who we all will stand before in judgment someday, we pray for our leaders. For those who resist you, Father, we pray that you would bring unrelenting conviction on them, to bring them to repentance and faith in you. If they persist in their disobedience Lord, we implore you that you would hinder their wicked ways. For you have said, Oh, King, show discernment. Take warning, oh judges of the earth. Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling, do homage to the Son that he not become angry and you perish in the way, for his wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him. But for those leaders, Lord, who do take refuge in You, overflow them with wisdom and boldness and perseverance, and protection. Lord, you made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. If there are any listening today who have not placed their faith in that atoning work of Jesus Christ, may they repent and believe in Christ today for salvation. It's in His name I pray, Amen!

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Until next time, Think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm! The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end.

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