Written by **Luis Miguel** on May 30, 2022

"Christian Nationalism" Is Gaining Ground Within the GOP

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A blend of unapologetic biblical morality and Trumpian America First economic policies is gaining traction within the Republican Party, resulting in a notable number of primary wins for the movement some are calling "Christian nationalism."

One of the most visible wins was the GOP primary for the Pennsylvania governor's race, in which Doug Mastriano this month came out victorious with 44 percent of the vote in a crowded field despite opposition from the state party establishment.

Mastriano, a state senator and retired army colonel, is known for leading political rallies that feel more like evangelical revival meetings. At his victory party, a Christian singer entertained the crowd while many attendees raised their arms in worshipful reverence.

"God uses the foolish to confound the wise," Mastriano told his audience, evoking scripture.

Although Mastriano has personally rejected the "Christian nationalist" label, some observers — those who notably want to see less Christianity in the public square — say he fits the bill perfectly.

For such scholars, Christian nationalism is a fusion of American and Christian values, symbols, and identity. The movement, they say, is characterized by a belief that God destined the United States, as He did biblical Israel, for a special role in history and that it will be blessed or receive judgment based on the nation's obedience.

Typically, Christian nationalism goes hand-in-hand with a conservative political ideology, including policy positions like opposition to abortion, gay marriage, and transgenderism. A reductionist immigration policy and distrust of Islam are also common, as is the prevailing belief that Donald Trump was ordained to help America at a unique moment in history.

There is often overlap with other beliefs/movements that the mainstream considers "far right," such as the belief that the 2020 election was stolen and that Covid-19 was a manufactured crisis, as well as believing that mass migration is a tool to demographically displace American citizens.

There is also the tendency to reject the traditional "separation of church and state" perspective. Mastriano, in fact, called it a "myth."

Mastriano "is a unique case where he really does in his speeches highlight this apocalyptic idea" that his supporters and causes are on God's side, said Andrew Whitehead, sociology professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and co-author of *Taking America Back for God: Christian*

Nationalism in the United States.

"It literally is good and evil," he continued. "There's no room for compromise, so that is the threat to democracy."

AP notes:

> In the book, Whitehead and co-author Samuel Perry measured rates of Christian nationalism by drawing on a 2017 Baylor University survey. It gauged opinions on such things as America's role in God's plan and whether the U.S. should be declared a Christian nation, advance biblical values and allow school prayer and religious displays in public places.
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> Their research found about one in five Americans align with many of those views. That's down from nearly one in four a decade earlier, just as Americans have become less religious overall. But Whitehead said Christian nationalists, who are more numerous among Republicans, can be expected to maintain their fervor.

Robert Jones, CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, attributed what he considers violence on Jan. 6 to Christian nationalism. Jones said those who backed the idea that America is a "promised land" "were far more likely to agree that 'true American patriots may have to resort to violence … to save our country.' To my mind, white Christian nationalism is really the threat."

Also per AP:

> Elizabeth Neumann, chief strategy officer for Moonshot, a tech company that aims to counter online violent extremism, disinformation and other harms, said Christian nationalism began picking up steam around 2015 amid a rising narrative of purported persecution of Christians.
>
> Neumann, who served in the George W. Bush and Trump administrations and grew up in an evangelical Christian household, called the movement "heretical and idolatry" and an "apocalyptic vision (that) very often leads to violence." Many pastors are pushing back against it, she added.
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> "I see Christian nationalism as the gasping, dying breath of the older generation in America that is afraid that Christians are going to be replaced," she said.

It speaks volumes about the anti-Christian, globalist nature of today's mainstream academia that they now consider it a threat to "democracy" to openly be a Christian in politics — something that was the norm a generation ago.

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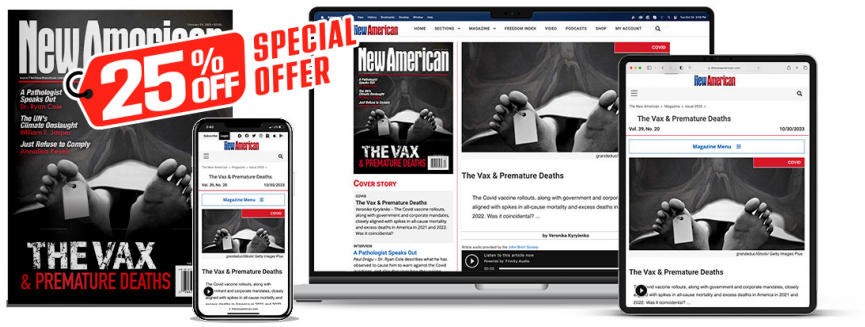

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