

Will America Ever Become a Christian Nation Again?

Read Time: 5 Minutes 8 Seconds

In the midst of the ongoing debate about Christian nationalism (see [here](#) and [here](#)), there are two fundamental questions that need to be asked. First, what does it mean to be a Christian nation? And second, is (or was) America a Christian nation?

How we answer these questions goes a long way in determining our attitude towards “Christian nationalism.”

Do you remember back in 2006 when President Obama said that America was “no longer just a Christian nation”? In full, he said, “Given the increasing diversity of America’s population, the dangers of sectarianism have never been greater. Whatever we once were, we are no longer just a Christian nation; we are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, a Buddhist nation, a Hindu nation and a nation of nonbelievers.”

Then, in 2009, speaking in Turkey, he stated that we Americans “do not consider ourselves a Christian nation, or a Muslim nation, but rather, a nation of citizens who are, uh, bound by a set of values.” Do you recall the outcry that followed?

To paraphrase what many of us were thinking: “What? America is not a Christian nation? Of course it is! And our country is just as certainly not a Muslim nation, like Saudi Arabia or Iran.

“Our founding colonies were explicitly Christian. Christian thinking informed our founding documents. Christian holidays are our national holidays. And the vast majority of our citizens profess to be Christians. Of course we consider ourselves to be a Christian nation.”

As articulated in a press release by Don Swarthout, President of Christians Reviving America's Values, "When I actually heard our very own President saying the United States is NOT a Christian nation, I couldn't believe my ears. His statement is just not true and is a total fabrication on President Obama's part."

To quote further from this same press release, "One of our current Congressmen said in May, 'The overwhelming evidence suggests this nation was birthed with Judeo-Christian principles. I would challenge anybody to tell me that point in time when we ceased to be so (a Christian Nation), because (that time) it doesn't exist.'"

And this: "A columnist, Wayne Barrett said, 'But what is inescapable in what he (President Obama) keeps saying is the emphasis that the United States is not Christian. One would be hard pressed to describe exactly how Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism have helped shape America and its laws and culture.'" (See also here for a more detailed response.)

On the flip side, a 2012 article in the Los Angeles Times stated that, "the National Assn. of Evangelicals said that when it surveyed selected evangelical leaders about whether the United States was a Christian nation, 68% said no.

"'Much of the world refers to America as a Christian nation, but most of our Christian leaders don't think so,' said Leith Anderson, the association's president. 'The Bible only uses the word "Christian" to describe people and not countries. Even those who say America is a Christian nation admit that there are lots of non-Christians and even anti-Christian beliefs and behaviors.'"

In 2009, after highlighting both the unchristian and Christian elements in America's past and present, the left-leaning evangelical Sojourner said this: "This dichotomy is reminiscent of St. Augustine's teachings in "The City of God."

Essentially, in the book he teaches that no human institution, even the institution which calls itself the church, can fully embody the teachings of Christ, but within these institutions are committed Christians who do God's will. This applies to America too. America is not a Christian nation, but there are followers of Christ within the country pushing the government and the nation to do the will of God. The only state, nation, principality or country that can call itself a Christian 'nation' is the kingdom of God fully ushered in by the second coming of Christ."

What are Americans thinking today in 2022? What do they understand when we speak of our country being a "Christian nation"?

I posed that question on Twitter, asking, "Broadly speaking, do you agree with the statement that 'America is a Christian nation'? Or do you believe that it was a Christian nation but no longer is? Or do you believe that no nation is truly Christian?"

Almost 12% voted for, "It's a Christian nation." Forty-one percent cast their vote for, "It was but isn't anymore." And 47% voted for, "No nation is Christian." How interesting!

To be sure, America today cannot possibly claim to be a truly Christian nation when: We have aborted more than 63 million babies since 1973. We are the world's leading provider of pornography by far. We have the highest rate of single family homes in the world. We reportedly lead the world in illegal drug use and drug overdose deaths, while we are among the world leaders in categories such as crime rates, murder rates, rapes and prisoners incarcerated.

And this is only to look at the most obvious examples of us not being Christian. (For a longer list, see [here](#).) As a 2013 article in Salon announced, "8 appalling ways America leads the world: Welcome to the new American exceptionalism: Number

one in obesity, guns, prisoners, anxiety and more ...”

Is this what a Christian nation is supposed to look like?

I have interacted with Muslims in other parts of the world who thought that “Christians” were highly immoral and ungodly. They based their opinion on their knowledge of our filthiest Hollywood movies, our celebration of near naked women on our magazine covers and our overall worldliness and carnality.

I have had to explain to them that, in reality, most Americans are not Christian at all, even if many profess to be. In that sense of the term, America is not a Christian nation, nor has it ever been.

On the other hand, I have Christian friends in India who say, “India is now a Hindu nation, but I believe that one day it will be a Christian nation!”

By this they mean that the vast majority of the people will become true Christians, which would then be reflected in the government, in the laws, in the schools and in the media. (Today, the opposite is true, as it is Hinduism that permeates the culture.)

In the same way, there are countries in Africa that are shifting from Islam, animism and tribal religion to Christianity, with Christians being elected to high government positions and schools becoming wide open to gospel influences. They want to see their nations become Christian.

Should we then want the same for America, especially in light of our origins? And is this what “Christian nationalism” is all about?

These are the questions we must answer first in the debate over Christian nationalism.

From my perspective, while no nation on earth will ever be fully Christian before Jesus returns, America in the past was

more Christian than it is today (despite all of our major failings). And it would be good if we could be much more Christian in the future. But that to me, is something different than “Christian nationalism.”

What’s your take? {eoa}

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