Opinion
Letters to the Editor



by NCR Staff

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

December 5, 2025
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Following are NCR reader responses to recent news articles, opinion columns and theological essays with letters that have been edited for length and clarity.

Christian nationalism conceptually necessary

I must strongly urge my fellow Christians not to take Michael Sean Winters' advice in his column to "retire" the phrase "Christian nationalism" and "thank" anyone who

"mutters" it for "helping to make MAGA inevitable" (NCR, Nov. 21, 2025). Raising awareness of Christian nationalism as a form of exclusionary politics that is not new but is ascendent in American political life is literally a matter of life and death.

Winters admits that he and many others don't understand what Christian nationalism is. It is "polymorphous" and half of Americans have "heard little or nothing about it." For Winters, this ignorance is reason for us to stop discussing it, even though it is an ideology that, as he also notes, at least 10% of Americans (that's a little over 34 million people) adhere to.

In a time of increasing political violence, it does not make sense to ignore an ideology that in its most extreme form views political violence as holy. A 2022 study in the journal Political Behavior, found that "Christian nationalism in the United States is associated with increased support for political violence" and another found that roughly 34 million Americans (there is that 10% again) expressed the belief that political violence against the Biden-led U.S. government could be justified. We don't understand the increasing cycles of political violence in the U.S. without understanding Christian nationalism. That Winters and others don't understand what Christian nationalism is does not mean that it has no "explanatory value."

Finally, Winters too easily elides Christian nationalism with the role of religion in the public square. Christian faith-based advocacy is not Christian nationalism. People who advocate for particular policies – whether on immigration, abortion, civil marriage, healthcare, etc. – because of their religious values are not engaging in Christian nationalism. Christian nationalism seeks to co-opt Christ as a justification for authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion. No need to "hurl it as an epithet", but to "retire the phrase" Christian nationalism would be to abandon those it seeks to exclude.

ANNA SCHEID
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

***



Christian nationalism a reality

Michael Sean Winters only has to experience Christian nationalism's domination in Texas politics to know it would be impossible to retire the term (NCR, Nov. 21, 2025). It pervades all civic life in Texas. People are dragged off the street because of the way they look. Texas' largest school district has closed many school libraries; books are banned in great numbers; public health is directed to the few; banning DEI is the law of the state; universities are under the thumb of the Texas government, shattering academic freedom; Texas workers of many years are deported; money that should be used for public education is sunk in militarizing the southern border. Our top government officials answer to President Trump, not to the people of Texas. What other term characterizes this foolishness?

MARGARET HANSEN
Houston, Texas

***

Advertisement

Bishops' political leanings

The divisions in the USCCB (NCR, Nov. 13, 2025) highlighted by Mr. Winters are largely, in my view, reflective of some of the divisions in our society. Although one can not realistically label any of our bishops as a liberal their spectrum of

conservatism likely runs the gamut from moderately conservative to reactionary. Their political leanings are also stark given their reticence to mention Trump by name when criticizing his policies as they had no qualms about calling out Biden or Obama.

The messages advanced by some of our bishops take issue with the excesses of Trump's policies toward not just immigrants, legal or not, but against any person of color who also appears Latino. Unfortunately, our Supreme Court seems to have given its imprimatur to racial profiling if Latinos are the targets. That needed to be addressed specifically by our ecclesial leaders but the message was subtle if at all apparent.

The fear our bishops seem to have toward Trump may lie more with their reticence to antagonize the financial forces which under gird the Republican party and Trump as well, by extension. Those same forces have made running our diocese like closely held corporations more of a determined reality than just circumstantial coincidence. I hope to see the next voting guidance from the bishops call into question voting for individuals who appear cavalier about due process and racial profiling as much as others are targeted as being pro-choice. Time will tell but history teaches us not to be too sanguine.

CHARLES LE GUERN
Mount Holly, North Carolina

***