

Christian Nationalists are Right!

(about some things, but wrong when they ignore complexity, or tell only part of the truth)

1—“*Separation of Church and State* is not found in the Constitution”

(yes, that specific phrase is not, but the principle is evident in the views of the Founders, and fundamental to the First Amendment “Establishment Clause”)

2—“Many of the Founders were Christians who sincerely believed in God”

(yes, “many” but not all; and, what was their belief about God, the Almighty, Providence—Anglican? Unitarian? Deist? Many would not be considered Christian by many Christians today. This begs the question: Why didn’t they put the Christian God (Jesus) in the major document of the new nation?)

3—“The Bible has been very influential in American History from the founding”

(yes, but there is no reference to the Bible—or the Ten Commandments, or Jesus—in the major documents. A wide diversity of religions, guided by various scriptures, have flourished in our history, often adding to the richness of our culture)

4—“Christians are not receiving the same privileges they used to enjoy”

(yes, because no dominant faith can receive special privileges under the Constitution. White people, and men, used to receive more privileges than others too—we’ve become more inclusive and enlightened—and we have a long way to go; why wouldn’t a Christian want others to be treated equally?)

5—“Parental Rights should be valued”

(yes, but this must apply to *all* parents, not just conservative Christians)

6—“Some books are not appropriate for children”

(yes, most people would agree—and some might say the Bible is also inappropriate; every parent can decide this for their own child; teachers and librarians, in rational conversation with parents, make these determinations, not based on one religious group or the beliefs of the few)

7—“Large numbers of Americans are leaving organized religion”

(yes, but that doesn't mean they don't believe in God; politicized religion, that seeks to force compliance to creeds and allegiance to one party, may be one reason many are leaving)

8—“Science can be wrong and doesn't provide answers to everything”

(yes, of course; Science is a process of investigation and discovery, it is peer-reviewed and self-correcting, continually advancing new theories and seeking more knowledge)

9—“The Government is *godless*”

(yes, our Representative Democracy, as instituted, does not favor Religion or any particular religion, yet protects citizens with or without religious faith; there is no mention of “God” in the Constitution)

10—“Civil laws are not based on *biblical principles and values*”

(yes, this is for the common good; legislators may be guided by their beliefs, but must enact laws that serve the public good in a society where one religion cannot dominate)

11—“The film industry doesn't give a fair and balanced view of religion”

(yes, and, as in the culture at large, religious literacy is lacking; so the film industry can do much better in fairly and accurately presenting characters with and without faith; this could be a model for “Christian” productions as well, so they do not disrespect or demonize other beliefs)

12—“News media doesn't present much positive coverage of religious faith”

(yes, but once again, this may often reflect poor religious literacy; the good that religious groups are doing ought to be highlighted, while not ignoring the abuses by some)

13—“Secular (non-religious, humanistic) values pervade our culture”

(yes, this is foundational and fundamental in our democracy; religion also permeates our culture, due in part to the wisdom of the Founders, who formed a Union of “We the People,” to enjoy the freedom to live by values within a wide secular public square)

14—“Schools are not teaching all the beliefs we value at home”

(yes, public schools cannot and should not teach personal beliefs, but give space for an array of viewpoints open to question and critical thinking. For example, “Intelligent Design” should not be taught in public school since it is a religious belief rather than a scientific subject)

15—“Elected leaders should be allowed to bring their faith into their work”

(yes, they should, and they *are* allowed; yet, in public service, elected leaders must represent all their constituents, not only those who share their religious beliefs; they cannot impose their faith onto the populace; remember: there can be “no religious test” for public office—Article VI)

16—“The whole history of our nation, including the place of religion, should be taught in schools”

(yes, agreed; though this must include the diversity of religious traditions as well as the role of freethought and humanism woven into our history; in addition, the good and the bad sides to religious activities—for example, slavery—should also be discussed freely and openly)

17—“Religious Freedom is under threat in America”

(yes, but not really; *whose* freedom is most challenged—the dominant and privileged faith?; religious liberty applies to all who may choose to believe or not; minority faiths and nonbelievers may be most threatened in our time, and greatly under-represented—note that nearly 90% of Congress is Christian, while almost 30% of Americans claim no religion)

18—“Christians feel persecuted in this culture”

(yes, some may *feel* that way, but there is no real evidence of that, except perhaps a loss of privilege and power, where Christians have to learn to share the public square—see #4)

19—“The pro-life movement calls attention to the need to protect our children”

(yes, perhaps, but protecting the wellbeing of children is something that the great majority of people believe in; primarily focusing on the “rights of the unborn” while dishonoring the “rights of the born” to make choices about their own bodies, is religious overreach — “life begins at conception” is a religious opinion that cannot be imposed on the rest of society—see #10, #15)

20—“Morality is guided by our most cherished beliefs”

(yes, but morality is not the exclusive realm of Christianity or the Bible; cherished beliefs, guided by other religious or humanistic beliefs, should be just as valued; people can be, and are, “good without God”)

21—“Liberal, progressive, ideology is a serious challenge to traditional faith”

(yes, and anything other than fear-based faith sees no danger in that; healthy faith is open to question, welcoming challenges that may bring growth and knowledge; reasonable faith in a democratic society allows for different opinions and gives room at the table for other perspectives)

What other claims do Christian Nationalists get (at least partly) right?

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