



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

Reformed Catholic Church
www.reformedcatholic.org

19 E. Eldridge Street
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August 29th, 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Reformed Catholic Church and All People of Good Will,

The United States of America, of which the undersigned bishops are citizens, stands at a critical juncture where the foundational principles of our democracy are under threat from within. This threat comes not from foreign adversaries but from extremist factions within certain religious groups that falsely claim the United States is a "Christian Nation." This assertion is not only historically inaccurate but theologically problematic.

The notion that the United States was intended to be a Christian Nation fails under historical scrutiny. Our founders, in drafting the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, purposely DID NOT enshrine Christianity as the state religion. The Declaration of Independence references God, but it does so in a manner consistent with Enlightenment thinking, not as an endorsement of Christian doctrine. The Constitution itself is intentionally secular. It avoids any mention of God. This was an unmistakably deliberate choice to prohibit the establishment of a state religion and ensure freedom of religious expression for all citizens. This commitment to secularism was reinforced in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights.

Theological arguments against the idea of a Christian Nation are equally compelling. However, The idea that scripture would endorse the characterization of any nation-state as a "Christian Nation," is anathema. The preaching of Jesus centered on the eternal reality of the Reign of God, within which we all live, move and have our being. Again and again, when the crowds erroneously called for him to become a political leader, Jesus rebukes them or retreats to shut down the desires of misguided followers. When the religious authorities attempted to trap Jesus, he drew the line between the Reign of God and the reign of Rome, famously "rendering to Caesar" the Roman coin.

The values of the Reign of God run contrary to the values of most secular governments, because they have completely different agendas. The goal of governments is power; the goal of the Reign of God is compassion. The gospels continually focus our attention on the values of justice, compassion, and inclusivity rather than on supremacy, oppression and the acquisition of wealth. Hebrew and Christian scriptures alike repeatedly emphasize the importance of caring for the poor, healing the sick, welcoming the foreigner, and liberating the oppressed. A truly Christian nation would align its laws and policies with these core values of the Reign of God, ensuring access to healthcare, supporting those in need, and showing love and respect for all individuals, regardless of their background or identity.

Moreover, the assertion that the United States should be a Christian Nation disregards the inclusive message of the Gospel. The words, proposals, and actions of those who adhere to this notion would marginalize those whose beliefs are different. In the Acts of the Apostles, the gifts of the Holy Spirit



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manifested on Pentecost are gifts intended for all humankind. Jesus' teachings emphasize love and acceptance for all people of different faiths or people with no faith at all. Such a “Christian Nation” would welcome and respect all individuals, including Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs, as well as those who identify as agnostic or atheist.

To consider the United States a Christian Nation is both historically wrong and theologically unsupportable. **Our nation's strength lies in its commitment to allowing our citizens the freedom to practice any religion or to practice no religion at all.** One group's religious practice ought not be imposed on another, nor be allowed to infringe on the exercise of another. Citizens of the United States are challenged to protect religious freedom and uphold the principles of equality and justice for all.

We urge all citizens to engage in civic affairs—during this presidential election and always—with a perspective rooted in the Gospel's message of universal love and respect. Christians can engage with their government at all levels by supporting leaders who advocate policies consistent with the values of the Reign of God: compassion, equality, inclusion, and true freedom for all.

May we, as individuals and as a nation, always embody the greatest commandments: to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Most Sincerely and Encouragingly in Christ,

Most Reverend Christopher M. Carpenter

Most Reverend William Cavins

Most Reverend Bill Heller

Most Reverend Leonard Walker

The Bishops of the Reformed Catholic Church