

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM AND THE CAPITOL INSURRECTION

**Written Testimony of Andrew L. Seidel
of the Freedom From Religion Foundation
on the role Christian Nationalism played in the lead up to
and during the attack of January 6th.**

**Delivered to the Select Committee
to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol,
U.S. House of Representatives
March 18, 2022**

Dear Chairperson Thompson and Members of the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol:

“Christian Nationalism is the biggest threat to America today. An existential threat to a government of the people, for the people, and by the people.”

I delivered that warning to a room full of reporters at the Religion News Association conference in Las Vegas on September 19, 2019. And 475 days later, on January 6, 2021, Christian Nationalists proved me right. They attacked our Capitol, our democracy, our nation, and you. Christian Nationalism was the banner under which the seemingly disparate groups united that day. This ideology provided the moral and mental permission structure Americans needed to assail American democracy.

I have been warning about the rising threat of Christian Nationalism for years, and studying and fighting Christian Nationalism for a decade. I am a constitutional attorney and Director of Strategic Response at the Freedom From Religion Foundation, a position I held until today.¹ I am the author of the book, *The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism is Un-American*, which seeks to correct the misinformation and disinformation—the myths—that feed the Christian Nationalist identity. Pastor Greg Locke, a Christian Nationalist preacher with ties to the January 6th insurrection, filmed himself burning the book with a blowtorch. I’m a Senior Correspondent at *Religion Dispatches* and have authored numerous articles about Christian Nationalism for that outlet and have been a guest lecturer at several universities on this topic. I’m also co-editor of an academic text, *Law and Religion: Cases and Materials* (Foundation Press,

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2022) 5th Edition, with Prof. Leslie Griffin; and authored another book, *American Crusade: How the Supreme Court is Weaponizing Religious Freedom* (Union Square & Co. Publishing, Sept. 2022). I was asked to submit this testimony because of my expertise and specifically because I helped conceive, organize, and write the comprehensive “Christian Nationalism at the January 6, 2021, Insurrection” report, published jointly by the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, FFRF, and Christians Against Christian Nationalism.²

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is a national nonprofit based in Madison, Wisconsin. Since its formation in 1976, FFRF has fought to uphold the constitutional separation between state and church, and to educate the public about nonreligion. In recent years, FFRF’s work has revealed an alarming rise in Christian Nationalism among state and federal officials, including in the judiciary, threatening the Constitution’s guarantee of the fundamental right to a secular government.

My testimony will lay out the undeniable evidence showing that Christian Nationalism played a central role in the insurrection, both in the lead-up to the insurrection (**Appendix A**) and on January 6 itself (**Appendix B**). These appendices are pulled directly from the “Christian Nationalism at the January 6, 2021, Insurrection” report mentioned earlier and have not been altered. I’ll also explore some of the state and local officials who were in DC that day, examine their Christian Nationalist leanings, and discuss whether the fallout from the attack has chastened or emboldened them (**Appendix C**).³ This information is new and was not included in the report.

Before those appendices, I’ll first briefly define Christian Nationalism and the role it played, then examine some solutions.

What is Christian Nationalism?

Christian Nationalism is an identity built on the claim that America was founded as a Christian nation, that it was based on Judeo-Christian principles, and, most importantly, that we have strayed from that foundation, from our godly roots. Christian Nationalism employs the language of return in an effort to claim to be the true heirs of the American experiment and, more importantly, the American Identity. In their retelling, Christian Nationalists are the true Americans, everyone else is an interloper.

² Available at [FFRF.us/Jan6Report](https://ffrf.us/Jan6Report).

³ In the wake of the attack, the Freedom From Religion Foundation compiled some of the Christian Nationalist leanings and tendencies of members of the U.S. Congress. Those are not included in this testimony but can be found at “FFRF: Shame on Christian Nationalist disruptors inside Congress,” Press Release of January 28, 2021 at ffrf.us/disruptors.

Christian Nationalism is an entire identity based on disinformation. You've heard the disinformation before:

“We're ‘One Nation Under God!’,” “in God we trust,” the Founding Fathers were all devout Christians who prayed during the Constitutional Convention, George Washington knelt in the snow at Valley Forge and prayed, that our laws and government are based on the Ten Commandments.

None of that is true. And for a long time, Christian Nationalism was treated as a historical debate. Historians on one side, propagandists and politicians on the other. But on January 6th, Christian Nationalism ripped off its mask, showing that it is not a scholarly debate about how America was founded, but a violent, exclusionary movement bent on seizing power here and now. It is an attempt to redefine America according to Christian Nationalist disinformation and then reshape the law accordingly.

Christian Nationalism was *the* central driving force on January 6.

The attackers were not shy about declaring their motivations. They held Bibles aloft, prayed in the Senate, carried Christian flags, and openly confessed to their motivations on video.

The many disparate identities and ideologies visible during the attack were united under a banner of Christian Nationalism, which created the permission structure necessary for Americans to attack their own government. The correspondent who shot the viral New Yorker video footage explained it like this: “The Christianity was one of the surprises to me in covering this stuff, and it has been hugely underestimated,” he said. “That Christian Nationalism you talk about is the driving force and also the unifying force of these disparate players. It's really Christianity that ties it all together.” See Appendix B.

This is not the first time you are hearing this.⁴ On July 27, 2021, you heard testimony from four police officers who were on the front lines that day. They spoke of the violence inflicted upon them. The injuries they suffered. The number of times they were electrocuted. The fingers trying to gouge out their eyes and seize their guns. How they were dragged into the mob and beaten. The chemicals they were doused with. The surgeries they've endured. The many colleagues who have resigned. One of their fellow officers took his own life. They spoke about their anger with the cowardice and

⁴ In addition to the testimony of the officers, the Secular Coalition for America and many of its member groups, including American Atheists, American Ethical Union, American Humanist Association, Black Nonbelievers, Camp Quest, Ex-Muslims of North America, Foundation Beyond Belief, Freedom From Religion Foundation, Freethought Society, Hispanic American Freethinkers, Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, Recovery From Religion, Secular Student Alliance, Secular Woman Society for Humanistic Judaism, and The Clergy Project asked this committee to “thoroughly investigate the extent and the impact of white Christian nationalism on those who stormed the Capitol on January 6.”

indifference of the politicians who deny the seriousness of the assault, many of whose lives were saved by these very officers. They spoke about the odious racial slurs and racism they faced that day.

And finally, one of them, Officer Hodges, the officer trapped and nearly crushed to death between the doors as the mob surged through the Capitol, spoke about the Christian Nationalist aspect of this assault, though not using the label itself:

“It was clear the terrorists perceived themselves to be Christians. I saw the Christian flag directly to my front. Another read ‘Jesus is my savior, Trump is my president.’ Another, ‘Jesus is King.’”

That Christian flag was carried into battle against America—carried alongside the Confederate flag. It was carried against the police officers protecting the beating heart of our democracy. The terrorists didn’t just parade the flag on the battle lines opposite Hodges, they carried that Christian flag onto the floor of the United States Senate. They attacked, they conquered, they paraded their flag on vanquished ground . . . and then they said a prayer to Jesus in that Senate.

“Thank you for allowing the United States of America to be reborn. Thank you for allowing us to get rid of the communists, the globalists, and the traitors within our government. We love you and we thank you. In Christ’s holy name we pray. Amen.”⁵

The idea that “the United States of America [should] be reborn” and reborn “in Christ’s holy name,” which is how the prayer concluded, is central to Christian Nationalism. We cannot understand what happened on January 6 without understanding Christian Nationalism. Nor can we hope to prevent a more serious repeat without confronting the danger of Christian Nationalism.

Two solutions: Investigate and Recommit

There are two solutions relevant to this committee’s work.

First, this committee must investigate the role Christian Nationalism played in fomenting and justifying this attack. The committee cannot ignore Christian Nationalism or treat it with timorous indifference simply because there are religious aspects to this identity. Of course, government officials must be careful to not trespass on true religious freedom. But we must be just as careful not to go too far in the other direction. We must not ignore genuine threats for fear of the false cries of persecution. An

⁵ We know this because of the New Yorker footage Mogelson captured.

unwillingness to investigate and discuss Christian Nationalism as a driver of this attack, for whatever reason, only increases the likelihood of a repeat attack. Christian Nationalism is an existential threat to the American republic and if we do not confront that fact, we are unlikely to survive it.

Second, the United States needs a national recommitment to the separation of state and church. This must begin with our elected leaders. The “wall of separation between church & state” is an American original. It is an American invention. The idea was born in the Enlightenment, but it was first implemented in the American Experiment. Until then, no other nation had sought to protect the ability of its citizens to think freely—by separating the government from religion and religion from the government. That separation is one of the truly unique and original aspects of the U.S. Constitution.

America invented the separation of state and church. We should be proud of that fact. And we should recommit to that American ideal.

Most of the other truly original elements of our Constitution sought to implement this separation—they are secular. For instance, “We the People.” Those words are poetic, but also so much more. They declare that power comes from people, not gods. The source of rulers’ authority comes not from above, but from the masses. That was revolutionary. (It was also aspirational for far too long.)

Not only does our Constitution draw its power from the people, it’s entirely godless—the first such document not to mention a god or deity. That was no accident, but a choice. Our Constitution was also the first to ban religious tests for public office: “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.” Article VI, clause 3.

Why did the founders design a secular government for the American Experiment? For several reasons, including to guarantee religious freedom. The founders understood something that many Americans seem to have forgotten: ***There is no freedom of religion without a government that is free from religion.*** A secular government is required for true religious freedom to exist.

The hatred and vitriol directed at this American original have done so much damage, not just to our government and the wall of separation, but also to true religious freedom.

This national recommitment to our secular founding must include a reckoning with the disinformation that underlies the Christian Nationalist identity. This entire identity is

based on lies and myths, but is validated by modern representations of the myths that previous Christian nationalists have imposed on the country during crises.

Christian Nationalists' erroneous beliefs are validated when they see "In God We Trust" on money or government buildings, or when, as schoolchildren, they are told that this is "one nation under God." I admire Rep. Liz Cheney for standing up to her party and seeking the truth about January 6, but she inadvertently adopted the language and mythos of the attackers at her opening statement to this committee on July 27, 2021 when she repeated the Christian Nationalist war cry heard so often in the lead up to January 6, "One Nation, Under God." Congress opens with prayers that assure every Christian Nationalist that this is indeed his America. Ten Commandments monuments sit on government property, proclaiming "I AM THE LORD THY GOD." This body passed a law declaring a National Day of Prayer in defiance of the First Amendment, which says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion"

The Christian Nationalist identity draws legitimacy from these artifacts left by the previous waves of Christian Nationalism this country has endured. These relics are really disfiguring scars, which ought remind us that Christian Nationalists have justified slavery, sanctified segregation, and, now, inspired an insurrection. Instead, the scars reinforce and validate Christian Nationalism, the very identity that attacked America on January 6. Until we erase those scars, we are giving aid and comfort to this traitor.

We can beat Christian Nationalism. We can relegate it back to the fringe whence it came by exposing the disinformation that feeds the identity—I wrote *The Founding Myth* because I believe this so deeply. We won't convince all Christian Nationalists to change, but can alert most of the country to the danger and prevent our government from giving aid and succor to that un-American identity that assaulted our democracy.

America is a shared idea. And Christian Nationalism refuses to share. It excludes non-Christians and the wrong kind of Christians. America will never be a Christian nation because the moment it becomes a Christian nation it will cease to be America. The two cannot peacefully coexist, one will triumph. This is the choice we face as a nation: Christian Nationalism or America? We cannot have both.

Appendices attached:

Appendix A: Events, People, and Networks Leading up to January 6

Appendix B: Attack on the Capitol: Evidence of the Role of White Christian Nationalism

Appendix C: Christian Nationalism and state and local officials

Appendix A

EVENTS, PEOPLE, AND NETWORKS LEADING UP TO JANUARY 6

Andrew L. Seidel

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As the previous section shows, there is a substantial structural network in place that allows a few leaders at the top to push Christian nationalist disinformation and motivate a massive cadre of followers.

Christian nationalists engaged this network to win the election. This was electoral politics, but it was sold to the masses as spiritual warfare.¹ Almost immediately after the polls closed on Election Day, that machinery changed gears to stoke outrage and fear, exhort action, and work to give Trump a second term as president, no matter what the voters wanted.

Paula White, still involved with the White House at the time, preached a sermon that went viral the day after the election because she spoke in tongues, rhythmically chanted seemingly disconnected phrases such as “I hear a sound of an abundance of rain,” and preached of “angels dispatched from Africa right now. Africa right now. Africa right now. From Africa right now.”²

White preached all this “in the name of Jesus.”³

White began hosting nightly prayers after this first prayer went viral. “White and fellow prayer warriors called on God to smite the president’s enemies—his political opponents, anyone standing in the way of a second term, and anyone interfering with their vision of national and global dominion,” explained one observer.⁴ On the second night of prayer, White preached that “God, we declare that you will keep the POTUS [sic] in his purpose and in his position,” and, “We override the will of man for the will of God, right now.”

Others, such as Lance Wallnau, the father of American Dominionism, also framed the fight to overturn the election as a spiritual war. “Fighting with Trump is fighting with God,” he declared.⁵ This warfare rhetoric was tinged with violence — stochastic terrorism — that increased leading up to January 6. Said Wallnau, “[W]e got to get some of that energy over there on our side. Because we need a couple of risk takers, and, you know, stir-things-up evangelists and revivalists and prophets, because I’m telling you, these angels want something to do, and they’re looking for some wildcards that are gonna go start something up.”⁶

Against the backdrop of this rhetoric, a few events held in late 2020 became practice runs for the Capitol insurrection.

November 14, 2020: The Million MAGA March

One of the first post-election rallies in Washington, D.C., took place on November 14 in Freedom Plaza. It was typical of the pre-January 6 rallies, with many of the same players and speakers. It opened with a prayer infused with Christian nationalism that set the tone for everything that happened later.⁷ Ed Martin of Phyllis Schlafly's Eagles (the Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund) stood on stage, a "Jesus Matters" sign waving behind him, and prayed:

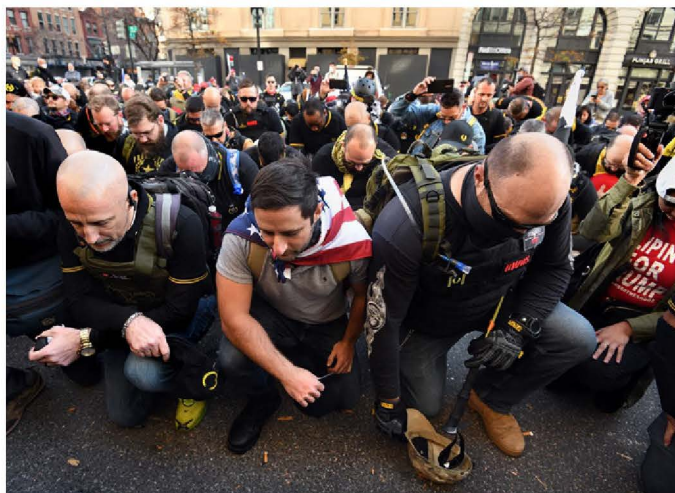
Today, Lord, we gather in this hallowed place, we make it holy right now, in your name because we ask you, Lord, bless us in our work. Our nation, Lord, you gave it to us as a gift and you said you will have this nation, founded on Judeo-Christian principles and framed by a declaration and a constitution. You will not be led by CNN or cable news or fake news. [CHEERS] Lord, you said to us, "If you take this American nation" — Lord, you said to us — "and you serve me in righteousness, I will give you prosperity and joy, and I will give you for the world, a light, a beacon on a hill." And we say, "Thank you, Lord." And now Lord, we ask you for this today, to strengthen us like our founding fathers had, and like our president has. We ask you Lord, strengthen us in the fight because the powers of darkness are descending. They're saying, "concession, not Constitution." ... Finally, Lord, we ask you to expose the fraud.

He ended the prayer with a convoluted invocation of the founding fathers, said "Amen," and then led a "U-S-A" chant.

The Proud Boys attended the rally and knelt in prayer. The Proud Boys are a neo-fascist, white supremacist group whose founder, Gavin McInnes, "calls himself a 'Western chauvinist,' espousing the idea that Western civilization, which he associates with 'Judeo-Christian values,' is superior to all others."⁸

There were many prayers that day⁹ and even into the night as violence broke out.¹⁰

Representative-elect Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., who also promotes Christian nationalism, urged them to march to the Supreme Court, just as Trump urged them to march on the Capitol on January 6.¹¹ They marched — they called it the "Million MAGA March" — down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Supreme Court for more speeches.¹²



The Proud Boys kneel in prayer at the November 14 Million MAGA March. Carol Guzy / NPR



Million MAGA Marchers kneel in prayer on November 14. Alex Edelman / Bloomberg / Getty Images

They marched with crosses,¹³ images of the Virgin Mary,¹⁴ "Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my President" flags,¹⁵ "An Appeal to Heaven" flags,¹⁶ and a red flag that proclaimed "JESUS IS LORD."¹⁷ An RV bedecked in Trump paraphernalia declared, "PRAY FOR 45."¹⁸ At the Supreme Court, they erected a massive white Christian cross.¹⁹

They carried yellow "Jesus Saves" signs²⁰ and handwritten signs that said, "Jesus Saves, Trump Leads,"²¹ "Thank God for Trump,"²² "Jesus is King, Trump is president,"²³ and "Ex: 28 vs. 11-19 [sic] It's been done. My feet are on the ROCK," which can be seen as someone preaches over a loudspeaker that "in the end, God has already won the victory."²⁴ One woman in a QAnon T-shirt carried two signs "WE LOVE TRUMP" and "WE LOVE AMERICA, GOD & BABIES."²⁵ Another protester held two signs on a pole; the top said, "Isaiah 45" (alluding to Trump as King Cyrus), and the bottom, "True Believer in Christ 4 Trump."²⁶ He also carried the "Proud American Christian" flag featuring a red, white, and blue ichthys, which is an image of a fish used as a symbol of Christianity, sometimes called a "Jesus fish."²⁷

One Trump supporter warned that day: “[C]areful what you wish for, because a wounded bear is a lot more dangerous than a bear that’s not wounded.” As night fell on November 14, violence erupted in D.C.²⁸

The violence we saw on November 14 was not the last time an event of this nature took such a turn — the mobs also turned violent at events on December 12 and January 6. The threat of violence was clear in the weeks before the attack on our Capitol.²⁹ The rallies, the marching to the Capitol, the violence: Dry runs like this are typical of terrorist attacks.

This day became a practice run — seven weeks later, they marched to the Capitol.

December 12, 2020: Jericho March’s “Let the Church ROAR” Rally

The battle of Jericho as portrayed in the Bible was less a battle and more a slaughter. In the story, God orders his followers to march around the city of Jericho while blowing shofars (ram’s horns) and carrying the ark holding the Ten Commandments. God brings the walls down and orders his followers to violently sack the defenseless city, steal the silver and gold, and murder every living being, including animals.³⁰

After Trump lost the election, two federal workers sought to oppose Joe Biden’s electoral victory by recreating this story. They christened their endeavor “Jericho March” and claimed that God had sent them visions, just like Joshua. One co-founder, Rob Weaver,³¹ explained the vision. “God told me to let the church roar,” he said. And, as God’s army marched around Jericho, God now wanted Americans to march around the “spiritual walls of this country.” By which Weaver meant the Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice, and the capitals of the swing states — all choke points for

certifying and ensuring the results of the election.³² “God is the head of this country. ... This country stands on the shoulders of Jesus; He’s the real government,” said Weaver in typical Christian nationalist terms. Weaver noted that his Jesus is militant and manly: “I remember my Jesus turning over tables in the literal temple in Jerusalem. ... They [the Supreme Court, Congress, etc.] need to do the right thing. They need to fix this ... The church is awake, and we’re getting louder,” Weaver added.³³

The other Jericho March co-founder, Arina Grossu,³⁴ said that the “Jericho March is about people coming and praying in their own way, in diverse ways. Judeo-Christians coming together and expressing their plea to God for truth to come out, because we know this is a battle not just on a temporal level.”³⁵

Even after the insurrection on January 6, Christian nationalists stood by this message.³⁶

Jericho March organized several events leading up to January 6. Throughout December, it had people marching around state capitols blowing shofars. On December 12, less than four weeks before the insurrection, Jericho March organized a “prayer rally” on the National Mall. They named the event “Let the Church ROAR.”³⁷

Partnering with Jericho March on “Let the Church ROAR” were Stop the Steal (Ali Alexander’s organization, which he said was inspired by Roger Stone) and Phyllis Schlafly’s Eagles (Ed Martin’s group). In the press release for the event, Weaver, Grossu, Alexander, and Martin praised God and preached Christian nationalism. Martin said, “Our founder, the late Phyllis Schlafly, taught us to build bridges of faith, policy, and politics to keep America great and to always fight for God, country, and the family. Our groups are in this fight to save the Republic from all the forces that seek to destroy it and to restore America to the vision of our Founding Fathers.”³⁸

One video ad for the march made the violent undertones clear. It featured crowds chanting “fight for Trump” and multiple speakers talking about losing the nation, losing freedom, the last stand, and “fighting” to prevent that: “we will stand up and fight! ... we’re going to protect this president ... this is our fight, this is for our freedom.”³⁹ The ad drew a clear line between Jericho March’s Let the Church ROAR event on December 12 and the Million MAGA March on November 14, showing those crowds and saying it was the “biggest rally.”⁴⁰

A three-minute trailer for the event made the Christian nationalism plain.⁴¹ It begins by recapping the presidential election and then says that our country is “at a crossroads. One path leads to a return to our founding Judeo-Christian principles: love of God, life, liberty, justice, law, and order. The other path leads to socialism,



The crowd at Jericho March’s Let the Church ROAR event on December 12 waves the “An Appeal to Heaven” flag and yellow “Jesus Saves” signs amid American flags and “Stop the Steal” signs. Crossroads with Joshua Philipp / YouTube

globalism, destruction — a dismantling of our great nation as we know it. But the voices of patriots and people of faith will not be silenced. America is a gift entrusted to us by our Creator Now it is our moment to save our republic and protect our freedoms from the corrupt and destructive forces at work.” The ad then alludes to the biblical violence: “Jericho was a city of false gods and corruption. On God’s command, Joshua and the army of Israel marched around the city seven times and let out a loud shout, and God brought down the walls of the city and exposed the darkness. Our Jericho March was born of a vision from God.” It then calls for that same kind of action: “We are calling on all American patriots and people of faith to join us on our Jericho Marches These marches will culminate on December 12 with a ‘Let The Church ROAR’ national march on Washington, D.C. ... This is our battle of Jericho for people of faith and patriots from all across America. ... We believe in a great and powerful God who can move mountains, expose corruption, and restore justice. We believe in a God of miracles. ... Share. March. Pray. Donate. Hold the line. And expect a miracle.”

Jericho March accustomed people to marching on the halls of power, just as they did on November 14 and as they would on January 6. In another promotional video for “Let the Church ROAR,” Grossu explained, “For the march, we are going to simultaneously go around the U.S. Capitol, the Supreme Court, and Department of Justice, after we do that ... we will gather onto the National Mall to hear some wonderful talks and prayers by faith leaders, political leaders, and also be led in praise and worship”⁴² The biblical allusion made violence the implicit goal of the march. In the Bible, Joshua’s army marched around Jericho for several days; the insurrectionists marched in multiple locations across the span of several weeks. Both culminated in violence.

“Let the Church ROAR” was held on the National Mall a few blocks from the Capitol and was basically another dry run for January 6.⁴³ The crowd waved signs and flags that were seen at the Million MAGA March on November 14 and everywhere on January 6, including the “An Appeal to Heaven” flag⁴⁴ and the yellow “Jesus Saves” sign.⁴⁵ The crowd chanted “U-S-A.” Nearly every speaker invoked the genocide at Jericho in adoring terms or prayed to Jesus. “One nation under God,” was perhaps the most common refrain. One sang “Ave Maria.”⁴⁶ Another sang “God Bless America.” They played Christian rock tunes, like “Chainbreaker,” in between the various speakers (and had a worship concert before the rally began).⁴⁷ At the December 12 “Let the Church ROAR” event hosted by the Jericho March, the crowd waved yellow “Jesus Saves” signs as a band led a singalong of the Battle Hymn of the Republic while the livestream displayed the lyrics for all to join; on January 6, the attackers would sing the battle hymn in the Rotunda of the Capitol.⁴⁸

Eric Metaxas emceed the “Let the Church ROAR” event. An evangelical radio host and writer, Metaxas personally turned to violence in August 2020 when he punched an aggressive protester after leaving the White House, which Metaxas admitted to journalists.⁴⁹

As at the biblical Jericho, it began with shofars. First, two shofars were blown at once on stage. Next, a shofar was blown that was “made for Donald Trump” and featured the flags of the United States and Israel painted on the horn alongside the presidential seal.⁵⁰ Then a woman in a Women for Trump shirt sang “the national anthem [which] rises as a prayer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Yeshua ha Mashiach [Jesus the Messiah].”⁵¹

After the prayer/anthem and while the crowd chanted “U-S-A,” Metaxas took the stage.⁵² A portrait of Mary as the Virgin of Guadalupe blessing Pope John Paul II was on stage, too, which served as a prop for an exorcism later in the day.⁵³ Metaxas began:

Is there anything that could be more important than the USA? His name is “Yeshua ha Mashiach” [Jesus the Messiah]. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. “Hallelujah” is American for “praise the Lord.”⁵⁴

Metaxas was speaking the language of Christian nationalism. “We are here because we love the God of the Bible ... We are here today to cry out to the God of heaven to ask him to have mercy on the greatest nation in the history of the world,” he added. “We are what God is doing in the United States today ... and today, we’re going to see heaven move. Heaven is going to move. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.”

The Rev. Kevin Jessip made the Christian nationalism explicit. “Some have said this is not a Christian nation. I’m telling you this is a Judeo-Christian nation. ... Today, I call this the warrior mandate, a battle cry, a call to arms.” And then, almost as an afterthought, he qualified the belligerence with “in the spiritual realm.”⁵⁵ He explained that the “battle cry” is a “mobilization of God’s men made holy by the blood of Jesus Christ and empowered by the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This battle cry is a Christian call to all Christian men ... as we prepare for a strategic gathering of men in this hour to dispel the Kingdom of Darkness.” This was a sermon of Christian conquest framed with military terminology: warrior, battle cry, mobilization, secret weapon, enlistment, strategic, prisoners of war, glory, deployed in hostile territory under enemy occupation, commissioned as special forces, stationed, final mission to ending this high treason, search and rescue team. And if the allusions weren’t clear enough, Jessip explained, “We are, without question, men born for war. We are fully equipped as warriors, with battle armor directed and suited for our assignment ... to restore the Eden Mandate of occupation and expansion of the



Rev. Kevin Jessip delivers a “battle cry,” a “call to arms,” at the Jericho March’s Let the Church ROAR event on December 12. Jericho March / Video Squirrel

Glory of God, filling the earth.” He wanted an “Army of the Lord” and preached unadulterated Christian nationalism and a clear call to arms. Jessip himself had organized “The Return: National and Global Day of Prayer and Repentance” on September 26, in Washington, D.C., and he viewed the Jericho March event as the “culmination” of that work.

Noted anti-Muslim bigot and conspiracy theorist Frank Gaffney announced a new political party. “The principal purpose of this” new party, said Gaffney, “is to get back to the founding principles of this nation. The belief that we are ‘one nation, under God!’”⁵⁶

Former U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., sent in a video prayer that began by greeting all of those “who love the Lord” and “who love this country” and came “to Washington, D.C., in obedience to the Lord to do the Jericho March.” She declared that they were there to turn “faith to action” and to “go on offense for our nation, on the Jericho March,” which she said was a duty to God and which would result in a miracle.⁵⁷ Mike Lindell, Founder and CEO of My Pillow, Inc., then came on and told election lies. Lance Wallnau spoke about the “spiritual warfare presidency” and how people were going to “come out of the shadows” and engage and fight for Trump. He repeated election lies and called for a “Christian populist uprising” to “see America restored” and another “great awakening.”⁵⁸ Throughout the event, the speakers cross-promoted Lindell’s pillows, including Metaxas giving out coupon codes.

Conspiracy theorist and radio host Alex Jones began, “Praise God, America is awakening, humanity is awakening, and Jesus Christ is king.” He found occasion to mention that George Washington “didn’t want to be king” and that he “was a Christian.” Jones invoked Jesus often, including that “Christ’s crucifixion was not our defeat, it was our greatest victory,” and ended his shouting, “1776 is God’s number of victory over the satanic 1984. God bless you all and I salute you. Thank you, Jesus.”⁵⁹

Another speaker at the event was Michael Flynn, the former general who served as national security adviser during the Trump administration before resigning after it came to light that he misled others about conversations he had with a Russian diplomat.⁶⁰ Flynn’s Jericho March speech recast the biblical story of slaughter into a peaceful protest: “[T]hey didn’t want to assault Jericho ... they wanted to march in peace around there.”⁶¹ This is simply not reflected in any of the stories, which are about conquest, but it shows the strategy of claiming peace when the goal is violence, which was the refrain after January 6.

Flynn then said the Lord’s Prayer. All morning, the speakers had teased an appearance by Trump himself. Instead, President Donald Trump blessed the crowd with a flyover in Marine One in the middle of Flynn’s speech.

Flynn then invoked the Jericho genocide again in a rather sloppy metaphor that the crowd cheered:

I’m going to use a metaphor because Jericho we’re inside the walls of the deep state. Okay? And there is — there is evil and there’s corruption ... and there’s light and truth. We’re going to get to the light and we’re going to get to the truth ... Inside of this barricade, we’re going to knock those walls down. Okay? We’re going to knock those walls down. So be proud. Be proud as Christians. Be proud as patriots. And what we ... do is we give witness today to our faith in God, our love of country, the United States of America, for our Constitution, and for our President Donald J. Trump. God bless America.⁶²

Ali Alexander, who founded Stop the Steal, took the stage.⁶³ He paraphrased the Bible when he talked about shutting everything down and “occupy[ing] D.C. full of patriots here, won’t we? We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.” He told the crowd, “We just need to find us one brave senator” to object to the election or they would “burn the Republican Party down.”⁶⁴ He concluded, “We have God’s favor ... To God be the glory. For God and country.”

Three days later, Alexander told the media at a press conference, “Our hope is in Christ. Our hope is in God. And our hope is in the founding documents, the Constitution that we must continue to exhaust.”⁶⁵

Other speakers that day represented a variety of Christian denominations. Father Greg Bramlage conducted an exorcism on stage in front of the portrait of Mary as the Virgin of Guadalupe blessing Pope John Paul II. He claimed to “specialize in exorcism and deliverance,” and he told the crowd that “we are in a spiritual battle, this cannot be solved by human means.” He prayed, “I ask that no demonic bondage, door, entity, portal, astral projection, or disembodied spirit may enter this space of 5,000 miles in all directions. I ask that any demons

within this vicinity or any that should try to enter here be rendered deaf, dumb, and blind. That you, Lord Jesus, would bind them, rebuke them, and disable them.”⁶⁶

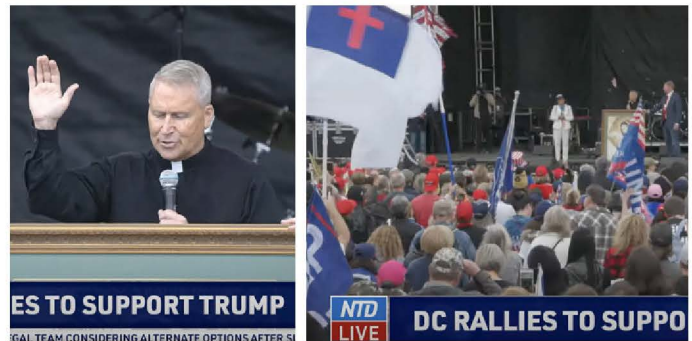
Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò preached that fighting for Trump was a holy crusade with “the lies and deceptions of the children of darkness” on one side and, on the other, “the silent army of the children of Light, the humble ranks who overthrow evil by invoking God, the praying army that walks around the walls of lies and betrayal in order to bring them down.” He added, “We fight the battles of the Lord with faith and courage, carrying the Ark of the Covenant in our hearts, remaining faithful to the teachings of the Gospel of Our Lord!” After preaching about the “deep state” and converting every public official, Viganò invoked Christian nationalism: “Be proud, as Christians and as patriots, to be able to give witness today to your faith in God and your love for the United States of America, for its Constitution, and for its president, Donald J. Trump.” An Italian citizen, Viganò repeatedly talked of “our nation” and “our beloved nation,” and ended with a prayer that concluded, “... granting victory to those who served under thy holy banner, Amen. God bless our president. God bless the United States of America. One nation under God.”⁶⁷

Jill Noble is a Jericho March coordinator,⁶⁸ and she hit the podium repeatedly with a gavel, which she called a hammer, and somehow this was related to a conspiracy theory about voting machines. As she hammered, the crowd chanted, “No king but Jesus.” She thanked God for not leaving them defenseless but giving them “weapons of warfare” to fight corruption and finished, “We say, let this be one nation under God! In Jesus’ name, Amen.”⁶⁹

Bishop Joseph Strickland, the Catholic bishop of Tyler, Texas, delivered a Christian nationalist prayer in a video message.⁷⁰ “We come before you praying for our nation,” said Strickland in his church in front of a stained-glass cross, “a nation that proudly proclaims that we are ‘One Nation Under God.’ ... We pray that truly, we can embrace the words, ‘God bless America,’ more profoundly and more deeply than ever. Amen.”

Frank Pavone, who runs Priests for Life, delivered a prayer that sounded like a stump speech. In front of a portrait of Trump and an American flag that said, “One Nation Under God,” Pavone prayed, “We thank you for the United States of America which you have preserved through many trials and have blessed with the greatest president we’ve had, Donald J. Trump.”⁷¹ He then repeated election lies.

Sister Deirdre Byrne, in her nun’s habit as she was for her speech at the 2020 Republican National Convention, thanked people for coming to the Jericho March to “help pray to end Satan’s lies that have covered our nation.”⁷² She asserted that the “rosary is a weapon.”



At the Let the Church ROAR event, Father Greg Bramlage performs the exorcism behind a framed painting of the Virgin Mary as the crowd holds up their hands in reverence and waves the Christian flag and Trump flags.
Crossroads with Joshua Philipp / YouTube

Bishop Leon Benjamin, the senior pastor and bishop of New Life Harvest Church in Richmond, Virginia, said, “American patriots, are you ready? We are here in the mighty name of Jesus today to declare that every Jericho wall must come down! ... President Donald Trump has faith in America. He has faith in God. He has faith in Jesus. There are walls that must come down ... A fresh anointing is about to come on this nation ... Jesus is the lion of the Tribe of Judah and he will rule in America! The Jericho walls — we know the history, Joshua is told to do something crazy, but we know when God tells us to do something crazy it means it’s going to work ... You came to bring these Jericho walls down in Washington, D.C. ... the walls must come down!”⁷³ He then again recounted the story of Jericho, with the Levites consecrating America in his version, and he used warfare language: “The demons we kill now, our children will not have to fight these devils. These are our devils, and we will kill them now. They will not fight our children. The Jericho walls must come down!” And he blew a shofar to bring down the walls.

Metaxas announced there would be a “prophetic declaration” and introduced “Curt Landry, a prophet of God.”⁷⁴ Landry, an anti-vaccine, right-wing minister, called this “spiritual warfare” and talked about the Pilgrims landing 400 years ago “this day.” He went into a cinematic vision of the Ten Commandments and warfare: “a traditional vision, a prophetic vision of your traditional Moses, Charlton Heston, standing up on the rock.”

The head of the “Black Robed Regiment,” the Rev. Bill Cook, wore an Oath Keepers shirt and a MAGA hat.⁷⁵ He used mythologized American history to shame pastors into militant action. He told of a pastor in the stories of Paul Revere and the battles of Lexington and Concord, and he said that the pastor even trained the militia. “Boy that’s radical,” he said. “Where are our pastors today in this battle? ... Why are pastors running today? Why are they not at the forefront of this battle?”



The Rev. Bill Cook wears a MAGA hat and Oath Keepers T-shirt with his “Prayer Rally” ID badge, and he asks the pastors in the crowd to raise their hands at the Jericho March’s Let the Church ROAR event. Jericho March / Video Squirrel

Stewart Rhodes, founder of the far-right anti-government militia group known as Oath Keepers,⁷⁶ told the crowd about the Insurrection Act and that “you can be called up as the militia to support and defend the Constitution ... [W]e’re going to have to do it ourselves later, in a much more desperate, much more bloody war. Let’s get it on now — while he is still the commander-in-chief.” To which Metaxas replied, “Oh, God bless you. This guy’s keepin’ it real, folks.”⁷⁷

That night, the Proud Boys roamed the streets of D.C., starting fights, vandalizing Black churches and burning a Black Lives Matter banner.⁷⁸ The next day, Trump said to aides, “seems like quite a few crazies,” an understatement given the arson, stabbings, and 30-plus arrests. This statement shows that Trump fully understood the violent power of this mob.⁷⁹

To be fair, Trump may not have only been talking about the participants in the Jericho March. There was another Trump rally on December 12 and, as this report shows, Christian nationalism was the common thread tying together the disparate identities — from white supremacists to QAnon conspiracists to Proud Boys.

December 12, 2020: Women for America First

While Jericho March, Stop the Steal, and Schlafly’s Eagles set up on the National Mall just down the street from the U.S. Capitol, Women for America First ended a nationwide bus tour (which began after the November 14 march⁸⁰) with a rally at Freedom Plaza near the White House.⁸¹ Women for America First has ties to Stop the Steal, and many of the same speakers and preachers appeared at both rallies.

Televangelist Mark Burns opened the rally by preaching a slapdash string of Christian nationalist talking points,

with special attention to “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance: “I am going to pray because we elected Donald Trump, we elected a man who believes in the name of Jesus Christ. And they are trying to take God out of everything, you know they are trying to take God out of our Pledge of Allegiance. They are trying to take God out of our Pledge of Allegiance.” He then recited the pledge, along with the crowd, which screamed the addition: “under God!” After whipping up the crowd, Burns turned militant, saying, “I’ve got patriots here who are ready for a fight on every race-baiting, dividing, God-hating liberal in America, that you will not take away the beautiful country we call the United States of America ... you will not take God out of our nation. You will not take our faith, you will not take our liberty. Give me liberty or give me death!” After invoking the Constitution, he prayed, “Father God — in the name of Jesus, our savior, our king — he died on the cross that we might have a relationship with the Father in Heaven — wrap your arms around Donald J. Trump and give him the strength to keep on fighting, to never back down, and never become quiet, because we believe that God is on our side.” He ended with, “God bless you, America, God bless the United States,” and then led a chant of “Donald Trump.”⁸²

Mike Lindell said, “this is the time we could bring our great country back to one nation under God — and that God is Jesus.”⁸³

Jennifer Lawrence of We Build the Wall said, “We answer to God, not government. And God is gonna tell us who is going to be the president. And God is gonna tell us how this country is going to go.”⁸⁴

Anna Khait, a former contestant on the TV show “Survivor” who was “born again” and now has a YouTube channel to “reach the lost,” delivered a sermon in which she claimed to have had visions and that Trump “was prophesied to have two terms, in Jesus’ name ... we thank you for two awesome terms.” She also had “a message ... for the devil. And his minions. And all the wizards and witches that are watching right now” that “Trump is our anointed one to bring justice back into this country. We’re going to lift the name above every name, in Jesus’ name.” She then tried to get the crowd to chant “Jesus” with her, but they couldn’t get the rhythm. She wanted the chant because it “was a vision [she] had a few weeks ago” but also made the crowd “repent for all of the blood sacrifice that has been poured.”⁸⁵

The lead pastor at HIS Church in Kentucky, Brian Gibson, ended that rally. Gibson is affiliated in some manner with Church United, a national network of hundreds of pastors.⁸⁶ He preached about Jesus being a lamb and a lion, that “he died on the cross for you,” and then seamlessly transitioned into Christian nationalism: “I’m looking at some lion-like patriots. I’m looking at some liberty-loving patriots. I’m looking at some lion-like Bible

believers ... We're not gonna give this land to Marxism ... to communism ... to the devil ... This was founded in Christian roots, and my children are gonna be raised in a Christian nation. Amen?" He talked about the founders, but he claimed that the real founders were the black-robed preachers and that "we need a brand new group of black-robed preachers in America ... that'll lead the Christian army to a rightful birthright in this country ... America did not birth the church, but the church birthed America."⁸⁷

Other groups and rallies

Plenty of other groups were active before January 6 — some small, some big. The "Let the Church ROAR" rally included a brief plug from Kimberly Fletcher of Moms For America, who asked people to come back the next day (December 13) for the Keep Christmas Rally. "If you want them to stop canceling Christmas ... then come tomorrow because we're going to have a Keep Christmas Rally with Mike Lindell."⁸⁸ That rally was in the same vein as these other rallies, with phrases such as "America is still a Christian nation ... there are more of us than them ... America is still a Christian nation."⁸⁹ Another speaker preached, "the U.S. Constitution was founded upon ... the Bible, Judeo-Christian principles."⁹⁰ In a bedazzled American flag hat, Grossu, the co-founder of Jericho March, spoke about her visions and "righteous anger," but also "our Christian history, Judeo-Christian history."⁹¹

Other big pieces were moving behind the scenes, too. The Council for National Policy, the networking outfit identified earlier, sent the letter mentioned in the previous section falsely declaring "Trump is the lawful winner of the presidential election."⁹²

The members of Congress who promised to object to the results of the free and fair election were nearly all people who promote Christian nationalist ideologies, as were those members who eventually did object.⁹³ This had an impact on the leaders and organizers of these marches and rallies. Any who doubt the impact of Senators Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz and the other objecting lawmakers to the results of a free and fair election need only listen to the Jericho March organizers, who announced their January 5-6 plans "after Hawley announced he would object to the results of several states being certified, joining several U.S. representatives who have said they will do the same."⁹⁴

January 5, 2021: Marches and rallies everywhere

Jericho March hosted a week of events leading up to the attack that included candlelight prayer vigils at the National Christmas Tree, Vice President Michael Pence's

home at the Naval Observatory, and the Russell Senate Office Building. Jericho March called for self-guided marches around the Capitol and Supreme Court on January 2-4. Then, on January 5 and 6, it got serious, with guided marches, speeches, and more.⁹⁵ The Eric Metaxas Show, on the day before the assault, aired an episode in which the host and guest argued that "Christian nationalism is a good thing."⁹⁶

January 5 kicked off with a "Supreme Court Blessing." As the crowd arrived, Religion News Service's Jack Jenkins reported that organizers used the sound system to "blast an overtly Christian nationalist anthem. 'God bless America again, We need the blood of Jesus to wash away our sins ...'"⁹⁷

At the Capitol across from the Supreme Court, they held "An Appeal to Heaven" flags and danced to "God's Not Dead," a song featured in the film of the same name that was intimately tied up with Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a Christian nationalist legal organization.⁹⁸ As in the biblical story of Jericho, one group marched around the Capitol, but instead of the Ark of the Covenant, they carried a two-foot tall cutout of Trump's head at the forefront along with a handwritten sign: "Thank you Lord, Donald v. Goliath." They sang "How Great is Our God" as their American, blue line, Gadsden ("Don't Tread on Me"), and Trump flags waved amid the red MAGA hats.⁹⁹

Back at the Supreme Court, marchers formed prayer circles talking about how they were cheated, asking God to intervene, and said "This is not about fighting, this is about supporting 'One [Nation] Under God.'"¹⁰⁰ Jenkins reported on the rhetoric that day:

"This is our moment, Lord, this is our moment to take our country back," declared one woman standing in a prayer circle near the U.S. Supreme Court. "This is our moment to fight ... with you as our weapon. You are our fighter." A few minutes later, someone could be heard chanting a few feet away: "We fight for God, and God fights for us!"¹⁰¹

They blew their shofars and marched. Two people wore white and gold robes featuring Mary as the Virgin of Guadalupe, carried a fat Bible, blew smoke out of their shofar, and one wore a tricorn hat with gold trim, invoking the founders.¹⁰² Other hornblowers draped themselves in American flags.¹⁰³

They marched around the Supreme Court to the "One Nation Under God Prayer Rally," which was organized by a coalition that included Jericho March and Stop the Steal, among others.¹⁰⁴ Roger Stone, a former adviser to Trump's campaign who Trump later pardoned after his conviction for witness tampering and lying to Congress, was escorted to that rally by a group of Oath Keepers in tactical gear.¹⁰⁵ Stone mounted the small stage and

led the crowd in a chant of “bullshit,” then apologized to “his evangelical friends.” Someone in the audience responded, “We feel it, too.” Stone preached the spiritual warfare of Christian nationalism, “Let’s be clear, this ... is a fight for the future of Western Civilization as we know it. It’s a fight between Dark and Light. It’s a fight between the Godly and the Godless. It’s a fight between Good and Evil.” Stone said, “We’re here to express our God-given First Amendment rights!” and then repeated election lies. After hammering those lies over and over, Stone, who found Jesus while awaiting sentencing for his felony convictions and preached about his conversion at Global Vision Bible Church four months earlier,¹⁰⁶ said, “I honestly believe that God has put us here in this place at this time for a great purpose. I believe my life was spared for some greater purpose, and when the Lord is ready to tell me what it is he wants me to do I can tell you I’m prepared to do it, but I will never stop fighting for this nation.” Stone promised to march “shoulder-to-shoulder” with the mob. He concluded, “So, go with God. Remember this: we battle for the Lord and we dare not fail. If we stay true, victory will be ours.”

The crowd cheered Stone off stage to chants of “U-S-A! U-S-A!” and a man in the audience in a MAGA hat can be seen and heard screaming, “Let’s build a gallows!”¹⁰⁷ They did.

Within a few months of the attack, at least ten members of the Oath Keepers militia group would be charged in connection with the insurrection and a conspiracy,¹⁰⁸ including one from Stone’s personal security detail.¹⁰⁹

The Christian nationalism seemed to ratchet up as the day wore on. There were more rallies that afternoon and night, including the “Rally for Revival” at Freedom Plaza.¹¹⁰ “This is a Christian nation,” shouted preacher Brian Gibson, adding, “The church of the Lord Jesus Christ started America ... We’re going to take our nation back!”¹¹¹



TRUMP SUPPORTERS RALLY IN FREEDOM PLAZA

Pastor Brian Gibson leads new members of the “Black Robed Regiment” in taking their oath at the January 5 “Rally for Revival.” Global TV Online / YouTube



Photo of Pastor Brian Gibson and Jacob Chansley, aka the “QAnon Shaman,” that surfaced after the insurrection. E (@ladygeewiz5) / Twitter

Gibson, who emceed parts of the rally, also brought up a group of preachers on stage: the Black Robed Regiment. “If Jesus is our King, then our nation is our responsibility.” Gibson had the men swear an oath:¹¹²

Today, I take an oath to follow Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to serve the kingdom of God’s, to be committed to the Scriptures, to live a holy lifestyle, and to stand for the church. The church is the pillar and the ground of the truth. And if Jesus is my king, then my nation is my responsibility. So I receive my responsibility. And I will never wear a yellow robe. I will only wear the black robe.

And I will stand for liberty. I will stand for freedom. I will stand for America. I swear before you and I swear before these people, that I will protect this nation and the Constitution as a leader of the people of God’s.

And now as a minister, I lead sheep, I feed sheep, and I kill wolves.

Photos later surfaced of this same preacher posing with Jacob Chansley as Chansley wore face paint, fur, and horns.¹¹³

Pastor Ken Peters, who runs The Church at Planned Parenthood and the Patriot Church, preached a similar message in Freedom Plaza:¹¹⁴

We are not just in a culture war, we are in a kingdom war. This is the Kingdom of Darkness versus the Kingdom of Light ... And Satan ... wants nothing less than destroying this country entirely because we are a beacon of the Gospel ... It is important that in

this moment we stand up like never before ... If we don't hold up the shield of faith, Satan will take over this land. But I see a bunch of people here that will say, "No, no." We are not going to allow the enemy to destroy this beautiful and great land that our forefathers gave to us. We will rise up in this time and say like Paul Revere, "The leftists are coming!"... God bless you and God bless America.¹¹⁵

The next day, the Patriot Church leader tweeted: "Patriots are now storming the capital [sic] in front of us."¹¹⁶

The election was "stolen" in "the most egregious fraud," according to Pastor Ché Ahn, who said at this same rally, "[W]e're going to throw Jezebel out and Jehu's gonna rise up, and we're gonna rule and reign through President Trump and under the lordship of Jesus Christ."¹¹⁷

Christie Hutcherson of Women Fighting for America preached, "We serve a mighty, powerful God. He wants everybody to know it's by His might, by His hand, that Donald J. Trump will serve four more years."¹¹⁸



At the January 5 "Rally for Revival," a "Jesus Saves" sign is held behind conspiracy theorist Alex Jones as he asks the crowd, "[I]f God be with us, who can stand against us?" Bloomberg Quicktake: Now / YouTube

Alex Jones, with a yellow "Jesus Saves" sign waving behind him, ranted on stage, "... [T]here is a God that inspired our republic and there is a God in the control of the affairs of humans and that God will see us through if we are loyal ... In the end, God will fulfill his destiny and will reward the righteous." He called Biden a "slave of Satan" and preached, "We renounce Satan!" Jones' rant might surprise those who divorce religion and conspiracy theories, but it was highly religious and full of Christian nationalist ideology. He continued, "[M]ore importantly, we embrace God ... and just as we see in the Bible ... God raises up men who are real ... real men like President Trump." Jones screamed about God, God's plan,

connecting with God, holding Trump up and thanking God for trying to send us a "deliverer."¹¹⁹ He told people they're never alone as long as they had faith in his God and to end, shrieking "the spirit of God is with us! ... And if God be with us, who can stand against us? ... I trust in the plan of God. I trust in Jesus Christ." He ended as one ends prayers: "Amen."

Pastor Mark Burns repackaged his December 12 sermon. He began by asking the crowd outside, "Don't I got some God-fearing, 1776, Trump-loving patriots in the building tonight?" and led a chant of "U-S-A." He preached about the war between good and evil, the biblical book of Revelation, and summed it up by saying, "Jesus wins!"¹²⁰

Pastor Greg Locke, who hosted Roger Stone at his Tennessee church four months earlier, preached to "Jesus-loving patriots." Locke was filling in and praying for the Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio. Locke preached unadulterated Christian nationalism ideas in front of a "Jesus Saves" sign:¹²¹

I wonder how many Jesus-loving patriots we got out there tonight? I'm here to tell you that President Andrew Jackson, on his deathbed, he made a marvelous declaration. He turned and looked at a Bible. He pointed at a copy of the word of God just before he closed his eyes in death and he said — and I quote, "That book, sir, is the rock upon which the republic rests."

After sharing that Christian nationalist myth,¹²² Locke continued with one of the clearest and most violent prayers of the day:

And ladies and gentlemen, we are here tonight not just because we have rights given to us by a constitution, but we have rights given to us by a holy Bible and God Almighty himself. And no matter what happens, no matter what they say, no matter what BLM does, no matter what Antifa does ...

Jesus Christ is still king of kings, he is still Lord of Lords, he is still the Alpha and the Omega. He's the beginning, he is the end, and he's everything in between, and my Bible says that he is the way, he is the truth and the life ... God is on our side. America is the last bastion of Christian freedom. It's the last bastion of capitalism ... I declare unto you that President Donald Trump is gonna stay for four more years in the White House ... We're a mighty army. They've gotta listen. They can't ignore us. Our churches have been backed into a corner ...

We pray for Enrique [Tarrio], and Lord, we pray for his organization [the Proud Boys]. And Lord, they may get a bum rap on the news media, but we just thank God that we can lock shields, and we can come shoulder-to-shoulder with people that still stand up for this

nation, and still love the rights and the freedoms that we have cause Lord, we've gotta recognize the fact if we don't have convictions worth dying for, we don't even know what living really is. So, God, help us to live, help us to fight, and if need be, lay down our life for this nation, and we thank you for those that have gone before us and done just that.

The violent Christian nationalism is explicit, and that was the message throughout all of these rallies, held from December 2020 until the attack on January 6, 2021. They were remarkably consistent, preaching that "God is on your side" and creating a divine justification to convince good people to commit evil acts, including attempting to overthrow the United States government and overturn a free and fair election.



Pastor Greg Locke preaches Christian nationalism as a person in the crowd holds up a Bible.

Bloomberg Quicktake: Now / YouTube

Appendix B

ATTACK ON THE CAPITOL: EVIDENCE OF THE ROLE OF WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Andrew L. Seidel

“My dear, when people show you who they are, why don’t you believe them?”

— Maya Angelou to Oprah Winfrey

There were three paths to the Capitol on January 6. First, the Jericho Marchers shifted their prayerful focus from the Supreme Court to the Capitol.¹

Second, Stop the Steal organized its “Wild Protest,”² a name chosen to echo Trump’s December 19 tweet: “Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!” Indeed, an Oath Keeper charged in the attack had posted earlier that Trump “wants us to make it WILD that’s what he’s saying.”³

The third path was the “Save America” rally hosted and managed by Women for America First, which hosted similar rallies on November 14 and December 12, opposite the Jericho March event. The January 6 stage was set up in front of the White House. The crowd chanted “Fight for Trump,” and the speakers incited people to “fight.”⁴ The stage opened with Paula White, one of Trump’s court evangelicals who was given a taxpayer-funded position in the White House, delivering an explicitly Christian nationalist and openly militant prayer.⁵ White began with pre-prayer remarks that discussed miracles

and God’s power, purpose, and plan, as interpreted by White. She then quoted a favorite Bible verse for Christian nationalists, Psalm 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord.”⁶ She became more bellicose as she asked God, “[M]ay your people rise up and stand strong,” to overturn their fear, and called for a “holy boldness.”⁷ She preached about “the Adversary,” meaning Satan, and then transitioned into asking God to “overturn” — a verb choice often related to subverting elections — “every adversary against democracy.”⁸ She called for “outpouring of your spirit like never before.”⁹ This all echoed the framing from the previous weeks of a battle between light and dark, good and evil, Christians and the godless. White asked God and the listeners to back Trump in that battle, to “secure his destiny,” and to “be his rear guard” and “go in front of him this day,” and again called for “holy boldness.”¹⁰

White ended with a Christian nationalist version of the Lord’s Prayer. The Bible (Matthew 6:9–13) attributes the words of this prayer to Jesus himself and it ends, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,



The crowd erected a gallows and openly spoke about hanging elected officials. Shay Horse / NurPhoto / Getty Images

forever. Amen.”¹¹ White rewrote Jesus’s prayer to include the U.S. After “forever,” she added the following: “And we all said for this United States of America, Amen.”¹² White’s final post-prayer flourish was to quote Trump, “For as our president says, ‘We worship God, not government.’ God bless you.”¹³

Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Ala., has been credibly accused of helping Stop the Steal organizers (along with Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., and Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz.), an allegation Brooks denies.¹⁴ Wearing body armor under his clothing in anticipation of violence that day (Brooks said he was “warned” about “risks” but did not say who warned him, what those risks were, or why he didn’t tell others¹⁵), Brooks took the stage between White and Trump to preach Christian nationalist-inspired talking points.¹⁶ He claimed that America was straying from its godly foundations and is therefore in danger. “We are here today because America is at risk, unlike it has been in decades and perhaps centuries. Socialist Democrats attack and mock our moral values, even to the point of sarcastically — in the United States Capitol, one of the most revered places in America — mockingly closing their hedonistic prayers with ‘Amen and awoman.’”¹⁷ He mixed election lies and Christian nationalism: “We are not gonna let them continue to corrupt our elections and steal from

us our God-given right to control our nation’s destiny ... Today, Republican senators and congressmen will either vote to turn America into a godless, amoral, dictatorial, oppressed, and socialist nation on the decline. Or they will join us, and they will fight and vote against voter fraud and election theft and vote for keeping America great.”¹⁸

Brooks invoked the sacrifice of the founding fathers and demanded to know if the crowd was also willing to make such a sacrifice: “Are you willing to do the same? [cheers] My answer is yes. Louder! Are you willing to do what it takes? [cheers] To fight for America? [cheers] Louder!”¹⁹ Arguing that America must get back to a godly foundation — a foundation it does not actually have — is a standard belief in Christian nationalism, and Brooks repeated the trope: “We American patriots are gonna come right at ‘em, that we American patriots are gonna take America back and restore the foundational principles that have combined to make us the greatest nation in world history.”²⁰ He concluded, “God bless America, and the fight begins today.”²¹

Brooks reiterated and even clarified these Christian nationalist ideologies after they led to violence on January 6.²² He told one journalist, “I make no apology for doing my absolute best to inspire patriotic Americans to not give up on our country and to fight back against anti-

Christian socialists I encourage EVERY citizen to watch my entire rally speech and decide for themselves what kind of America they want: One based on freedom and liberty or one based on godless dictatorial power.”²³

Others espousing Christian nationalist ideologies preached on the “Save America” stage, too. Rep. Madison Cawthorn, R-N.C., told a crowd in December to “call your congressman and feel free — you can lightly threaten them.”²⁴ He began his remarks on January 6 by saying, “Wow! This crowd has some fight in it!”²⁵ He invoked the founders and said that the crowd “ha[d] the voice of lions,” but that the courage was not reflected in “a significant portion of our [Republican] Party,” bemoaning those who “have no backbone” and “sit idly by.”²⁶

Trump’s 2016 campaign spokesperson Katrina Pierson reiterated the Trump-as-savior talking points. Trump “loves the United States of America,” she declared. “He loves God. He loves our flag, and he loves all of you. And that’s why we’re all here today. We love Trump. And I gotta tell you, I’ve never seen someone fight so hard, so strong, against everything, here and abroad, just to provide and protect our basic values and principles that keep our nation free and our people able to go to church.”²⁷

Rudy Giuliani famously asked for “trial by combat.”²⁸ Alongside Giuliani on the stage was John Eastman, a senior fellow and director at the Claremont Institute, which one observer recently called “an increasingly white nationalist think tank.”²⁹ In *Newsweek* in August 2020, Eastman tried to kick off a second wave of birtherism against then-Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., Joe Biden’s running mate. Meanwhile, more details about his role in January 6 continue to emerge. Giuliani talked of invasion and freedom of religion, coded terms for Christian nationalism ideologies: “This has been a year in which they have invaded our freedom of speech, our freedom of religion, our freedom to move, our freedom to live.”³⁰

The crowd was at a fever pitch when Trump took the stage. Photos and video show that, amid a sea of maskless faces and red hats, there were American flags, Trump flags, “Don’t Tread on Me” flags (also known as Gadsden flags), and Confederate flags (including one with an AR-15 and the words “COME AND TAKE IT”),³¹ accompanied by a mixture of Christian and patriotic imagery and messages, including Christian flags, “An Appeal to Heaven” flags, “Faith over Fear” flags, flags that read “Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my President,” a cross made of PVC pipe,³² and a sign that simply said, “I am with you. —God.”³³ One sign proclaimed, “JESUS HAS THE THRONE.”³⁴ One woman listening to Trump had a makeshift shield — a metal trash can lid — that she painted red and on which she wrote “JESUS RULES,” hoisting the shield after Trump concluded his speech, “God Bless America.”³⁵



The Christian flag, “An Appeal to Heaven” flag, an upside down American flag, and others (including an “Unleash the Kraken” flag) fly over the crowd as Trump speaks at the “Save America” rally. ProPublica



One of the signs at the “Save America” rally emphasizing that God is on the crowd’s side. ProPublica

Trump told the crowd “we’re gonna walk down” to Congress to convince them “to confront this egregious assault on our democracy ... And I’ll be there with you, we’re going to walk down,” and explained that “you’ll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong. We have come to demand that Congress do the right thing ... ”³⁶

With the call to march on the Capitol ringing in their heads after weeks of spiritual warfare rhetoric and hints of violence, the crowd obeyed.

Iconic imagery at the siege

The imagery and violence of January 6 left indelible stamps on the American memory. Of the thousands of photos and videos taken that day, several moments have come to symbolize the insurrection. The five categories of iconic imagery examined here all have ties to Christian nationalism. The officers on duty that day described seeing the Christian nationalism, even if they didn’t know what to call it. D.C. Metropolitan Police Officer Daniel Hodges testified to a House Select Committee, “It was clear the terrorists perceived themselves to be Christians,” citing a small taste of the imagery and rhetoric noted in this document.³⁷



Christian nationalist messages were penned on the gallows.
Tyler Merbler / Flickr

1. The Gallows

The gallows, noose, and calls to hang any who were disloyal to Trump clarified that this was a lynch mob.³⁸ “Hang Mike Pence!” they chanted. An effigy branded a “traitor” with a noose around its neck was paraded on a stick to the Capitol.³⁹ Days earlier, Proud Boys leader Joe Biggs wrote on the social media platform Parler, “Every law makers [sic] who breaks their own stupid Fucking laws should be dragged out of office and hung.”⁴⁰ Recordings that day show the attackers were less artistic and more violent: “They’ve got the gallows set up outside the Capitol Building. It’s time to start fucking using them.”⁴¹ Another attacker was asked by an NPR reporter what he hoped would come of January 6, and he was clear: “The people in this House who stole this election from us hanging from a gallow out here in this lawn for the whole world to see, so it never happens again. That’s what needs to happen — four by four by four hanging from a rope out here for treason.”⁴²

The attackers that destroyed and piled up journalists’ equipment screamed about collecting names. One said, “We start hunting them down, one by one,” to cheers of the crowd and a response of “traitors get guillotine.”⁴³

People posed for photos with the gallows. At one point, a man in a “Faith, Family, Freedom” sweatshirt was seen atop the gallows.⁴⁴ They signed their names and added thoughts to the wooden gallows erected near the Capitol, including “Hang them high,” “In God We Trust,” “God Bless the USA,” “Hang for treason,” and “Amen.”⁴⁵

2. The Cross

One of the most ubiquitous symbols on January 6 was the Christian cross. Latin crosses are “the principal symbol of Christianity around the world,” according to the Supreme Court,⁴⁶ and, as used on January 6 by the insurrectionists, one of the clearest displays of Christian nationalism.

Crosses were everywhere that day in D.C., on flags and flagpoles, on signs and clothes, around necks, and erected above the crowd. The Proud Boys also erected a massive cross using ropes in a viral video of the Michigan Capitol (a sister rally, not in D.C.).⁴⁷ A cross with “Jesus Saves” written on one plank was featured in some news stories, and it was also paraded next to Alex Jones as he paused on the march to the Capitol, climbed atop a fountain — like a stage — and ranted on a megaphone.⁴⁸ The lead image on a *New York Times* article showed a white cross, maybe three feet tall, atop a flagpole with a “Trump: Keep America Great 2020” flag thrust high above the crowd in front of the Capitol as people chanted “Fight for Trump.”⁴⁹

They erected an 8-foot wooden cross in Freedom Plaza (at the White House end of Pennsylvania Avenue)⁵⁰ and another 8-foot tall cross at the Capitol that became disturbingly iconic after the crowd prayed around it.



People worshipping at the cross on the east side of the Capitol during the attack.
Left: Win McNamee / Getty Images. Right: Stefani Reynolds / Bloomberg / Getty Images

That wooden cross attained infamy on the east side of the Capitol.⁵¹ Win McNamee photographed the man holding the cross with his forehead resting against it, seemingly in prayer; meanwhile, in the foreground, a man draped in a Trump flag with a smaller American flag on a wooden pole bowed down before that cross and groveled.⁵² Other photos show the mob surrounding the cross in their red Trump hats, praying, laying hands on one another, and flying the “Trump Train” flag. These are just a few examples of crosses displayed during the insurrection. There were many, many more.

3. Flags

Flags have the potential to be the perfect symbol for Christian nationalism. We typically associate them with a country or nation or some sort of sovereign entity with geography over which to rule. Flags are meant to be symbols of this power, idea, and identity. The insurrection was wrapped in many flags that reflect the mythical Christian nation.



The Confederate flag is paraded in the U.S. Capitol for the first time in American history. SAUL LOEB / AFP / Getty Images

The Confederate Flag

As historians Dr. Keri Leigh Merritt and Dr. Rhae Lynn Barnes wrote, “[F]or the first time in American history, White supremacists treasonously raised a Confederate flag inside the United States Capitol, disrupting America’s peaceful transfer of power and invoking tangled memories of our nation’s Civil War.”⁵³ And this too is a relic of Christian nationalism, albeit Confederate Christian nationalism.⁵⁴

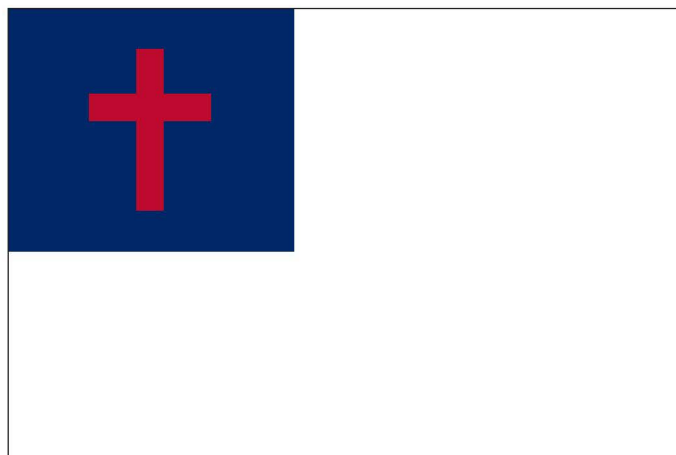
Kevin Seefried carried the flag of white supremacy and traitors into the Capitol that day, but he did more. According to the FBI, Seefried and his son, Hunter, listened to Trump’s speech, marched to the Capitol and watched as lumber 2x4s and riot shields were used to break windows.⁵⁵ They then helped clear the glass and

entered the building. A *Christian Chronicle* correspondent and minister, Hamil Harris, filmed Seefried with his seditious flag outside the Capitol exhorting people to “go inside” the Capitol, stop “sitting down,” and yelling, “This is just the beginning.”⁵⁶

Ruth Braunstein, a professor of sociology and author of *Prophets and Patriots: Faith in Democracy across the Political Divide* and co-editor of *Religion and Progressive Activism: New Stories About Faith and Politics*, observed that the juxtaposition of symbols — including the Confederate flag alongside Christian imagery and anti-Semitic T-shirts — was striking. “The riot was a pitch-perfect performance of the kind of white Christian nationalism that has ebbed and flowed throughout American history—from 1860 to 1960, 1920 to 2021.”⁵⁷

The Christian Flag

The Christian flag was everywhere on January 6.⁵⁸ In a conversation caught on video as the mob surged into the Capitol and shots were about to be fired, a man stood flying two gold-fringed Christian flags, the Capitol and mob just behind him, and said, “Donald Trump coordinated it. We’re his surrogates.” He pauses, looks at



The Christian flag (above) is carried onto the floor of the U.S. Senate (below). NBC News

the flags, and adds, “Jesus loves us.”⁵⁹ One photo shows the Christian flag flying above another flag that reads, “JESUS IS KING.”⁶⁰

The insurrectionists also paraded the Christian flag around the Senate on January 6. Perhaps it escaped notice because not many recognized it.

NBC News reporter Frank Thorp was in the Senate Gallery as about a dozen attackers rifled through senators’ desks on the floor of the Senate.⁶¹ Thorp captured the attackers on video, including one who carried and planted the Christian flag on the floor of the Senate.⁶² One year later, the attacker with the flag who also rifled through senators’ desks and photographed their papers has not even been identified.



The mob and police clash around a “Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my President” flag. Lev Radin / Pacific Press / Shutterstock

Other Flags

Many insurrectionists favored flags that read “Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my President,”⁶³ and many wore flags as capes, including the Savior/President flag.⁶⁴

The “An Appeal to Heaven” flag was also common. One widely circulated image shows it streaming above the massive “JESUS 2020” banner.⁶⁵ One of those “An Appeal to Heaven” flags was on a literal pitchfork used as a flagpole.⁶⁶ This flag’s message was important to the attackers. One handmade version was explicit: “An Appeal to Heaven: A Cry for Divine Justice.”⁶⁷ In an interview, one of the attackers who got to the Senate floor and was part of the infamous prayer singled out the flag, stating, “We appeal to heaven because we — as individuals, we’re powerless.”⁶⁸

The “An Appeal to Heaven” flag has long been popular with Christian nationalists, including preachers.⁶⁹ Arkansas state Senator Jason Rapert, who is also a preacher and a legislative sponsor of bills to require the posting of “In God We Trust” in every public school classroom, is very

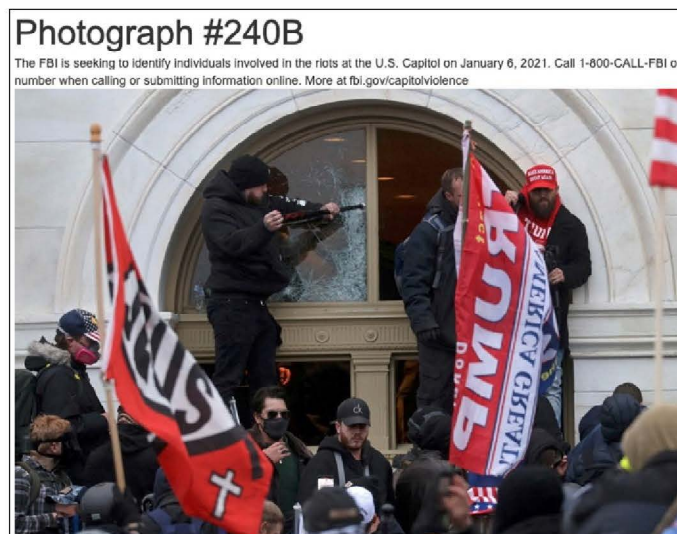
fond of this flag and its message.⁷⁰ Rapert posed with that same flag in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on a previous trip to D.C. and regularly has people hold it on stage when he preaches.⁷¹

Other flags featured the ichthys,⁷² a symbol of Christianity colloquially known as the “Jesus fish.” One person carrying such a flag that included the words “Proud American Christian”⁷³ also wore a sign featuring the Christian dove that symbolizes the Holy Spirit and that also said “WWJD” for “We Want Justice Delivered,”⁷⁴ adding the QAnon callsign “WWG1WGA,” meaning, “where we go one, we go all.”⁷⁵ At one point, the crowd around one of these proud American ichthys flags began chanting “Trump is president, Christ is king!”⁷⁶ An 8-foot long banner with the “Trump is president, Christ is king” slogan featured a Byzantine icon of Jesus, complete with halo and huge Bible with a cross, and it was flown between an American flag and a blue “Keep America Great” flag in front of the Washington monument as the mob marched to the Capitol.⁷⁷

The FBI posted a photo of some of its most wanted perpetrators on January 6 breaking through the doors and windows on the first floor of the west side of the Capitol, and a flag with an ichthys on a red background with crosses in the corner is flying in the foreground of the photo as attackers batter the glass.⁷⁸



Examples of “Jesus fish” flags seen in the January 6 crowd. Below: A photograph shared by the FBI features a flag with the “Jesus fish” and Latin crosses as insurrectionists break windows to enter the Capitol. FBI



Photograph #240B
The FBI is seeking to identify individuals involved in the riots at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Call 1-800-CALL-FBI or number when calling or submitting information online. More at [fbi.gov/capitolviolence](https://www.fbi.gov/capitolviolence)



A new spin on MAGA: “Make America Godly Again.” Tayfun Coskun / Anadolu Agency / Getty Images

Yet other flags included:

- A more explicitly Christian nationalist version of MAGA, “Make America Godly Again,” on an American flag.⁷⁹
- “Born, Raised, and Protected by God, Guns, Guts, and Glory,” which attackers waved as they stood on police vehicles outside the Capitol.⁸⁰
- A black Christian cross and two assault rifles were superimposed over the American flag with the words, “GOD GUNS TRUMP.”⁸¹
- “Thank You President Trump God Bless America” in white lettering on a blue field with a red border.⁸²
- A black, vertical flag with a photo of a large lion’s head, with “TRUMP” written above the head in red letters while below the head read, “The Lion in you NEVER RETREATS. Proverbs 30:30.”⁸³
- One pole held three Christian-themed flags: one “An Appeal to Heaven” flag; a “FAITH OVER FEAR” flag; and a flag with a lamb, dove, and lion.⁸⁴
- Another man, also on the march over to the Capitol, waved the flag of Israel above a sign begging the crowd to “Say Yes To Jesus,” featuring Jesus himself kneeling in prayer.⁸⁵

4. Signs, clothing, and Bible verses

Then there were the signs. Printed yellow signs proclaiming “Jesus Saves” stood out everywhere in the crowd, including the mob surging up the steps and into the Capitol itself.⁸⁶ Two preachers with the yellow “Jesus Saves” sign — and the same message on sweatshirts and vests — preached to the crowd through a bullhorn.⁸⁷ One video shows EMTs rushing an unidentified injured person to an ambulance, pushing the stretcher past a “Jesus Saves” sign and a man holding a “Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my President” flag.⁸⁸

At least one “JESUS 2020” banner was hung by the crowd, many of whom held signs that echoed the sentiment.⁸⁹ As mentioned earlier (when it was held near Alex Jones), one sign was in the shape of a cross with the phrase “Jesus Saves.”⁹⁰ Another read “Glory to God.”⁹¹ Yet another sign, dotted with crosses, read “TO GOD THE GLORY TRUTH & JUSTICE DEEP STATE EXPOSED TRUMP 2021–24.”⁹² Another: “Moultrie Co., IL LOVES JESUS, the CONSTITUTION + TRUMP.”⁹³

One hat read “God, Guns, Trump” with a cross after “God” and an American flag on the bill.⁹⁴ “God Chose Trump to Save USA,” said one banner.⁹⁵ “God’s Word calls Dem out!” proclaimed a sign.⁹⁶ One man wore a



One of the many yellow “Jesus Saves” signs seen on January 6 and in the events leading up to the insurrection. Robert Nickelsberg / Getty Images

Black Warrior XII T-shirt, which had Christian crosses on the front and back and American flags on the arms along with the phrase: “Jesus dies for all of us because all lives matter.”⁹⁷ A black pickup truck pulled a massive trailer with a white billboard that said in block letters “THOU SHALT NOT STEAL” and “#STOPTHESTEAL.” People signed the billboard and wrote things like, “In God We Trust,” “Free the CHURCH!!!,” “Jesus!,” “1 Peter 1:19–20,” and entire Bible verses.⁹⁸

Bible verses and phrases were as ubiquitous as crosses. Some of the more militant attackers, including at least two in tactical helmets and military-grade gas masks, sported “Armor of God” patches on their camouflage fatigues.⁹⁹ The military-style patches feature a large Christian cross and invoke the passage in Ephesians 6:10–17, in which Christians are instructed to “put on the armor of God.” Attacker Samuel Lazar wore face paint and a patch on his tactical gear that bore the words: “Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle.” [Psalm 144:1 ESV]¹⁰⁰

Other Bible verses in the crowd included one sign that simply listed Heb. 4:12, Jer. 4:7, Psalm 67.¹⁰¹ In one video, the mob can be seen moving to breach the east steps of the Capitol while a Christian flag and a “Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my President” flag are visible, as well as the sign with the citations for those three Bible verses.¹⁰² Another sign seen that day read “Ye must be born again. Jn 3:7 [referencing John 3:7 KJV].”¹⁰³ One handwritten sign featured citations for 13 Bible verses.¹⁰⁴

Not only Bible verses, but the book itself was a totem of the crowd. A man wearing skeleton gloves posed for media photos with a Bible in the chaos and then, when the crowd finally breached the building and surged into the doors, that same gloved hand thrust the Bible in the air for the mob to follow.¹⁰⁵

5. White Jesus and religious iconography

Perhaps the best symbol of the day was the modified, syncretic portrait of white Jesus, about four feet tall, that one woman carried. It showed a popular depiction of Jesus — Peter V. Bianchi’s portrait, “I am the Truth, The Light and the Way,” — altered to have Jesus wearing a red MAGA hat with “#WWG1WGA” on his white robes.¹⁰⁶

Popular American depictions of Jesus depict him with white skin — Bianchi’s portrait and Warner Sallman’s “Head of Christ” are perhaps the most popular — but first-century residents of the Levant did not look like the white man in those portraits. Jesus was not white,¹⁰⁷ nor did Jesus wear a MAGA hat.

One person carried two 5-foot-tall portraits with religious iconography. One depicted a white Jesus standing tall in white robes with a halo of light, hand raised in front of his chest shooting out beams of red and blue light with the words “Jesus, I trust in you.” The image is called “Divine Mercy,” as interpreted by Adolf Hyla and then by Kathleen Weber in 1992. The second painting was of Mary in a gilded frame — specifically, the Virgin of Guadalupe, patroness of Mexico and all the Americas.¹⁰⁸ As the mob occupied the east steps of the Capitol and breached those doors, the two large Jesus and Mary portraits were displayed in the East plaza, framing the territory as clearly as the flags and crosses.¹⁰⁹



White #MAGA QAnon Jesus is perhaps the best symbol of the day. Tyler Merbler / Flickr



The crowd carried framed paintings, including these two: Divine Mercy and the Virgin of Guadalupe. Andrew L. Seidel / Twitter



A statue of Mary wrapped in a rosary (lower left) and a banner of Mary as the Virgin of Guadalupe (upper right) are hoisted above the crowd on the east steps. Andrew L. Seidel / Twitter

in a rosary held above the heads of the attackers surging up the steps and attacking the Capitol door.¹¹³ Another attacker can be seen attempting to breach a different Capitol door with his rosary wrapped around his hand, on which a fellow insurrectionist remarked.¹¹⁴ He wasn't the only one,¹¹⁵ and one priest said he performed an exorcism in the Capitol.¹¹⁶



The framed paintings are placed at the foot of the east steps as the mob flooded into the Capitol. ProPublica

Like the eagles the Roman legions carried, the mob carried religious symbols and statuary above their heads, including what looks like a bronze shrine to Mary in the Lady of Peace pose with upturned hands slightly raised and out to the sides, borne atop a pole.¹¹⁰ There also was a painted Christ child king known as the Infant of Prague.¹¹¹ A colorful tapestry of the Virgin of Guadalupe and three angels on the reverse side can be seen in this same mob,¹¹² as well as a white, marble-esque Mary wrapped

In their own words: Christian nationalism

The prayer in the Senate

The impromptu prayer in the U.S. Senate chamber captured by the *New Yorker* began with one insurrectionist, Michael Roche, praying:¹¹⁷

Jesus Christ, we invoke your name, Amen!

The 30–40 other insurrectionists in the chamber echoed with loud “Amens” of their own. In a post-insurrection interview posted to Facebook, Roche said:

My name is Michael Roche. We're here in Washington, D.C. We did get a chance to storm the Capitol. And we made it into the chamber ... We managed to convince the cops to let us through. They listened to reason. And when we got into the chamber. ... [W]e all started praying and shouting in the name of Jesus Christ, and inviting Christ back into our state [sic] capitol.

Roche's brother posted a photo of Roche and one of the most prominent insurrectionists, Jacob Anthony Chansley,



Michael Roche shouts in the Capitol (left) and poses for a photo with Jacob Chansley (right) in a Facebook post shared by Roche's brother. ROBERTO SCHMIDT / AFP / Getty Images

writing, "My brother was shoulder to shoulder praying in Jesus name in the main capital [sic] chamber holding up the Bible."¹¹⁸

After Roche shouted his invocation, Chansley suggested a more formal prayer.

The crowd agreed, and many approached the dais as though this were an altar call in a church. Chansley led them in the following prayer:

Let's all say a prayer in this sacred space. Thank you Heavenly Father for gracing us with this opportunity.

[Pause for all to remove hats and bow heads]

Thank you our Heavenly Father for this opportunity to stand up for our God-given unalienable rights. Thank you heavenly Father for being the inspiration needed to these police officers to allow us into the building; to allow us to exercise our rights; to allow us to send a message to all the tyrants, the communists, and the globalists, that this is our nation, not theirs. That we will not allow the America — the American way of the United States of America, to go down.

Thank you divine, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent creator God, for filling this chamber with your white light of love, with your white light of harmony. Thank you for filling this chamber with patriots that love you and that love Christ.

Thank you divine, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent creator God for blessing each and every one of us here and now. Thank you divine creator God for surrounding and filling us with the



On the Senate dais, Chansley delivers a prayer over a bullhorn while Roche raises his arms and looks to the ceiling in worship. The New Yorker / YouTube

divine omnipresent white light of love and protection, peace and harmony. Thank you for allowing the United States of America to be reborn. Thank you for allowing us to get rid of the communists, the globalists, and the traitors within our government. We love you and we thank you. In Christ's holy name we pray! Amen.

[All Shout:] Amen!¹¹⁹

The idea of the country being "reborn" and specifically reborn "in Christ's holy name," which is how the prayer concluded, is central to Christian nationalism. This is also why Roche described them as "inviting Christ back into our state [sic] capitol." They were seeking to return the nation to a mythical past that does not exist, but that mythical past is central to their identity.



Chansley at an election protest in Arizona just three days after Election Day, holding a sign that says “GOD WINS.” Hope O’Brien / Twitter



A demonstrator prays in Washington, D.C., on January 6. Eric Lee / Bloomberg / Getty Images

The BBC interviewed Chansley and reported on January 10 that he believed “he had done nothing wrong and he had truth and God on his side.”¹²⁰ He told the FBI that he was only able to get into the Senate chamber “by the grace of God.”¹²¹ In video shot just outside the Capitol after the attack, Chansley explained that he left the Capitol because “Donald Trump asked everybody to go home, he just put out a tweet — it’s a minute long — he asked everybody to go home.”¹²² He believed he attacked at God’s behest and left at Trump’s request. Chansley explained that Trump only asked him and the other supporters to leave “because, dude, we won the fucking day, we fucking won.” The victory was “sending a message to the senators and the congressmen” and Vice President Pence, that if they don’t do what the attackers wanted — overturn the results of the 2020 election — then “we will remove them from office, one way or another,” again invoking a violence represented by the gallows. Chansley likened doubters of the January 6 victory to those who doubted the divinity of Jesus: “a lot of people doubted a lot of prophets, saints, and sages — a lot of people doubted Christ. All I can say to those people is haters can hate. I don’t give a shit.”

Chansley exemplifies the stew of identities and ideologies at the insurrection, especially the connections between Christian nationalism and QAnon, hence his *nom de guerre*, “QAnon Shaman.” He was photographed in Arizona on November 6, 2020, just three days after Election Day. Protesting the election results, he carried a sign that said “HOLD THE LINE PATRIOTS. GOD WINS” on one side and “Q sent me” on the other.¹²³

Other prayers on January 6

The prayer in the Senate checked most boxes of Christian nationalist ideologies, but prayer was used in many places that day.

As insurrectionists overran the Capitol, staffers who

had barricaded themselves in one of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s offices heard a female attacker “praying loudly outside their door for ‘the evil of Congress to be brought to an end.’”¹²⁴ When the crowd arrived at the Capitol after Trump’s speech, they hailed the Proud Boys as “God’s warriors.”¹²⁵ They then knelt in prayer, as they had at the rallies in the preceding weeks.¹²⁶ The prayer — just like the prayer in the Senate — included typical Christian nationalist rhetoric about returning and revival.¹²⁷ Several other groups prayed in the Capitol Rotunda.¹²⁸ One of these prayer groups first sang a few lines from the Battle Hymn of the Republic, similar to how they sang along to the song at the Jericho March event three weeks earlier.¹²⁹ They then prayed “in the name of Jesus, Amen.”¹³⁰ Citizen investigators suggest that at least four of those praying in that particular circle were Oath Keepers. Others knelt in prayer as law enforcement worked to clear the Capitol.¹³¹ The founder of Cowboys for Trump prayed through a bullhorn above the crowd: “Let us pray Second Chronicles, chapter 7, verse 14, over our nation. Let us pray. Our Father says that if we will repent and pray, he will hear our prayers.” The crowd chanted, “Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump!” unfurled a flag with “An Appeal to Heaven” on it, and held a “Trump 2020” flag on a pole topped with a white Christian cross alongside another flagpole with a sign that said, “Jesus, I trust in you.”¹³²

Another group prayed as the masses of attackers swarmed the scaffolding outside the Capitol.¹³³ A man in a white shirt emblazoned with a red cross — sold as a “Crusader Knights Templar Distressed Cross T-Shirt”¹³⁴ — led a prayer circle outside the Capitol as attackers overwhelmed police.¹³⁵ He prayed for a small circle of people while a woman in the prayer circle held aloft a handwritten “In God We Trust” sign. The man was also photographed holding the sign that day, which featured Christian crosses on the corners.¹³⁶ The prayers often sought the restoration of a Christian nation that never was.

Religious music and shofars

During the attack, people blew shofars, as they did at Jericho March events, and chanted, “The blood of Jesus covering this place,” meaning the Capitol.¹³⁷ One shofar was painted with an American flag motif.¹³⁸ There was also music, including a mobile stage of sorts. “Cry out, I will heal the land, cause only Jesus saves. Yeah, only Jesus saves. Bring peace right now even for the guy that got shot. In Jesus’ name,” they sang.¹³⁹ On the march to the Capitol, some paused for an impromptu worship concert.¹⁴⁰ Several women — one wearing a Trump flag as a cape and red MAGA hat — can be seen singing and swaying to worship songs.¹⁴¹ Five others, including some children in red MAGA hats, kneel and sway to the music as a man in a leather Harley Davidson jacket enters the center of the circle, in front of the speakers, and kneels in praise as the crowd cheers. On the grass just next to the Peace Monument,¹⁴² a 50-plus person Christian choir sings, “believers in Jesus, lifting up our voices to the Lord,” with a Christian flag flying behind them.¹⁴³ They appear to be singing a modified version of Robert Gay’s “People of the Lord.” This version of the song begins: “... We are going forth, with His praises on our lips, **and a sword in our hands, we are marching on with power, as we possess this land.**”¹⁴⁴ They also sang, “the Lord will fight the battles for his people when we cry aloud unto him and he will crush the enemy”¹⁴⁵

Near the end of the insurrection, the leaders of Jericho March sought to control the damage and blame the media for distorting the violent insurrection into something more than a peaceful march. The group posted two videos to Twitter, both taken earlier in the day but — according to the timestamps — they were posted as after-the-fact justifications that evening. One Tweet said, “You won’t see this on #fakenews, but here is what the patriots looked like — singing patriotic songs, praying, and chanting USA. Here they are singing God Bless America.” The accompanying video showed the singing as Christian flags, Trump flags, and American flags flew over the crowd on the west side of the Capitol. At that point, the crowd had already swarmed over police barriers and climbed scaffolding.¹⁴⁶ The video shows the initial stages of the attack on the Capitol in an effort to stop American democracy. Jericho March’s Twitter feed posted another video showing “Catholic patriots praying the rosary.”¹⁴⁷

As the fallout and second impeachment commenced, those false narratives evaporated. Many of the indicted insurrectionists openly spoke about going to the Capitol to stop the election, boasting that they were Trump’s Jesus-loving patriots.

Confessions and prior statements

Prayers aside, we have the confessions of many of the attackers themselves. They admit that prayer guided their actions leading up to the fateful day and on the day itself.

The *Wall Street Journal* spoke with one attacker who:

... felt the need to go inside to share his views with Congress but wanted to consult God first. He prayed aloud: “Lord, is this the right thing to do? Is this what I need to do?” He says he felt God’s hand on his back, pushing him forward. “I checked with the Lord,” he says. “I checked with Him three times. I never heard a ‘No.’”¹⁴⁸

After the attack, insurrectionist Jenny Cudd¹⁴⁹ filmed and posted a video of herself discussing the attack while sipping a beer.¹⁵⁰ A Trump flag is still tied around her neck. “Hey, patriots,” she begins her 25-minute video, “I’m gonna tell y’all what actually happened today.” Cudd closes her video with a textbook example of Christian nationalism:

To me, God and country are tied — to me they’re one and the same. We were founded as a Christian country. And we see how far we have come from that. When they make an absolute mockery of us and pray to some heathen god and say “amen and awoman.” What the fuck is that? We are a godly country, and we are founded on godly principles. And if we do not have our country, nothing else matters.¹⁵¹



Top photo: Leo Kelly (far right) stands next to the Senate dais just before the prayer. *The New Yorker* / YouTube
Bottom photo: Kelly gives an interview to LifeSiteNews in his hotel room that evening. LifeSiteNews

Cudd raised funds for her legal defense on a Christian fundraising website, whose founder claims “everything we do and what our platform delivers is Christ-centered.”¹⁵² In her plea, Cudd explained her actions: “I love my country, President Trump, the Constitution, & the Christian principles our country was founded on. God made me a fighter not a coward. ... If you cannot contribute, please pray. God bless the U.S.A!”¹⁵³

Leo Kelly and Joshua Matthew Black, two of the insurrectionists who invaded the Senate and participated in the Christian nationalist prayer led by Chansley, later recounted the moment. Kelly gave a post-attack interview in his hotel room with LifeSiteNews, a far-right propaganda outlet based in Canada that is “a known purveyor of misleading information” according to Snopes and has been banned from Facebook and YouTube for spreading disinformation about COVID-19.¹⁵⁴ He talked about getting onto the floor of the Senate: “We said a prayer in there ... One guy up there ... said we should pray and some of us did. He was on his bullhorn/microphone thing and he just consecrated it to Jesus.”¹⁵⁵

Joshua Matthew Black also described the attack and, like Kelly, can be seen in the *New Yorker* video joining the prayer with hands raised in worship after rifling through the desk of Sen. Ted Cruz with several other attackers.¹⁵⁶



Black rifling through senators’ desks, on the floor of the Senate in camouflage and gloves, and later as he appears in his selfie video. The New Yorker / YouTube

Like Cudd, Black justified the attack in a selfie video while wearing Trump paraphernalia.¹⁵⁷ At the outset, Black explained his goal: “I just wanted to get inside the building so I could plead the blood of Jesus over it. That was my goal.”¹⁵⁸ Black attributed every action he took to a conversation he had with God. First, he wondered, “Why are we just sitting here?” and then:

I started praying. I said, “Lord, I don’t know what to do. What do you want me to do?” You know, he said, “go to the top of the steps,” and I was like, “Lord, it’s packed. I can’t get up in there.” And then he said, “look up,” and I looked up and there’s a bunch of people ... that had been sprayed with mace and they were coming down the steps like blind people with their hands out ... and I just felt my heart go right there. I was like, “Are you sure Lord? Because I’m not a big fan of pepper spray, you know what I’m saying?” And he was like, “no, go.” I said, “okay, Lord.” So I walked over the top and next thing I know, I’m at the door. I don’t know how I got there, but I was at the door and people were — it was a mob rule situation ... the patriots were pissed ... so much anger. So I just kept saying, “praise the name of Jesus. Glory to God. God bless America. Praise the name of Jesus. I plead the blood of Jesus. Glory to God. God bless America.” And next thing I know I’m up there at the police and there’s six of them in this little door.¹⁵⁹

Black described entering the Capitol and walking around “yelling, ‘Praise the name of Jesus. Glory to God. God bless America. I plead the blood of Jesus.’ ... [W]hen I was talking this, it must have been the spirit of God in me because people tended to do what I said, and I’m not like an imposing figure.” Then he recounted reaching a door he says is marked “U.S. Senate”:

The Holy Spirit just fell on me and I just started weeping ... It was awesome. The presence of God is like the best drug on earth. ... It was awesome ... If I had it to do over again though I would have ... prayed about the evil spirits that were in there. I’d have cast them out. But I didn’t even think of that ... So I got down on my knees, started praying, I started lifting my hands, I was like, “Praise the name of Jesus. Thank you, Lord for the blood of Jesus” ... I’d accomplished my goal. I pled the blood of Jesus on the Senate floor. I praised the name of Jesus on the Senate floor. That was my goal. I think that was God’s goal ... I think the Lord wanted me to be there.¹⁶⁰

In the video, Black also complains that the Democrats are “anti-Christian,” insinuates that Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris slept her way to the top, announced plans to start a prison ministry, and assures viewers that he’s not a racist for wearing a “Blacks for Trump” shirt because his last name is Black and “it’s an inside joke.” He concluded, “I guess that’s it. God bless America. I don’t know what’s happening next but God wins.”¹⁶¹

Other people at the Capitol were just as clear about their motivations. *The Atlantic* interviewed a man from Texas who said “that the country was coming apart and that this dissolution presaged the End Times.”¹⁶² The man told *The Atlantic* editor Jeffrey Goldberg, “It’s all in the Bible ... Everything is predicted. Donald Trump is in the Bible. Get yourself ready.”

Goldberg, who was there and spoke to people in the crowd, explains, “The conflation of Trump and Jesus was a common theme at the rally. ‘Give it up if you believe in Jesus!’ a man yelled near me. People cheered. ‘Give it up if you believe in Donald Trump!’ Louder cheers.”¹⁶³

Stephen Baker livestreamed his invasion of the Capitol, often addressing the audience. “We’re having fun, huh? Repent and believe in Jesus,” he told his viewers.¹⁶⁴ Baker mentioned and may be affiliated with the white nationalist group “Red Elephants,” and he regularly streams Christian content. By July 2021, he was openly defending Christian nationalism, and he wrote a piece titled “Why I’m A Christian Nationalist.”¹⁶⁵

Joseph Padilla is seen on multiple videos, including police officer body camera video, attacking police lines and trying to breach the Capitol. He posted online about it, believing God was on his side: “I was right there. I have the wounds to prove it. I pushed the rails, I pushed the stairs, and then pushed the doorway. I was beaten unconscious twice, sprayed more times than I care to count, received strikes from batons that should have been lethal (Multiple temple and carotid strikes) except that God was on my side.”¹⁶⁶

Christian Chronicle correspondent and minister Hamil Harris (mentioned earlier) interviewed some people outside the Capitol, and they regurgitated Christian nationalist talking points. “I feel like the Democrats are slapping our Creator in the face: God Almighty ... As a Christian I feel that I need to stand up for my political leaders that are fighting for us. That’s my right, that’s my freedom as a Christian. God calls us,” said Diane McMichael.¹⁶⁷ Her husband Bob added another perfect Christian nationalist encapsulation: “[W]e are certainly founded on, ‘under God,’ ‘one nation under God’ and certainly our roots were there and we’ve turned our back on it.”¹⁶⁸ Another interviewee lamented how the country seemed to be turning back on its godly roots, which is the core of the Christian nationalist narrative. She said, “I remember back in the day, I used to go to church school — I used to be released and be able to go to church school! I remember praying in school. I remember all of that. And when all that started to stop, I think our country just have been slowly, slowly turning away from that.”¹⁶⁹

William McCall Calhoun Jr. is one of the attackers who kicked in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s door thinking the crowd would tear her “into little pieces.”¹⁷⁰ After Calhoun

was charged, his rantings were recounted at one of his hearings: “God is on Trump’s side. God is not on the Democrats’ side. And if patriots have to kill 60 million of these communists, it is God’s will. Think ethnic cleansing but it’s anti-communist cleansing.”¹⁷¹

Luke Coffee’s father is a full-time minister who preaches in prisons.¹⁷² Coffee himself is another attacker who admitted in a since-deleted Facebook video to fighting the police, recounting how he tried to break and push against the police line: “I pushed all against the line and was, like, trying to drive them back, and God gave me some supernatural energy.”¹⁷³ He added, “And I literally thought I was getting gassed to death like I was in Nazi Germany, a Jew getting gassed to death.” Body camera footage shows Coffee assaulting the police line with a metal crutch.¹⁷⁴ This was right at the moment when officer Michael Fanone of Washington, D.C.’s Metropolitan Police Department was pulled out of a police line and beaten by the mob. Despite ample evidence of his assault on officers, in another since-deleted video, nearly two hours long, Coffee claims: “I was asking people to pray. Because there was chaos. Satan uses chaos to manipulate and tell lies.”¹⁷⁵

Even if they were not explicitly recounting the Christian nationalist motivations of the day, the link was so clear that other attackers, more serious in their desire to do violence, piggybacked on the ideologies of Christian nationalism. One of the attackers, a self-professed white supremacist who wanted to be a “lone wolf killer,” was on probation, but via text message on the evening of January 4, he convinced his parole officer to let him go to D.C. “to distribute Bibles with ... Gideon International,” which he had done before.¹⁷⁶ He invaded the Capitol wearing a Proud Boys T-shirt, pausing to flash the white power symbol and pose for photos with a Confederate flag.

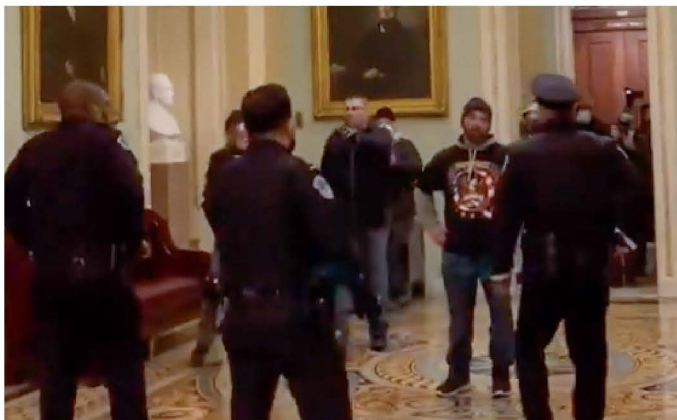
Infamous photos show an insurrectionist in a black winter beanie and a black shirt with a large QAnon “Q” and eagle over a gray hoodie, advancing through the halls of



The infamous photo of Doug Jensen confronting police officers in the halls of the Capitol. Manuel Balce Ceneta / AP



Officer Goodman lures Jensen and others in the mob away from lawmakers. Igor Bobic / Twitter



Mike Sparks (center) and Jensen confront officers. Igor Bobic / Twitter



Sparks wearing the “Armor of God” T-shirt in his mug shot and confronting officers in the Capitol. Oldham County Detention Center



Sparks (left) with Kevin (center) and Hunter Seefried (right) confronting officers. Kevin Seefried is carrying the Confederate flag. Manuel Balce Ceneta / AP

the Capitol with his arms spread wide.¹⁷⁷ That was Doug Jensen.¹⁷⁸ Jensen was the leading insurrectionist that pursued Capitol Police Officer Eugene Goodman.

To be more accurate, Officer Goodman lured Jensen and the mob away from the Senate, running up stairs to draw the attackers away from members of Congress and into a hallway with police reinforcements. Jensen demanded the officers go and arrest Vice President Pence.¹⁷⁹ Much attention has been rightly paid to Goodman’s heroics and to QAnon’s role in motivating the attackers, as seen on Jensen’s shirt. But Christian nationalism motivated them, too.

Ten days earlier, on December 27, Jensen replied to a Donald Trump tweet that blamed the COVID-19 pandemic on China. Jensen wrote, “God Bless Americans and God Bless President Trump.”¹⁸⁰ The header photo on Jensen’s now-suspended account featured a religious grotto that included a cross, the Divine Mercy image, and a Mary statue holding baby Jesus in an alcove.¹⁸¹ The grotto is the

Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel & Divine Mercy in Des Moines, and it appears to be a photo Jensen himself took and posted, not one pulled off the internet.¹⁸²

The splinter mob Jensen led included Kevin and Hunter Seefried, the father and son duo who carried the Confederate flag, and Mike Sparks, a white Christian, who shouted at Goodman, a Black man, “This is *our* America!”¹⁸³

Sparks posted on his Facebook page, “A new dawn is coming. Be ready. Just pray and trust in the Lord” and “TRUMP WILL BE YOUR PRESIDENT 4 more years in JESUS NAME.”¹⁸⁴ In his mug shot, Sparks is wearing a T-shirt with two crossed swords and a shield with a stylized cross, which reads, “Armor of God, Ephesians 6:11.”¹⁸⁵

Another haunting image was the militarized man in black carrying a holstered weapon and zip-tie handcuffs — or “flex cuffs” — photographed as he vaulted railings in the Senate gallery.¹⁸⁶



Eric Munchel vaulting rails in the gallery with zip ties.
Win McNamee / Getty Images

Later identified as Eric Gavelek Munchel, he gave an impromptu interview at a hotel after the attack. He explained that he was “just a hidden patriot” and “I am very worried about our country — where it’s going politically, *religiously and, just, morally.*”¹⁸⁷ Munchel took video of the march to the Capitol, along the way passing one of the ubiquitous yellow “Jesus Saves” signs. As he saw it, he commented, “Jesus saves, and so do guns.”¹⁸⁸ At one point, a woman walking close to Munchel — perhaps his mother, Lisa Eisenhart — begins reading the signs out loud. The voice says, “Chinese American Republicans. God bless you people. God bless them.”¹⁸⁹

In an interview with the British newspaper *The Sunday Times*, Munchel explained that he “wanted to show that we’re willing to rise up, band together and fight if necessary. Same as our forefathers, who established this country in 1776.”¹⁹⁰ He said the attack was “a kind of flexing of muscles” and that “[t]he point of getting inside the building is to show them that we can, and we will.”¹⁹¹ The pretrial detention memo notes that “agents located approximately 15 firearms, including assault rifles, a sniper rifle with a tripod, other rifles, shotguns, and pistols, and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. Agents also located a drum-style magazine.”¹⁹²

Christian nationalism was the “driving force”

An NPR journalist who is an expert in American extremist groups was struck by the diversity of the extremism that day:

Am I going to see an Oath Keeper? OK, there’s an Oath Keeper. Am I going to see the Three Percent logo? Definitely saw some of them there. Qanon, huge presence at this one. I saw neo-Confederates in the crowd, all sorts of white supremacist and neo-Nazi insignia, too. And all of the strands of American extremism were there in the same crowd. And what’s wilder is that they were in the same crowd with, you know, a grandmother from Arizona, you know, who fervently believes in her heart that the election was stolen and that her vote didn’t matter.¹⁹³

Yes, the groups were diverse. But it was the Christian nationalism that united them that day.

When writing this report and the epilogue of my book, I spoke with Luke Mogelson, the *New Yorker* journalist who filmed the shocking video of the attack from inside the Capitol. “The Christianity was one of the surprises to me in covering this stuff, and it has been hugely underestimated,” he said. “That Christian nationalism you talk about is the driving force and also the unifying force of these disparate players. It’s really Christianity that ties it all together.”

Appendix C

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM AND STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

Andrew L. Seidel

The attack on January 6 could not have happened without some support from those in power. President Trump whipped the mob into a fury and told it to march on the Capitol to prevent a stolen election. Eight senators and 138 representatives objected to certifying election results from Arizona or Pennsylvania, communicating to the mob that it had allies on the inside and a chance to overturn the election. One sitting senator even raised his fist in solidarity with the mob.¹

But there were also state and local leaders involved, not just in stoking the fury and lies, but in attacking the Capitol itself. The mob included Christian Nationalist legislators from all over the country. This appendix will explore some of those officials—it is meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. Many are still in office and some are running for higher offices, including governor, lieutenant governor, and secretary of state.

Rep. Conor Lamb beat Pennsylvania State Rep. **Rick Saccone** to win the 2018 special election in the state's 18th Congressional District. Campaigning with Donald Trump Jr. by his side, Saccone said of people “on the left” that “many of them have a hatred for our country. . . . They have a hatred for God.”² Equating the Christian god with the United States as a nation is quintessential Christian Nationalism. Saccone was not on the floor of the House to vote against American democracy because he lost that election, but he was at the Capitol. Saccone posted a video: “We’re live here in front of the US Capitol. Hundreds of thousands of people storming the Capitol. They broke down the gates. They’re macing them up there. We’re trying to run out all the evil people in there and all the RINOs that have betrayed our president.”³ In the description of the video as originally posted, Saccone wrote, “our vanguard has broken thru [sic] the

barricades.”⁴ He ended the video with a favorite rhetorical relic, left behind by a previous wave of Christian Nationalism, “Until next time, ‘In God We Trust.’”

Saccone spent much of his career in the Pennsylvania state house sponsoring Christian Nationalist legislation, including resolutions declaring 2012 the “Year of the Bible;”⁵ November 2011 “King James Bible Heritage Month;”⁶ and a “National Fast Day.”⁷ He added two resolutions designating “American Religious History Week” that repeat some popular Christian Nationalist talking points;⁸ six resolutions recognizing the National Day of Prayer;⁹ and legislation requiring public schools to display “In God We Trust.”¹⁰

Bills to force or encourage public schools to display Saccone’s insurrection sign-off tagline, “In God We Trust,” became the centerpiece of a campaign to flood state legislatures with Christian Nationalist bills called **Project Blitz**. Saccone proposed his bills in 2012/13 and 2015/16. At that point, no state had passed such a law in almost a decade. After Saccone’s 2016 proposal, Project Blitz included a model bill in its 2017/18 playbook: “‘In God We Trust,’ shall be prominently displayed in a conspicuous place in all public elementary and secondary school classrooms and libraries in this State, in all public colleges and universities in this State, and in each government building or facility in this State.”¹¹ Both of Saccone’s proposals and the Project Blitz handbook christened the



legislation, “the National Motto Display Act.”¹² In short, Saccone has been pushing Christian Nationalism for a long time.

After his insurrection video, Saccone resigned from a teaching post at Saint Vincent College, but then announced his run for Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor in September of 2021.¹³ In his video announcement, Saccone, bedecked in American flags and “We the People” imagery, asked, “Are you thirsting for someone to stand up for our Constitution and our God-given rights?” before declaring himself, “your champion.” Later, he sits in front of more flags, including two miniature “Appeal to Heaven” flags so beloved by Christian Nationalists, and says that he “will push back on the cancel culture social media trying to discredit those, like me, who profess our traditional values and our belief in God” and ends “God bless.” He’s running on the same Christian Nationalist platform he pushed through the state house.

Pennsylvania State Senator **Doug Mastriano** is a front-runner for governor in the 2022 race, having answered “God’s calling” asking him to run.¹⁴ Mastriano and Saccone posed for a photo together outside the Capitol on January 6th.¹⁵ First elected in 2019, Mastriano humbly compared his political motivations to the biblical figure Queen Esther, who stopped the ancient Persians from massacring the Israelites. Mastriano reportedly stated that “if we get the call, we’re not going to stand away from our Esther moment.”¹⁶ The story of Esther ends with sons impaled on poles, 300 executions, and 75,000 enemies slaughtered, shading Mastriano’s “Esther moment” with bloody violence.¹⁷ A day before the insurrection, Mastriano noted that Republicans “were in a death match” with Democrats.¹⁸ Nothing suggests that he personally entered the Capitol, but he was just outside the building and declared that he was “really praying that God will pour His Spirit upon Washington, D.C., like we’ve never seen before.”¹⁹ He joined several public prayer calls after the election, including one to “pray that we’ll take responsibility, we’ll seize the power that we had given to us by the Constitution and as well by you providentially. I pray for the leaders also in the federal government, God, on the sixth of January that they will rise up with boldness.”²⁰ Again, they were all speaking the same language and this is very similar to Paula White’s opening prayer at the Trump rally on January 6, asking God to “make your people rise up and stand strong,” to overturn their fear, and calling for a “holy boldness.”²¹

Ahead of a damning *New Yorker* exposé on his Christian Nationalism and involvement in the insurrection, Mastriano threatened the reporter, Eliza Griswold.²² The exposé correctly observes that Mastriano “embod[ies] a set of beliefs characterized as Christian nationalism, which center on the idea that God intended America to be a Christian nation, and which, when mingled with conspiracy theory and white nationalism, helped to fuel

the insurrection.”²³ It also notes that Mastriano is likely involved in the New Apostolic Reformation or NAR, whose “members believe that God speaks to them directly, and that they have been tasked with battling real-world demons who control global leaders.”

A veteran, Mastriano believed he was a divine soldier on the frontlines between the Christian West and the atheistic, communistic Soviets. This thinking has since morphed into what he has called a new religious conflict against radical Islam.²⁴ On Twitter, Mastriano spread a debunked conspiracy theory that Rep. Ilhan Omar directed fellow Muslims to throw a five-year-old child off a balcony, and has shared graphics that read “Islam wants to kill gay rights, Judaism, Christianity and pacifism.”²⁵ Mastriano has pushed the Big Lie and, not coincidentally, appears to have received his Ph.D. for a thesis that has since been found to be plagued with errors and false citations.²⁶ A formal review of his work determined that many of his citations are “completely false and do not support his claims whatsoever” and identified dozens of footnotes “with no apparent relation to their corresponding book passages.”²⁷ The entire Christian Nationalist identity is based on historical disinformation, as I detail in *The Founding Myth*,²⁸ so this is not surprising.

Mastriano spoke at the Dec. 12 Jericho March event in DC, the “Let the Church ROAR” rally. Eric Metaxas introduced him to the crowd as a “patriot” and recounted how Trump called Mastriano, while two large wooden crucifixes were paraded through the audience, one visible as Mastriano began to speak.²⁹ Mastriano addressed the “God-fearing Americans, flag-waving Americans” and quoted First Corinthians. He invoked 1776, the Battle of Gettysburg, Ben Franklin, and said:

America is here. United States of America. We stand together. As Franklin said, “if we don’t hang together, we’re gonna hang separately.” We’re going to hang together. Huh? What do you say? There ain’t nothing the Left can tell me, or the media or those lying snakes in the media— they’re not going to dissuade us. We’re Americans! We walk as free people. We do not walk in bondage. We bow to no man. We bow to no ideology. We serve God with our hearts. “Greater is he that is in us and he that’s in the world,” right? [1 John 4:4] You know? Ephesians 3:20 says what? “He can do more than you can imagine or think.” Do you believe it? Do you know it? I know it’s true.³⁰

After that sermon, Mastriano talked about how George Washington was failing until he “appealed to Heaven,” again, invoking the message on the flag that was seen so widely on January 6th and in the lead-up, the flag Christian Nationalist preachers build empires around, the flag other Christian Nationalist legislators like Jason Rapert of Arkansas hold so dear. Mastriano said that “George Washington appealed to Heaven. God

intervened on Christmas Day, he drove the Hessians out of Trenton . . . This is our day. This is our hour. Let's stand together. If we don't hang together, we'll hang separately. God bless you guys and God bless America."³¹

The "Appeal to Heaven" rhetoric and flag are an integral part of Christian Nationalism, as seen in the other two appendices. Mastriano frequently appears in videos with the Appeal to Heaven flag behind him, including in the video in which he threatens the *New Yorker* journalist.³² The Appeal to Heaven flag was common on January 6; one widely-circulated image shows it streaming above the massive Jesus 2020 banner³³ precisely because it has long been popular with Christian Nationalists.³⁴ For instance, Arkansas State Senator **Jason Rapert** is a preacher, legislator, and Christian Nationalist who started a group for "Christian lawmakers" alongside his personal ministry and is responsible for putting up a Ten Commandments monument at the Arkansas Capitol and "In God We Trust" in every public school classroom, like Saccone. Rapert formed the "Appeal to Heaven Caucus . . . to honor the Lord by networking elected officials who are believers in Jesus Christ, who regularly attend and display a commitment to an evangelical, Gospel-centered church and who will commit to live and govern based on biblical, constitutional and Federalist principles."³⁵ He also posed with that same flag in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on a previous trip to DC and regularly has people hold it on stage when he preaches.³⁶ During the attack itself, the flag was widely visible. One of those Appeal to Heaven flags was on a pitchfork for a flagpole.³⁷ This flag's message was important to the attackers. In an interview, one of the attackers who made it to the Senate floor and was part of the infamous prayer, after discussing the prayer in an interview, singled out the flag: "We appeal to heaven because as individuals we're powerless . . ." ³⁸ (See also, Appendix B.)

Rapert condemned the violence on January 6th, but seemed more interested in whataboutery and tying the violence to "months of destruction in our nation at the hands of Antifa and BLM Leftists."³⁹ And before he condemned them, he stoked the fires, again in Christian Nationalist terms. In an angry, aggressive live video on Dec. 27, 2020, Rapert called on his supporters to "stand up" and to go to DC for the January 6th rally.⁴⁰ The description of the video reads: "LIVE NOW: Nashville bombing. Stop the steal. January 6th. Stand up for God and Country." Rapert began by discussing the bombing in Nashville, the need "to elect good godly people in this nation if we're to have a good, godly nation," and transitioned immediately into the Big Lie: "the level of corruption and the level of stealing that I think has been going on in our electoral system."⁴¹ Rapert didn't just preach the Big Lie, he went further: "I'm asking all of you to not ignore it [the Big Lie] either. I'm asking all of you to stand up for the country. I'm asking you to pray for the nation in a way that you've never prayed before. But I'm

asking you to also shut down the stupidity that you're often being fed through the mass media. I want you to pay attention, think about the founding of this country, and what our Founding Fathers stood for and look at what's happened in the last 50 years."⁴² He fearmongered about communism and said our "darkest days" are ahead if "Joe Biden and Commie Harris" get into the White House.⁴³ "The only thing" standing between the results of the free and fair election was "January 6th."⁴⁴ He tells the audience, "Friends, it's time for you to stand up."⁴⁵ He said the election was "stolen" and urged viewers to "Stand up and fight back!"⁴⁶ The entire 20-minute video is put in Christian Nationalist terms: "There's a lot of American citizens out here that are absolutely tired of what we're seeing. We're tired of you undermining our country. We're tired of you belittling our faith. We're tired of you trying to say that people that believe in the Bible and God and country are bigots—and we're not putting up with it anymore. . . . We need more people to serve because January the 6th . . . they're going to certify the electoral college votes."⁴⁷

For much of his talk, Rapert has plausible deniability—he could have been talking to elected officials. He skillfully navigates the line of stochastic terrorism, but at the end, he stumps for the rally. First he tells people to "Get prayed up, stocked up, and be speaking up for the truth. . . . Never give in and never bow down to the ungodly or to the unrighteous" and that they must take action: "Friends, now's the time to think about who you are. You don't have the luxury to just pretend that these matters take care of themselves . . . So January the 6th I hear that literally who knows how many people are going to descend on Washington DC. Our president has put out a message for people to go to Washington DC."⁴⁸ Rapert waffled about attending, "But I'm going to be watching. And I'm going to be behind everything that's going on to show the truth in the country. I'm going to be looking for the truth to come out. . . . It's time to stand up for God and Country."⁴⁹ He concludes: "Never bow down to the ungodly."⁵⁰

Rapert may not have been at the Capitol in person, but he was certainly at the Capitol in spirit. Like Saccone and Mastriano, Rapert is running for higher office, Arkansas Lieutenant Governor (Trump's former press secretary **Sarah Huckabee Sanders**, leads the gubernatorial pack at the moment).

Gospel singer, preacher, and Tenn. State Rep. **Terri Lynn Weaver**⁵¹ bragged about being "in the thick of it" on January 6 and said the mob was "a heck of a lot of patriots."⁵² On Twitter she called it an "epic and historic day gathering with fellow Patriots from all over the nation"⁵³ and on Facebook, she blamed the lawlessness and violence on Antifa, a baseless lie she has since deleted.⁵⁴ It's unclear whether or not she entered the Capitol, though the "thick of it" suggests an answer.

Weaver is a typical Christian Nationalist, sponsoring Project Blitz bills, such as legislation to make the Bible the state book in 2020⁵⁵ and 2021,⁵⁶ and to put “In God We Trust” on state license plates.⁵⁷ Weaver regularly tweets that America is “one nation under God”⁵⁸ and posts other Christian Nationalist fare, such as a photo of a gun, the Constitution, and a Bible resting on the American flag.⁵⁹ Weaver once sang a Battle Hymn of the Republic (“Our God is marching on”) introduction to God Bless America at the Republican Party’s annual Statemen’s Dinner.⁶⁰ Perhaps most infamously, she “posted a Halloween picture of herself with her pastor posing in black face as Aunt Jemima. For a caption, Weaver wrote ‘Aunt Jemima, you is so sweet.’”⁶¹ After the election, she used her platform to stoke fear and activism, including telling people to attend a #StopTheSteal rally: “If this scandalous criminal act continues it will be the end of free elections and death to this Republic.”⁶²

When running for office, West Virginia delegate **Derrick Evans** wanted everyone “to know that I’m pro-life, pro-Second Amendment, and I’m going to fight for Christian values!” He preached “God-Given rights,” told voters that “[a]cross this country our Christian values have been under attack” and promised, “Once elected, I will spend every day fighting for Christian values!”⁶³ Evans livestreamed the video of himself breaching the Capitol while chanting “Trump” and made it easy on investigators by shouting “We’re in, we’re in! Derrick Evans is in the Capitol!”⁶⁴ Evans fistbumped a Capitol police officer and told him, “God bless you.” He resigned from the West Virginia legislature, and was arrested and charged.⁶⁵

Another West Virginia legislator, **Eric Barber**, wore tactical gear and a military helmet when he invaded the Capitol.⁶⁶ Barber had been a City Councillor in Parkersburg, a body the Freedom From Religion Foundation sued for reciting the Lord’s Prayer at every meeting. FFRF singled Barber out for his aggressive conduct against those who didn’t participate in the prayers, writing in the 2018 lawsuit: “At least one member of the City Council has been openly hostile to nonparticipants, the lawsuit charges. Councilman Eric Barber glared at attendees who sat during the prayer at a meeting. At the end of that prayer, Barber positioned himself near his microphone, pressed the button, and shouted, ‘Amen.’”⁶⁷ Barber left the Democratic party shortly after Trump became president over what he called the party’s “anti-Christian rhetoric.”⁶⁸ When the Senate confirmed Brett Kavanaugh he wrote on Facebook, “Better get your coat-hangers ready liberals.”⁶⁹ He was arrested and charged for his role in the Capitol attack.⁷⁰

Otero County, New Mexico Commissioner **Couy Griffin** rode his horse through town in March 2020 and said, “We’re just blessed to still be able to come out and fly the American flag, ride for our country, ride for our president and, most importantly, ride for our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ,”⁷¹ adding to these thoughts later at an anti-public health rally in May, “the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat.”⁷²

Griffin appeared in Appendix B, as the founder of Cowboys for Trump, who prayed over the crowd:

The founder of Cowboys for Trump prayed through a bullhorn above the crowd: “Let us pray Second Chronicles, chapter 7, verse 14, over our nation. Let us pray. Our Father says that if we will repent and pray, he will hear our prayers.” The crowd chanted, “Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump!,” unfurled a flag with “An Appeal to Heaven” on it, and held a “Trump 2020” flag on a pole topped with a white Christian cross alongside another flagpole with a sign that said, “Jesus, I trust in you.”⁷³

Griffin even seems to point at the Appeal to Heaven flag holders and give them a thumbs up.

Griffin was later arrested for his role in the attack, which he spoke about at the commission meeting immediately following the attack, on January 14.⁷⁴ First, he opened the meeting with an official prayer, addressing or mentioning his god 30 times in 85 seconds. He “pray[ed] for our nation . . . a nation with so much unrest,” prayed for “unity,” and prayed for “victory, which we already have in Jesus Christ,” ending his prayer “In Jesus name, Amen.”⁷⁵ The mentions of unity and unrest were somewhat bold given his presence at the Capitol days earlier and his comments later in the meeting.

At the end of the meeting he spoke for 17 minutes, including chastising the outgoing Vice President because “Pence certified a fraudulent election.”⁷⁶ He explained that he went to D.C. to tell people to kneel to Jesus:

I went there [D.C.] to support my president and stand up for my country. . . . Gary shared with me a vision that one of the boys from their church had had about somebody leading like a million people in prayer and that person was to ask everyone to take a knee in which to declare Jesus Christ as Lord in which the Bible says “every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess.” So that was passed on to me and that’s what I felt the call was.



He recounted the prayer he delivered on the steps of the Capitol while the crowd chanted “fight for Trump!” The prayer was “one of the greatest honors of my life,” said Griffin, and the attack “was the most historic sight that I’ve ever seen in my life. . . . I saw soccer moms crawling up the side of the Capitol . . .” He lionized the death of Ashli Babbitt, calling it “an execution” by “a Black D.C. police officer.”⁷⁷ He said that he was going to return to DC because of the Big Lie: “This election was fraudulent. On every level it was a fraud. It was stolen by Communist China. The evidence is irrefutable without a doubt. It’s not an opinion, it’s video evidence.”⁷⁸ Then he fearmongered about guns and masks, before listing the guns he was taking to DC before the inauguration but after the insurrection.

Griffin did return to DC, and he was arrested and charged. After his release, he spoke at the Feb. 11 commission meeting for another 20 minutes.⁷⁹ He refused to resign from the county commission, despite mounting pressure, promising instead “to prayerfully hold the line on a constitutional side, to fight for individual rights, individual liberties and individual freedoms which I believe that by God’s grace I have been able to do to date. . . .”⁸⁰ He then waxed on about taking his oath of office on a Bible, the same Bible he used as pastor at New Heart Cowboy Church and explained his religion informed personal governing philosophy, “That’s the platform that I stand on and I stand before God and I live in fear of God that my oath is my bond and my bond is to the people of Otero County.”⁸¹

Griffin later told reporters, “I went to pray with people, you know, and I went to lead people in prayer,”⁸² but on his Facebook page he warned of another rally at the Capitol: “it’s gonna be a sad day, there’s gonna be blood running out of that building.”⁸³

This is a Christian Nationalist preacher and public official motivated by prayer and the Bible to bring an arsenal to DC *after* the insurrection and before the inauguration, threatening “blood running out of” the Capitol.

Virginia State Senator **Amanda Chase** spoke at the Jan. 6 rally but left before the violence. Chase later called the insurrectionists “patriots” and was censured by the Virginia legislature, including members of her own party.⁸⁴ In the past, Chase has “worn a holstered handgun on the Senate floor, marched through downtown Richmond alongside far-right ‘boogaloo boys’ with an AR-15 strapped across her chest, and called on Trump to hold on to power after November’s election by declaring martial law.”⁸⁵ Chase lost a primary bid for governor and is a Christian Nationalist. She hosted a weekly radio show on which she parroted Mike Pence’s saying that he’s “a Christian first, a conservative second, and then a Republican.”⁸⁶ In one episode, she explains that she has a private, personal Facebook page for family photos,

and that she also had a “personal Senator Amanda Chase page,” where she posted a “scripture” or “psalm” every day.⁸⁷ She argued that’s okay because she’s not establishing a national religion and she’s “not Congress, if you want to get literal.” She adds, “The term separation of church and state is not even in the First Amendment, and therefore can’t be violated” and quotes RC Sproul (a preacher and one of the architects of the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy) calling this separation a “mythological concept.”⁸⁸ On another episode, she hosted Bishop Leon Benjamin, who appears in Appendix A as a speaker at the Jericho March Let the Church ROAR event on Dec. 12, 2020. In that episode, Chase claims there was a “move to take God out of our public schools” and wants “to put God back in our public schools,” and attacks the constitutional separation of state and church, too.⁸⁹

Michigan State Rep. **Matt Maddock** and his wife, Michigan Republican Party co-chair **Meshawn Maddock**, spoke at a January 5 rally and attended the January 6 rally, after organizing busloads of Trump supporters to travel from Michigan to help stop the election.⁹⁰ The “couple radicalized the state’s GOP and emboldened insurrectionists.”⁹¹ Shortly after the election, from her “CoChairMeshawn” account, Maddock tweeted, “This is not where I belong! Take this world and give me Jesus.”⁹² In June, Michigan activists demanded a forensic audit of their state election results at a prayer rally: “Boxes containing the affidavits, some inscribed with Biblical verses, were blessed with prayer and anointed in oil on the steps of Michigan’s Capitol.”⁹³ They prayed, repeatedly, sang hymns, and one speaker explained, “This is a spiritual battle. If you wonder why we’re doing this at a prayer rally, that’s because we recognize that this is a spiritual battle,” then compared the 2020 election with the persecution of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the Bible.⁹⁴

Alaska State Representative **David Eastman**, who represents Sarah Palin’s hometown of Wassila, was in D.C. on January 6. Before that, he was spreading the Big Lie.⁹⁵ Eastman is a member of the Oath Keepers.⁹⁶ See Appendix A for the Oath Keepers ties to the Jericho March. On his blog, Eastman wrote “It’s not PC to believe in truth. It’s not PC to believe what’s in the Bible. And even if it was, it’s certainly not PC to admit to it in public. Silence is what is demanded. And if you aren’t silent, you will be attacked”⁹⁷ Eastman attended Mike Lindell’s “cybersecurity” rally in August 2021.⁹⁸ His views are so extreme he was the first Alaska Representative to be censured and a few years later was stripped of his committee assignments and put on probation by his own party.⁹⁹

As far as I can tell, David Eastman is not related to **John Eastman**, the architect of the insurrection legal memo. However, David Eastman does claim to have been an Abraham Lincoln Fellow at **the Claremont Institute**,

which John Eastman was affiliated with. (John Eastman, incidentally also has some strong Christian Nationalist leanings, even having written “One Nation Under God: The Pledge of Allegiance Under Attack” a book-*cum-amicus* brief published by the Claremont Institute.) David Eastman also has a masters degree in apologetics from Biola University. He also apparently studied at the Oxford Study Centre in Oxford, which appears designed to trick people into thinking it’s affiliated with the renowned university but is actually part of **Summit Ministries**, a ministry based in Manitou Springs, Colorado, that appears to espouse Christian Nationalism.¹⁰⁰

Citing personal knowledge and Eastman quoting Hitler and posing for photos with Hitler quotes, one of Eastman’s former classmates didn’t mince words: “David Eastman, my classmate, is a white supremacist and a neo-fascist.”¹⁰¹ Those ideologies go hand-in-glove with Christian Nationalism.

Eastman isn’t the only January 6 Christian Nationalist to quote Hitler. US Congresswoman **Mary Miller**, who took office on Jan. 3, spoke to **Moms for America** on January 5th about “the importance of faith and guarding our youth from destructive influences,” and favorably quoted **Adolf Hitler**: “Hitler was right on one thing. He said, ‘whoever has the youth has the future.’”¹⁰²

Miller objected to the electoral certifications from Arizona and Pennsylvania in the House. Miller teaches Sunday School and Vacation Bible School at Oakland Christian Church.¹⁰³ In a candidate questionnaire she said she was “unabashedly Chstian” and claimed “Our nation was founded as a Christian nation,” which is a defining belief of Christian Nationalism, and she continued, “most of our leaders throughout history have in one way or another expressed belief in God. . . . We need leaders who have humbled themselves before God and strive to live their Christian faith in their daily lives.”¹⁰⁴

Miller’s husband, Illinois State Rep. **Chris Miller**, livestreamed a video from the Trump rally on Jan 6, the Washington Monument behind him and **Katrina Pierson** speaking over him on the stage. He said, “I think it’s important to know that we’re engaged in a great cultural war to see which worldview will survive, whether we will remain a free people under free-market capitalism or whether they will put us in the tyranny of socialism, communism and the dangerous Democrat terrorists that are trying to destroy our country.”¹⁰⁵ He has questionable ties to the **Three Percenters** militia group.¹⁰⁶ He denies entering the Capitol.¹⁰⁷

Arizona State Representative **Mark Finchem** spoke on stage at the January 5 “rally for Revival” in Freedom Plaza (see Appendix A) and was introduced by **Ali Alexander** of **Stop the Steal**.¹⁰⁸ Finchem began by telling the crowd, “This is God washing the stench off of Washington,

D.C. . . . America is watching the People of God.”¹⁰⁹ He repeated the Big Lie and then called for a “forensic audit” of every election. He’s now running for Arizona Secretary of State and would control and oversee Arizona’s elections. I understand that this Committee is already investigating his ties to **Alexander, Biggs**, and others who played central roles in fomenting the Big Lie and this attack.

Finchem was on the grounds and close to the Capitol during the attack.¹¹⁰ Some reports suggest that Finchem once “recruited” for the **Oath Keepers**.¹¹¹ On December 11, he tweeted to Ali Alexander that he planned to be at the **Jericho March** and spoke to the crowd.¹¹² He was only given a couple minutes on stage at the Let the Church ROAR event and he told the audience: “Ladies and Gentlemen, you have one job, and that is to get on your knees and pray that Satan’s minions would be bound up, that the fraud would be found out”¹¹³

Finchem’s state office is covered in Christian Nationalist imagery, including an “In God We Trust” poster, a plaque with at least nine Christian crosses, and what appears to be a sculpture of a hand holding a shofar.¹¹⁴ When State Rep. Athena Salman delivered a secular invocation in 2017, Finchem stood up and said a prayer to Jesus to replace it. He did something similar to a secular invocation in 2016, explaining that there needs to be a time for prayer, for “lifting this body up to the God that we speak of when we say our Pledge of Allegiance” and “we are ‘One nation under God.’ This republican form of government came out of the Book of Exodus. It is a matter of fact.”¹¹⁵ At the **Reawaken America tour** in January 2022, Finchem gave a talk entitled, “Election Integrity and God’s Command to Choose Wisely,” quoted Exodus, and tied “election integrity” to the Bible.¹¹⁶ He also trotted out some favorite Christian Nationalist quotes. **Mike Flynn, Roger Stone, Greg Locke, Lance Wallnau, Mike Lindell, Brian Gibson, Mark Burns**, and some of the other regulars from Appendix A appeared as well, and, like the **Jericho March** Let the Church ROAR event, they blew shofars to open the rally. Finchem is a Christian Nationalist.

This appendix is not meant to be exhaustive. Other state and local officials attended the rally, including Arizona State Rep. **Anthony Kern**, Missouri State Rep. **Justin Hill**, Georgia State Rep. **Vernon Jones** and Virginia Del. **Dave LaRock**, among others. The point is to show that Christian Nationalism is inextricably linked to the insurrection and its adjacent activism. Christian Nationalism provided the permission structure necessary for Americans to attack their own government and free and fair election.

ENDNOTES

Appendix A

1. For instance, a September 2020 rally on the National Mall called “The Return” included many of the same people mentioned in the previous section and preaching the same messages that we’ll see later in this report. See Peter Montgomery, *Trump Embraces Christian Nationalists and Friends Gathered in DC to Denounce Choice, LGBTQ Equality, Church-State Separation*, Right Wing Watch, Sept. 28, 2020, www.rightwingwatch.org/post/trump-embraces-christian-nationalists-and-friends-gathered-in-dc-to-denounce-choice-lgbtq-equality-church-state-separation/.

It also included bigger names, such as Pat Robertson, Kevin Sorbo, Cindy Jacobs, and Ralph Drollinger (who teaches the Capitol Ministries Bible Study for members of Congress and which infamously helped the Trump administration justify the child separation policy at the border by citing Romans 13). See Andrew L. Seidel, *The White House Bible Study group that influenced Trump’s family separation policy*, ThinkProgress, June 19, 2018, <https://archive.thinkprogress.org/white-house-bible-study-group-trump-child-separation-policy-24de236c4824/>.

For more on the various Bible studies run by Capitol Ministries, see Valerie Strauss, *Top Trump administration officials flock to weekly Bible study classes at White House*, The Washington Post, Aug. 1, 2017. Available online at <https://wapo.st/3Ev25vf>.

2. Right Wing Watch (@RightWingWatch), Twitter, Nov. 4, 2020, 9:24 p.m., <https://twitter.com/RightWingWatch/status/1324175651515949056>;

Wyatte Grantham-Phillips, *Pastor Paula White calls on angels from Africa and South America to bring Trump victory*, USA Today, Nov. 5, 2020, www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/11/05/paula-white-trumps-spiritual-adviser-african-south-american-angels/6173576002/.

3. Peter Montgomery, *White House Aide Paula White Calls on God and His Followers to Fight to Keep Trump in Office*, Right Wing Watch, Nov. 6, 2020, www.rightwingwatch.org/post/white-house-aide-paula-white-calls-on-god-and-his-followers-to-fight-to-keep-trump-in-office/.

One of the other preachers connected to White’s ministries, Todd Lamphere, added with the violent hint, “Jesus Christ was a warrior. He’s a fighter. You need to understand something: The Christian life is a battleground and not a playground.” Lamphere had actively used the public school system in efforts to convert other people’s children to his religion. See Katherine Stewart, *The Movement to Put a Church in Every School Is Growing*, The Nation, Jan. 14, 2015, www.thenation.com/article/archive/movement-put-church-every-school-growing/;

WFTV 9, *Orange County high school under fire over student athletes praying*, Aug. 28, 2014, www.wftv.com/news/local/orange-county-high-school-under-fire-over-student-107063074/;

Brownie Marie, *High school football team fires its chaplain after atheist complaints*, Aug. 29, 2014, www.christiantoday.com/article/high-school-football-team-fires-its-chaplain-after-atheist-complaints/40113.htm.

4. Frederick Clarkson, *Beneath the ‘Wacky’ Paula White Video is a Dark and Deeply Undemocratic World Propping up the President*, Nov. 17, 2020, <https://religiondispatches.org/beneath-the-wacky-paula-white-video-is-a-dark-and-deeply-undemocratic-world-propping-up-the-president/>.

5. Peter Montgomery, *Lance Wallnau Claims ‘Fighting Trump Is Fighting God,’ Says While Trump Is Sick God’s Angel Will ‘Wreck’ His Enemies*, Right Wing Watch, Oct. 5, 2020, www.rightwingwatch.org/post/lance-wallnau-claims-fighting-trump-%e2%80%8bis-fighting-god-says-while-trump-%e2%80%8bis-sick-gods-angel-will-wreck-his-enemies/.

6. Id.

7. C-SPAN, *Campaign 2020 Rally for President Trump in Washington, D.C.*, Nov. 14, 2020, at 5:45, www.c-span.org/video/?478128-1/rally-president-trump-washington-dc.

8. Jon Campbell, *Gavin McInnes Wants You to Know He’s Totally Not a White Supremacist*, The Village Voice, Feb. 15, 2017, www.villagevoice.com/2017/02/15/gavin-mcinnes-wants-you-to-know-hes-totally-not-a-white-supremacist/.

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Bloomberg, *Demonstrators Participate In ‘Million MAGA March,’* (1229622626), Getty Images, Nov. 14, 2020, www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/demonstrators-pray-during-the-million-maga-march-at-freedom-news-photo/1229622626?adppopup=true.

10. Andrew Caballero-Reynolds, *US-POLITICS-VOTE-RALLY* (1229622869), Getty Images, Nov. 14, 2020, www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/supporter-of-us-president-donald-trump-prays-near-a-line-of-news-photo/1229622869?adppopup=true.

11. Associated Press, *Thousands Rally Behind Trump, Insisting He Won Race He Lost*, Nov. 14, 2020, www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2020-11-14/trump-thrills-protesting-supporters-with-motorcade-drive-by.

12. The Austin-American Statesman, *PHOTOS: Trump Supporters rally in DC to protest election results*, Nov. 14, 2020, www.statesman.com/photogallery/TX/20201114/PHOTOGALLERY/111409990/PH/1.
13. The Austin-American Statesman, *PHOTOS: Trump Supporters rally in DC to protest election results*, Nov. 14, 2020, Photos 10, 16, www.statesman.com/photogallery/TX/20201114/PHOTOGALLERY/111409990/PH/1.
14. Id., photo 12; NurPhoto, *Trump Supporters, Far-right Extremists Rally In Washington DC For 'Million MAGA March,'* (1229648207), Getty Images, Nov. 14, 2020, www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-million-maga-march-saw-10-15-000-trump-supporters-news-photo/1229648207?adppopup=true.
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Oliver Douliery, *US-politics-vote-RALLY*, (1229619890), Getty Images, Nov. 14, 2020, www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/supporters-of-us-president-donald-trump-rally-at-the-us-news-photo/1229619890?adppopup=true.
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22. Andrew Lichtenstein, *Trump supporters rally in Washington to declare the election results a fraud*, (1285832435), Getty Images, Nov. 14, 2020, www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/tens-of-thousands-of-trump-supporters-rally-and-march-to-news-photo/1285832435?adppopup=true.
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28. Marissa Lang, Michael Miller, Peter Jamison, Justin Moyer, Clarence Williams, Peter Hermann, Frederick Kunkle, and John Woodrow Cox, *After thousands of Trump supporters rally in D.C., violence erupts when night falls*, The Washington Post, Nov. 15, 2020, www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2020/11/14/million-maga-march-dc-protests/.
29. Id.
30. "Then they devoted to destruction by the edge of the sword all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys ... They burned down the city, and everything in it; only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord." Joshua 6:21, 24 NRSV.
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33. Alex Joseph, *Jericho March Co-Founder: 'God Told Me to Let the Church Roar,'* NTD, Dec. 13, 2020, www.ntd.com/jericho-march-co-founder-god-told-me-to-let-the-church-roar_539706.html. As Weaver gives the interview, Ali Alexander, the Stop the Steal organizer, walks through the background at 3:40 after delivering his speech from the stage. See also Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York: Liveright, 2020.

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9. Id. at 8:32.

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56. Hamil Harris, YouTube, Jan. 7, 2021, *Pro-Trump Protesters*, 0:01–0:05, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c_nC6UqjVc.

Seefried appears at the beginning, speaking to another camera crew, and it's hard to make out all the words. But Harris clarifies some in the text of his story. Hamil Harris, *Congress certifies Biden as president after mob carrying Christian symbols storms Capitol*, The Christian Chronicle, Jan. 7, 2021, <https://christianchronicle.org/us-congress-certifies-biden-as-president-after-mob-carrying-christian-symbols-storms-the-capitol/>.

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Here it is on the march to the Capitol: Robert Nickelsberg, *Trump Supporters Hold "Stop The Steal" Rally In DC Amid Ratification Of Presidential Election*, Getty Images, Jan. 6, 2021, no. 1296432288;

Seven seconds into this video of marchers heading to the Capitol: <https://d2amdhggrspxsl.cloudfront.net/s3vids/nsGY09hlePeh.converted.mp4>;

In this video of an Epoch Times interview, it's draped over a red pickup truck: <https://d2amdhggrspxsl.cloudfront.net/s3vids/fqmYI9BqZlj8.converted.mp4> (you can actually see three separate Christian flags in this one video and other flags with Christian imagery and verbiage, such as "Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my President");

There are two Christian flags in this video: <http://d2amdhggrspxsl.cloudfront.net/s3vids/BKSLTTzLtOu2.converted.mp4>;

Here's another: www.shutterstock.com/editorial/image-editorial/us-president-trump-supporters-storm-the-capitol-in-nyc-usa-6-jan-2021-11697298a1.

59. Video at https://ffrf.org/uploads/video/Jan6_Videos/Flag_Guy_Captioned_Jan6.mp4.

See also, Jack Jenkins, *For insurrectionists, a violent faith brewed from nationalism, conspiracies and Jesus*, Religion News Service, Jan. 12, 2021, <https://religionnews.com/2021/01/12/the-faith-of-the-insurrectionists/>.

60. Lev Radin, *Pro-Trump Riot in Washington DC, District of Columbia, United States*, Shutterstock, Jan. 6, 2021, www.shutterstock.com/editorial/image-editorial/protrump-riot-in-washington-dc-district-of-columbia-united-states-06-jan-2021-11696121gu.

At the November 14 rally at the Supreme Court, a nearly identical flag read, "JESUS IS LORD." <https://d2amdhggrspxsl.cloudfront.net/s3vids/RizVuHc6OOEX.converted.mp4> at 0:36.

A handwritten sign at that rally also proclaimed "Jesus is King, Trump is president." at 0:25 <https://d2amdhggrspxsl.cloudfront.net/s3vids/yS8nnxnXxf74.converted.mp4>.

61. NBC News, *Protestors walk around on Senate floor after breaking into Capitol building*, Jan. 6, 2021, www.nbcnews.com/video/protesters-walk-around-on-senate-floor-after-breaking-into-capitol-building-98948677663.

62. The sign accompanying the Christian flag purports to quote Benjamin Franklin, but actually quotes a Facebook post and YouTube video posted one week earlier by Dutch Sheets, a preacher from South Carolina who had been hosting daily prayers on YouTube asking God to intercede and make Trump president again. Dutch Sheets, *The Eagles are Rising | Give Him 15: Daily Prayer with Dutch Day 54*, YouTube, Dec. 30, 2020, <https://youtu.be/pLfeJb7RgUY?t=600>.

Sheets's December 30, 2020, Facebook post is long. He recounts a six-scene dream given to Dan Lynch, a preacher out of Pensacola. After hearing this dream, Sheets prayed specific prayers at several key locations in Washington, D.C., as he believed the dream commanded. The dream involved a flock of eagles at various monuments, including the Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, and Trump Hotel. Of course, Trump was in the dream as well, "holding a Benelli Super Black Eagle shotgun and reloading it with shells" with dead ducks all around him. Outside the Trump Hotel, a statue of Ben Franklin comes to life, "angry and teary-eyed with rage" and condemns mail-in voting with a cryptic comment:

Then, he repeated his famous phrase, "We have a Republic, if we can keep it." He reached out to shake my hand and looked me in the eye as if to say, "Let's make sure we keep it."

Sheets interprets "Franklin's ... oft-repeated quote regarding the republic" as "an admonition and warning to the *ekklesia* to keep fighting." Sheets offers several definitions of *ekklesia* but here means American Christians, and Sheets specifies the fight as "spiritual warfare." The YouTube video has been viewed nearly a quarter of a million times. The reach of the video and certainly the message is considerably broader. For instance, Riverside Full Gospel Church in Lucedale, Mississippi, played the message during its service. See Riverside Full Gospel, Facebook (Live Stream) at 1:04:15, Dec. 31, 2020, www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=3646922922021401&ref=watch_permalink.

63. This flag can be seen in video: Inside News, *We Decoded The Symbols From The Storming Of The Capitol* | Decoded, YouTube, Jan. 16, 2021, at 0:10, <https://youtu.be/blxT61F-Ris?t=10>, at 5:42, <https://youtu.be/blxT61F-Ris?t=339>, and at 6:02, <https://youtu.be/blxT61F-Ris?t=362>;

Right Side Broadcasting Network, *RSBN LIVE: U.S. Capitol on Lockdown, Senate and House in Recess*, YouTube, Jan. 6, 2021, at 3:00, <https://youtu.be/vTXOkcwYxvE?t=180>;

RFIRN, *Eastside Capital Building 1/6/21*, YouTube, Jan. 10, 2021, at 25:25, <https://youtu.be/ZjLvYqJ2-EM?t=1526> (on the East steps, just as they breach the door).

And in multiple photos: Shira Feder, *Storming of the Capitol through the lens of a veteran Jewish DC photographer*, The Times of Israel, Jan. 14, 2021, www.timesofisrael.com/storming-of-the-capitol-through-the-lens-of-a-veteran-jewish-dc-photographer/, see specifically https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/01/901_Wolf_use-1536x1022-1-1024x640.jpg;

Lev Radin, *Pro-Trump Riot in Washington DC, District of Columbia, United States*, Shutterstock, Jan. 6, 2021, www.shutterstock.com/editorial/image-editorial/protrump-riot-in-washington-dc-district-of-columbia-united-states-06-jan-2021-11696121eq;

Alamy, *Save America Rally, moments before Capitol Protest begins*, www.alamy.com/save-america-rally-moments-before-capitol-protest-begins-washington-dc-usa-image397573598.html and www.alamy.com/save-america-rally-moments-before-capitol-protest-begins-washington-dc-usa-image396867421.html.

The “Jesus is my Savior, Trump is my president” slogan even appeared on shirts. See Robert Nickelsberg, *Trump Supporters Hold “Stop The Steal” Rally In DC Amid Ratification Of Presidential Election*, Getty Images, Jan. 6, 2021, no. 1298602248;

Oliver Douliery, *US-POLITICS-ELECTION*, Getty Images, Jan. 6, 2021, no. 1230448106.

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65. Kimberly Winston, *The History Behind The Christian Flags Spotted At The Pro-Trump U.S. Capitol ‘Coup’*, Religion Unplugged, Jan. 6, 2021, <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2021/1/6/some-history-behind-the-christian-flags-at-the-pro-trump-capitol-coup>.

66. Jordan Klepper interviewed this individual for the Daily Show on Comedy Central. The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, *Jordan Klepper Fingers the Pulse- Capitol Insurrection (Clip)*, Season 26, Comedy Central, Aired Jan. 12, 2021, at 2:30, www.cc.com/video/ak9tak/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah-jordan-klepper-fingers-the-pulse-capitol-insurrection.

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68. *EXCLUSIVE: Man who entered Capitol tells his story to LifeSiteNews*, LifeSiteNews, Jan. 6, 2021, at 4:17, www.lifesitenews.com/news/exclusive-man-who-stormed-capitol-tells-his-story-to-lifesitenews.

69. See endnote 62.

70. Rapert is a preacher and legislator who started a group for “Christian lawmakers” alongside his personal ministry and sponsored bills for a Ten Commandments monument at the Arkansas Capitol and to require the posting of “In God We Trust” in every public school classroom.

71. Jason Rapert (@jasonrapert), Twitter, Mar. 12, 2021 6:47 AM (Thread), <https://twitter.com/jasonrapert/status/1370340721379659782>;

Jason Rapert, *America Under Attack - the Battle for The Soul of Our Nation* (Blog), Holy Ghost Ministries, Jan. 9, 2021, www.holyghostministries.org/post/america-under-attack-the-battle-for-the-soul-of-our-nation.

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73. Jack Jenkins, *For insurrectionists, a violent faith brewed from nationalism, conspiracies and Jesus*, Religion News Service, Jan. 12, 2021, <https://religionnews.com/2021/01/12/the-faith-of-the-insurrectionists/>.

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75. Tyler Merbler, Flickr.com (Jan. 6, 2021), www.flickr.com/photos/37527185@N05/50814426406/.

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Katie Munnik, *HIS FLAG HELD HIGH: The Capitol Hill insurrectionists misused symbols of Christian faith*, Christian Courier, Feb. 5, 2021, www.christiancourier.ca/his-flag-held-high/.

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78. FBI Most Wanted, Photograph #240B, www.fbi.gov/wanted/capitol-violence-images/capitol-240b.jpg/view.

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Peter Manseau (@plmanseau), Twitter, Jan. 17, 8:47 PM (Thread), <https://twitter.com/plmanseau/status/1350983168992694273>.

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- Peter Manseau (@plmanseau), Twitter, Jan. 17, 2021 9:31 AM, <https://twitter.com/plmanseau/status/1350812920633044992?s=09>.
106. Tyler Merbler, Flickr.com, Jan. 6, 2021, DSC09170, <www.flickr.com/photos/37527185@N05/50826699171/>;
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110. Tyler Merbler, Flickr.com, Jan. 6, 2021, *Hats*, <www.flickr.com/photos/37527185@N05/50821278796/>.
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The *New Yorker* video shows Black with his MAGA hat off and hands raised in worship during the prayer around 9 minutes in. He has on one yellow leather glove and one purple medical glove. Black is wearing a red MAGA hat, camouflage pants, camouflage jacket, protective gloves, protective eyewear, and a "Blacks for Trump" T-shirt, which he claims is a joke — Joshua Matthew Black is white.

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Appendix C

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"We're always supposed to have been wearing these badges and slamming these gavels, because that's who we represent: the ultimate judge and the king," Sheets told the crowd, banging the gavel into the podium. He said God had revealed to him a year earlier that the early days of the Trump administration would experience 10 months of turbulence followed by three years of a national "turnaround" back to God.
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