

THE MYTH OF CHRISTIAN NATIONALIST VIOLENCE

Part II

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[Part I](#) of this installment exposing the myth of Christian nationalist violence focused on six purported incidents of this phenomenon as described by Amanda Tyler, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC) and lead organizer of Christians Against Christian Nationalism.

She has testified on two occasions before congressional panels on this issue. The research I did examining her sources forms the basis of my analysis. Most of her claims are just that—assertions. They are not evidentiary. Her central claim maintains that “The greatest threat to religious liberty in the United States today...is Christian nationalism.”

Part II addresses the seventh, and last, incident—the January 6, 2021 Capitol riot. She calls it “an insurrection.”

“Christian Nationalism and the January 6, 2021 Insurrection” is a [report](#) sponsored by BJC and the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), a notorious anti-Christian atheist organization. It was published in 2022.

There are seven chapters in the Report, all supposedly chock full of evidence that the riot was a Christian nationalist event. Yet the first three chapters are merely a commentary on Christian nationalism, and don’t even attempt to tie the violence at the Capitol to it. Of the other four chapters, two were written by Andrew Seidel, an attorney who works for FFRF.

Katherine Stewart is an author and investigative journalist.

Here is the first sentence in her chapter: "By now, most Americans understand that Christian nationalism played a role in last year's violent attack on the Capitol." She cites not a single source. It is simply an unsupported assertion. This is the extent of her "evidence."

Seidel wrote chapters five and six. Chapter five covers events leading up to January 6, and chapter 6 claims to provide evidence that the riot was of Christian nationalist origin.

Chapter five says there were two violent Christian nationalist episodes leading up to January 6: one occurred on November 14, 2020; the other occurred on December 12, 2020.

Seidel argues that after supporters of President Trump rallied on November 14, "violence erupted in D.C." It did. But the source he cites from the *Washington Post* simply says that Trump supporters clashed with counterdemonstrators. So what? The news story says not a word about Christian anything.

The December 12 incident saw another nighttime clash between the two factions. The source he cites notes that the Proud Boys, a right-wing group that supports Trump, was involved. They were. What Seidel doesn't mention is that four of them were stabbed.

Chapter six begins by saying that Paula White, one of Trump's spiritual advisors, delivered "an explicitly Christian nationalist and openly militant prayer." What was it? "Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord" (Psalm 33:12). That was it.

Other "evidence" that the riot was a Christian nationalist event include statements by Katrina Pierson, a Trump campaign spokesperson. She said, Trump "loves the United States of America. He loves God." Ergo, this is an invitation to Christian nationalist violence.

Seidel also says that some people carried a cross and a Christian flag, and some were even spotted singing "God Bless

America.” More evidence that this was a Christian nationalist event was the sighting of men blowing shofars. A shofar is a Jewish musical instrument—not exactly a prop used by violent Christian nationalists.

Tyler wraps up the Report with similar “evidence.” Signs such as “In God We Trust” are considered proof that Christian nationalists were on a tear. She says that as the violence took place, something curious happened: Christian leaders who condemned it “for the most part did not name Christian nationalism as a contributing or driving factor.” I wonder why.

No doubt there are crazies who fit the label “Christian nationalist.” But if those who make a living off of selling the idea that Christian nationalists are a violent-ridden threat to America, and they can’t provide convincing evidence, then they are frauds. Worse, accusing Christians of bomb threats and arson—absent any proof—makes *them* a bona fide threat to America.