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A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: Christian Nationalist Belief and Behavior in the United States

Tommy Nanto

Introduction

Christian nationalism is a buzzword in American politics, but insufficiently researched in the intersection of politics, religion, and psychology. In a country where individual Christian practice is declining, why is this strand of nationalism seemingly on the rise? Through an original study, I establish an empirical link between Christian nationalism and racial resentment, finding that racial resentment is the single greatest predictor of Christian nationalist beliefs. I frame Christian nationalist beliefs separately from behavior. I find initial empirical evidence that racial resentment and Republican partisanship predict both belief and behavior, but religiosity does not predict Christian nationalist behavior.

The distinction between Christian nationalist beliefs and behavior is not systematically addressed in political science literature. In addition, research in politics and religion indicates personal religious beliefs and outward religious behavior predict political opinion in different ways, yet this differentiation is missing from research on Christian nationalism. My findings explain discrepancies between Christian nationalist belief and behavior by treating them as separate independent variables. I present evidence that racial resentment and political partisanship, not religious behavior or belief, drive individuals to act on their Christian nationalist beliefs and exhibit Christian nationalist behavior.

Racial Resentment, Religion, and Politics

Christian nationalist beliefs generally include a distinctly Christian view of American history and policy preferences that reflect the desire to restore America to

a perceived rightful Christian origin. The most definitive research on the causes of Christian nationalism in the United States focuses primarily on Christian nationalist *beliefs*. Sociologists Whitehead and Perry argue Christian nationalism is a political ideology, motivated by racial resentment and partisanship that “co-opts Christian language and iconography in order to cloak particular political or social ends” (2020). Other research finds priming on Christian nationalism increases racial resentment (Johnson et al. 2010). Christian nationalist belief, as measured by Whitehead and Perry, is a measure of public opinion and should be treated as such. I argue Christian nationalist belief is incorrectly conflated with Christian nationalist behavior.

Support for Donald Trump and his brand of the Republican Party is the current embodiment of Christian nationalist behavior in the United States. Lajevardi and Abrajano find that negative sentiment towards Muslims (racial resentment) was a strong and significant predictor of support for Trump in 2016 (2019). Whitehead et al. find significance for Trump support in other measures of racial resentment, as well as a distinct measure of Christian nationalist belief (2018 pg. 150). Hooghe and Dassonneville find the two strongest predictors for Trump support in 2016 were anti-immigrant sentiment and racial resentment (2018). With evidence that racial resentment is a strong predictor of Trump support and core attribute of Christian nationalist belief, we can hypothesize that Trump support is a form of Christian nationalist behavior.

Current research provides two key findings. First, Christian nationalist belief is not a religious worldview, but a political ideology that relies on a narrow belief of a deeply Christian American history. This belief is rooted in racial resentment and annexes power to white, Protestant men. Second, Trump support in 2016 and 2020 is the current embodiment of Christian nationalist behavior. These findings, while extremely important, assume the predicting factors of belief and behavior are the same. I argue otherwise.

Since Christian nationalism is a political ideology veiled by religious symbolism and language, we must address the relationship between religion and politics in the United States. How does religion inform political opinion and vice versa? Djupe et al. establish a difference between religious identification and affiliation (2017). They find that politics on the Christian Right have threatened organized religion in the United States by alienating liberals and moderates – but only in the context of *congregational affiliation*. Congregational affiliation refers to an attachment to a specific, local, religious organization and day-to-day social religious practice. Thus, social religious behavior matters for politics more than general religious identification. Wald et al. find that churches play a distinct role as political communities, and “contribute strongly to the members' political conservatism over and above the personal commitment of respondents to traditional Christian values and a variety of social and attitudinal variables” (1988). However, “religion” is not a catch-all factor for political behavior. Recent literature in the psychology of religion corroborates the theory that religious *belief* and *behavior* should be distinguished. Graham and Haidt show religious behavior creates social unity by promoting interaction with innate moral foundations, specifically through in-group loyalty and respect for authority (2010). This level of

distinction between religious belief and behavior has yet to be applied to Christian nationalism in the United States, specifically concerning the different motivations behind Christian nationalist belief and behavior.

Outside the United States, there is a global precedent for distinguishing *religious* belief and behavior and how the two interact with *political* belief and behavior. Ginges et al. explore how personal religious belief (measured by prayer) and social religious behavior (measured by religious service attendance) independently predict support for suicide attacks in the Middle East (2009). They theorize religion's role in support for suicide attacks is to provide a community and environment that builds "coalitional identities" (Ginges et al., 2009). Through three experiments, Ginges et al. find that increased religious service attendance predicts support for suicide attacks more than prayer—for both Palestinian Muslims and Jewish Israelis (2009).

Suicide bombing is a form of radical political ideology that crosses the threshold from belief to behavior. While there are obvious differences between Trump support and support for suicide bombing, both are political *behaviors*. The same distinction between belief and behavior should be applied to the context of Christian nationalism in the United States.

Theory

I propose the two following hypotheses to examine the relationship between religion, racial resentment and Christian nationalism. My hypotheses also distinguish between Christian nationalist belief and behavior, as well as religious belief and behavior.

H1: Christian nationalist belief should be predicted by social religious behavior, Republicanism, and racial resentment.

On the surface, Christian nationalist belief and behavior seem religious in nature. However, I assume Christian nationalism is not a form of religious extremism, but rather a nationalist political ideology that has hijacked religious symbolism and language to further its agenda. Racial resentment is at the core of Christian nationalist belief at both the group and individual level.

At the group level, Christian nationalist "in-group" identity and belief has formed throughout the history of the United States. Historically, racial resentment is inseparable from much of white Christian identity in America, especially Protestant America. As David French writes, "for more than two centuries, the United States of America was quite likely the best place in the world to live if you were a white theologically conservative Protestant" (2021). The comfort of religious freedom and majority status are woven into the comfort of systemic white privilege.

If Christian nationalist belief is triggered by social religious behavior and partisanship, why has Christian nationalist belief become increasingly "loud" despite decreased religious behavior in the United States? Christian nationalists are losing the social power, political power, and majority status the white Christian in-group

has experienced for generations. Perry and Whitehead (2020) address the connection between racial hierarchies and religion:

Appeals to Christianity were merely cynical and transparent attempts to sanction the racial hierarchy. Frederick Douglass, for example, famously described the Christianity of the South as, ‘the justifier of the most appalling barbarity,— a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds,— and a dark shelter under, which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection.’ As Douglass points out, white Americans’ claims to be preserving Christian order, America’s Christian heritage, or even “religious freedom” have long served as coverings for what has amounted to the exclusion of nonwhite and especially black Americans... In fact, historians like Randall Balmer trace the birth of the Religious Right and its brand of Christian nationalism to a reaction to federal efforts to restrict the ability of conservative Christian schools to racially discriminate (p. 99).

Groups hijacking Christianity to justify political ends is not a new phenomenon in America. Myths are created to justify racist, nationalist ideologies. At the individual level, what contributes to a person’s belief in these myths?

At the individual level, no person is likely to admit, or necessarily perceive, that their Christian nationalist attitudes are rooted in racial resentment, political ideology, or anything other than religious devotion. A consistent phenomenon researched in cognitive psychology is “substituting questions” (Kahneman 2011). When faced with a mentally taxing question, people are inclined to give an answer to a simpler question (De Neys et al., 2013, p. 269). In the case of Christian nationalism, religious belief is that “easier” justification for politically nationalist ideals, even if racial resentment is the true motivator. This and other cognitive mechanisms may explain how and why individuals throughout American history have tried to veil political ends with their claims of religious conviction. Still, religion must play some role in Christian nationalist behavior. My second hypothesis addresses this role.

H2: Christian nationalist behavior is predicted by social religious behavior, Republicanism, and racial resentment, but not inward religious belief.

H2 reinforces and expands the theory that Christian nationalist behavior is inherently political and ideological, but not religious. While religious symbols and language are inseparable from Christian nationalist belief, increased religious behavior would, ideally, decrease such nationalist ideologies. This hypothesis builds on H1 and distinguishes religious belief and behavior. As discussed, researchers have found a clear distinction between inward religious belief and outward religious behavior, especially regarding how religion informs politics. I hypothesize that this distinction applies to Christian nationalist belief and behavior, since Christian nationalism is inherently political.

Social religious behavior, such as church attendance, provides individuals with a community that forms an in-group identity and homogenous political views. This

social and political community is distinct from personal religious belief or practice. Combined with Republicanism and racial resentment, social religious behavior introduces the religious context that allows individuals and groups to become Christian nationalist actors in the name of religion. I hypothesize that personal religious devotion and habits do not introduce the same religious context as social religious practice one may use to justify nationalist ideals.

Research in the psychology of religion has repeatedly found a connection that links religious behavior, such as prayer, with prosocial outcomes (Campbell et al., 2018). Furthermore, most Christian teachings include service, love for others, and inclusion as central beliefs. These principles do not need to be internalized for one to participate in social religious activity. However, these religious convictions would ideally clash with nationalist ideals and prevent a Christian nationalist “believer” from becoming a Christian nationalist “actor.”

Methods

To determine the relationship between religion, Christian nationalism, and racial resentment, I fielded a survey of 800 US adults in March 2021, using Amazon M-Turk respondents. The survey consisted of four question blocks:

1. Demographics
2. Racial resentment
3. Christian nationalism
4. Religiosity

The demographic block included age, income, race, religious affiliation, political ideology, party identification, gender, education, and 2020 presidential vote. These questions provide necessary control variables, and the key measure of Christian nationalist behavior (i.e. Trump support).

The racial resentment block included questions by Kinder and Sanders, widely accepted as the dominant measure of racial resentment among Americans (Carmines et al., 2011). These questions directly measure the degree to which a respondent believes in systemic racism in the United States, and indirectly measure racial resentment toward black Americans. The response options were on a 4-point Likert scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. As is common in survey methodology, I did not include an option for a neutral response in order to decrease non-response error, especially given the social sensitivity of these questions (Fowler 2014).

Racial resentment block:

1. Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
2. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class (reverse coded).

3. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve (reverse coded).
4. It's really a matter of some people just not trying hard enough: if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

I conducted factor loading analysis and a Chronbach's alpha test to measure the internal strength and consistency of these questions. This survey question block is widely used in social science research, so as expected, the racial resentment block showed high reliability. The responses were then combined into an average "racial resentment" score, on a 0-1 scale.

Table 1. Racial resentment, Chronbach's alpha and factor analysis

Chronbach's alpha	0.73
Factor loading Q1	0.59
Factor loading Q2	0.69
Factor loading Q3	0.53
Factor loading Q4	0.73

As discussed earlier, Christian nationalist behavior is measured by a vote for Donald Trump in the 2020 election. To measure Christian nationalist belief, I adapted the scale created and recommended by sociologists Whitehead and Perry (2020).

Christian nationalist belief block:

1. The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation.
2. The federal government should advocate Christian values.
3. The federal government should allow the display of religious symbols in public places.
4. The success of the United States is part of God's plan.
5. The federal government should enforce separation of church and state.

The original scale included a sixth question which I did not include in my adaptation: "The federal government should allow prayer in public schools." I omitted this question due to the strong similarity to Q5. I conducted factor analysis and a Chronbach's alpha test to measure the strength of the Christian nationalist belief block. Q5 ("The federal government should enforce separation of church and state") was a strong outlier in the factor analysis, and the overall Chronbach's alpha value was 0.50. This outlier is contrary to the original scale of Whitehead and Perry, and may be due to MTurk sampling (which may produce a younger and more liberal sample than a more representative sample). I omitted Q5, which increased the Chronbach's alpha to 0.77. I hypothesize that Q6, not included, would similarly be an outlier. I kept the four remaining questions and averaged them into a single "Christian nationalist belief" score on a 0-1 scale to match the racial resentment block.

Table 2. Christian nationalist belief, Chronbach's alpha and factor analysis

Chronbach's alpha (Q5 included)	0.50
Factor loading Q1	0.82
Factor loading Q2	0.84
Factor loading Q3	0.62
Factor loading Q4	0.80
Factor loading Q5	0.11
Chronbach's alpha (Q5 omitted)	0.77

Finally, the religiosity block was replicated from the Duke University Religion Index, a strong measure of religious behavior and belief (Koenig and Büsing 2010). This index was created to measure religious behavior (both organizational and non-organizational) and personal religiosity in longitudinal studies.

Religion index block:

1. How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?
2. How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?
3. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my approach to life.
4. In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine.
5. I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life.

This block measures both self-reported personal religious conviction (Q3, Q4, Q5) and religious behavior (Q1, Q2), which is a key differentiation in my theory. These questions were standardized on a 0-1 scale. While I did not combine these questions into a single measure of religion (in order to preserve the distinction between belief and behavior), I also conducted factor analysis and a Chronbach's alpha test to measure the strength and internal consistency of the question block. The two questions that measured religious behavior (Q1, Q2) scored slightly lower in the factor analysis compared to the questions that measured belief. This provides some evidence that the latent construct between the two categories is different.

Table 3. Religious belief and behavior, Chronbach's alpha and factor analysis

Chronbach's alpha	0.88
Factor loading Q1	0.70
Factor loading Q2	0.72
Factor loading Q3	0.83
Factor loading Q4	0.81
Factor loading Q5	0.82

With the survey data collected, I conducted two separate regression analyses to test my hypotheses.

Model 1

H1: Christian nationalist belief is predicted by social religious behavior, Republicanism, and racial resentment.

To test H1, I regressed the Christian nationalist belief score on Trump vote, religious affiliation, religious belief, religious behavior, party identification, the racial resentment score, as well as age, gender, race, and income. As described earlier, each variable was combined on a 0–1 scale or as a binary indicator for ease of interpretation. The model included robust standard errors. Each control variable was included to decrease omitted variable bias, as age, gender, race, and income may correlate with political belief, racial resentment, or Christian nationalist belief.

Model 2

H2: Trump support (Christian nationalist behavior) is predicted by racial resentment, Republicanism, and social religious behavior, but not inward religious belief.

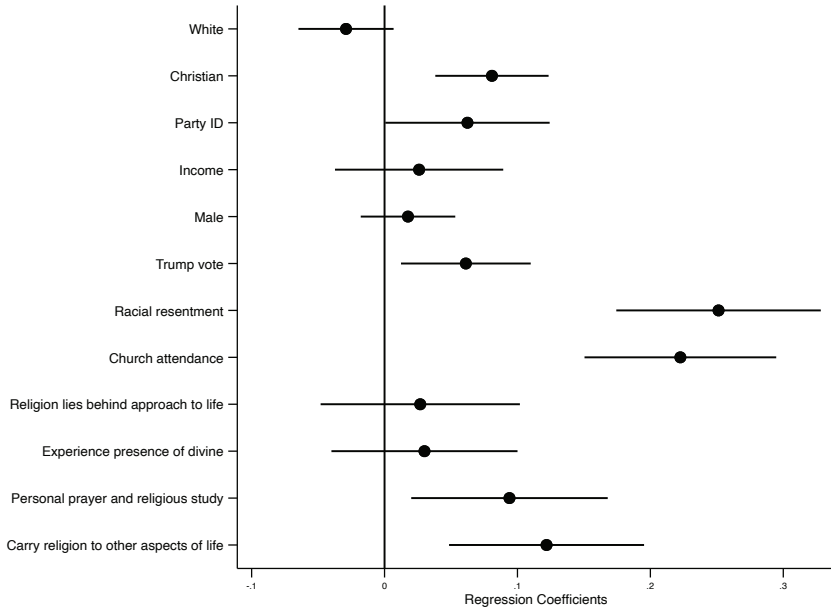
To test H2, I regressed Christian nationalist behavior (via 2020 Trump vote) on Christian nationalist belief score, religious affiliation, religious belief, religious behavior, party identification, the racial resentment score, as well as age, gender, race, and income. Model 2 also included robust standard errors.

There are some limitations to my methods. First, the M-Turk survey was not a representative sample of American adults – the proportions for gender, race, political party, and religion were not matched by overall demographics in the United States. I was unable to weigh the survey data to account for this demographic variation. The sensitive and personal content of religion and racial resentment may have also triggered social desirability bias and lead to dishonest answers. Priming from one block could also influence the answers in another block, though I attempted to control for this by randomizing the order of the blocks.

Another key limitation is that the survey did not distinguish between Christian denominations beyond Catholic, Latter-day Saint (Mormon), and Protestant. Research has shown that Evangelical Protestants behave differently than mainline Protestants, especially regarding Christian nationalist beliefs (Whitehead et al., 2018). Christian nationalism has historically been focused on Evangelical Protestants, but my methods cannot explore differences between Evangelicals and other Christians. However, my methods compared Christians as a whole group to all other religious identities. Furthermore, my theory does not consider specific religious affiliation, but rather personal religious belief and social religious behavior.

Findings

Figure 1. Coefficient Plot for Model 1
Dependent variable: Christian nationalist belief



This coefficient plot shows the relative significance of each variable from Model 1. Regression coefficients are shown with 95% confidence intervals. A VIF test confirmed that Model 1 does not have a large level of multicollinearity, at a mean VIF of 4.89. See appendix for regression table.

As illustrated in Figure 1, Christian identity, party ID, Trump vote, racial resentment, church attendance, personal prayer, and carrying religion to other aspects of life were the significant variables. This model partially confirms H1 – Republicanism, racial resentment, and social religious behavior (measured by church attendance) significantly predict Christian nationalist belief. Racial resentment is the strongest predictor, followed by church attendance. Based on my theory, I do not consider church attendance as a measure of personal religious conviction, but rather a measure of social community that can influence political belief. Furthermore, the two most personal religious variables are insignificant in predicting Christian nationalist belief. Model 1 illustrates that a certain level of religiosity is necessary for Christian nationalist belief, notably a Christian affiliation and high church attendance. However, Christian nationalist belief cannot be explained without racial resentment and Party ID.

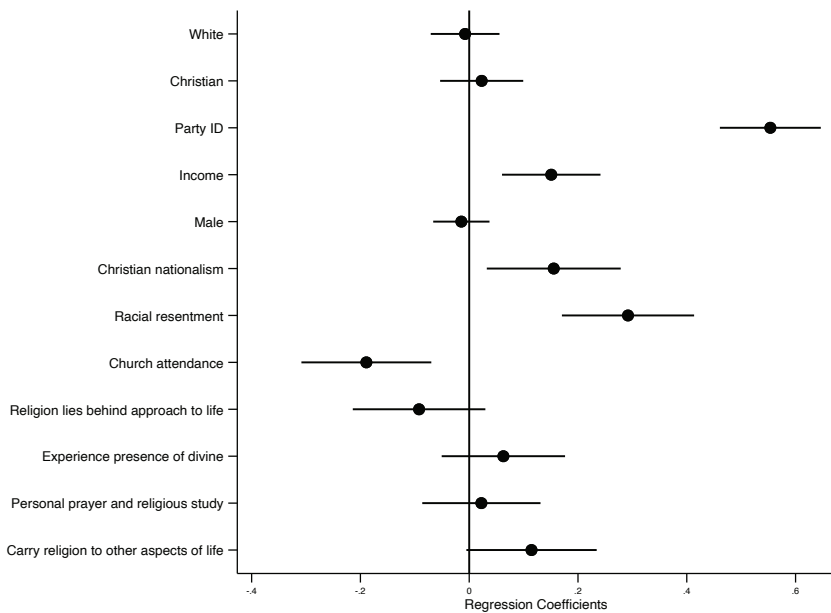
Interestingly, race is insignificant in Model 1. Summary statistics indicate, among Christians, whites do not have the highest levels of Christian nationalist belief.

Table 4. Average Christian nationalist belief score among Christians, by race

Race (N)	Average	95% CI
White (315)	0.57	[0.54,0.60]
Black (50)	0.67	[0.61,0.73]
Asian (67)	0.60	[0.53,0.67]

While the sample size of non-Whites is considerably smaller, on average, Black and Asian Christians score higher on Christian nationalist belief. Confidence intervals indicate there is no significant difference in Christian nationalist belief between White and Asian Christians, but Black Christians have significantly higher Christian nationalist belief scores. If Christian nationalist belief and behavior were indistinguishable, these findings would be curious. However, Model 2 tests H2 and is based on the theory that Christian nationalist belief and behavior are separate. I find that the factors that predict Christian nationalist belief are not the same factors that predict behavior.

Figure 2. Coefficient plot for Model 2
Dependent variable: Trump vote (theorized Christian nationalist behavior)



I conducted a VIF test for multicollinearity (mean VIF 4.91) and used robust standard errors. See appendix for regression table.

As Figure 2 indicates, party ID is the single highest predictor of Trump support, followed by racial resentment and Christian nationalist belief. Christian identity becomes insignificant compared to Model 1. I hypothesized (H2) social religious behavior would predict Trump vote (representing Christian nationalist behavior), but not inward religious conviction. Model 2 confirms my hypothesis that inward religious conviction, or religious belief, does not predict Christian nationalist behavior. However, Model 2 illustrates how religious behavior *also* does not predict Christian nationalist behavior. Church attendance is the only significant religious variable in Model 2, with a negative coefficient.

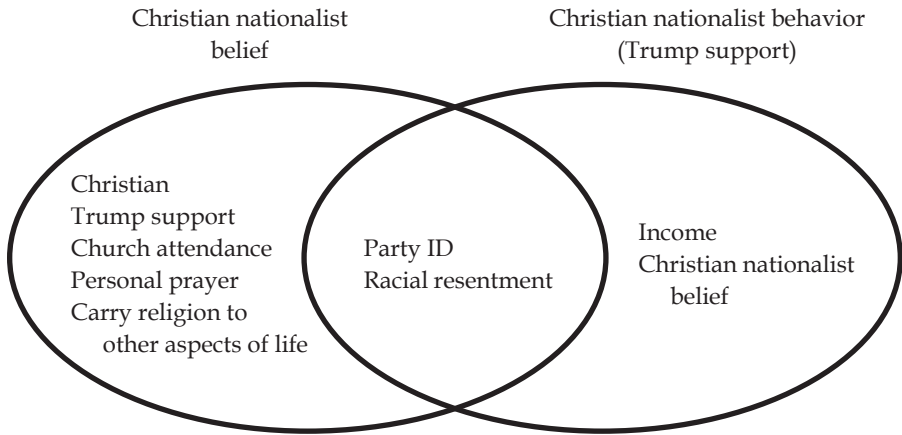
The two most striking findings from Models 1 and 2 are a) Party ID and racial resentment predict both Christian nationalist belief and behavior and b) church attendance positively predicts Christian nationalist belief but negatively predicts Christian nationalist behavior. Models 1 and 2 thus provide evidence that Christian nationalist belief and behavior should be treated as separate phenomena and, similarly, religious belief and behavior predict political outcomes differently. Perhaps church attendance is only correlated with Trump support through its correlation with Christian nationalism. If so, this would indicate that religious behavior itself does not predict Trump support without Christian nationalism, though a two-stage model with an instrumental variable would provide clearer insight.

The finding that party ID and Christian nationalist belief are the strongest predictors of Trump support is not surprising. As discussed, Perry and Whitehead find that Christian nationalist belief was a robust predictor of Trump vote in 2016, even controlling for religion and ideology (2020). Likewise, I find evidence that Christian nationalist behavior is not a proxy for Christian identity, religious behavior or belief, or white identity.

Models 1 and 2 show a strong relationship between Christian nationalist belief and behavior and racial resentment. As discussed earlier, one of my key assumptions is that White identity, White privilege, and Christian identity have been almost inseparable throughout American history. Therefore, determining whether racial resentment predicts Christian nationalist behavior, or vice versa is difficult. This uncertainty provides further evidence for the theory that the two are indistinguishable. Some religious behavior predicts Christian nationalist belief, but no religious behavior significantly predicts Christian nationalist behavior.

Christian nationalism is a more dynamic issue than initially expected. Racial resentment is a common theme yet race itself does not predict Christian nationalism. The factors that predict Trump support (Christian nationalist behavior) and Christian nationalist belief are nearly identical, yet religious activity only predicts the former. I propose an alternate view of Christian nationalism that distinguishes between belief and behavior. I measured Christian nationalist belief through the 4-question block adopted from Perry and Whitehead, but Christian nationalist behavior is a different phenomenon.

Figure 3. The predictors of Christian nationalist belief and behavior



Religious behavior, especially church attendance, clearly predicts Christian nationalist belief. However, religious behavior does not predict Christian nationalist behavior as measured by Trump support. If Christian nationalist behavior is a “mobilized” version of Christian nationalist belief, these results show that religious behavior *decreases* the chance of Christian nationalist belief crossing the threshold to Christian nationalist behavior. It is not necessarily surprising that church attendance or Christian identity is a predictive variable for Christian nationalist attitudes, but it is fascinating that these religious behaviors decrease when Christian nationalism crosses the threshold of Trump support.

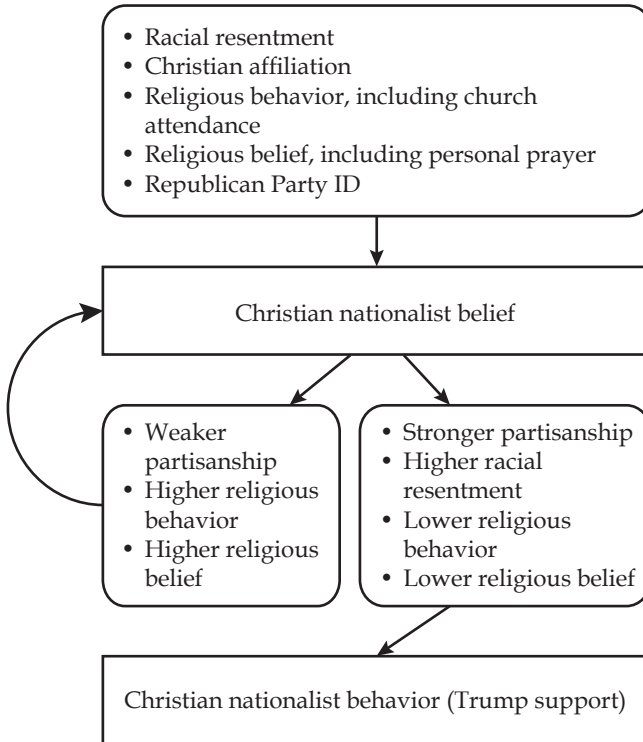
Even when predicting Christian nationalist belief (Model 1), two religious behavior variables are insignificant: “I experience the presence of the divine” and “Religion is what really lies behind my approach to life.” Church attendance, prayer, and carrying religious beliefs to other aspects of life, on the other hand, are significant. There is a categorical difference between these behaviors. Church attendance is the most social and outward of the religious questions, and the most significant to predict Christian nationalist belief. As theorized by Ginges et al., church attendance creates a social community where in-group behavior is reinforced, and political views are built (2009). However, the more personal religious factors are not significant for Christian nationalist belief or behavior. To experience the presence of the divine and hold religion as a core approach to life are strong indicators of personal religiosity. As shown in Table 5, Christian respondents did not answer these two questions at proportionally lower rates than the others—each of the religious questions were relatively similar. The variation between the “inward” and “outward” religious questions can therefore be attributed to Christian nationalist belief, not Christian identity.

Table 5. Average scores of religious questions among Christians

Church attendance	0.57	6-point scale
Personal prayer	0.49	
Religion lies behind approach to life	0.64	4-point scale
Experience presence of divine	0.65	
Carry religion to other aspects of life	0.63	

There is no significant variation in the way respondents answered the religion block questions, but there is variation in how each question predicts Christian nationalist belief and behavior. Personal religious conviction could be associated with lower Christian nationalist belief, and therefore lower racial resentment. More social behaviors or behaviors tied to political views are more likely to plant the dangerous combination of racial resentment and Christian nationalism. These findings are integral to how we approach the issues of Christian nationalist belief and behavior and their relationship to religious belief and behavior. While attempting to untie the deeply woven relationship between racism and religion in the United States is necessary, religion itself, or religious activity, is not entirely to blame for the rise of Christian nationalism.

Figure 4. Flowchart of Christian nationalist belief and behavior



The paradox of these findings is that a certain amount of religious belief, behavior and Christian identity is necessary for initial levels of Christian nationalist belief, but increased religious behavior can prevent Christian nationalist belief from expanding. By contrast, increased partisanship and racial resentment drastically increase Christian nationalist belief, along with the likelihood to mobilize as a Christian nationalist in the form of Trump support. In this sense, religion is both a contributing factor and antidote to Christian nationalist behavior.

Discussion

In sum, I provide initial evidence that Christian nationalist belief and behavior are separate phenomena predicted by separate factors, albeit with some overlap. Racial resentment and Republican partisanship are the only overlapping predictors of both Christian nationalist belief and behavior. Interestingly, religious behavior predicts Christian nationalist belief, while both religious behavior and belief prevent Christian nationalist behavior. I find that Christian nationalist “believers” are not necessarily the same people as Christian nationalist “actors.” These findings provide

a nuanced outline of Christian nationalism that may begin to explain why research consistently finds demographic variance (race, for example) between individuals with Christian nationalist beliefs and individuals who behave as Christian nationalists. However, my findings leave many unanswered questions about the relationship between racial resentment, religion, and nationalism.

Once an individual has reached an initial level of Christian nationalist belief, what would motivate them to increase in partisanship and racial resentment and shift over to Christian nationalist behavior? What would motivate them to increase (or decrease) in religious behavior and belief, shifting them towards or away from nationalist behavior? Further research in psychology, politics, and religion could address these questions. Future research should not conflate Christian nationalist belief and behavior but examine them separately. Established theories in world politics and religion on extremism and mobilization should be applied to Christian nationalism in the United States. Further empirical evidence would stem from a mediation statistical model that follows the sequence of Figure 4.

While increased religious belief and behavior does not predict Christian nationalist behavior, both still significantly predict Christian nationalist belief, alongside partisanship and racial resentment. Religious behavior's ability to prevent nationalist behavior is promising. Yet religion's role in influencing/causing/shaping Christian nationalist belief is concerning. Further research could explore how to prevent Christian nationalist belief, as well as isolate the cognitive mechanisms that cause Christian nationalist belief, given racial resentment and religion. Christian nationalism is an especially deceitful form of nationalism; it hijacks religious language, symbols, and teachings to justify a narrow view of American history and exclusionary policy preferences. We must take a comprehensive approach to exploring Christian nationalism, separating belief and behavior, addressing racial resentment, and exploring the relationship between religion and politics. In an era of increased polarization, a comprehensive understanding of Christian nationalism could begin to depoliticize religion in the United States and decrease dangerous nationalist ideologies.

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APPENDIX

Model 1 Table

Dependent Variable:	Christian Nationalist belief
White	-0.029 (0.018)
Christian	0.081** (0.022)
Party ID	0.062* (0.031)
Income	0.026 (0.032)
25-34 age	-0.041 (0.025)
35-44 age	-0.096** (0.028)
45-54 age	-0.126** (0.037)
55-64 age	-0.143** (0.051)
65-74 age	-0.054 (0.063)
75-84 age	-0.015 (0.040)
Male	0.018 (0.018)
Trump vote	0.061* (0.025)
Racial resentment	0.251** (0.039)
Church attendance	0.223** (0.037)
Religious approach to life	0.027 (0.038)
Presence of divine	0.030 (0.036)
Prayer	0.094* (0.038)
Carry religion	0.122** (0.037)
Constant	0.145 (0.124)

Observations	734
R-squared	0.532

Notes: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, robust standard errors in parentheses, education omitted from table due to insignificance, but included in model as individual indicators for each level of education. VIF test for multicollinearity: mean VIF 4.89

Model 2 table

Dependent Variable:	Christian Nationalist belief
25-34	0.011 (0.040)
34-44	0.043 (0.046)
45-54	0.110 (0.060)
55-64	0.014 (0.067)
65-74	0.073 (0.077)
75-84	0.240 (0.206)
White	-0.008 (0.032)
Christian	0.023 (0.039)
Party ID	0.554** (0.047)
Income	0.151** (0.046)
Male	-0.014 (0.026)
Christian nationalism	0.155* (0.063)
Racial resentment	0.292** (0.062)
Church attendance	-0.189** (0.061)
Religious approach to life	-0.092 (0.062)
Presence of divine	0.063 (0.058)

Prayer	0.022 (0.055)
Carry religion	0.115 (0.061)
Constant	-0.084 (0.216)
Observations	734
R-squared	0.352

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, robust standard errors in parentheses, education omitted from table due to insignificance, but included in model as individual indicators for each level of education. VIF test for multicollinearity: mean VIF 4.89