Persuasive Communications

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Professor

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Assignment

### *Developmental Readings*

Review Assignment #3, the course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

***Assignment #2 – Thesis Finalization & Paper Outline***

* 1. 1. Create Developmental Readings from the Assignment #1 Works Cited list and additional resources discovered during your research. The developmental readings should support your arguments and counterarguments. a. Refer to the "**Student Guide to Developmental Readings**" in the **General Helps** folder for updated information on *sample comments*, *the grading rubric*, and *key definitions* related to developmental readings.
	2. 2. Revise your thesis statement according to feedback from your professor, if needed.
	3. 3. Develop a sentence outline for your argumentative essay. Include main points and sub-points for your argument and the counter-arguments you will present. Make sure your outline clearly indicates the direction of your argument. Provide one properly cited (APA) quotation that you can use to support each of the main points and sub-points in your outline.

**1. Developmental Readings**

**Source One:** Wolf, S. (2022). *The Case for Christian Nationalism*. Canon Press

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “For decades, theologians have developed theologies that exclude Christianity from public institutions but require Christians to affirm the language of universal dignity, tolerance, human rights, anti-nationalism, multiculturalism, social justice, and equality, and they ostracize from their own ranks any Christian who deviates from these social dogmas. They’ve effectively Christianized the modern West’s social creed. The Christian leaders most immersed in the modern West’s civil religion are those who loudly denounce the “civil religion” of “Christian nationalism”. This book challenges the social dogmas of our time- the secularist civil religion- by offering a positive account of Christian nationalism. … The problem we face today is not simply the absence of arguments but the lack of *will* for our political objectives. I hope to enliven in the hearts of Christians a sense of home and hearth and a love of people and country out of which springs action for their good.” (Wolf, 2022, p.5)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive in one way and variant in another. Where, the virtues the author mentions “universal dignity, tolerance, human rights, anti-nationalism, multiculturalism, social justice, and equality” which seem to be required of Christians to affirm, are all virtues that Christians should hold, but the author seems to suggest that these are not virtues that Christians are to hold.

**Contextualization:**  The author is suggesting that Christians are discouraged from engaging in civic discourse and political engagement and thus the call to Christian nationalism in order to participate in the civic and political arena, I would argue that a Christian does not need to be a Christian nationalist to engage in civic and political discourse, they are free to do so as like any other citizen, and they believes could be informed by their Christianity. The concerning item from this quote is that Christians “lack the will for our political objectives” Christians may indeed have political objectives but that should be separate from their Christian mission or objectives.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**“Here is my definition: Christian nationalism is a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs, conducted by a Christian nation as a Christian nation, in order to procure for itself both earthly and heavenly good in Christ. The purpose of this book is to show that Christian nationalism (as defined) is just, the ideal arrangement for Christians, and something worth pursuing with determination and resolve.” (Wolf, 2022, p.7)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This isadditive tomy understanding of the way a Christian nationalist defines Christian nationalism. The goal seems to be a worthy cause to produce “earthly and heavenly good in Christ”.

**Contextualization:** I do think the proposed definition of Christian nationalism is ambiguous, but nevertheless it is able to be used as a definition that could be represented by Christian nationalists. The definition for sure assumes that the nation would be a Christian nation in order to conduct itself as a Christian nation. Not all people in America are Christians, so I do not understand how this definition accounts for that, it just seems to suggest that the political powers need to be Christian in order to guide national action in a Christian fashion.

**Source Two:** Whitehead, A. L., & Perry, S. L. (2020). *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*. Oxford University Press.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Simply put, Christian nationalism is a cultural framework- a collection of myths, traditions, symbols, narratives, and value systems- that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life. But the “Christianity” of Christian nationalism is a particular sort. We do not mean Christianity here as a general, meta-category including all expressions of orthodox Christian theology. … On the contrary, the “Christianity” of Christian nationalism represents something more than religion. As we will show, it includes assumptions of nativism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and heteronormativity, along with divine sanction for authoritarian control and militarism. It is as ethnic and political as it is religious.” (Whitehead & Perry, 2020, p.10)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding of a good definition of Christian nationalism, it seems like it would be agreeable to Christians as well as Christian nationalists, with the exception of that is based on a particular kind of Christianity, that has some anti-Christian characteristics.

**Contextualization:** This seems to be one of my main concerns about Christian nationalism, which is that it is an anti-Christian (does not hold to Christian principles) movement and good-intentioned Christians could get sucked into this movement with the idea that they are promoting Christian virtues but are in actuality promoting un-Christian values. I do not want to see my brothers and sisters be used as pawns in this political movement, all the while giving Christianity a bad name.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Christians who reject Christian nationalism point out how its consequences directly contradict dictates found within the Bible. …The kingdom of God, they argue, is broader, more diverse, and will long outlast the kingdoms of this world, including the United States. In this view, fusing national identity with Christianity destroys the witness of the kingdom of God. The desperate quest for power inherent in Christian nationalist ideology is antithetical to Jesus’ message. At its core, Christian nationalism is a hollow and deceptive philosophy that depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ.” (Whitehead & Perry, 2020, p. 163)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This supports my understanding of the Christian concerns of Christian nationalism and the consequences of such.

**Contextualization:** This issue of the U.S. being a Christian nation has been a concern for many Christians, where they state that early colonizers came for religious purposes and that the founders of the U.S. had religious beliefs and that the founding was based on Judeo-Christian values, they think America is a Christian nation. I am unsure why many Christians desire to establish the U.S. as a Christian nation from its onset, and thus hold that having a Christian nation should be held onto and continued. Even if their arguments hold as they suggest, not all colonizers came for religious purposes and not all the founders had Christian beliefs, in addition, the founding was based on the political theory of the day that arose from the Enlightenment.

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Twenty years ago sociologist Christian Smith argued that scholars and journalists had got white evangelicals all wrong- specifically, those evangelicals who were seemingly sympathetic to Christian nationalist rhetoric and ideals. First and foremost, Smith explained, white evangelicals are not a monolithic group. They hold diverse opinions about the nation’s Christian heritage and should not be stereotyped as staunch Christian nationalist. But more than this, Smith argued, the use of “Christian nation” language, for most rank and file evangelicals, was not intended to mobilize *political* action, but to shore up their identity *as Christians* and to mobilize *religious* action. Their primary interest is not to “take America back for God” through political force, but simply to live as faithful Christians, redeeming their increasingly secular society through interpersonal influence.” (Whitehead & Perry, 2020, p.58)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding of how some Christians even Christian sociologists view the movement of Christian nationalism. Even in this quote, it points out that there are two distinct groups of Christians pursuing Christian nationalism, seeming for different reasons, but with the same results.

**Contextualization:** This quote is telling where a supporter of Christians who support Christian nationalism, says many Christians may do so based on good intentions of religious action and redeeming secular society. Christians can and have made significant changes in society throughout history, however, Christians do not need to pursue Christian nationalism in order to make positive social change in societies. This is something that I will need to clearly articulate in my paper.

**Source Three:** Delehanty, J., Edgell, P., & Stewart, E. (2019). Christian America? Secularized Evangelical Discourse and the Boundaries of National Belonging. *Social Forces*, *97*(3), 1283–1306. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soy080>

 **Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Here, we focus on four particularly important expressions, reflecting ideas that have roots in evangelical culture, but which are not tied to any particular social movement or campaign issue: claims that religious identity is important for good citizenship, that religious belief is a criterion for strong political leadership, that society’s rules should be based on divine will, and that public institutions should broadly accommodate religious belief and practice.” (Delehanty et al., 2019, p.6)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding of religious mindset of the societies benefit of religion. In general, Christian evangelical culture holds that their religious view is good for society. They hold that Christian evangelicals make good law abiding and productive citizens, and that the best political leadership are and could serve these good citizens well for the betterment of society. In addition, Christian evangelical generally hold that society’s rules/laws should be modeled from divine laws to best serve people in the society as well as those public institutions should support these ‘divine laws’ and religious principles.

**Contextualization:** In more or less terms this has been my understanding of the mindset of Christian evangelical culture that in the America the goal has been to maintain a certain political support for their societal vison. I have thought about this in the last few years and seen the issue that comes about, that Christianity becomes a mere political association rather than a way of life lived for Christ. The Christian’s duty becomes a political duty of conserving their values within society. This is very concerning to me because of what Christianity represents to the larger society is not Christ but political party, and the gospel of Christ becomes lost in political rhetoric.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “…while biblical literalism is typically associated with Christian fundamentalism, a broader discourse of “Judeo-Christian heritage” informs a “contract” approach to the public good (Gorski 2017a; Williams 1995). This perspective argues that God has a special plan for America, and that to live up to it, the country must govern itself according to God’s will. We measure this by evaluating responses about whether society’s rules should be based on God’s laws.” (Delehanty et al., 2019, p.9)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive and variant to my understanding, where yes, God may bless a nation based on people of that nation service to Him. And God being God, has power to control things in His kingdom and the secular world. However, when it is put in terms of “the country must govern itself according to God’s will” this is variant to my understanding, where ‘countries’ are secular structurers and are instruments for religious and nonreligious people alike.

**Contextualization:** I believe that I was led to believe from being in church, whether from teachings or conversing with other believers that the US was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, and we should stand firm to protect this view and protect our country transforming to a secular country. I have always been confused by this, why do or at least some Christians hold to this, it seemed odd and counter to the Christian’s mission to try to Christianize the state. Even though some of the US founding fathers where Christians doesn’t necessitate the country to be a Christian country. This is important, because what I have found at least some Christians seem to confuse their Christian duty with their civic duty and exchanging the Christian identity with Christ’s teaching to a Christian identity of a political identity. And this has really hindered the Christian church impact in our country as well as the rest of the world.

**Source Four:** Aktürk, Ş. (2022). Nationalism and Religion in Comparative Perspective: A New Typology of National-Religious Configurations. *Nationalities Papers*, *50*(2), 205–218. <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2021.17>

 **Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “I argue that different configurations of religion and nationalism depend on two major conditions: the degree to which the dominant religious sectarian tradition is supraethnic in doctrine and transnational in its institutionalization on the one hand, and the religious identity of the main adversary in the constitutive conflict that culminated in national statehood on the other. These two factors can be considered variables in a continuum rather than binaries, since religious sectarian tradition may be more or less ethnic rather than either fully ethnic or entirely supraethnic.” (Aktürk, 2022, p. 212)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Coming from the global historical perspective the author is coming from his argument is additive to my understating if the historical ties between religion and the state. Where, there is an ethnic factor to the religious practices of a given area the correlates to the ethnic grouping of the state or the political power.

**Contextualization:** I can see how this has been applicable throughout history and regions, and in light of the protestant reformation of Europe, and the development of state religions, then the move of Europeans to America’s to either establish the ‘state’ religion in the new world or escape the state church and have freedom of religion. Therefore, I can see why it is in the mindset that American’s founding is based on the Christian religion (whatever the varied denominations and Catholic). This has been helpful to bring about the larger context of religion in coming to the Americas, where we cannot deny that part of the creation of the new world development has a basis in European Christian religion, since there was a tight relationship between the European states and the Christian religion.

**Source Five:** Braunstein, R. (2021). The “Right” History: Religion, Race, and Nostalgic Stories of Christian America. *Religions*, *12*(2), 95. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12020095>

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “…focus on these movements’ invocation of the “founding myth” of America as a Christian nation (Seidel 2019). This myth is rooted in the idea that the country’s exceptionalism and special favor from God are incumbent upon Americans’ religiosity and shared religious values—America is “One Nation Under God;”.”(Braunstein, 2021, p. 4)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This “founding myth” is variant to what I had been informed growing up in the church, where I had the impression that the “founding” of a “Christian” nation was actual and corresponded with the national narrative from school lessons. However, as I have thought about this over the last several years, it is additive to my current understanding of the U.S. founding of a “Christian” nation.

**Contextualization:** I do hold that many who came from Europe to the new world were Christians and desired to escape the political support of a particular Christianity of the state which they came from in Europe. Others came with the political Christian ordination to “Christianize” the world with political power and sword of the state. This is the thing we should not forget about history and history of Christianity where Christianity has been used by political powers for political ambitions to conquer lands and people. If we claim that the U.S. has been a Christian nation, we have a lot to answer to of all the unchristian things this ‘Christian’ nation has done from genocide to slavery. What do people mean when they say we are a Christian nation?

 **Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “When people say that America is a Christian nation, they are making a claim about American national identity, identifying the criteria for full belonging, and marking the boundary between insiders and outsiders. Standard accounts of national identity focus on such visions of who “we” are as a nation and encourage attention to group. whose “formal” or “substantive” citizenship is contested.” (Braunstein, 2021, p.4)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive to my current understanding of the claim that America is a Christian nation, it’s a national identity claim rather than a religious belief claim. From the language of the day, Christian meant ‘civilized’ as opposed to heathen. This is more of the way America was a Christian nation and not a unified body of Christian believer who started a new country.

**Contextualization:** The claim America is a Christian nation has to do with more of a structural and political claim than it does with the identity with the Christian religious system. The moral guidance of the laws of the land are grounded in Christian morals, which would be a benefit to all not only Christian citizens. America was constructed where there was not an official state church, where the church and state were separate. It is important to understand that in our ‘Christian’ nation those who are Christians should practice the Christian faith faithfully and with kindness and love toward Christians and non-Christians alike. Christianity is not a political party and is not a mechanism to be used by the state to control people to ‘act’ like Christians.

**Source Six:** Corbin, C. M. (2019). Christian Legislative Prayers and Christian Nationalism. *Washington and Lee Law Review*, *76*(1), 32.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Support for a Christian America is a core component of Christian nationalism, which “envision[s] the boundaries of the religious and political communities to be as coterminous as possible.”That is, Christian nationalism conceives of religion and government as wholly overlapping rather than separate spheres. It also means the conflation of religious identity and national identity. In sum, Christian nationalism is the belief that the United States “has been and always should be distinctly Christian in its identity, values, sacred symbols and policies.” (Corbin, 2019, p.454)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my understanding of what Christian national is, it is a strong belief that the governmental and political system should support and uphold Christian values and policies.

**Contextualization:** There are two aspects of this issue of America being a Christian nation, in one aspect it is true that many of the colonizers were Christians, and the country has provided freedom of worship (not just to Christians) and there has been a majority of Americans identifying as Christian through history, America has not been a Muslim or Buddhist country where those religions may be in a majority in other countries. This should not be disputed. The second aspect is disputed, where the political system should be a “Christian” political system always making policies based on Christian values. Christianity is a religious system; the republic of the U.S. is a secular system. They are two different types of systems and should not be become infused into one.

**Source Seven:** Davis, J. T. (2019). Funding God’s policies, defending whiteness: Christian nationalism and whites’ attitudes towards racially-coded government spending. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *42*(12), 2123–2142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2018.1527939>

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The embrace of Christian nationalism among white Americans brings with it implications far beyond determining who holds political offices. Research in sociology and political science shows that race and “racial coding” is often used by whites to determine whether they will support political agendas, particularly those involving the use of tax dollars.” (Davis, 2019, p.2)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to my understanding of “Christian” nationalism and its reproductions. As Americans one can support whatever political agenda they wish, whoever they are or what race or religion they are.

**Contextualization:** It may be the case that white “Christian” nationalist tend to support certain political agendas should come to no surprise, every other American no matter race or religion does the same. If there is an argument against “Christian” nationalism this should not be it.

**Source Eight:** Perry, S. L. (2022). American religion in the era of increasing polarization. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 48, 87-107.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Later studies looking at different data sources from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s found that the more Americans connected Christianity with American civic life, the more likely they were to be intolerant of religious and ethnic minorities, unfavorable toward welfare spending, and hawkish on foreign policy (Davis 2018, 2019; Edgell & Tranby 2010; Froese & Mencken 2009). Addressing the culture war thesis directly with data from the 2003 American Mosaic Project, Edgell & Tranby (2010) proposed that “cultural preservationists” (who see American society as unified around Whiteness and Christianity) believe they are indeed at war, with encroachments from ethnic and religious outsiders eroding the cultural core. Importantly, they also found cultural

preservationists are more likely than others to be religiously active and identify as Republican and conservative Protestant.” (p.94)

**Essential Element:** Developing Persuasive Argument

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quoteis additive to my current understanding of the rise of Christians engaging in the political process as a political movement rather than citizens who are Christians participating in the political process being informed by their religious beliefs.

**Contextualization:** This is an example of what happens (and has happened throughout history) when Christianity becomes politicalized, the traits of Christianity “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” are overshadowed by political shrewdness with the ‘virtues’ of political power, i.e., corruption and domination. This is then what Christianity will look like to non-believes (and many believers) a political party of Christianity, that uses political power to dominate society and inflict symbolic violence if not outright violence on groups seen as the enemy.

**Works Cited**

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Wolf, S. (2022). *The Case for Christian Nationalism*. Canon Press

**2. Revise your thesis statement**

Prior Thesis Statement: Christian Nationalism is the pursuit of establishing a nation that adheres to Christian legalism enacted in the nation’s laws and policies. Which is inherently un-Christian and unjust to members of society as well as a hindrance to people coming to the saving faith of Christianity because Christianity is seen as a political power movement instead of a religious belief system and a way of life.

Revised Thesis Statement: Christian nationalism is a political movement that is counter to Christian principles, even though many Christians hold to a cultural mandate to change society, it is not necessary to have a Christian nation for Christians to make positive social change in society.

**3. Develop a sentence outline for your argumentative essay**

**1) Thesis Statement:**

Christian nationalism is a political movement that is counter to Christian principles, even though many Christians hold to a cultural mandate to change society, it is not necessary to have a Christian nation for Christians to make positive social change in society.

**2) Definition:**

Christian nationalism is a framework that advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life, consisting of civil laws, social customs, traditions, symbols, narratives, and value systems, to procure earthly and heavenly good for the nation. (Whitehead & Perry, 2020) & (Wolf, 2022)

**3) The Concern:** Many Christians have an isolated Christian socialization experience that their Christian worldview is formed within the confounds of the walls of the church that neglects to expand the Christian worldview as trans history and culture Christian way of life. This makes many Christians susceptible to believing that the pursuit of Christian nationalism is a process of bringing Christianity to the society or nation, whereas Christian nationalism is counter to the teaching of Christianity as it is a political movement seeking political goals. Without sociological insight into understanding Christianity from historical and cultural perspectives, many Christians could be persuaded to join the political movement of Christian nationalism, thinking they are pursuing their Christian duty while undercutting the true teachings of Christianity. (Whitehead & Perry, 2020)

**4) Argument 1:**

Christian nationalism seeks a system of legalism. As a proponent of Christian nationalism states “Christian nationalism is a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs” (Wolf, 2022, p.7), meaning that Christian nationalists seek to legislate “Christian” morality, as like the religious laws of Israel Christ preached against. Pursuing a Christian life is not about submitting to manmade laws, but about submitting to the love of God through Christ.

Counterargument: Making a nation’s laws in agreement with Christian principles is good for all people of that nation, God’s laws are inherently good and thus good for society, believers, and non-believers alike. (Delehanty et al., 2019)

**5) Argument 2:**

Christian nationalism is a political ideology and movement that seeks political power to obtain political objectives. (Wolf, 2022) Christian nationalism is not about spreading the gospel to members of a nation but is about political leverage to govern various levels of the government to establish a government in support of the political interest of Christian nationalists.

Counterargument: Christian nationalism is a religious movement seeking the favor of God upon our nation (Braunstein, 2021), because “God has a special plan for America, and that to live up to it, the country must govern itself according to God’s will.” (Delehanty et al., 2019, p.9)

**6) Argument 3:**

Christian nationalism has a harmful effect on the view of Christianity and the calling of Christianity. Whereas, non-Christians, see “Christianity” not as a religion of love and forgiveness but as a political system of control and hate for people on the outside of “Christianity”. The consequences of Christian nationalism contradict the teaching of Christianity found in the Bible. (Whitehead & Perry, 2020) “At its core, Christian nationalism is a hollow and deceptive philosophy that depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ.” (Whitehead & Perry, 2020, p. 163)

Counterargument: Christian nationalism seeks to support the love of people and country out of action for good (Wolf, 2022) by bringing religion and government as wholly overlapping rather than separate spheres, with shared identity, values, sacred symbols, and policies. (Corbin, 2019)

**7) Navigation:**

The cultural mandate that many Christians hold to mean that Christians are called to make an impact in society from Genesis 1:28, “God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”. This does not mean Christians need to pursue Christian nationalism, in thinking political power over a nation is the only way to make changes in society. In Schmidt's 2004 book *How Christianity Changed the World* the examples provided were done not because of the political power of a Christian nation but were done in love by Christians who had a genuine concern for people. By all means, let us as Christians make positive social change throughout the world, but let us rely on the power of Christ and not by political power of humankind.

**8) Conclusion:**

Christian nationalism is a political endeavor to make a nation “Christianized” by legislation, this is counter to the gospel of Christ, and results in a manmade system of legalism, which non-believers and believers cannot abide by. Let us not be rebuked by Christ as we attempt to establish a system of legalism by way of Christian nationalism, as Christ did to the political establishment of Israel, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.” Matthew 23:13

**References**

Braunstein, R. (2021). The “Right” History: Religion, Race, and Nostalgic Stories of Christian America. *Religions*, *12*(2), 95. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12020095>

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