WESTERN POLITICAL CHRISTIANITY IN THE NEW TRUMP ERA

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The election of Donald Trump for a second term as the President of the United States of America has coincided with the increasing entrenchment of what may be deemed political Christianity in the US. This term could mean different things to different people, but in the context of this commentary, it means the misuse of the traditional teachings of Christianity to propagate explicitly political messages that have exclusionary social consequences. In the context of the US, a popular and increasingly relevant term that coincides with this definition is Christian nationalism.

Christan nationalism is a complex term that we had elaborated upon in a previous article [1], but we will provide a short definition here: Christian nationalism is the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way. Christian nationalists argue that Christianity should enjoy a privileged position in the public square and emphasize the Christian mandate to [convert] people of all nations to the religion. While this ideology is primarily interested in the domestic politics, the emphasis on the Christian mandate to convert other peoples carries sinister implications.

There is no doubt that Trump courted Christian nationalists during his first term as president and during his election campaign for his second term. Whatever he is from the perspective of religiosity, circles associated with Christian nationalism view Trump as Gods wrecking ball.[2] They advocate that he will ruthlessly push the political agenda of the Christian nationalists that will bring changes to the US and beyond. Owing to the US status as a superpower, the country acts as a global trendsetter, which in the context of Trump means that circles espousing forms of political Christianity (like Christian nationalism) around the world have become emboldened and are now eagerly pushing their agendas.[3] This has taken the shape of the counter-equivalent of what is labeled as jihadist Islamism.

This stance frequently translates to political behaviors that may be deemed alarmist. Examples of this include the argument that the Christian West is under siege from Islam because of sneaky Muslim immigrants and that white Christians in North America and Western Europe are under the threat of being marginalized due to demographic trends in favor of the immigrants.

There are important foreign policy implications of this stance as well, such as the historical hostility towards Türkiye because it is the inheritor of Muslim Ottoman Empire that persecuted Christian Europe. This is a well-documented subject that we have dealt extensively in the past[4], and it has always played an influential (negative) role in Türkiyes relations with its Western allies. Türkiyes Western allies unfortunately have the habit of treating Türkiye as the outsider who is too important to be pushed away, but made to feel that she is neither trusted nor wanted.

Another example for foreign policy implications is the ironclad support expressed for Israel, currently governed by war-mongering Jewish supremacists who explicitly indicate their desire to wipe out the Palestinians,[5] because Israel is viewed by Christian fundamentalists as the harbinger of a better Judeo-Christian future. Despite there being considerable evidence that Israel is at the very least brazenly committing war crimes, Christian fundamentalists and Western politicians catering to their interests continue to pretend that Israels current conduct in its fight against Hamas is acceptable. This, however, is having a devastating effect on the Wests reputation as the bastion of democracy and human rights.

This paranoid, aggressive, and destructive mindset laden with double-standards has unfortunately found an outlet among many Western politicians who are trying to capitalize on populist trends in the West.

The entrenchment of political Christianity in the West is being closely followed by Armenian groups (both in Armenia and in the Diaspora) and their affiliates who have identified Türkiye as their archenemy. In recent times, there has been a noticeable uptick in the number of publications that frame Armenias stance towards Türkiye and Azerbaijan (with which Türkiye enjoys brotherly relations) as the perpetually victimized Christian nation under the threat of extinction from its Muslim neighbors.[6]

The focus in these publications seems to be on Karabakh, the previously occupied Azerbaijani territory in the South Caucasus that Azerbaijan regained full control over in September 2023. All these publications essentially call upon the United States and the European Union to intervene in the South Caucasus on behalf Christian Armenia, but they completely gloss over the details of Armenias 30-year occupation of Karabakh. As a specific example, the officials of the defunct separatist Armenian regime in Karabakh are currently on trial in Azerbaijan. If we were to take what is written in the publications at face value, we would believe that the former Karabakh Armenian officials are innocent people who were simply trying to help their fellow Christians make a living in a land that exclusively belonged to Armenians since time immemorial. The reality is, however, that Karabakh is a historically multi-ethnic/religious region that legally belongs to Azerbaijan, and the Karabakh Armenian officials on trial in Azerbaijan oversaw a regime that carried out ethnic cleansing and massacres against Azerbaijanis and illegally exploited Azerbaijans land and natural resources for around 30 years.[7] Framing this issue in religious terms is both misleading and dangerous, and is therefore malicious.

Global historical analyses of the weaponization of religion for the sake of politics

consistently reveal that this tactic results in conflict for all the parties involved. It is our hope that the Western public realizes, before it is too late, that political Christianity is an inherently flawed and dangerous approach to both domestic and foreign policy-making, and that the best path forward is to analyze the world based on facts and context and to adopt a secular approach that emphasizes win-win solutions with neighbors.

*Picture: *The Atlantic*

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To cite this article: TULUN, Mehmet Oğuzhan. 2026. "WESTERN POLITICAL CHRISTIANITY IN THE NEW TRUMP ERA." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Commentary No.2025 / 14. March 20. Accessed November 20, 2026. https://avimbulten.org/public/en/Yorum/WESTERN-POLITICAL-CHRISTIANITY-IN-THE-NEW-TRUMP-ERA

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