

REPORT OF THE WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM TASK FORCE

Addressing the Challenges of Christian Nationalism Through Education, Formation, and Inclusive Community

California-Nevada Annual Conference | Submitted to the 2026 Annual Conference Session

Executive Summary

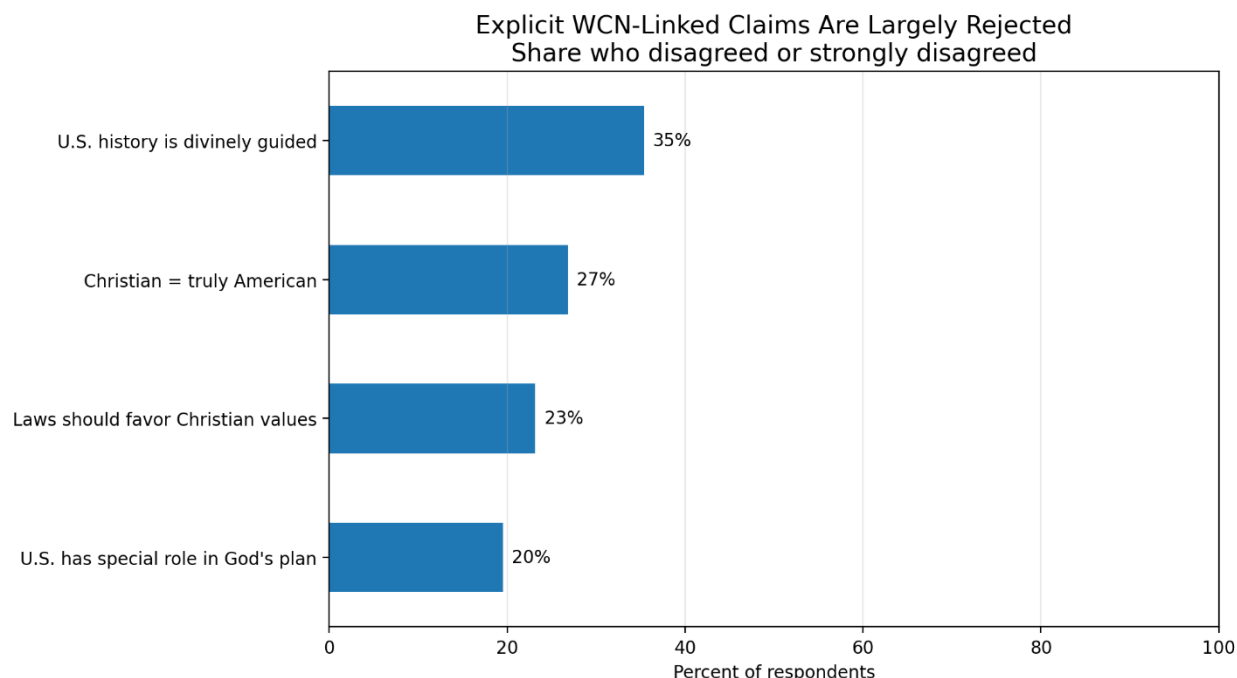
In response to the action of the 2025 California-Nevada Annual Conference directing the Conference Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships to establish a White Christian Nationalism Task Force, the Task Force has substantially fulfilled its mandate through study, listening processes, data gathering, engagement with scholarship, and the presentation of findings and recommendations contained in this report.

During the past year, the Task Force has:

- met regularly for study and discernment;
- engaged theological and historical resources;
- participated in public events related to religious nationalism;
- facilitated conference dialogue at Asilomar;
- conducted a conference-wide Faith, Identity, and Public Life survey.

Survey findings suggest:

- respondents largely reject explicit Christian Nationalist claims;
- respondents strongly affirm justice and inclusion;
- some congregational dynamics reveal a gap between values and sustained practice;
- significant concern exists regarding misuse of religion, church silence, and faith tied to political power.



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Explicit Christian Nationalist Claims Are Largely Rejected

The Task Force concludes that the primary challenge before the church is not only ideological rejection of Christian Nationalism, but deeper formation and communal practices that align belief, belonging, and public witness with the values of the gospel.

The report therefore offers recommendations related to education, congregational dialogue, leadership development, intentional inclusive community practices, and interim collaborative work to sustain momentum.

I. Introduction and Purpose

While this Task Force was constituted in response to concerns regarding White Christian Nationalism, this report interprets its findings within the broader framework of Christian Nationalism, consistent with recent denominational usage, while retaining attention to racialized dimensions often described as White Christian Nationalism.

The purpose of this report is to: 1. Respond to the Annual Conference charge; 2. Present findings from the Task Force's work; 3. Offer theological and practical interpretation; 4. Present recommendations for conference consideration.

II. Response to the Annual Conference Charge

Fulfillment of the Charge Matrix

Annual Conference Charge	Task Force Response
Examine rise, influence, and harm	Study + survey findings
Conduct listening sessions	Asilomar + Bay Area events + survey
Gather data and testimonies	Survey + participant input
Engage scholarship	Books + denominational resources
Report findings and recommendations	This report + separate recommendation

The Task Force believes it has substantially fulfilled the mandate of the Annual Conference through these activities.

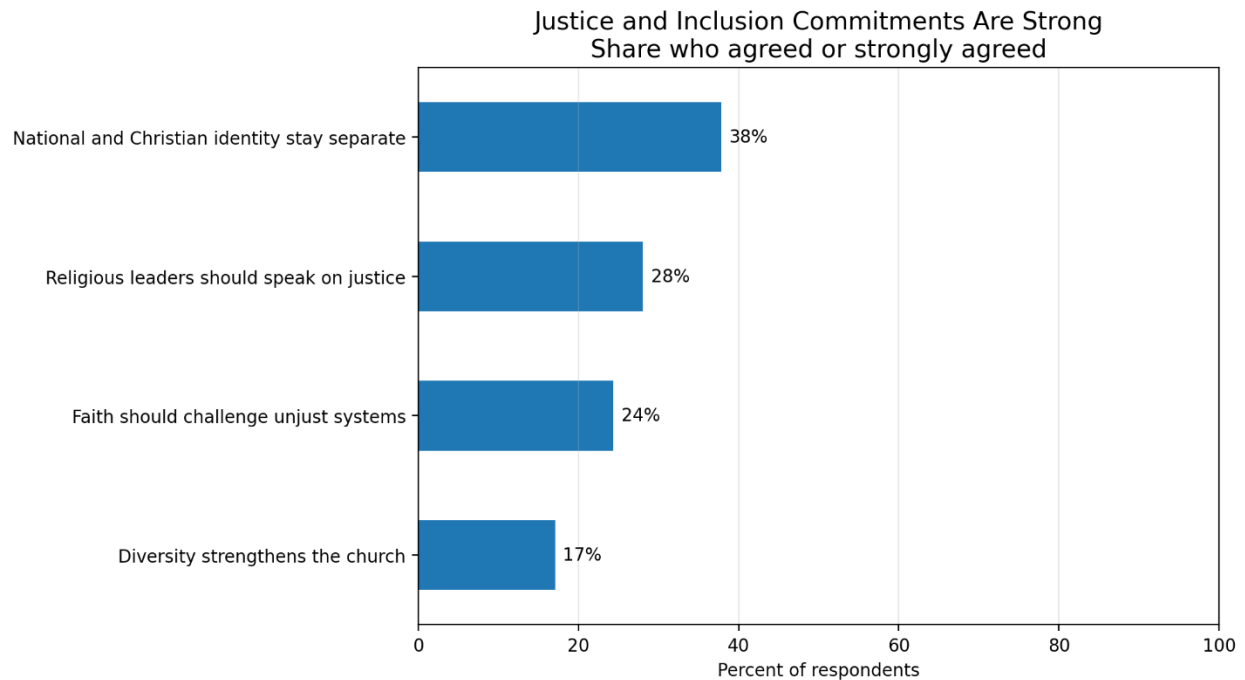
III. Scope of Work and Activities

- Monthly Task Force meetings since October 2025
 - Study of key texts and denominational materials
 - Participation in Bay Area Religious Nationalism events
 - Workshop at Asilomar Conference Grounds
 - Conference-wide survey initiative
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IV. Survey Findings

A. Belief Patterns

Survey responses indicate that explicit Christian Nationalist claims were not widely affirmed among respondents.



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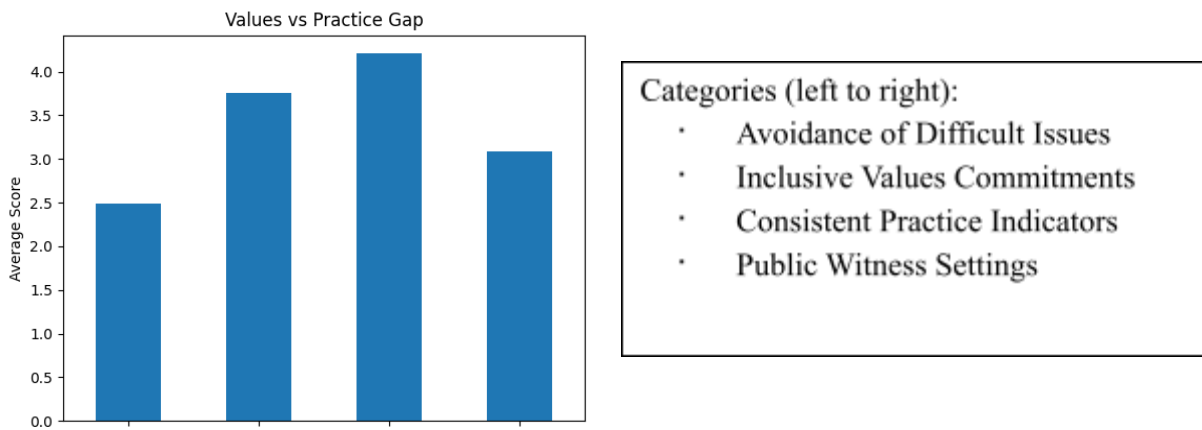
Justice and Inclusion Commitments Are Strong

B. Congregational Tensions and Practice Gap

While respondents affirmed inclusive values, data also indicates avoidance of difficult topics and continued presence of patriotic expression in worship settings.

Key Insight:

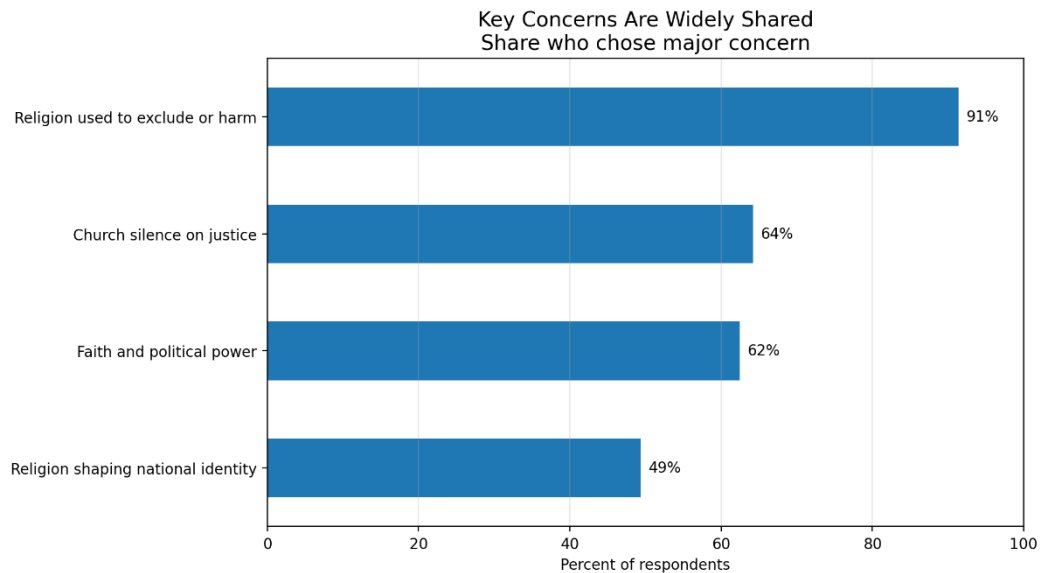
The challenge is not only what we believe, but how consistently we practice those beliefs in community.



Values vs Practice Gap

C. Levels of Concern

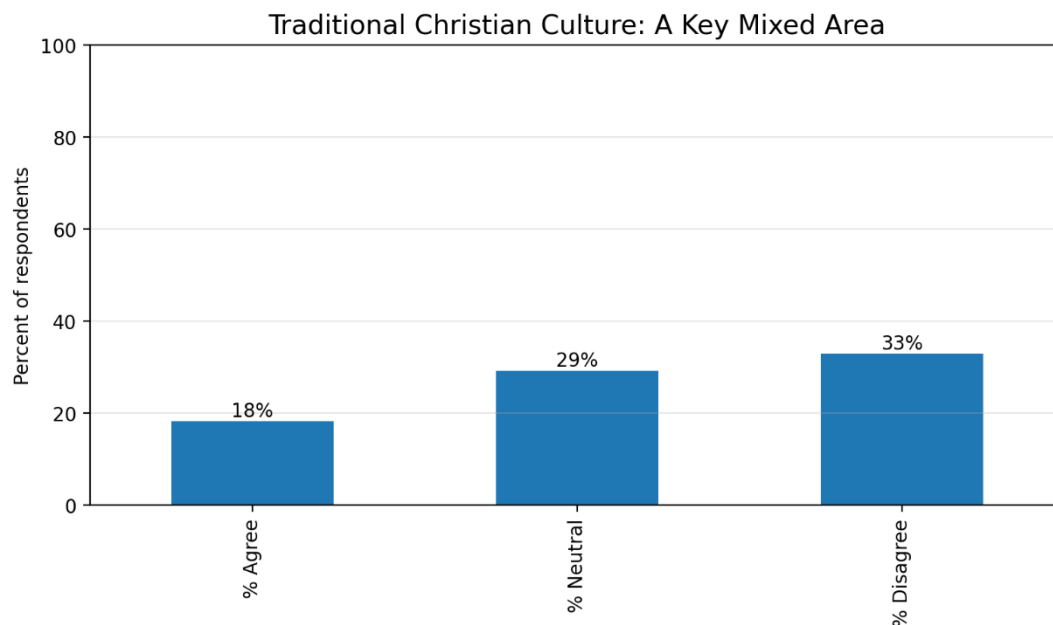
Respondents expressed significant concern regarding misuse of religion, church silence on justice issues, and faith tied to political power.



Key Concerns Are Widely Shared

D. Mixed Area of Vulnerability

Mixed responses regarding preserving “traditional Christian culture,” together with patriotic expressions in worship settings, suggest possible areas where softer or cultural forms of Christian Nationalism may still be normalized or insufficiently examined.



Traditional Christian Culture: A Key Mixed Area

V. Theological and Spiritual Discernment

A. Jesus in the Wilderness: A Theological Lens

Drawing on Matthew 4:1–11, the Task Force considered the temptation narrative as a theological lens for discerning the distortions of White Christian Nationalism. In the wilderness, Jesus faces temptations that offer shortcuts to power, security, and control. These are not merely personal moral tests; they concern how identity is grounded, how power is exercised, and what kind of community or “kingdom” is being built.

The Task Force observed that these temptations illuminate dynamics associated with White Christian Nationalism. Where Christian Nationalism seeks certainty through dominance, coercion, or protected hierarchy, Jesus refuses to instrumentalize power, refuses spectacle, and refuses empire. He rejects an identity grounded in control and instead embodies trust, restraint, and fidelity to God. This contrast provides a theological framework for understanding why the challenge posed by Christian Nationalism is not only political or cultural, but deeply spiritual.

This lens also informs the report’s constructive response. Jesus’ refusal of domination points toward another way—one grounded in belovedness rather than supremacy, and in community rather than exclusion. For the Task Force, this supports practices of discernment, inclusive community, and faithful public witness as responses more aligned with the gospel than the logics of fear, certainty, and control.

B. The Fruit Test: Healing or Harm

Drawing on Matthew 4:23–24, the Task Force reflected on Jesus’ ministry of teaching, proclaiming good news, and healing as a theological test for discerning rightly ordered power. In this passage, Jesus reveals authority not through domination, but through restoration. Healing—personal, social, and communal—becomes the first fruit of power aligned with God’s purposes. This suggests a critical question for discernment: **When power is exercised in the name of faith, what does it produce—healing or harm?**

This “fruit test” shaped the Task Force’s analysis of White Christian Nationalism. Jesus crosses boundaries toward those pushed to the margins and restores community where exclusion has taken hold. By contrast, where religion is tied to fear, exclusion, or domination, the fruit may be fragmentation and harm rather than healing. For the Task Force, community wellness—whether people and communities become more whole, less fearful, and more connected—functions as theological evidence.

This lens also points toward the report’s constructive response. If rightly ordered power heals, then faithful response must include practices of reconciliation, repair, and intentional inclusion. In this sense, the work of inclusive community is not separate from theological discernment, but a continuation of it.

C. Identity, Loss, and Belonging

The Task Force also considered the ways support for White Christian Nationalism may be fueled not only by ideology, but by experiences of identity under threat—particularly perceived loss of cultural centrality, authority, or belonging. In this framing, unacknowledged loss can harden into fear, and fear can seek expression through control, exclusion, or resentment. This lens suggests that part of the challenge posed by White Christian Nationalism is not simply theological error, but difficulty navigating identity adjustment within an increasingly pluralistic and changing social context.

The Task Force found this lens significant because it shifts attention from ideology alone to the deeper question of belonging. White Christian Nationalism may offer a form of belonging grounded in hierarchy and protected identity, whereas the gospel points toward belonging grounded in “belovedness,” trust, and relationship. In this sense, the spiritual challenge is not merely rejecting domination, but learning how to sustain identity and community without dependence on supremacy or control.

This insight reinforces the report’s constructive response. If part of the crisis concerns identity, fear, and belonging, then faithful response must include practices that support grief, re-grounding, reconciliation, and more inclusive forms of community life. For the Task Force, this further supports Intentional Inclusive Community as a spiritually grounded response to the conditions that can give rise to exclusionary forms of nationalism.

VI. Constructive Response: Inclusion Organizing and Intentional Inclusive Community

This report proposes Intentional Inclusive Community as a constructive pathway emerging from the findings.

Include:

- Cross-boundary relationships
 - Reflective learning and discernment
 - Inclusion Organizing as relational and structural practice
 - Public witness rooted in justice, truth, and belonging
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VII. Recommendations for Action

1. Receive the report.
2. Commend the findings for study and reflection.
3. Affirm and support engagement with the report's recommendations.
4. Support continued development of constructive responses through collaborative conference partnership.

5. Request Follow-Up Through Appropriate Conference Leadership

In light of the findings and in order to avoid loss of momentum, recommend that the Annual Conference request the appropriate Mission Focus Area leadership—including Partners in Ministry and Compassion & Justice—in consultation with the Core Team, to identify a process for follow-up on the recommendations contained in this report, including discernment regarding responsible conference bodies, leadership support, and possible next steps for advancing this work through appropriate conference channels.

The Annual Conference may also invite consultation, as needed, with the Committee on Nominations and Connectional Leadership Development regarding leadership needs related to this work.

VIII. Methodology and Data Notes

The **Faith, Identity, and Public Life Survey** received approximately **82 responses** from individuals engaged in church life across the California-Nevada Annual Conference and, in a small number of cases, possibly beyond.

The survey included a combination of scaled-response and open-ended questions designed to assess perceptions related to faith and national identity, congregational experience, sources of influence, and levels of concern regarding religion and public life.

District affiliation was collected through an open-text field. As a result, responses included variations in naming, including differing spellings, legacy district names, informal identifiers, and a small number of entries that may reflect affiliations outside the California-Nevada Annual Conference.

These responses were reviewed and, where possible, grouped into recognizable district categories. Because some entries were unclear or non-standard, the data is presented as reflecting **conference-wide patterns** rather than district-level comparisons.

The Task Force determined that the number of ambiguous or possible out-of-conference responses appears limited and does not materially alter the principal findings presented in this report.

Accordingly, the survey findings should be understood as indicative patterns within the respondent group, interpreted as a resource for discernment rather than as a statistically representative or predictive instrument. Accordingly, the survey findings should be understood as indicative patterns within the respondent group, **interpreted as a resource for discernment rather than as a statistically representative or predictive instrument.**

IX. Conclusion

The Task Force finds both encouraging alignment and meaningful challenge within the conference. This moment invites deeper formation, faithful public witness, and continued collaborative response.

Appendices

Appendix A

Districts Represented (as identified or reasonably grouped)

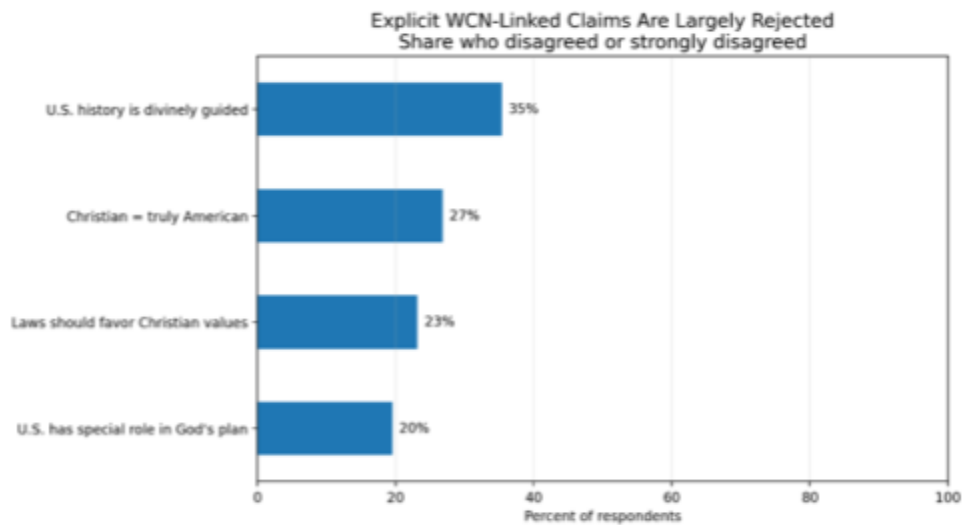
Responses appear to reflect participation from districts including:

Bay District
El Camino Real District
Los Rios District
Great Northern District
Central Valley / Central California
Western District
Hawaii District
Northeast District

A small number of responses reflected naming variations, legacy identifiers, or possible affiliations outside the conference.

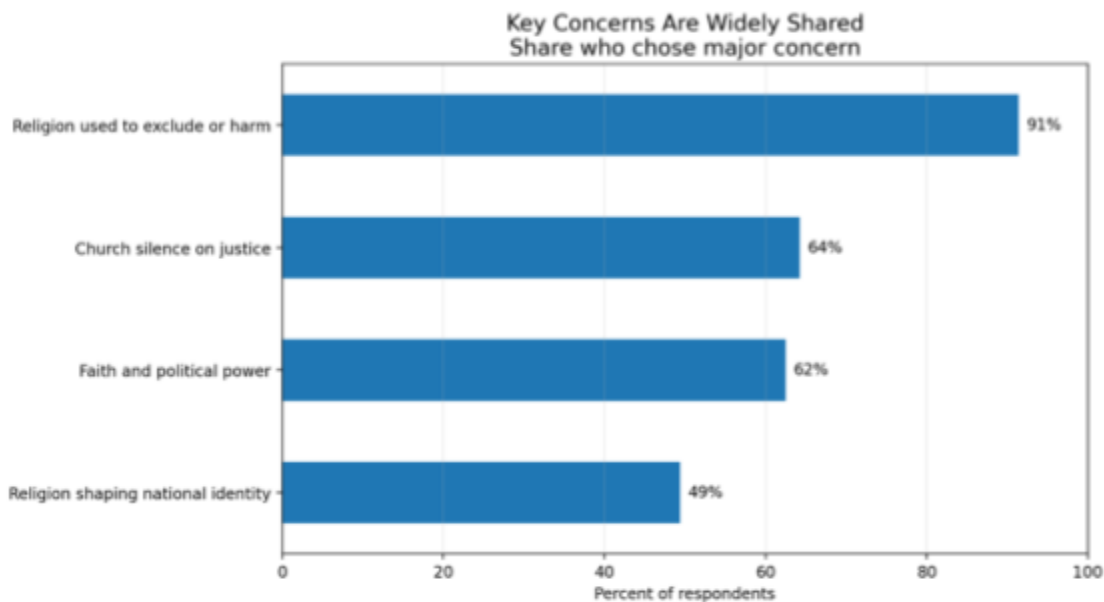
No district-level comparative conclusions are drawn from the data.

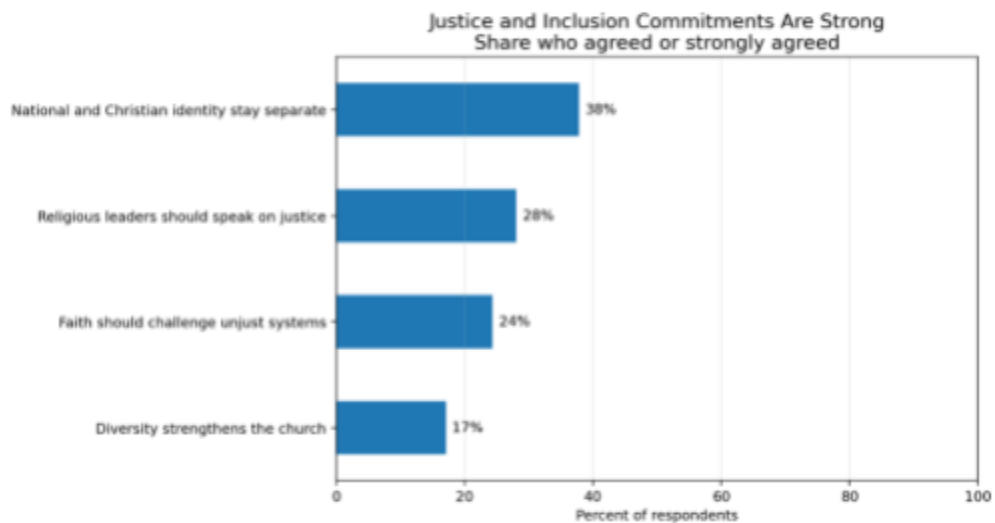
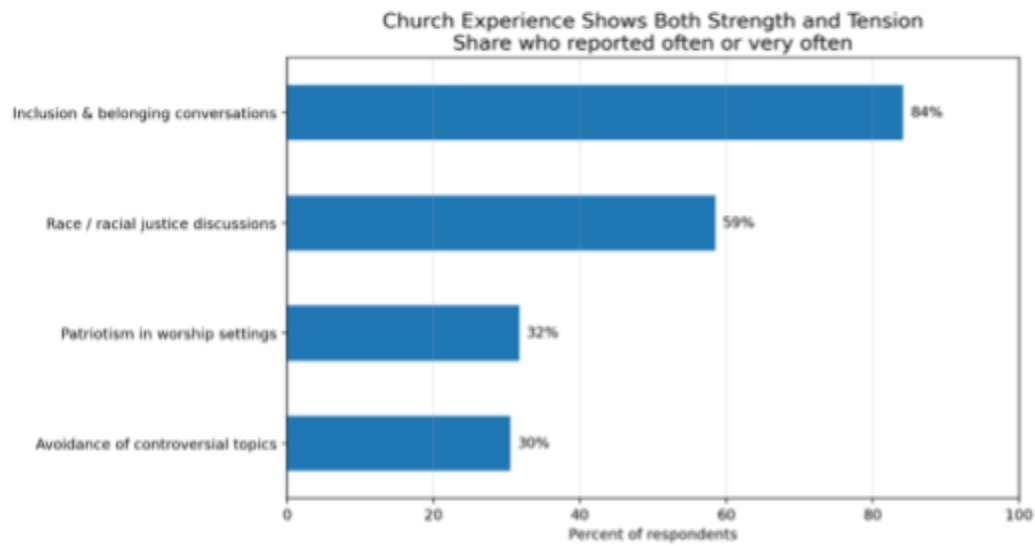
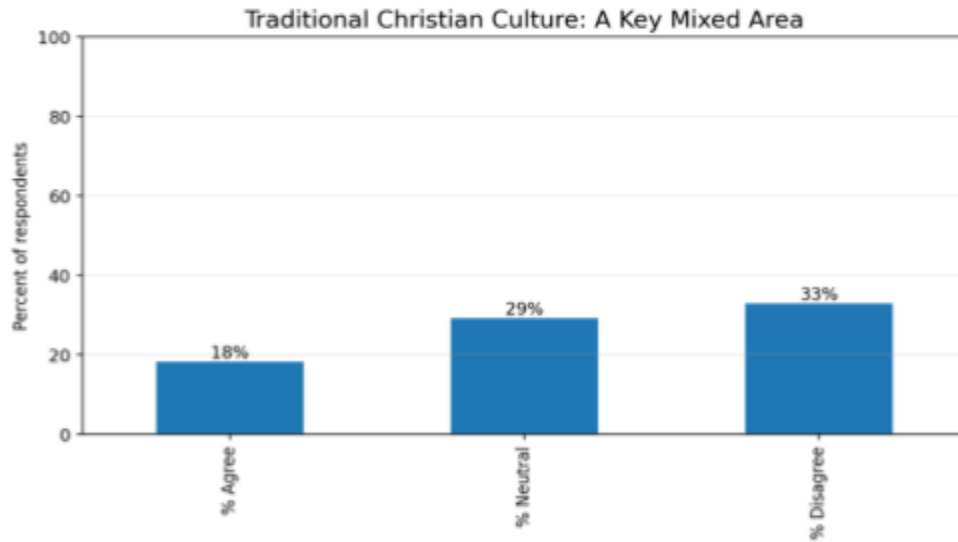
Appendix C



Categories (left to right):

1. Avoidance of Difficult Issues
2. Inclusive Values Commitments
3. Consistent Practice Indicators
4. Public Witness Settings





Appendix C

Summary of Workshop Presented at the Spiritual Leadership Gathering (Asilomar)

As part of its response to the Annual Conference charge, members of the White Christian Nationalism Task Force led a workshop at the **Spiritual Leadership Gathering at Asilomar Conference Grounds** exploring White Christian Nationalism as a theological, spiritual, and communal concern. The workshop combined theological reflection, guided dialogue, and constructive response, and contributed to the discernment reflected in this report.

Major Themes

The workshop focused on five interconnected themes:

1. White Christian Nationalism as Spiritual Distortion

Participants explored White Christian Nationalism not only as a political ideology, but as a distortion of identity, power, and belonging that can undermine faithful witness.

2. Jesus in the Wilderness as Theological Lens

Drawing on Matthew 4:1–11, the workshop considered Jesus' refusal of domination, certainty, and control as a framework for discerning distorted uses of power.

3. The Fruit Test: Healing or Harm

Drawing on Matthew 4:23–24, participants considered whether expressions of faith produce healing, trust, and communal wholeness—or fear, exclusion, and harm.

4. Identity, Loss, and Belonging

The workshop explored how fear of loss and threatened identity may contribute to exclusionary forms of nationalism and highlighted the spiritual challenge of learning belonging without supremacy.

5. Constructive Response Through Intentional Inclusive Community

Participants considered practices of reconciliation, cross-boundary relationship, reflective learning, and inclusion organizing as faithful responses.

Relationship to This Report

Insights from the workshop informed:

- the theological discernment framework in Section V;
- the constructive response in Section VI;
- and the recommendations presented in this report.

The workshop also contributed to the Task Force's fulfillment of the Annual Conference charge to engage listening, scholarship, and public conversation.

Additional Resources

A fuller version of the workshop, along with related resources, bibliographies, and continuing materials, is available through the conference resource page:

[Insert Conference Website Resource Link Here]

Readers are encouraged to consult that resource page for expanded workshop materials and ongoing learning opportunities.

Appendix D

How This Workshop Differs from Books Like *The Flag and the Cross*

Books such as *The Flag and the Cross* (Gorski & Perry) provide:

- Clear sociological and historical definitions of White Christian Nationalism
- Empirical research on its relationship to race, politics, and democracy
- Essential data and analysis for public understanding and policy conversations

This workshop **builds on that foundation** but addresses a different question:

What kind of Christian faith, identity, and community life allow White Christian Nationalism to take root—and what kind of formation can interrupt it?

Rather than centering information transfer, this workshop centers **spiritual discernment**. Participants are not positioned as observers of a problem “out there,” but as people of faith invited to examine how fear, loss, identity, and power shape Christian witness from within.

Key Distinctives of This Workshop

1. Scripture as the Primary Diagnostic Lens

This workshop places Jesus at the center, using Matthew 4 (temptation) and Matthew 4:23–24 (healing ministry) as theological mirrors. White Christian Nationalism is examined not primarily through political critique, but through the ways it *fails when held up to the life and ministry of Jesus*.

2. Focus on Spiritual Formation, Not Debate

The workshop is intentionally non-debative. It is designed to help participants reflect on how Christian faith is formed or distorted over time—especially under conditions of fear, perceived loss, and identity threat.

3. Naming Identity, Loss, and Fear Without Shaming

Rather than leading with condemnation, the workshop names unacknowledged loss and

resistance to identity adjustment as key spiritual drivers. This pastoral framing allows participants to engage honestly without becoming defensive, while still naming harm clearly.

4. Community Wellness as Theological Evidence

Drawing on Jesus' healing ministry, the workshop introduces a "fruit test": faithfulness is evaluated by whether it produces healing or harm, restored community or exclusion. This reframes discernment around lived outcomes, not ideological claims.

5. A Formational Alternative, Not Just Opposition

Most WCN resources end with warning or resistance. This workshop goes further by offering a constructive pathway: reconciliation, inclusion organizing, and the formation of Intentional Inclusive Community as a disciplined spiritual practice.

Relational and Structural Response Held Together

A defining feature of this workshop is its integration of:

- **Relational and communal work** (belonging, trust, truth-telling, cross-boundary encounter)
- **Public and structural witness** (defending dignity, resisting authoritarianism, dismantling segregation, and practicing nonviolent solidarity)

Participants are invited to see these not as competing approaches, but as inseparable dimensions of mature Christian discipleship.

Why This Workshop Is Especially Suited for Denominational Contexts

This workshop is designed for:

- Clergy gatherings and continuing education
- Congregational learning and leadership formation
- Task forces, listening sessions, and conference-wide initiatives
-

It offers denominational leaders a resource that:

- Names White Christian Nationalism clearly **without inflaming division**
- Grounds critique in **Jesus, Scripture, and Christian spirituality**
- Supports **pastoral leadership** rather than replacing it
- Helps communities move from fear toward healing, reconciliation, and faithful public witness

In Summary

Many resources help people understand White Christian Nationalism. This workshop helps communities discern, heal, and mature spiritually so that such distortions lose their power.

Used alongside books like *The Flag and the Cross*, this workshop equips faith communities not only to recognize White Christian Nationalism, but to **form a Christian identity and communal life that no longer requires fear, domination, or exclusion to belong**.

Selected Resources and Additional Materials

Readers seeking expanded materials related to this report—including the full workshop paper, annotated bibliography, denominational statements, and continuing educational resources—are encouraged to consult the conference resource page:

Faith, Identity, and Public Life Resource Page

[Insert Conference Website Link]

Resources available there may include:

- Full workshop paper presented at the Spiritual Leadership Gathering
- Bibliography on Christian Nationalism and public witness
- Statements from the United Methodist Council of Bishops
- Resources from the General Board of Church and Society
- Survey-related materials and continuing learning opportunities
- Additional materials related to Intentional Inclusive Community

This appendix is intended as a gateway to ongoing learning and engagement beyond the scope of this report.

Appendix E

Recommendation to Receive the Report of the White Christian Nationalism Task Force and Encourage Faithful Conference Response

Submitted to the California-Nevada Annual Conference

June 26–29, 2026

Submitted by the White Christian Nationalism Task Force

In partnership with the Conference Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships

Recommendation

The White Christian Nationalism Task Force recommends that the California-Nevada Annual Conference:

1. Receive the Report

Receive the **Report of the White Christian Nationalism Task Force (2026)** as a resource for continuing discernment regarding faith, identity, justice, and public life.

2. Commend the Findings for Study and Reflection

Commend the report's findings, theological reflections, and supporting resources for consideration and use by:

- districts
 - congregations
 - clergy and lay leaders
 - conference committees and ministry groups
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3. Affirm and Support Engagement with the Report's Recommendations

Affirm and support engagement with the report's recommendations related to:

- education and theological formation
 - congregational dialogue
 - leadership development
 - practices of Intentional Inclusive Community
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4. Support Continued Development of Constructive Responses

Support continued exploration of practices, structures, and partnerships that may strengthen the conference's response to issues addressed in the report, including collaborative work among Advocacy and Justice, Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, and related inclusive community efforts.

5. Request Follow-Up Through Appropriate Conference Leadership

In light of the findings and in order to avoid loss of momentum, recommend that the Annual Conference request the appropriate Mission Focus Area leadership—including Partners in Ministry and Compassion & Justice—in consultation with the Core Team, to identify a process for follow-up on the recommendations contained in this report, including discernment regarding responsible conference bodies, leadership support,

and possible next steps for advancing this work through appropriate conference channels.

The Annual Conference may also invite consultation, as needed, with the Committee on Nominations and Connectional Leadership Development regarding leadership needs related to this work.

Rationale

This recommendation arises from the work of the White Christian Nationalism Task Force since its establishment by action of the 2025 California-Nevada Annual Conference, including study, listening processes, public engagement, workshop leadership, and analysis of the conference-wide **Faith, Identity, and Public Life Survey**.

This recommendation is also informed by broader denominational action, including the 2024 pastoral letter of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, resources of the General Board of Church and Society, and action of the 2024 United Methodist General Conference denouncing Christian Nationalism and encouraging educational response within the church.

This provision is intended to support continuity of work in the interim and avoid loss of momentum while longer-term conference alignment is discerned.