

**Call for Manuscripts**  
**Special Issue for *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies***

**White Christian Nationalism and Contemporary Education: Implications  
for Theory, Policy, and Practice**

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**Expressions of interest:** July 30, 2023

(Send email with brief synopsis of planned manuscript to editors--

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White Christian nationalism, as a political and cultural movement, is certainly not a new phenomenon in the United States, but it is an ideology that is increasingly visible in American politics, particularly since the January 6th insurrection (Gorski & Perry, 2022). Indeed it can be somewhat disorienting to read texts critical of the most recent waves of educational reform—from No Child Left Behind forward—that fail to center the role of Christian conservatism and its push to privatize schooling in the United States (e.g. Giroux, 2012; Watkins, 2012). This isn't to say that attending to the role of Christian activists in attacks on public education didn't happen (see, for instance, Apple, 2006), but it is to assert that new developments both in applied theories and in public policy (e.g. expanded school choice; the targeting of LGBTQ students and faculty; and the banning of any discussion of racial discrimination in school curricula) have made clear that a thorough understanding and treatment of white Christian nationalism in educational research is urgently needed.

The political and cultural movement of white Christian nationalism is ideologically underpinned by beliefs about the supremacy of white racial identity, Christian-inflected theological arguments that historically supported colonization, enslavement, segregation, and displacement of people of color and currently support a belief that the United States was, is, and always should be a white Christian nation. Further, white Christian nationalists argue (often citing their own emotional sense of victimhood) for the preservation of hierarchical power structures that privilege white, cisgender, heterosexual men and view violence as a reasonable approach to defending their version of a Christian nation (Burke, Juzwik, & Prins, 2023) As Gorski & Perry note, white Christian nationalism is a “constellation of beliefs . . . that manifest in political goals” (Atencio, 2022). Scholars of white Christian nationalism often note the sophistication of

the organizational system and the religiously-sustained passion of individuals (Stewart, 2019) whose political influence has spiked in recent years, particularly at the state level.

What does the rise in visibility and influence of white Christian nationalism mean for education then? White Christian nationalists understand--and explicitly identify--public education as one of the key battlegrounds in establishing and defending their view of the United States as a Christian nation. White Christian nationalists (e.g., Boykin & Cureton, 2022; Wagner, 2011) urge “true Christians to gain control of the ‘seven molders’ or ‘mountains’ of culture and influence . . . including . . . education” (Stewart, 2019, p. 25). Adherents of white Christian nationalist ideologies are increasingly exerting influence on public education policy-making processes at both state and local levels. For example, recent studies show a marked rise in attempted book bans beginning in 2021 (American Library Association, 2022). This rise in attempted and successful book bans appears to be coordinated--the result of more than 50 separate organizations advocating at local and state levels for the removal of books that include LGBTQ+ and/or BIPOC characters (PEN America 100, 2023). And of course, it’s not just English Language Arts curricula that are affected by this political movement--white Christian nationalist ideologies are present and influential in the public discourse on a wide range of educational issues: funding private school vouchers with public money; limiting discussions around race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and power in classrooms; in recent Supreme Court decisions that have shifted the balance of First Amendment jurisprudence away from concerns about Establishment and toward Free Exercise; in curricular demands to teach alternatives to established scientific theories; in the discourse around school shootings and arming teachers; in bills that regulate trans bodies in school spaces; at local school boards that require teachers to publish lesson plans for parent and community review; and in the general deprofessionalization and precarity of the teaching profession.

Given the above concerns, and considering the relative paucity of research related to white Christian nationalism in the field of education specifically, this special issue seeks to set down stakes for where we might best begin to build a robust critical literature. Some questions authors might consider include, but aren’t limited to:

- What are the implications of white Christian nationalism in schooling for minoritized religious and irreligious individuals and groups?
- What are theological, theoretical, and/or philosophical responses to white Christian nationalism in purportedly secular institutions such as public schooling in the US?
- How does curriculum get mis/shaped by manifestations of white Christian nationalism at various scales (in schools; in districts; in states; and federally)?

- What might teacher preparation that critically attends to white Christian nationalism look like? What are barriers to such work and how might they be surmounted?

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