

Article

Sacralizing Dominion: The Doctrine of Christian Discovery and the Religious Nationalist Imagination

Adam D. J. Brett ^{1,2,3,*}  and Betty Hill (Lyons) ¹ ¹ American Indian Law Alliance, Liverpool, NY 13088, USA² United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg, PA 17325, USA³ Department of Religion, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244, USA

* Correspondence: abrett@aila.ngo

Abstract

White Christian nationalism presents itself as restoration—of a Christian nation, a moral order, a rightful hierarchy. This article argues that what it restores is the world-making rhetoric of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (DoCD). Reading the fifteenth-century papal bulls, their sedimentation into United States law, culture, religion, and contemporary dominionist discourse as a single rhetorical formation, we show that the bulls' vocabulary of discovery, vacancy, and civilization did not describe a world but constituted one: a moral-legal order in which Christian identity conferred sovereignty and racialized peoples appeared as obstacles to salvation and property. That order persists as hegemonic common sense, carried by legal precedent, curricula, and popular culture, and it is re-performed today in the territorial rhetoric of the New Apostolic Reformation and white Christian nationalism. Following Steven T. Newcomb (Shawnee/Lenape), repudiating the doctrine's documents without dismantling its embeddedness within language and cognition leaves religious nationalism's deepest resource intact. Against the discovery template, we set three counter-rhetorics—Indigenous theologies, Black theology, and womanism—and argue that desanctifying dominion requires conciliation, not reconciliation.

Keywords: Doctrine of Christian Discovery; white Christian nationalism; dominion theology; constitutive rhetoric; hegemony; *Johnson v. M'Intosh*; Two Row Wampum; womanist ethics; Black theology; settler colonialism

1. Introduction: Sacralizing Dominion at the Crossroads

Two origin stories, five centuries apart, follow a similar rhetorical strategy. In May 1493, Pope Alexander VI signed *Inter Caetera*, narrating a gift of lands that had never belonged to him: by apostolic authority, the lands “discovered and to be discovered” west of a line drawn on the ocean were given, granted, and assigned—*donamus, concedimus, et assignamus*—to the monarchs of Castile, together with the peoples living on them, so that “barbarous nations” might be subjugated and brought to the faith (Modrow and Smith 2022). In 1975, as the story is told, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ and Loren Cunningham of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) each received, independently and on the same day, a divine directive listing seven “mountains” of culture that Christians must climb and claim. “Or so the legend goes,” writes the rhetorician Matthew Boedy of that second story, noting that the meeting was not written about for decades and functions in the movement as “powerful spiritual lore passed down from one generation to another” (Boedy 2025). Both narratives do the same rhetorical work. Each manufactures retroactive



Received: 29 July 2026

Revised: 6 September 2026

Accepted: 10 September 2026

Published: 21 September 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

divine sanction for a program of domination; each converts an act of taking into an act of receiving; each locates authority in a grant no court of the living can inspect.

This article argues that the resemblance is not a coincidence but an inheritance, carried most often by society and institutions rather than via conscious transmission. As we have previously discussed, the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (DoCD) is not merely the legal precedent of American empire but its foundational rhetorical template (Brett and Hill 2024a). The papal bulls' vocabulary of "discovery," "vacancy," and "civilization" constituted a theological and moral order in which Christian identity conferred title to lands that, while still occupied, became vacant under the Christian civilizing gaze. What Newcomb calls the Original Free Prior Existence of Indigenous Peoples is not honored by the settler colonial Christian; instead, it is seen as an obstacle (Newcomb 2008; Wolfchild 2015). White Christian nationalism today speaks in that same deterministic framework, sacralizing territorial belonging and racial hierarchy as divine restoration. This is why repudiating the doctrine's documents, as hundreds of churches and even the Vatican have now attempted, leaves religious nationalism's deepest resource intact: the repudiations disavow the paper while the rhetoric keeps working (Holy See Press Office 2023). A theological, legal, and intellectual rescinding and repudiation of the dominion within theology is what is needed.¹

Four clarifications bound and delimit our analysis. First, we do not argue that contemporary Christian nationalists consciously transmit a fifteenth-century doctrine; most have never heard of it. Instead, we argue that the doctrine's rhetoric was sedimented into institutions—property law, federal Indian law, curricula, civil religion—that carry it forward ideologically and intellectually through the pattern of a sedimented religion identified by Tisa Wenger (Wenger 2026). Second, we argue that the DoCD is the template for settler-colonial Christian nationalisms not only throughout the Americas but across the colonial world (R. J. Miller 2026, 2019).² Other formations sacralize territory through other genealogies (Saiya 2025). Third, "religious nationalism" itself is not a uniformly dominant category. Tracey E. Hucks has documented a form of African American religious nationalism that "presumes as its starting point the normalcy, and not the aberration, of blackness and argues for its theological integrity and sacredness," a nationalism grounded in peoplehood from below (Hucks 2012, pp. 27–28; Clark 2026). Our target, by contrast, is the Enlightenment's dominative formulation of nationalism. We mark this distinction so that the term itself is not ceded to domination.

Fourth, on the kinds of claim we make, the article moves between historical continuity, genealogical influence, and structural analogy. We do not treat these as three separate arguments. They are one continuity seen at three magnifications, as under a microscope. Zoom in on the law and the chain of citation appears link by link: the bulls, *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, *Sherrill v. Oneida*, *Brackeen v. Haaland*. Zoom out to the movements and the links blur into influence: Reconstructionism forming the New Apostolic Reformation. Zoom out again, to *Inter Caetera* set beside a Reconstructionist commentary on Genesis, and only the shape remains, the same grammar at both ends of five centuries. Three focal points, one specimen: one Christian nationalism across several empires, from Rome through Iberia and Britain to the United States, and the analogies show what continuity looks like when the chain of citation goes underground (Section 5 explains how hegemony carries the doctrine forward implicitly).

A brief clarifying note regarding terminology, since "Christian colonialism" and "Christian hegemony" could each claim the phenomenon. We use all three and mean something distinct by each. Following Tink Tinker (wazhazhe, Osage Nation), we take the three to share one source: Christendom, which crossed the Atlantic as a eurochristian formation and has maintained itself ever since through an abstracted Christian hegemony

that merges with the putatively secular hegemony we call culture (Tinker 2024). Colonialism names the method: the conquest, dispossession, and remaking of Indigenous worlds through Christian categories. Hegemony names the maintenance: the process by which those categories become ordinary and pass as culture (Section 5). Nationalism names the identification of a people, its state, and its destiny with Christianity, and we reserve it for the domination code at its strongest point of impact: the intersection of Christianity and statecraft. Here we follow Newcomb, whose reading of *Johnson v. M'Intosh* and plenary power gave “Christian nationalism” its definitive usage within federal Indian law (Newcomb 1993). One Christian nationalism runs across several empires, from Rome through Iberia and Britain to the United States, and we emphasize that continuity (Riccardi-Swartz 2026; cf. Ruether 2007). The gradations of hegemonic domination and violence in the encounters between eurochristians and the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island/Abya Yala deserve parsing in their own right; our focus is the point where Christianity and statecraft meet. We recognize that the term is contested within the field, and on grounds we share: the discourse can obscure the colonial genealogy and racial formation that produce the movement (Homewood 2026; Hulsether 2026; McCrary 2026; Smith and Tran 2026). This article supplies that genealogy: we retain the term, but historicize it.³

Religious nationalism, as we have argued elsewhere, is best identified by its relation to myth: “myth-histories become totalizing and vital,” and “to desecrate the myth and/or the icons is to desecrate the nation” (Brett 2026, p. iii). As our colleagues Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst and Megan Goodwin remind us, “BORDERS ARE LIES WE TELL ON MAPS AND DEFEND WITH BOMBS.”⁴ In the quotidian sense, myths of domination are just like the borders they draw (Morgenstein Fuerst and Goodwin 2024). Building on our previous *Religions* article and our earlier documentary work, which assembled the paper trail from the fifteenth-century bulls through dominion theology, here we ask how the self-referential, authorizing rhetoric of theological and jurisprudential justifications of dominion works (Brett and Hill 2024a). The argument unfolds in four movements: a close reading of the bulls as constitutive rhetoric (Sections 3 and 4 trace the words into law); an account of the hegemonic frameworks that carry them (Section 5); a reading of contemporary white Christian nationalist and New Apostolic Reformation discourse as discovery rhetoric re-performed (Sections 6–8); and a constructive turn to the counter-rhetorics—Indigenous, Black, and womanist—that have resisted domination all along (Sections 9 and 10).

2. Meeting at the Crossroads: Rhetoric, Race, and Religion as Method

In conversation with this Special Issue’s guest editors Andre E. Johnson and Denise Burgher, we focus on the psycho-social and linguistic registers of religion. As Ashon T. Crawley has so deftly illustrated, religion is bound to language: its worlds are spoken, sung, decreed, and translated into deeds and titles (Crawley 2016). Race, as a generation of scholarship has shown, is in significant part a Christian theological production: Geraldine Heng locates race-making in medieval Christendom’s sorting of Christian from Jew, Muslim, and “Saracen,” with religion as the primary sorting mechanism (Heng 2018); Willie James Jennings locates the racial imagination’s primal act in the colonial displacement of peoples from land (Jennings 2010); J. Kameron Carter traces the whitened Christ to Christianity’s severance from its Jewish roots (Carter 2008). As the RaceB4Race symposia on premodern critical race studies highlight, race emerged as a weapon of dominion precisely through Christian settler-colonial encounters with Africa and the Western Hemisphere (Hall et al. 2023). Rhetoric is where both become public order—where a way of speaking hardens into a way of classifying diverse nations, religions, cultures, and peoples into collective nouns and adjectives that homogenize and erase difference.

Rhetorically, we situate our analysis alongside Kenneth Burke and Maurice Charland. Burke's "terministic screens" emphasize how vocabulary can deterministically direct attention: a terminology of "discovery" is simultaneously a terminology of erasure, for it can only see land as found, never as home (Burke 1966). Peter Fitzpatrick locates the same operation inside the word: "the prefix 'dis-' does have a privative force with its connotations of actively denying or undoing a previous condition," so that "the thing discovered is now different for having been discovered" (Fitzpatrick 2002, p. 25). Charland's "constitutive rhetoric" names the deeper operation: discourse does not merely persuade pre-existing subjects but calls subjects into being, interpellating peoples "always already" inside its narrative while concealing its own artifice (Charland 1987). The bulls, we will argue, did not describe Christian sovereigns, discoverable lands, and enslaveable peoples; they constituted them. Charles H. Long's *Significations* further underscores this constitutive and co-creative power of language through his careful attention to the genealogical history of religions, phenomenology, and rhetoric. For Long, "signification"—the conqueror's power to name others—renders the signified into objects of the Western religious imagination, and the colonized, excluded from the naming act, "exist as the pauses between the words," where "in their silence they speak" (Long 1986; Long 1969, p. 146). We return to Long's category of "opacity" in the constructive turn: when a culture's opacity is denied, "the meaning of that culture as a human value is denied" (Long 2018).

Two terms recur in what follows and should be defined at the outset. By the doctrine's grammar, we mean not only its vocabulary but also its syntax, which together form a fixed set of positions (a divine grantor, a chosen grantee, a territory given, and a people to be subdued) that any speaker can refill with new nouns. In contrast, the relations among those positions remain unchanged. By template, we mean that grammar in motion: a structure that, once installed in a legal opinion, curriculum, or sermon, can regenerate the doctrine's conclusions without explicit citation. Burke's terministic screens select the vocabulary; Charland's constitutive rhetoric supplies the subjects; grammar fixes their relation. Section 6 offers the fullest demonstration by placing the papal donation clause beside a Reconstructionist commentary on Genesis.

Jonathan J. Edwards has recently read R. J. Rushdoony—the founder of Christian Reconstructionism—through Burke's synecdoche, showing how the "law-word" trope totalizes: a part (God's law) stands for and constitutes a whole (all social order), foreclosing neutrality and licensing theocratic uniformity (Edwards 2024). Rushdoony's religious rhetoric builds on Calvin's synecdochic exegesis. It expands it across more than eight hundred pages of commentary on the Ten Commandments, until the eighth commandment's prohibition of theft condemned public education itself and the law-word underwrote "a dangerous fetishization of homogeneity, privacy, and racial and religious purity" (Edwards 2024, pp. 354–55). And the stakes exceed one movement's idiom: synecdoche, Edwards observes, is the trope of hegemonic construction—the part that "founds the w(hole)"—and Rushdoony's value as an archive is precisely that "he said quiet parts out loud," articulating premises that remain unstated in the fundamentalist and Christian nationalist arguments of the present (Edwards 2024, pp. 352–54).

Simon P. Kennedy has traced "worldview" itself as a "combat concept," forged twice for cultural war, from Abraham Kuyper's "mortal combat" against modernism to Francis Schaeffer's "total and complete antithesis" (Kennedy 2024). The word's career runs from Kant's *Weltanschauung* into the hands of James Orr and Kuyper in the 1890s, reforged as conservative Christianity's "tool for differentiation from, and contention with, the 'other'" (Kennedy 2024, pp. 63–67). When the concept re-emerged in the 1970s through Schaeffer, Charles Colson, and Nancy Pearcey, the martial framing had become explicit doctrine: "The real war is a cosmic struggle between worldviews—between the Christian worldview

and the various secular and spiritual worldviews arrayed against it” (Colson and Pearcey, quoted in [Kennedy 2024](#), p. 63). Kennedy argues that worldview language was never merely a rhetorical strategy but “a weapon intended for conflict”; the dominionist rhetoric is therefore as theologically constitutive as the theology it supports ([Kennedy 2024](#), pp. 66–67). In agreement with Kennedy, we do not see the rhetoric as decorative wall sconces but as load-bearing pillars supporting the theology. Edwards and Kennedy demonstrate how the dominionist lexicon rewards rhetorical criticism; what it has not yet received is a genealogy that runs the analysis back to 1452.

This Special Issue is about crossroads; now we arrive at ours. Five studies bear on our question, and we place them in conversation to illuminate the collision between dominion theology and what Tisa Wenger calls “settler secularism” ([Wenger 2026](#)). The legal historians of the DoCD have the archive. Except for Newcomb and d’Errico, they rarely treat its language as a world-making technology ([Williams 1990](#); [Robertson 2005](#); [R. J. Miller 2006](#); [Newcomb 2008](#); [d’Errico 2022](#)). Sociologists of white Christian nationalism have the present but not the deep genealogy: they do not connect its formation to the DoCD ([Whitehead and Perry 2020](#); [Gorski and Perry 2022](#)). Our friend, now ancestor, Tupac Huehuecoyotl Enrique Acosta (Izkaloteka Mexica Azteca) taught us that the story of white Christian nationalism and dominionism must always start at or before the DoCD, because this is the point of the critical distillation of Christendom into its new global formulation ([Acosta 2023](#)). The rhetorical critics of colonialism have the method but rarely the theology ([Stuckey and Murphy 2001](#); [Black 2015](#); [Endres 2009](#)). The theologians of race have the co-production of race and religion but not the movement analysis ([Carter 2008](#); [Jennings 2010](#); [Heng 2018](#)). Scholars of dominionism have the movement but not the doctrine: their timelines begin with Rushdoony, and papal theology of dominion is absent from their footnotes ([Ingersoll 2015](#); [Taylor 2024](#); [Boedy 2025](#); [Gagné 2024](#)). Robert P. Jones points toward the crossroads when he names the DoCD the “hidden root” of white supremacy ([Jones 2024](#)); Newcomb stands alone at the crossroads with his cognitive reading of discovery’s metaphors in law ([Newcomb 2008](#)). Nobody has built at the intersection (for the field’s current state, see [Arnold et al. 2026](#); [Brett and Hill 2026a](#)). We seek to join Newcomb with one further methodological commitment: following Betty Hill (née Lyons) (Onondaga Nation Snipe Clan) and Gregory Younging (Opaskwayak Cree Nation), we treat Indigenous peoples as their own experts and theorists, and Indigenous scholarship as authoritative rather than illustrative ([Younging 2018](#); [Avalos 2024](#)).

3. “Invade, Capture, Vanquish, and Subdue”: The World-Making Rhetoric of the Papal Bulls

As Newcomb, Modrow, and others have noted, the papal bulls authorizing colonization did not emerge *creatio ex nihilo*; they came out of the *longue durée* of Christendom, the crusades, and the Canary Island papal bulls. By the time Nicholas V took up his pen in 1452, the papacy had spent four centuries constructing what Brett Edward Whalen calls a claim to “worldly leadership and pastoral dominion over rulers, churches, and communities everywhere as a prelude to the end of history” ([Whalen 2009](#), p. 3). The decisive doctrinal hinge came in the thirteenth century, when Innocent IV conceded that “infidels” held legitimate dominion under natural law—and then reserved to the papal office the right to judge their societies and authorize armed action ([Whalen 2009](#), pp. 166–67). Freedom for non-Christians, in other words, was real but conditional, held on terms a Christian judge could always find breached. The fifteenth-century bulls culminate this jurisprudence, and their language carries the full weight of an apocalyptic theology in which the expansion of Christendom fulfilled prophecy. Glenn T. Morris (Shawnee) narrates the same arc from the Council of Constance’s *dominium* debates to the Alexandrine grants and their authority

to “subjugate” and “subdue” the “barbarous nations” found there (Morris 2003, p. 108). The year 1492 also produced a quieter instrument: Antonio de Nebrija’s Castilian grammar, presented to Queen Isabella with the observation that language had always been “the perfect instrument of empire” (Morris 2003, pp. 103–6). The empire’s strategists, rhetoricians, theologians, and canonists were contemporaries.

Read as constitutive rhetorics, the three bulls at the doctrine’s core—*Dum Diversas* (1452), *Romanus Pontifex* (1455), and *Inter Caetera* (1493)—perform three speech acts at once (Indigenous Values Initiative 2018; Nicholas 1455; Modrow and Smith 2022). They constitute a subject: the “Christian prince,” authorized and obligated. They constitute an object: lands “not previously possessed by any Christian owner,” a category that converts the Original Free inhabitants of *Alkebulan* (the African continent) and of Turtle Island / Abya Yala into “pagan,” “unbelievers,” and “other enemies of Christ,” and their inhabited homelands into available space, by religious test alone (Ben-Jochannan 1971). And they constitute a relation, stated in *Romanus Pontifex* with a candor later centuries would launder:

to invade, search out, capture, vanquish and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed . . . and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods. (*Romanus Pontifex* 1455, in Davenport 1917)

Newcomb’s analysis of this corpus identifies its three tenets—enslavement of persons, exploitation of labor, extraction of wealth—and demonstrates that domination is both form and content (Newcomb 2008). Thought, word, and deed come together to colonize the mind (Fanon 1967, 1963). The passive voice grants theological and rhetorical absolution; the epithets are a taxonomy for the dehumanization of those they seek to dominate. In Latin, the Vatican writes that the “barbarous” nations be *deprimantur*: that they be pressed down, subdued, and subjugated. Newcomb’s etymological work on *domo* (“to subdue, subjugate, tame, till”) places the entire dominion word-family inside a single semantic field of breaking and possessing (Greenberg 2016, p. 238; Newcomb 2018). Translation is fraught, and translating these documents with precision is crucial for theological and jurisprudential scholarship. Modrow and Smith’s careful side-by-side re-translation of *Inter Caetera* diverges from Davenport’s standard edition at decisive points, and they provide the annotated Latin alongside the English so that readers can test the translation—and feel the rhetorical force of the original—for themselves (Modrow and Smith 2022).

Famously, as noted by Newcomb, d’Errico, Miller, et al., these papal bulls are foundational to property law, but they do not discuss “vacancy.” The bulls are interested in occupation and possession: they authorize conquest of lands they acknowledge to be inhabited—by “Saracens and pagans,” by “barbarous nations.” The famous emptiness—*terra nullius*, *vacuum domicilium*—is a later, common-law re-terminologization of conquest logic, and the substitution is itself evidence of the template’s power: the grammar could exchange one key term for another while preserving its structure. The term also outlives its doctrine as an imaginary: in Australia, where the High Court rejected *terra nullius* in 1992, Julianne Schultz still finds “a *terra nullius* of the mind” that lets settlers treat the continent as a blank slate (Schultz, quoted in Poulos 2026). Jodi A. Byrd (Chickasaw) names the product: “discourses of savagery, Indianness, discovery, and mapping . . . served to survey a world into European possession by transforming indigenous peoples into the *homo nullius* inhabitants of lands emptied and awaiting arrival” (Byrd 2011, p. xxi). Peoples first, then lands: the emptying of the land required the prior emptying of the human. A theological inversion of *kenosis*—emptying the self to pursue fidelity—becomes emptying of the land to pursue wealth.

Prince Henrique's Guinea expeditions were pitched to Rome as crusades and licensed in exactly the bulls' terms, their crews absolved in advance (Crowley 2015, pp. 5–6). Down the African coast, the captains planted *padrões*—stone pillars surmounted by crosses—"an immodest act of possession," as Crowley writes, carried headland by headland (Crowley 2015, pp. 3–4).

And in the Spanish ritual theater of colonization, the bulls generated their most instructive offspring: the *Requerimiento*, the crown-mandated text read aloud—often in Latin, often from shipboard, often to empty beaches—informing inhabitants that God had given their lands to Castile through the pope. Gonzalo Lamana's analysis highlights a key detail for this rhetorical genealogy: the *Requerimiento*'s real addressees "were not Indians but conquerors. Its performance reaffirmed before them the Crown's authority over acts, lands, and peoples that were, in practice, well beyond its control" (Lamana 2008, p. 178). This is constitutive rhetoric caught in the act. The document did not persuade the invaded; it constituted the invaders—assured them that what they were doing was not raiding but law. Muysca memory keeps the other side of that scene: Luz Orozco sets *Inter Caetera*'s demand "that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself" beside an ancestral prophecy that "these pale men will take over the lands of our ancestors and we, their children, will be dispossessed of them by whip and sickness," and reports that "the legacy left by the Doctrine of Discovery continues to risk our way of life" (Orozco 2024, pp. 5–6). The bulls' first interpreters understood them eschatologically as well as legally: Columbus assembled his own *Book of Prophecies*, framing the voyages as "the discovery and conversion of the islands of the Indies" within salvation history (quoted in Whalen 2009, p. 229). And the claim-language borrowed a legitimacy older than Christendom itself. As Robert Pogue Harrison observes through Vico, "authority" descends from *auctores*—the buried ancestors "from whom we derive the title to property"—so that "the surest way to take possession of a place and secure it as one's own is to bury one's dead in it" (Harrison 2003, pp. 24, 85). The bulls pervert this logic: they assert an ancestral-title claim on behalf of newcomers whose dead lay an ocean away, while denying that claim to the peoples whose ancestors were actually in the ground. The insidious creativity of the bulls is their assertion of title through an appeal to heaven and the *Deus Otiosus*, the distant, idle deity (Arnold 2023).

Patricia Seed's comparative study generalizes the point across the maritime empires: colonial rule "was initiated through largely ceremonial practices—planting crosses, standards, banners, and coats of arms—marching in processions, picking up dirt, measuring the stars, drawing maps, speaking certain words, or remaining silent," and Europeans "created these rights for themselves" through exactly such symbolic action (Seed 1995, p. 2). Each power possessed in its own idiom, and each found its rivals' ceremonies unintelligible, which confirms where the rhetoric was aimed: the rituals "primarily targeted their fellow Europeans," whom colonists "had to convince of the legitimacy of their actions, not indigent peoples" (Seed 1995, pp. 11, 179). The ceremonies did not record possession; they manufactured it. The English idiom already rehearsed the later legal vocabulary: Winthrop reasoned that land "which lies common and hath never been replenished or subdued is free to any that will possess and improve it"—vacancy logic performed as ceremony a generation before Marshall's court hardened it into doctrine (Seed 1995, pp. 23–31, 39). Five centuries later, the paper trail remains open. As Tina Ngata (Ngāti Porou) writes of the bulls: "these laws have never been rescinded since they were issued in the 15th century. They were only ever built upon and expanded" (Ngata 2019). What they were built into is the subject of Section 4.

A reader may fairly ask whether the bulls' rhetoric reveals any denominational distinction, since many white Christian nationalists in the United States would balk at any

kinship, even rhetorical, with Rome. Our answer is that the grammar is older than the Reformation and the vice dominion has never respected denominational borders. The bulls were issued to a Christendom that had not yet split, and the Protestant sovereigns who repudiated papal authority kept the papal grant, translating it into charter, covenant, and common law (Seed 1995; Williams 1990). Our research collaborative continues to trace the footsteps of the Protestants who take up the Roman Catholic dogma they have eschewed whenever it suits their dominionist purposes. What we see emerging parallels the historian Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra's comparative finding that English Puritans and Iberian Catholics "deployed similar religious discourses to explain and justify conquest and colonization: a biblically sanctioned interpretation of expansion, part of a long-standing Christian tradition of holy violence aimed at demonic enemies within and without" (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006, p. 7). Both read America typologically as a second Canaan; both cast colonization as *reconquista* against a demonic sovereign holding prior title; "the Puritans were also willing to launch a *reconquista* against the devil in America to recover the continent for God" (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006, p. 12). Iberian conquest theology reached Massachusetts not as a transmitted doctrine but as an already-shared rhetoric, which is precisely what Newcomb's oft-overlooked cognitive theory would predict. The pattern held as the sorting turned from religion to race: Gerbner's Protestant planters wrote "Christian" into their slave codes and then replaced it with "white" (Gerbner 2018; Section 7). And it holds across today's mutually hostile streams, charismatic dominionist, Calvinist nationalist, and Catholic integralist alike (Section 6): a Catholic college can found itself on the conquistadores while a Reformed nationalist claims the Reformation, and both speak the grammar of the grant (Tillman 2026; Oosterhoff 2026). The traffic runs in the present tense: Gorski finds that the civilizational reframing "moves Roman Catholicism from the margins to the middle" of a coalition whose foot soldiers remain Protestant (Gorski 2026). The family we describe is therefore rhetorical, not ecclesial; its members need not recognize one another, and most do not. Herein lies the paradox of the Protestantization of the DoCD: Protestants see Catholics as legalistic, yet it is Protestants who weaponize the courts to enforce their theological preferences. In the land of a thousand charismatic micro-popes, it is the courts that provide the theological and jurisprudential justifications.

4. From Bulls to Law: Discovery's Sedimentation in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* and Federal Anti-Indian Law

In 1823, the Supreme Court of the United States decided a dispute between two non-Indigenous claimants to land in Illinois, and Chief Justice John Marshall reached back through the colonial charters to the discovery idea: discovery itself vested ultimate title in the discovering sovereign, leaving the Native nations who lived on the land a mere "right of occupancy." *Johnson v. M'Intosh* (1823) is conventionally treated as the cornerstone of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery's enshrinement into U.S. law. Rhetorically, it is better read as a translation—the moment a theological vocabulary was transubstantiated into what Wenger calls settler secularism, the idiom of U.S. property law. Marshall's own writing preserves the theological register under a thin veneer of regret:

The character and religion of its inhabitants afforded an apology for considering them as a people over whom the superior genius of Europe might claim an ascendancy. The potentates of the old world found no difficulty in convincing themselves that they made ample compensation to the inhabitants of the new, by bestowing on them civilization and Christianity, in exchange for unlimited independence. (*Johnson* 1823)

Christianity, civilization, and dominion—three of the bulls' tenets—survive intact; only the issuing authority has changed, from the chair of Peter to the bench of the Court. Vine De-

loria Jr. (Standing Rock) famously illustrated how the whole apparatus of “aboriginal title” flowed from this substitution (Deloria [1974] 1985). Robert J. Miller’s element-by-element analysis of the DoCD in U.S. law further illustrates the formal continuity among discovery’s constitutive elements (R. J. Miller 2006; Miller and Ruru 2009). *Johnson* follows in the footsteps of the *Requerimiento*, which had already shown discovery to be a reusable script, passed from Iberian to English hands long before an American court re-terminologized it (Lamana 2008; Williams 1990). Katherine Carté highlights that independence reorganized rather than ruptured this inheritance: American leaders “continued to embrace and articulate the kind of religious nationalism they had inherited from imperial protestantism” (Carté 2021, p. 21).

The rhetoric’s justificatory work is clearest in law. Jill Norgren’s history of the Cherokee cases traces the pre-1823 chain (Innocent IV, Vitoria, Vattel) directly into Marshall’s reasoning, then follows the after-life: *Worcester’s* “domestic dependent nations” surviving Removal and allotment, hardening into *United States v. Kagama* (1886) and *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock* (1903)—“the Indians’ Dred Scott”—where the Court derived unlimited congressional “plenary power” over Native nations from, as one scholarly assessment puts it, “rhetoric of colonial expansion rather than the rhetoric of constitutional discourse” (Norgren 1996, p. 147). Sidney Harring’s account of Crow Dog’s case supplies the mechanism: when the Court in 1883 recognized Lakota sovereignty, Congress overrode it with the Major Crimes Act, and the *Kagama* Court then invented plenary power—a doctrine “rooted in,” not opposed to, Marshall’s dependent-nations formulation. Harring adds the parallel that belongs in this Special Issue: “The same Supreme Court that ‘buried’ the civil rights acts in the 1880s and 1890s also created the plenary power doctrine . . . clearly consistent policies” (Harring 1994, p. 20). The dispossession of Native nations and the abandonment of Black civil rights were one Court’s coherent program. David Waggoner has since given the pattern a name and a longer arc, tracing a single “jurisprudence of white supremacy” from the papal bulls through *Johnson v. M’Intosh* to *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973): the logic that denied non-Christian peoples title to land reappearing, a century and a half later, to deny their descendants equal schooling (Waggoner 2015). Nor was the critique of plenary power a later scholarly retrieval: writing in the Native-run magazine *Indian Voice* in 1972, Jack Forbes was already answering that wardship “arose as a part of a process of extra-legal military conquest” (Forbes 1972, p. 8).

As Newcomb and d’Errico have shown across their work, the Court did not invent plenary power out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*); it drew the doctrine up from the depths (*creatio ex profundis*) of the older theology of Christian dominion. Tracing plenary power back through its chain of reasoning, we arrive at the *Deus Otiosus*, the distant and idle god of the papal grant (Section 3), in whose name the courts treat their own assertions as self-evident justification (Newcomb 2017, 2008, 1993; d’Errico 2026, 2022; Goudy 2026). John Milbank traces the same descent from inside Christian theology: for the made world to count as secular, “Adam’s dominium” had to be “redefined as power, property, active right, and absolute sovereignty,” so that “theology enters into the very construction of the new realities ‘property’ and ‘sovereignty’” (Milbank 2006, pp. 13, 16). The doctrine our courts call plenary power carries its parentage in its name: it is the English of “the canonical plenitudo potestas of the Pope, later invoked by Bodin in his invention of secular sovereignty” (Milbank 2006, p. 18).

City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation (2005) invoked “the doctrine of discovery” by name in a footnote to bar the Oneida Nation’s sovereignty over land it had repurchased on the open market; the “equitable” language of disruption re-performed the old diminishment (*City of Sherrill* 2005; d’Errico 2022). The asymmetry is the point: settler belonging converts silently into title (the “white possessive,” in Aileen Moreton-Robinson’s (Goenpul) phrase

for whiteness as a position of self-possession that licenses possession of land and knowledge alike; [Moreton-Robinson 2015](#)), while Indigenous belonging—actual ancestors, actually in the ground, a relation that never lapsed—converts into nothing, not even when the nation buys the land back. The doctrine’s jurists now rarely speak its name—subsequent land-claim dismissals apply *Sherrill*’s laches framework with the theology fully submerged ([Sumner, forthcoming](#))—which is not the doctrine’s absence but its perfection: a 2014 federal land decision could still recite that “discovery by a Christian nation” gave title ([Greenberg 2016](#), p. 239). The DoCD and plenary power lurk beneath the legal substrate, ready to strike lest anyone should dig too deep.

The most recent Supreme Court engagement confirms the pattern from both directions at once. In *Haaland v. Brackeen* ([Lloyd 2023](#)), the Court upheld the Indian Child Welfare Act—but, as Dana Lloyd argues, on grounds narrow enough to leave intact the *Johnson*-derived routing of Indigenous questions through race rather than sovereignty, “a logic of discovery, promoted in fifteenth-century papal bulls and read into U.S. law in the nineteenth century” ([Lloyd 2023](#), p. 95). And in the same case, sitting Justices conceded the doctrine’s constitutional vacancy from the bench: Justice Gorsuch found that “our founding document does not include a plenary federal authority over Tribes,” while Justice Thomas had “searched in vain for any constitutional basis for such a plenary power, which appears to have been born of loose language and judicial *ipse dixit*” ([Lloyd 2023](#), pp. 318, 335). The foundation has outlived its own justification in the eyes of the Court that inherited it—and the edifice stands anyway, which is the sharpest available demonstration that what holds it up is not law’s reasons but law’s grammar: the fixed positions of grantor, grantee, territory, and subject people defined in Section 2, which each new court refills without re-examining.

Two further attestations show how far beyond property law the sedimentation runs. The first is hermeneutical. New Testament scholarship has established that Matthew 28—“go therefore and make disciples of all nations”—was not read as a general missionary mandate for most of Christian history. As Ulrich Luz writes, “Only since the sixteenth century has Matt 28:19a separately become a decisive text for the mission of the church”; in Drew Strait’s summary, the text “did not become the ‘Great Commission’ until the doctrine of discovery emerged to transform the text into an imperial vision of Christianizing distant lands through colonization and genocide” ([Strait 2025](#), p. 370). The doctrine reshaped not just who owned the land but how the church read its own scripture. The second attestation comes, remarkably, from the doctrine’s heirs. The theonomist tradition itself insists that legal orders are never neutral: “in any culture the source of law is the god of that society,” Rushdoony wrote, in a passage contemporary presuppositionalist scholarship still cites approvingly (Rushdoony, quoted in [Schlebusch 2022](#), p. 88). On this one point we agree with the Reconstructionists against the liberal settlement: American property law’s claimed secularity is a vocabulary choice, not a metaphysical fact. The god of the system that begins at *Johnson v. M’Intosh* can be identified by locating the source of its law—and the source is a papal grant. The words that encode the relation—“guardian,” “ward,” “trust,” “domestic dependent nations”—carry, as one of us has written, “a paternalistic moral hierarchy” from theology into administration ([Brett 2026](#), p. xii). Language did not follow the dispossession. Language performed the dispossession, and still performs it.

5. The Hegemonic Nature of Christian Dominion

How does a fifteenth-century vocabulary become twenty-first-century common sense? We answer through Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, refined in three ways and deepened through womanist ethics. Hegemony names power in its most durable form: not the visible force of the police officer, but the governing assumption. It is an arrangement so thoroughly embedded in schools, churches, deeds, and holidays that it ceases to appear

as an arrangement at all (Gramsci 1971), whose book and Christian Hegemony working group have done more than any other source to make the concept usable for organizers and educators, applies this framework to the condition at issue here: the everyday, systematic dominance of Christian values and institutions that presents itself as secular, neutral, and simply American (Kivel 2013). One need not cite a papal bull to believe that the continent was supernaturally settled, that private property arrived with civilization, or that the nation bears a divine assignment.

Drawing upon womanist ethics, Emilie M. Townes arrives at a parallel account, and her formulation is worth placing beside Gramsci's because it was built to explain precisely the racial-religious production this article traces.⁵ Townes names the "fantastic hegemonic imagination"—an explicit fusion of Foucault's fantastic with Gramsci's hegemony, "ideological domination that is moral, political, and cultural and is transmitted by language." It "traffics in peoples' lives that are caricatured or pillaged so that the imagination that creates the fantastic can control the world in its own image," and—her crucial refinement of Gramsci—"it is in all of us . . . the privileged and the oppressed" (Townes 2006, pp. 18–21). Her own genealogy of the fantastic hegemonic imagination runs through: Puritan New Israel theology, Manifest Destiny, the turn-of-the-century "Protestant empire." "What endures," she writes, "is the self-image of being God's chosen people who are called to establish the new Israel" (Townes 2006, p. 92). The womanist and Gramscian analyses converge on the same object from different traditions, illustrating how deep and abiding the domination framework is.

Responding to feedback from our colleagues, we acknowledge that a careful analysis of hegemony must also specify what would negate it, and here three precision tools keep the claim from circularity. First, James C. Scott's distinction between thick and thin hegemony: the evidence that dominated peoples actively believe the ideology that dominates them, Scott shows, is "generally untenable"—but thin hegemony, the naturalization of an order as inevitable, is another matter (Scott 1990, pp. 71–73). Our claim is accordingly two-track: the discovery ideology operates as thin hegemony toward the dominated, who have never stopped contesting it, and as something closer to sincerely held belief within the settler-Christian formation itself. Second, Lisa Wedeen's Syrian ethnography demonstrates that rhetoric nobody believes can still dominate, producing "compliance rather than legitimacy" through enforced public performance (Wedeen 1999, p. 6). Participation in the rituals of Christian nationhood requires no inward conviction to do its reproductive work. Third, Moishe Postone's account of impersonal domination explains why no dominator needs to cite the founding documents: once a structure is sedimented into law and property, it confronts its inheritors as "a form of power with no real personal or concrete institutional locus" (Postone 1993). Precedent is the perfect example. *Johnson v. M'Intosh* binds in 2026 without any judge re-litigating its theology, because *stare decisis* is a machine for carrying conclusions forward while shedding their premises. Marshall wrote the machine into the opinion itself: "Conquest gives a title which the Courts of the conqueror cannot deny, whatever the private and speculative opinions of individuals may be, respecting the original justice of the claim" (Johnson 1823, quoted in Piccolo 2024, p. 1144). Wenger's "settler secularism" names the same mechanism from the historian's side: the doctrine's "claims for Christian superiority over the 'heathen'" never require restatement—they have "been silently affirmed in court cases ever since" (Wenger 2026, pp. 5, 278–79).

Hegemony operates not despite the secular form of American law but through it: Christian hegemony is carried on and preserved in the name of precedent and property law. Attorney Andrew Seidel explicitly names the trajectory without euphemism: the current Court's conservative bloc reads "the First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom through the lens of Christian supremacy"—his chapter title for the jurisprudence

is “Christian Legal Supremacy” (Seidel 2022). The doctrinal migration from Establishment Clause caution to Free Exercise maximalism has made schools, in William Barr’s phrase, “ground zero” for the reassertion of Christian normativity (Nguyen et al. 2021, p. 8). Curtis names the present form of the mechanism “illiberal secularism”: the movement accepts the secular premise that religion is private and then enlarges the private (family, church, corporation) until it governs in the state’s stead (Curtis 2026). Settler secularism, in Wenger’s sense, and illiberal secularism, in Curtis’s, are the same door seen from the two sides of the threshold.

Schools have long been a battleground for Christian hegemony. Andrew Gardner has shown that Andover Theological Seminary—the prototype of American graduate theological education—was founded in 1808 “as part of an evangelical infrastructure designed to undergird the co-constructed projects of religious nationalism and imperialism,” an institution one early alumnus praised as “peculiarly fitted to patriotic Christians” (Gardner 2026). The seminary was nationalist infrastructure from its foundation, giving Jennings’s diagnosis of theological formation (Section 10) an institutional point of origin. In the 1920s, fundamentalist campaigns converted “implicit cultural assumptions about public schooling” into statute—antievolution laws defended on the floor as necessary to preserve America’s status as a “Christian nation,” mandatory Bible-reading championed by the Klan as a means of ensuring that “only native born Americans rule the government” (Laats 2010). Leslie Ribovich carries the story into the postwar North, where New York City’s schools “braided notions of whiteness, morality, and meanings of religion together in colonial projects of creating moral Americans,” so that “secularization and desegregation are part of the same story” (Ribovich 2024, pp. 4, 10). The transmission continues by the same means today. Andrew Nalani and Hirokazu Yoshikawa map the “activity settings”—school boards and legislatures, libraries and curricula, churches and youth groups, homeschool networks and charter schools, with the family as “the central target activity setting”—through which white Christian nationalism transmits itself to the next generation, naming the vectors (the Council for National Policy, ALEC, Moms for Liberty, Generation Joshua) with empirical specificity (Nalani and Yoshikawa 2023, pp. 556–58).

The struggle extends into mass culture as well. Kristin Kobes Du Mez has shown that “the products Christians consume shape the faith they inhabit”—books, radio, music, and retail forming a conquest imaginary more effectively than any catechism (Du Mez 2020). Nor is the transmission confined to civil society: Lerone Martin’s history of the FBI shows a federal security agency itself conveying the formation—Hoover “built up the FBI as a white Christian force that partnered with white evangelicals to aid and abet the rise of white Christian nationalism,” making it “the bedrock of the modern national security state” (Martin 2023, pp. 4, 8). The gatekeeping ran inward as well: the flagship institutions of postwar evangelicalism were built, in Isaac Sharp’s summary, by a leadership “without exception . . . lily white,” which policed the boundaries of who counted as evangelical for the next half century (Sharp 2023). Who counts as Christian and who counts as American have never been separate questions in this formation; these institutions answer both at once. Each conduit is checkable; the hegemony claim stands or falls with them.

What these vehicles transmit is a theology with a name. Dominion theology’s genealogy—Rushdoony’s Christian Reconstructionism, its “biblical law” project, its transmission into the broader evangelical world—we have documented elsewhere and do not re-narrate here (Brett and Hill 2024a; Diamond 1995; McVicar 2015; Ingersoll 2015). What matters for the present argument is its underlying logic, and the movement states it plainly. Rushdoony’s “law-word,” as Section 2 showed, totalizes God’s law into all social order. Gary North—Rushdoony’s son-in-law and the movement’s economist (Ingersoll 2015, p. 31;

[Diedericks 2021](#))—grounds the whole program in a divine land grant with an exegetical candor the bulls would recognize:

Men can therefore subdue the earth in confidence through God’s law (Gen. 9:1–7), for “the earth hath he given to the children of men” (Ps. 115:16). ([North 2012](#), p. 524)

“Man’s tool of dominion over nature is law,” North writes elsewhere in the same commentary ([North 2012](#), p. 523)—a sentence that could serve as the epigraph to *Johnson v. M’Intosh*. When the Reconstructionist George Grant stated the movement’s aim, he reached for the full conquest register:

Christians have an obligation, a mandate, a commission, a holy responsibility to reclaim the land for Jesus Christ—to have dominion in the civil structures, just as in every other aspect of life and godliness. But it is dominion we are after. Not just a voice. It is dominion we are after. Not just influence. It is dominion we are after. Not just equal time. It is dominion we are after. World conquest. (Grant, quoted in [Ingersoll 2015](#), p. 69)

Reclaim the land. The verb presupposes the grant; the grant is the bulls’ template, re-derived from Genesis by men who did not need Alexander VI because the conclusion was already common sense. Tink Tinker (Osage) names the deep structure from the Indigenous side: plenary power is the old eurochristian “orders of creation” secularized into federal Indian law, “so that all Native claims are now legally inferior to the superior claims and economic powers of the invader” ([Tinker 2024](#), pp. 332–33)—the up-down schema of dominion theology and of Indian law are one schema. Jack D. Forbes (Powhatan-Renapé, Delaware-Lenápe) gave this whole formation an Indigenous diagnostic name: *wétiko*, the cannibal disease—“consuming another’s life for one’s own private purpose or profit”—whose sacralizing slogans he lists as “divine will,” “manifest destiny,” “doing God’s work” ([Forbes \[1979\] 2008](#)). Dominion theology, in Forbes’s terms, is *wétiko* with a systematic theology. The next section watches it speak in the present tense.

6. Restoration and Replacement: White Christian Nationalism’s Discovery Rhetoric

The sociology of white Christian nationalism has established the formation’s shape: a cultural framework fusing Christian identity with American civic belonging ([Whitehead and Perry 2020](#)), narrated as a “deep story” about who rightfully owns the nation ([Gorski and Perry 2022](#)). Ruth Braunstein’s anatomy of the movement’s historical storytelling supplies the narrative skeleton this article needs: whether in its explicitly racial (“white Christian nation”) or formally colorblind (“Judeo-Christian”) register, the story has one structure—original perfection, decline, restoration—and speakers slide strategically between registers, which is what gives “heritage” talk its deniability ([Braunstein 2021](#)). Our claim is that this restoration narrative is the discovery template speaking: a divinely granted founding (the grant), a fall (the loss of possession), and a rightful re-claimant (the restorer). The decline the story requires is measured, not imagined: white Protestants fell from a majority of Americans in 1993 to less than a third by 2014 ([Jones 2016](#)). Recent empirical work catches the sacralizing mechanism directly: Christian statisticians “feel elected by God to have power, not because of their piety or subservience” ([Li and Froese 2025](#), p. 12; cf. [Perry 2025](#)).

The transmission from Reconstructionist seedbed to mass movement is now well documented. Julie Ingersoll’s history shows the Reconstructionists “instantiated that theological system in institutions, especially the institutions of ‘Christian education,’” then carried dominion theology to the fastest-growing sector of world Christianity: “by the 1990s the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) arose among pentecostals and charismatics who

developed their own variation on dominionism, known as the Seven Mountains Mandate”—now “the public face of Christian Nationalism” (Ingersoll 2024, pp. 39, 44). The NAR’s founding theologian, C. Peter Wagner, described the resulting doctrine without euphemism:

Our theological bedrock is what has been known as Dominion Theology. This means that our divine mandate is to do whatever is necessary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to retake the dominion of God’s creation which Adam forfeited to Satan in the Garden of Eden. . . . We want to see whole cities and regions and states and nations transformed to support the values of the kingdom of God. This will happen only as kingdom-focused saints become the head and not the tail. (Wagner, quoted in Gagné 2024, p. 23)

Here, “retake the dominion” distills NAR rhetoric to its doctrinal core: recovering a forfeited divine land grant. Lance Wallnau, the Seven Mountains Mandate’s popularizer, renders the same program as territorial invasion: the church is “called to go into the entire matrix and invade every system,” for the “power of darkness” cannot be broken unless “the Church [is] represented in each sphere” (Wallnau, quoted in Gagné 2024, p. 25). The movement’s vocabulary did not drift into this register; it escalated and amplified the dominionist framework. Boedy traces the drift from “areas of influence” to “spheres” to “gates” to “mountains,” and summarizes Wallnau’s reframing in a sentence that is itself a terministic-screen analysis: “Influence became conquering. Success became transformation. Stewardship . . . became actively taking back money once used for evil” (Boedy 2025). The founding hermeneutic was already an occupation order: Dominionist Loren Cunningham glossed Luke 19:13 as “Jesus told us to occupy until He came,” and the movement’s teachers reach spontaneously for imperial precedent, urging the church to do what Rome did to conquered territory—impose its culture through a governing *ekklesia* (Boedy 2025).

Where the bulls had cartography—lines of demarcation drawn on oceans, *padrões* planted on headlands—the NAR has “spiritual mapping.” Its inventor, George Otis Jr., defines it in terms that deserve close reading:

[Spiritual mapping] involves superimposing our understanding of forces and events in the spiritual domain onto places and circumstances in the material world. The result is often a set of borders, capitals and battlefronts that differ notably from those we have come to associate with the political status quo. (Otis, quoted in Gagné 2024, p. 57)

This is *Inter Caetera*’s operation described from inside: a sacred cartography superimposed on the political one, generating borders and battlefronts invisible to secular law but binding on the faithful. “Territorial spirits” hold ground; “strategic-level spiritual warfare” clears it; apostles “take hold of the ‘spheres’ of their enemies by referring to Old Testament accounts of war and conquest to justify their actions” (Gagné 2024, p. 86). On 6 January 2021, the register became a battle order. Tyler Ethridge, a Seven Mountains-trained pastor later arrested for his part in the insurrection, preached from the Capitol steps that “Christians . . . need to infiltrate every area of society,” even “if it takes a little bit of aggression to barge through the walls that Satan separates us from the culture” (Ethridge, quoted in Boedy 2025).

Set Ethridge’s “infiltrate every area” and “barge through the walls” beside *Dum Diversas*’s *invadendi* and the rhetorical genealogy requires no forcing. Charlie Kirk’s idiom completes the lexical loop—“You should be leaning in. You should be taking terrain” (Boedy 2025)—and Katherine Stewart’s reporting shows the possession idiom in the movement’s organizational documents and pulpits alike: “God has called us to take possession and dominion of this land and of our government,” preaches one movement pastor; a Project Blitz steering-committee member writes the same mandate above a leaked fifty-state

legislative playbook (Stewart 2020, pp. 147, 155). The movement has since put the word on a cover: Torba and Isker's *Christian Nationalism: A Biblical Guide for Taking Dominion and Discipling Nations* (Torba and Isker 2022) treats dominion as the genre's proper name, and Riccardi-Swartz reads the "Christ is king" banners of January 6 as the return of an imperial political theology older than the republic (Torba and Isker 2022; Riccardi-Swartz 2026). Samuel Perry's findings locate Christian nationalism's racial work in "prototypicality," the consecration of the white Christian as the normative American, rather than in overt out-group hatred (Perry 2025). A donation logic behaves in exactly this way. It does not need to curse the dispossessed; it needs only to sanctify the possessor. This is what hegemonic inheritance sounds like when it surfaces: five hundred years of grammar, fluently spoken by people who could not date a single bull.

Boedy's structural summary can serve as this section's: "If dominion is the theological principle that unites the movement, then the political principle is 'participatory antidemocracy'" (Boedy 2025; cf. Aho 2021).

The bulls' third keyword completes the loop. "Civilization"—the warrant for subduing peoples not yet brought to civility—persists intact in the presidential idiom of restoration: "our ancestors trounced an empire, tamed a continent, and triumphed over the worst evils in history," Trump told the Naval Academy's graduates—a speech that Donovan Schaefer reads as reasserting "the racialized citadel they called 'civilization'" (Schaefer 2020, pp. 9–14). And the movement's dominion horizon is no longer subtext. In July 2024, Trump promised a summit of Christian voters that a second term would fix things "so good you're not going to have to vote anymore, my beautiful Christians" (quoted in Whitehead and Perry 2025)—dominion offered, quite literally, as the end of the electoral cycle.

The tightest single demonstration of the template's persistence is a juxtaposition of donation clauses. *Inter Caetera*, 1493: we "give, grant, and assign" the lands and their peoples to the Christian sovereign, that the barbarous nations may be subdued. Gary North, 2012, in the dominionist movement's economic commentary on Genesis: "the earth hath he given to the children of men," therefore men may "subdue the earth in confidence" (North 2012, p. 524). Grantor, grant, grantee, and the imperative *subdue*—the syntax is identical; only the notarization has moved, from the papal chancery to the biblical concordance. Newcomb finds the verse already at work in the charters: the Cabot patent sends its colonizers to "subjugate" the "heathen and infidel" places they find and to enlarge English "jurisdiction" and "dominium titula," which puts Genesis 1:28 inside colonial law centuries before a Reconstructionist commentary reached for it (Newcomb 2016, pp. 6, 8). This is what we mean by a rhetorical template: not a doctrine consciously transmitted but a grammatical structure—divine donation of territory to a chosen "us," with subjugation as duty—that regenerates its conclusions wherever it is installed. Jones is therefore right to call the DoCD the hidden root of white Christian nationalism, and the metaphor needs one amendment: a root feeds silently, but this root also *speaks*—its vocabulary of grant, possession, occupation, and civilization remains the movement's productive lexicon, generating new utterances daily (Jones 2024). Restoration rhetoric also arrives pre-gendered: Du Mez's history shows dominion taught as masculinity itself—the lost thing to be retaken is simultaneously land, nation, and manhood (Du Mez 2020).

American Christian nationalism, like American denominationalism, is pluralistic and fractious: its major streams—charismatic dominionism, Calvinist nationalism, Catholic integralism—are often mutually exclusive, cooperating only toward liminal goals (Saiya 2025). Each nevertheless speaks the grammar of the DoCD, and the traffic between streams is a high volume of intellectual cargo, as Patricia Tillman's study of Christendom College's conquistador self-fashioning inside the Project 2025 network shows (Tillman 2026). Gorski's own post-mortem on the concept confirms the direction of travel: the movement's

intellectuals now speak of civilization rather than nation, and what they propose to reclaim “is not America but Christendom,” a horizon that reaches “past the Revolution and the Reformation to the Middle Ages and the Roman Empire” (Gorski 2026). The sociology has caught up with the bulls.⁶

The dominionist idiom also travels globally, through the NAR’s international networks and a European “civilizationism” that deploys a Christian nationalist sociocultural identity of “belonging rather than believing” (Heuser 2021; Brubaker 2017). Boedy’s index contains no papal bulls; Aho’s and Ingersoll’s timelines begin with Rushdoony; the NAR’s own literature knows Kuyper, not Nicholas V. However new the Seven Mountains Mandate imagines itself to be, it participates in this long dominionist genealogy, and scholars and activists alike should situate it there—as Strait’s identification of “the doctrine of discovery” within white Christian nationalism’s “deep story” (Strait 2025, p. 350) and Newcomb’s 1993 clarion call for exactly this tracing both urge (Newcomb 1993). As Sections 4 and 5 establish, the movement need not cite *Inter Caetera* to inherit its logic. The paradigm has changed: the grant now issues from a biblical concordance rather than a papal chancery, the map is spiritual rather than nautical, and the carrier is a charismatic network rather than a Christian prince. The ideology of domination and its code remain the same.

7. Race, Chosenness, and the Enslaveable Other

Race is internal to the rhetoric of discovery, not an accident of its application. The bulls sorted humanity by a religious test—Christian and infidel, pastor and pagan—and that sorting was already race-making in Heng’s sense: a hierarchy of humankind produced by theology, law, and image before the age of Atlantic slavery gave it its modern form (Heng 2018). The “pagan” of the bulls is the prototype of the racialized subject. Jennings shows the mechanism: when Christian supersessionism detached election from Israel, chosenness reattached to European bodies—and land, detached from peoples, became possessable (Jennings 2010; Carter 2008). Newcomb’s three tenets name what the sorting licensed: enslavement, exploitation, extraction (Newcomb 2008). One theology of domination produced at least two major catastrophes: Africans were declared to be “without religion” to legitimize their enslavement, and Native Americans “without religion” to justify taking their land—a double operation that Ingersoll finds still being litigated in the briefs of the Christian-nationalist legal movement (Ingersoll 2015, p. 198). Maldonado-Torres traces the operation to its premise: a people theorized as having no religion had no metaphysical authority from which to claim sovereignty (Maldonado-Torres 2014).

Holding these two catastrophes in one analysis without collapsing them requires vocabulary the field has only recently supplied. Byrd’s term *arrivants*—borrowed from the poet Kamau Brathwaite—designates “those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism,” a position distinct from both settler and native (Byrd 2011, p. xix). The discovery ideology produced the *homo nullius* emptying of Indigenous homelands and, in the same motion, the forced transit of Africans as arrivants; but these are different positions within one order, and Byrd’s warning against the “transitive fallacy of like can become like” is this section’s methodological guardrail: rendering colonization and racialization interchangeable “risks leaving those very colonial structures intact on the one hand and allowing all experiences of oppression within settler colonialism to step forward as colonized on the other” (Byrd 2011, p. 54). The relation is co-constitution, not equivalence—“relationality rather than comparison,” as Byrd and her collaborators put it in naming the “economies of dispossession” that joined land theft and enslavement to property’s very form (Byrd et al. 2018, pp. 4–5). Nor is the relation innocent on any side: Byrd’s own engagement with the Cherokee and Chickasaw Freedmen—Native nations both dispossessed under discovery logic and implicated in

chattel slavery—models the honesty the analysis demands (Byrd 2011, 2021). The Freedmen record gives that honesty a documented legal spine: the 1866 treaty guaranteed Cherokee Freedmen “all the rights of native Cherokees,” yet a 2007 constitutional amendment re-imposed a blood-quantum test keyed to the Dawes Rolls, stripping some 2800 descendants of citizenship (Chin 2014, pp. 1229, 1237)—the racializing logic of dominion operating inside Indigenous sovereignty as well as against it.

Our own route to Byrd runs through Sarah Nahar, who introduced us to Byrd’s work and to the arrivant concept. In a four-part series for the Doctrine of Discovery Project, Nahar returns to the Combahee River Collective’s (1977) statement—the classic articulation of interlocking oppressions—and names what it could not yet say: without an explicit analysis of settler colonialism, Black feminist freedom dreams remain vulnerable to co-optation by the settler state they were forged against (S. Nahar 2023a, 2023b). Her repair is Byrdian at every step. She takes up Byrd’s warning that liberal multicultural settler colonialism deflects competing struggles into bids for inclusion rather than transformation. She invokes Byrd’s call for settler, native, and arrivant each to “acknowledge their own positions within empire.” And she proposes the Doctrine of Discovery itself as the shared analytic ground on which Black and Indigenous feminists can make common cause without de-centering either struggle: a braiding, in her figure, of struggles that dominion sorted apart (S. Nahar 2023c, 2023d). Her account of religious moral suasion and material support in the environmental justice movement carries the same commitments into practice (S. E. Nahar 2026). Nahar’s scholarship is the arrivant position doing exactly what Byrd hoped—relationality rather than comparison, practiced rather than merely theorized.

The chosen-nation theology carried both operations into the American centuries. James H. Cone’s account of lynching states the continuity with terrible economy: the claim that white mobs could kill Black people extralegally “was grounded in the religious belief that America is a white nation called by God to bear witness to the superiority of ‘white over black’” (Cone 2011, p. 7). A white nation called by God: the bulls’ donation clause, domesticated. Kelly Brown Douglas traces the same inheritance through the myth of Anglo-Saxon purity: “American exceptionalism was Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism” (Douglas 2022, pp. 143–44). Teresa L. Smallwood’s survey of the colonial statutes shows the co-constitution written directly into law—Virginia and Carolina codes providing that no slave should be freed by becoming Christian, legislation necessary precisely because the older rule had tied enslavability to unbelief (Smallwood 2023). The same dominion logic that extinguished Indigenous title also converted persons into title: Virginia’s 1705 act declared “the Negro, Mulatto, and Indian slaves within this dominion, to be real estate” (Brewer 2017, pp. 1074–75)—body and land, for a time, the same legal object. Cheryl Harris states the general rule: the conquest of Native land was “ratified by conferring and acknowledging the property rights of whites in Native American land,” and in *Johnson* “and similar cases, courts established whiteness as a prerequisite to the exercise of enforceable property rights” (Harris 1993, pp. 1716, 1724). Katharine Gerbner gives the hardening a name and a date: “Protestant Supremacy” was “the predecessor of White Supremacy,” and colonial planters “gradually replaced the term ‘Christian’ with the word ‘white’ in their law books,” so that “by 1700, whiteness had replaced Christianity as the primary indicator of freedom and mastery” (Gerbner 2018, pp. 2–3, 74–75). The religious sorting did not merely resemble the racial one; it became it, lexically, in the statute books. And the dominionist stream carried the proslavery theology forward under its own name: Rushdoony defended antebellum slavery as “a generally benevolent slavery” and opposed the Reconstruction amendments—commitments his heirs soften but, as Edwards shows, never structurally renounce (Edwards 2024, pp. 361–62; Stewart 2020).

The coding operation—hierarchy maintained without the word “race”—is itself part of the genealogy. Ingersoll documents its postwar form: after *Brown v. Board*, “white Christians who wanted to maintain their segregated schools could accomplish that with a ‘biblical’ critique of public education without mentioning race at all” (Ingersoll 2024, pp. 42–43). The documentary record makes the substitution visible: a 1969 South Carolina Methodist segregationist, appealing to “colorblindness,” lifted his language nearly verbatim from *Plessy v. Ferguson*—colorblind Christianity not as a repudiation of Jim Crow theology but as its rhetorical afterlife (Hawkins 2021, p. 126). Braunstein’s colorblind “Judeo-Christian nation” narrative performs the same laundering at the level of national story, and its analysts gloss the code bluntly: “‘Judeo-Christian’ is code for ‘White’” (Braunstein 2021; Nalani and Yoshikawa 2023, p. 557). The vernacular register keeps the older version audible. In 1971, John Wayne—the icon of the militant Christian masculinity Du Mez chronicles—could still say aloud what the courts had learned to imply: “I don’t feel we did wrong in taking this great country away from [the Native Americans]. . . . Our so-called stealing of this country from them was just a matter of survival,” because “the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves” (quoted in Du Mez 2020). Selfishly trying to keep it for themselves: *vacuum domicilium*, in a cowboy’s cadence. And the market keeps the hierarchy current: Boedy documents Turning Point USA’s pivot into “War on White People” and Great Replacement rhetoric on the frank calculation that “there was a market for anti-immigrant and racial-division messages” (Boedy 2025). From *deprimantur* to demographic threat, the enslaveable Other has never lacked a name; only the names have changed.

8. The Repudiation Gap and the Limits of Disavowal

The doctrine has been repudiated as no colonial instrument before it. More than 350 denominations and ecclesial bodies have formally renounced it—Episcopalians in 2009, Unitarian Universalists in 2012, the World Council of Churches, the United Methodists (Greenberg 2016, p. 240).⁷ In 2023, Indigenous delegates meeting ahead of a WCC assembly both credit and press that record, commending the Council “for repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery and the principle of *terra nullius* (nobody’s land)” while insisting that “the road to reconciliation leads through restoration of justice, because without justice, we cannot stand as equals” (Message from the Indigenous Peoples Pre-Assembly Meeting 2023, pp. 125, 129). The 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provided the canonical formula used by many to condemn all doctrines of superiority as “racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust”—language that Canada’s UNDRIP Act preamble then applied to discovery and *terra nullius* (United Nations 2007; Canada 2021). In March 2023, the Vatican itself issued a Joint Statement declaring that the Doctrine of Discovery “is not part of the teaching of the Catholic Church” (Holy See Press Office 2023). We have analyzed that statement’s rhetoric elsewhere: it distances without rescinding—the bulls remain in force as instruments never formally revoked, and the statement frames them as “manipulated” by colonial powers rather than constitutive of colonial power (Brett and Hill 2024a; Ngata 2019). A student legal commentator presses further: the sixteenth-century document the Church now offers as exculpatory proof is, “on close reading, an expression of the same hierarchical worldview that produced the Doctrine of Christian Discovery in the first place” (Sumner, forthcoming, p. 27).

The gap between speech-act and structure is not an unfortunate lag; it is the article’s strongest evidence about where the doctrine lives. If the DoCD were doctrine on paper, repudiating the paper would kill it. Because it is grammar-in-institutions, the repudiations coexist peacefully with *Johnson v. M’Intosh* and *Sherrill* still standing, with the equitable-bar

cases still dismissing Haudenosaunee land claims, with Wilkins's 1997 demand that the Court "repudiate the despised, outmoded, and always inaccurate doctrine of discovery" now three decades old and still unanswered (Wilkins 1997, p. 309). The road to Rome is longer still. In the quincentenary year Newcomb proposed that non-Native people "unite in solidarity with indigenous peoples" to press John Paul II "to revoke, in a formal ceremony with indigenous people, the Inter Cetera bulls of 1493" (Newcomb 1992); the Indigenous Law Institute's open letter to the pope, from Newcomb and Birgil Kills Straight (Oglala Lakota), made the demand formal in 1993 and carried it to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago that year, on the ground that the bulls "are the basis for ongoing patterns of subjugation that have been incorporated into federal Indian laws" (Taliman 1994). Arthur Manuel (Secwepemc) put it to Francis directly: "those church doctrines remain, more than 500 years later, the core legal justification for the confiscation of our land and subjugation of our peoples" (Manuel, quoted in Newsom and Carruthers 2022, p. 76). Before Francis's 2015 visit to New York, Tadodaho Sid Hill (Onondaga Nation) asked publicly that the pope rescind the doctrine and end the Vatican's silence (Gonzalez 2015); the Haudenosaunee Confederacy was given no hearing, and Onondaga Nation members left the visit reporting that the Confederacy and its Tadodaho had been slighted (Syracuse.com 2015). What arrived eight years later was the Joint Statement: a disavowal of the doctrine's use, not the revocation three decades of letters had asked for. Norgren's comparison is the sharpest available: *Plessy* was repudiated; *Lone Wolf* is still cited, "its underlying principles still unquestioned" (Norgren 1996). Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou), addressing the UN Permanent Forum's 2012 session on the doctrine, named the asymmetry from the Indigenous side: apologies without restitution leave the "genocidal legal magic" of discovery intact, and the real remedy is not the state's contrition but "an Indigenous re-discovery of our own rights, law and sovereign authority" (Jackson 2012). Aotearoa offers the structural comparison: the He Puapua report rejected discovery and *terra nullius* outright and proposed jurisdictional transformation rather than apology; its shelving under political backlash confirms the pattern (Charters et al. 2021; Mutu 2019).

Eve Tuck (Unangaŋ) and K. Wayne Yang supplied the name for what the gap performs: "settler moves to innocence"—"strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all" (Tuck and Yang 2012, p. 10). A statement renouncing discovery costs an institution nothing it intended to keep; reconciliation so conducted "is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future" (Tuck and Yang 2012, p. 35). What the alternative would require has been on the table for decades: Robert Porter (Seneca Nation) proposed in 1998 that the Hanadagáoyas (Town Destroyer, the Haudenosaunee name for American presidents) repeal the colonial statutes and abandon by name "the 'doctrine of discovery,' the Indian 'right of occupancy' doctrine, [and] the Plenary Power Doctrine" (Porter 1998, pp. 998–99). The Assembly of First Nations drew the same line in its own register: repudiation is not dismantling, and dismantling requires legislative reform, redress for lands taken without consent, and a binding commitment that the doctrine "is not in any manner invoked in contemporary court cases or negotiations" (Assembly of First Nations 2018, p. 2). We have made the parallel argument for the doctrine's theological register: so long as the DoCD operates in law and theology, it "must be repudiated and rescinded . . . and removed from all courts of law" (Brett and Hill 2024b)—repudiation, rescission, and removal, three different acts, of which only the first has begun.

The gap also takes an offensive form: where repudiation threatens, restoration rhetoric re-narrates the founding rather than defending it. The 1776 Commission was convened explicitly to answer the 1619 Project—a state-sponsored counter-memory operation, "restoration of American education" as the retaking of a mountain (Boedy 2025). The maneuver

has deep precedents: Tillman documents an American Catholic college literally founded on a manufactured memory of Franco's crusade, its progenitors vowing to "make America Catholic the way the conquistadores made half the world Catholic" (Tillman 2026). Even within Calvinism the usable past is fought over—the current Christian-nationalist claim on the Reformation is, in Micah Oosterhoff's judgment, "not recovery—it was recreation" (Oosterhoff 2026, p. 373). That the myth survives its own refutation is the strongest evidence for reading it constitutively: when fact-checking led David Barton's publisher to withdraw *The Jefferson Lies*, the correction cost Barton no discernible influence (Throckmorton 2026). Townes's counter-memory names what these operations fear: a reconstitution of history from the flesh-and-blood particulars the fantastic hegemonic imagination caricatures (Townes 2006, pp. 21–23). The memory wars are not adjacent to the repudiation gap; they are its battlefield.

The gap has an ecclesial-progressive form as well: Cone demonstrates that Reinhold Niebuhr wrote through the lynching era without once connecting the cross to the lynching tree—"what is missing in his language about Calvary was the racial context that defined the actual cross bearers in American society" (Cone 2011, p. 63). Repudiation-in-principle, silence-in-fact. And the gap has a movement-side mirror, which may be its most instructive form. The NAR's own apologetic literature now disavows "dominionism"—the term "can unfortunately present a picture of Christians as the equivalent of the Islamic Taliban," writes Randy Clark—while retaining, in the same document, Wagner's definition of dominion theology verbatim and the Seven Mountains schema (Clark et al. 2024, pp. 18, 129, 132). The movement may attempt to disavow the label while keeping the grammar and logic of the DoCD. Nor does counter-rhetoric alone reach the formation. Djupe and Walker find that self-identified Christian nationalists already affirm pluralist statements at high rates, yet under perceived threat Christian nationalism "erases the pro-social effects" of that pluralism (Djupe and Walker 2026, pp. 177–78). Opposition campaigns like Amanda Tyler's therefore appeal to convictions adherents already hold, and the threat-saturated dominion frame overrides those convictions when it counts (Tyler 2024). Even the scholarly field participates—the same seasons that produced the repudiations produced academic essays dismissing "Christian nationalism" as "an all-purpose branding term used to derogate the more conservative forms of Christianity in America" (Raschke 2023; cf. McCrary 2026). Ingersoll's summary of Reconstructionism's afterlife generalizes: the influence persists precisely as "subtle, implicit, and hidden," unacknowledged by the mainstream that speaks its vocabulary (Ingersoll 2015). A repudiation that leaves the terministic screen intact is not repair. It is, at best, the beginning of an honest inventory—and at worst, a ritual that performs innocence while the structure keeps title. That inventory now has a scholarly field forming around it (Paradise and Montague 2025, p. 463), and this article is offered as a contribution to its cohering.

9. Sovereignty Is Still the Issue: Counter-Rhetorics of Relation

The discovery template has never gone unanswered. This section reads two counter-registers—Haudenosaunee political thought and the African American prophetic tradition—as rhetorical theory in their own right: not resistance-as-reaction but standing alternative accounts of how peoples may share a world. We hold them side by side in Byrd's sense, as cacophony rather than harmony—parallel answers from the positions of native and arrivant, neither reducible to the other (Byrd 2011).

Let us begin on the river. In 1613, at Tawagonshi, the Haudenosaunee and Dutch newcomers made the treaty the Haudenosaunee call the Guswentá and English speakers call the Two Row Wampum: two purple rows on a white belt, a canoe and a ship traveling

the same river, parallel forever (Barreiro 1992). Oren Lyons (Onondaga Nation, Turtle Clan), Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan, renders its meaning:

This is our canoe, the Indian people, their government, and their religions. This is our brother the white man's boat, his religions, his government, and his people. Together, side by side, we go down the river of life in peace and friendship and mutual coexistence. As you note, we never come together. We are equal. (O. R. Lyons 1992, pp. 33–34)

Set this against *Inter Caetera* and the rhetorical inversion is complete. Where the bull constitutes one vessel and one river—a single sovereignty flowing from God through pope to prince—the Guswenta constitutes two vessels and a shared river: sovereignty as relation, not grant; coexistence without absorption. Goodell Ugalde gives that relation a current name, relational sovereignty, and quotes Aaron Mills (Anishinaabe) on what the settler ear misses: “one is not hearing what First Nations law says about belonging if one is only willing or able to listen in the language of citizenship,” since belonging “is not conferred once and fixed at the date of signature but is continually sustained through reciprocal care, mutual aid, and shared responsibilities” (Goodell Ugalde 2026, p. 86). The Two Row is not a “hidden transcript” in Scott’s sense, some coded resistance muttered offstage (Scott 1990). It is a public, formally negotiated counter-doctrine, co-equal in genre with the instruments of discovery and older than most of them in this hemisphere; what has been hidden is only the dominant order’s willingness to hear it. Scott Richard Lyons calls the standing claim “rhetorical sovereignty”—peoples’ inherent right to determine their own communicative futures (S. R. Lyons 2000); Malea Powell names the practice “survivance,” presence-in-resistance against a rhetoric that requires the vanishing of its objects (Powell 2002). Oren Lyons compressed the whole theory into a sentence at Montreal in 1979: “Sovereignty—it’s a political word. It’s not a legal word. Sovereignty is the act. Sovereignty is the do. You act. You don’t ask” (Lyons, quoted in Brett et al. 2026). Lyons has made the argument in the law’s own venues: recounting a Canadian court’s ruling that under the doctrine of discovery Indigenous peoples held only occupancy—“which makes you flora and fauna. We win”—he answered with unbroken title and the definition the doctrine cannot metabolize: “sovereignty is freedom . . . sovereignty is responsibility” (O. R. Lyons 1993, pp. 209, 212). The act continues in the Grand Council’s refusal of state jurisdiction in the 1997 trade-and-commerce negotiations (Heath 1998) and in Deloria’s proposal to restore treaty relations (Deloria [1974] 1985); the claim is hemispheric, as Margaret Mutu (Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Whātua) carries Moana Jackson’s teaching that “to honour the treaty, we must first settle colonisation” (Mutu 2019). And the stakes are not abstract for the nation from which this article is co-written: the Onondaga Nation’s petition before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights—filed in 2014 over the taking of its lands and the poisoning of Onondaga Lake, and still awaiting a United States response a decade later—is the discovery doctrine adjudicating a living, sacred body of water in the present tense (Brett and Hill 2026b).

A note on sources is itself part of the argument: the Two Row’s teachings, subject to frequent attempts at undermining by settler colonists, have in fact been in print for a generation (O. R. Lyons 1992; Brett et al. 2026; Parmenter 2013). The demand for parchment proof of the Guswenta, while federal Indian law and property law rest untroubled on a papal grant, that is not a standard of evidence; it is the discovery logic administering the archive.

Now the second register. The African American prophetic tradition answered the chosen-nation story from inside the scriptures the nation claimed. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner—AME churchman, Reconstruction legislator, and, in Andre E. Johnson’s studies, the exemplar of “prophetic pessimism”—refused every sacralization of the American order.

The flag was “a dirty and contemptible rag”; the *Plessy* Court an “abominable conclave”; and his emigrationist conclusion inverted the whole civilizational hierarchy: it was Liberia, not America, that showed the marks of a civilized polity, and “I see nothing for the Negro to attain unto in this country” (Johnson 2020). Where mission-oriented prophecy calls the nation back to a covenant, prophetic pessimism testifies without expecting the nation to change (Johnson 2012, 2020). Turner’s “God is a Negro” did for theology what his Liberia did for geography: it seized the naming power that signification had monopolized. Cone’s twentieth-century successor move works the same seam—“Every time a white mob lynched a black person, they lynched Jesus. The lynching tree is the cross in America” (Cone 2011, p. 158)—resignifying the dominant tradition’s central symbol against its complicity rather than abandoning it. Rhetorical scholarship has formalized what Cone was doing: Johnson’s early study of *Black Theology and Black Power* shows Cone adopting a “prophetic persona” that grounds itself in the sacred, discloses what the order will not say, and judges—a rhetorical theology, not merely a theological rhetoric (Johnson 2010, p. 268). Long supplies the theory for both: the forcibly silenced “exist as the pauses between the words,” and their opacity—refused translation into the conqueror’s categories—is itself a mode of signifying (Long 1969, p. 146; Long 2018). Smallwood carries the register into the present: #BlackLivesMatter as “an expression of religious freedom in its mature state,” proclamation becomes flesh in the streets (Smallwood 2023).

Neither the Guswenta nor the prophetic tradition asks for inclusion in the discovery order on better terms; each denies that order’s account of what land, peoples, and God are for. That is what makes them counter-*rhetorics* rather than counter-claims: they do not contest a title within the grammar; they speak a different grammar. And their difference from each other is load-bearing. The canoe and the ship name a relation between nations; the cross and the lynching tree name a betrayal within a body. Conciliation—a word we take up in closing—will mean differently for each, which is precisely why the article ends with a triad rather than a synthesis.

10. Conclusions: Desanctifying Dominion

The Doctrine of Christian Discovery sacralized domination. Dismantling religious nationalism therefore requires desanctifying it—not merely repudiating documents but unmaking the grammar in historical memory, theological practice, and legal-material structure, at the level of rhetoric where the sacralizing was done. Because the analysis has been rhetorical, the conclusion can be exact about what desanctification requires: not one alternative theology but three, held in cacophony, each answering the template from its own ground.

From Indigenous theologies: diagnosis and relation. Forbes named the disease—*wétiko*, the cannibal sickness of “consuming another’s life for one’s own private purpose or profit”—and identified its sacralizing slogans: divine will, manifest destiny, God’s work (Forbes [1979] 2008). Building on his decades-long relationship with Faithkeeper Lyons, Philip P. Arnold situates the cure’s foundation in Indigenous values that treat land as a relative rather than a resource (Arnold 2023). Randy Woodley (Keetoowah Cherokee) works the same seam from inside the church, refusing to equate Christianity with Western civilization and proposing lament and listening before any remedial “doing” (Woodley 2022). Desanctifying dominion, on this account, is resanctifying relation. And conciliation, not reconciliation, names the political form: there was no prior right relationship to restore; there was invasion. Iva Carruthers names the same refusal from the Black church side: “all too often, those who have a heart for justice don’t have the stomach for truth. They want to leap-frog to reconciliation and peace without remembrance and confession” (Carruthers

2020). The task is to establish right relation for the first time—which is what the Two Row has been offering, in public, for four hundred years (Cf. Hill 1992a, 1992b).

From Black theology: the naming of the idol and its replacement. Willie James Jennings, examining the formation Western education gives its “white self-sufficient man,” finds beneath possession, control, and mastery “one relentless goal: dominion”—and answers with the one word the template cannot metabolize: “Belonging must become the hermeneutic starting point from which we think the social, the political, the individual, the ecclesial” (Jennings 2020, pp. 153, 10). A Black theologian, working without reference to the bulls, independently names dominion as the deformity and belonging as its cure: the convergence is the argument. Cone’s inversion supplies the christological form—the God of this tradition is found among the crucified, not the conquerors—and Strait’s “hermeneutic of resistance” shows the reclamation can reach the proof-texts themselves, restoring Genesis 1 to stewardship and Matthew 28 to servanthood (Cone 2011; Strait 2025). Andrew Whitehead’s turn from measurement to confession makes the intra-evangelical case, naming “power, fear, and violence” as Christian nationalism’s operative idols (Whitehead 2023, pp. 16, 66).⁸

From womanism: the method for the long work. Townes’s counteremory—“not a rejection of history, but a reconstitution of it”—is the discipline the memory wars of Section 8 require, and her “everydayness” locates the dismantling where hegemony actually lives: in daily, communal, unglamorous practice (Townes 2006, pp. 21–23). The tradition’s founding text had already named the deepest problem. An ethics “predicated upon the existence of freedom and a wide range of choices” is “null and void in situations of oppression”; dominion’s ethics, the unmarked freedom of the discoverer, is exactly such an ethics. Moral truth must instead be rebuilt from the ground the dominant ethics erased (Cannon 1988, p. 2). And Hucks documents the answer the typology would otherwise miss: exit—Black religious world-making entirely outside Christianity, on land, behind a border that reads “You are leaving the U.S. You are entering the Yoruba Kingdom” (Hucks 2012, p. 168). Protest, refusal, and departure are all answers to dominion; a desanctified future has room for each.

The stakes are not antiquarian. The emptying-and-claiming template is at work this decade on new frontiers—*terra nullius* logic redeployed in green-capitalist extraction zones, Indigenous lands rendered sacrificeable for a planetary “greater good” (Hutagalung 2026), and on this continent the Line 3 resistance names the same logic, where “a settler-colonial project seeks epistemic hegemony to justify its entitlement to territory for resource extraction” and water protectors call the pipeline “modern-day colonialism for resource extraction and corporate profit” (S. Miller 2024, pp. 356, 365–66)—and the movement that stormed a capitol under an Appeal to Heaven flag has not retired its cartography. Long’s dyad states the choice this article has tried to make legible: the religion of the conqueror, which sacralizes possession, or the religions of the oppressed and the resistant, which have kept another world audible from within the pauses of the conqueror’s speech (Long 2018, pp. 167–68). The Doctrine of Christian Discovery taught the nations to hear “dominion” as a blessing. Unteaching it is rhetorical work—renaming, retranslating, restoring opacity its dignity and land its relations—and material work: honoring treaties, returning land, dismantling the doctrine in the law where it still resides. Tinker gives the material demand its Indigenous name—LandBack, “reversing the thingification of Land, reversing the conversion of Land into ‘property’” (Tinker 2024, pp. 333–34)—and Onondaga Lake gives it a face. Betty has asked the question elsewhere, and it belongs here too: “How do you pollute your Mother, the Earth? All living beings depend on her; none is greater than another. How can humans claim dominion over the Earth while poisoning the very waters that give them life?” (Brett and Hill 2026b). Faithkeeper Lyons reminds us that Sovereignty

is the act thereof. The river is wide enough for two vessels. Land, sovereignty, and our Mother the Earth are still the issue.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.D.J.B. and B.H.; Methodology, A.D.J.B. and B.H.; Formal analysis, A.D.J.B. and B.H.; Investigation, A.D.J.B. and B.H.; Resources, A.D.J.B. and B.H.; Writing—original draft, A.D.J.B. and B.H.; Writing—review & editing, A.D.J.B. and B.H.; Project administration, A.D.J.B. and B.H. All authors contributed equally. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Indigenous peoples contest whether the joint statement represents an actual repudiation or is merely yet another half measure. Cf. (Arnold et al. 2023).
- ² Africa is the case that shows the reach: reviewing Amin’s legal history of extraction, Dzah describes the doctrine of discovery as “a foundational concept in international law’s power to dominate non-European polities, be it in Africa, Asia, or in Latin America,” one that treated “non-European spatiality as theoretically vacant and practically uninhabited” and whose effects outlived formal decolonization “through the instrumentality of international financial and development institutions that replaced the European colonising powers” (Dzah 2025, pp. 678–79).
- ³ The three terms have separate histories and ebb and flow in relation to one another. For our purposes, “Christian nationalism” is the oldest in this application: Newcomb used it for federal Indian law in 1993, Albert B. Cleage Jr. had used it for a Black religious-political project in 1972, and the social-scientific literature specified its current sense only in the 2010s (Cleage 1972; McDaniel et al. 2011; Whitehead and Perry 2020). “Christian hegemony” comes out of feminist, antiracist, and educational writing of the 1990s and 2000s (Kaye 1996; Blumenfeld 2006); Paul Kivel’s *Living in the Shadow of the Cross*, together with the Christian Hegemony working group he convenes, gave the concept its most developed and usable form for organizers and educators (Kivel 2013); and “secular Christian hegemony” names its persistence after belief declines (Lauwers 2023). “Christian colonialism” appears in comparative missionary history and in Indigenous critical jurisprudence (Savage 1997; Hawkley 2014; d’Errico 2017), where it names the method rather than the polity. The terms describe one arrangement from three sides: a colonial claim to land invokes Christian authority; its survival in ordinary legal reasoning becomes hegemonic; the story that the land belongs to a divinely chosen Christian nation is nationalist. On the distinction between Christendom and Christianity, see d’Errico’s foreword to Newcomb 2008.
- ⁴ Emphasis in the original.
- ⁵ Townes styles her name in lowercase; we follow her usage in the text and references.
- ⁶ On the ultramontane genealogy of the Catholic-integralist stream, see Cowan (2021) and Voekel (2022), read together by Byram (2026): today’s Catholic-Protestant right is “a relatively recent chapter in longer conflicts over territorial sovereignty and ultramontane authority.”
- ⁷ The Council’s own record is explicit: reporting to the 10th Assembly, General Secretary Olav Fykse Tveit noted that “we addressed the Doctrine of Discovery last year, repudiating the use of this doctrine to justify non-indigenous claims to sovereignty and domination” (Tveit 2013).
- ⁸ The idolatry frame has a parallel outside Christianity. Reviewing Yaacov Yadgar’s *To Be a Jewish State*, William Cavanaugh notes that Yadgar reads Zionism as “nation-statist political theology,” “a particular instance of a universal phenomenon” in which the state supersedes the tradition it claims to fulfill and sovereignty “takes the role of the quasi-divine agent”; the religious/secular boundary, Cavanaugh observes, obscures that confrontation, and the older words, idolatry and supersessionism, name it better (Cavanaugh 2026; Yadgar 2024, pp. 65, 127). The DoCD’s sacralization of dominion is the Christian case of the same nationalization of faith.

References

Primary Sources

- Dum Diversas. 1452. Pope Nicholas V. In [Davenport 1917](#).
- Romanus Pontifex. 1455. Pope Nicholas V. In [Davenport 1917](#).
- Inter Caetera. 1493. Pope Alexander VI. In [Davenport 1917](#); [Modrow and Smith \(2022\)](#).
- Johnson & Graham's Lessee v. M'Intosh*, 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823).
- United States v. Kagama*, 118 U.S. 375 (1886).
- Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, 187 U.S. 553 (1903).
- City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation of New York*, 544 U.S. 197 (2005).
- Haaland v. Brackeen*, 599 U.S. 255 (2023).
- Two Row Wampum Treaty/Guswentá. 1613. See [Barreiro \(1992\)](#); [Parmenter \(2013\)](#).

Secondary Sources

- Acosta, Tupac Enrique. 2023. Superseding the Doctrine of Discovery: World Water One. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*, March 29. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/blog/1CEMANAHUAC/> (accessed on 15 April 2026).
- Aho, James. 2021. Christian Dominionism and Violence. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. Edited by John Barton. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Arnold, Philip P. 2023. *The Urgency of Indigenous Values*. Haudenosaunee and Indigenous Worlds. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Arnold, Philip P., Sandra L. Bigtree, and Adam D. J. Brett. 2026. A Preface to Challenging the Justifications of Domination through Religion: 'We Were Planting Corn, and They Were Planting Crosses'. *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 24: 187–208.
- Arnold, Philip P., Sandra L. Bigtree, and Betty Lyons. 2023. Continuing Christian Domination: A Response to the Vatican's Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. *The Commons by APRIL*, April 6. Available online: <https://www.aprilonline.org/continuing-christian-domination/> (accessed on 15 April 2026).
- Assembly of First Nations. 2018. *Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery*. Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations.
- Avalos, Natalie. 2024. Indigenous Religious Traditions and the Decolonial Turn in Religious Studies. *Religious Studies Review* 50: 267–72. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Barreiro, José, ed. 1992. *Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Ithaca: Akwe:kon Press, Cornell University.
- Ben-Jochannan, Yusef. 1971. *Africa: Mother of Western Civilization*. African-American Heritage Series; Baltimore: Black Classic Press.
- Black, Jason Edward. 2015. *American Indians and the Rhetoric of Removal and Allotment*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Blumenfeld, Warren J. 2006. Christian Privilege and the Promotion of 'Secular' and Not-So 'Secular' Mainline Christianity in Public Schooling and in the Larger Society. *Equity & Excellence in Education* 39: 195–210. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Boedy, Matthew. 2025. *The Seven Mountains Mandate: Exposing the Dangerous Plan to Christianize America and Destroy Democracy*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Braunstein, Ruth. 2021. The 'Right' History: Religion, Race, and Nostalgic Stories of Christian America. *Religions* 12: 95. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Brett, Adam D. J. 2026. Preface: 'Borders Are Lies We Tell on Maps and Defend with Bombs'. *Journal of the Council for Research on Religion* 7: Iii–xvi.
- Brett, Adam D. J., and Betty Hill (Lyons). 2024a. Documenting Domination: From the Doctrine of Christian Discovery to Dominion Theology. *Religions* 15: 1493. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Brett, Adam D. J., and Betty Hill (Lyons). 2024b. On the Limits of the Concept of Religious Freedom in Indigenous Communities. *Journal of the Council for Research on Religion* 5: 75–96. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Brett, Adam D. J., and Betty Hill (Lyons). 2026a. Examining the Doctrine of Discovery in Religion and Indigenous Studies. *Religion Compass* 20: e70039. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Brett, Adam D. J., and Betty Hill (Lyons). 2026b. Healing the Sacred: The Fight to Restore Onondaga Lake and Honor Indigenous Land. *International Journal on Responsibility* 9: 2. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Brett, Adam D. J., Betty Hill (Lyons), and Nethaniel Belmont. 2026. A Postscript: Sovereignty Is Still the Issue. *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 25: 129–53.
- Brewer, Holly. 2017. Slavery, Sovereignty, and 'Inheritable Blood': Reconsidering John Locke and the Origins of American Slavery. *American Historical Review* 122: 1038–78. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2017. Between Nationalism and Civilizationism: The European Populist Moment in Comparative Perspective. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 1191–226. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Burke, Kenneth. 1966. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Byram, Timothy. 2026. When Christian Nationalism Meets Catholic Modernity in Latin America. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 293–303. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Byrd, Jodi A. 2011. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Byrd, Jodi A. 2021. Not Yet: Indigeneity, Antiracism, and Anticolonial Liberation. In *Antiracism*. Edited by Moon-Kie Jung and João H. Costa Vargas. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 309–24.
- Byrd, Jodi A., Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy. 2018. Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities. *Social Text* 36: 1–18. [CrossRef]
- Canada. 2021. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. S.C. 2021, c. 14. Department of Justice, Canada. Available online: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/u-2.2/FullText.html> (accessed on 15 May 2026).
- Cannon, Katie G. 1988. *Black Womanist Ethics*. AAR Academy Series 60; Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge. 2006. *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Carruthers, Iva E. 2020. Remembrance: Toward Righteousness and Reparations. *The Ecumenical Review* 72: 6–18. [CrossRef]
- Carter, J. Kameron. 2008. *Race: A Theological Account*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carté, Katherine. 2021. *Religion and the American Revolution: An Imperial History*. Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press.
- Cavanaugh, William T. 2026. The Nationalization of Faith. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 330–33. [CrossRef]
- Charland, Maurice. 1987. Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73: 133–50. [CrossRef]
- Charters, Claire, Kayla Kingdon-Bebb, Tāmami Olsen, Waimirangi Ormsby, Emily Owen, Judith Pryor, Jacinta Ruru, Naomi Solomon, and Gary Williams. 2021. *He Puapua: Report of the Working Group on a Plan to Realise the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Wellington: Te Puni Kōkiri.
- Chin, Jeremiah. 2014. Red Law, White Supremacy: Cherokee Freedmen, Tribal Sovereignty, and the Colonial Feedback Loop. *John Marshall Law Review* 47: 1227–68.
- Clark, Jawanza Eric. 2026. Sacred Black Spaces: A Review of Black Religious Nationalism. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 282–85. [CrossRef]
- Clark, Randy, Landen Dorsch, Will Hart, Charity Cook, Tracy Nicole, Ty Yoshimura, Michael Yoder, and Anne Watt. 2024. *A Response to New Apostolic Reformation Critics*. Rev. and expanded, 3rd revision. Mechanicsburg: Global Awakening Theological Seminary.
- Cleage, Albert B., Jr. 1972. *Black Christian Nationalism: New Directions for the Black Church*. New York: William Morrow.
- Combahee River Collective. 1977. The Combahee River Collective Statement. Available online: <https://blackpast.org/african-american-history/combahee-river-collective-statement-1977/> (accessed on 15 May 2026).
- Cone, James H. 2011. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Cowan, Benjamin A. 2021. *Moral Majorities Across the Americas: Brazil, the United States, and the Creation of the Religious Right*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Crawley, Ashon T. 2016. *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*. Commonalities. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Crowley, Roger. 2015. *Conquerors: How Portugal Forged the First Global Empire*. New York: Random House.
- Curtis, Finbarr. 2026. Christian Statism? *Religious Studies Review* 52: 243–47. [CrossRef]
- Davenport, Frances Gardiner, ed. 1917. *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to 1648*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, vol. 1.
- Deloria, Vine, Jr. 1985. *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence*. Austin: University of Texas Press. First published 1974.
- d’Errico, Peter P. 2017. Indigenous Lèse-majesté: Questioning U.S. Federal Indian Law. *New Diversities* 19: 41–54.
- d’Errico, Peter P. 2022. *Federal Anti-Indian Law: The Legal Entrapment of Indigenous Peoples*. Santa Barbara: Praeger.
- d’Errico, Peter P. 2026. Federal Anti-Indian Law: Why a Challenge to ‘Christian Discovery’ Creates a Metaphysical Crisis for the US. *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 25: 1–14. Available online: <https://jcr.org/archives/25.1/derrico/> (accessed on 15 May 2026).
- Diamond, Sara. 1995. *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Diedericks, Morne. 2021. Critical Evaluation of Theonomist Eschatology. In *die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 55: a2753. [CrossRef]
- Djupe, Paul A., and Brooklyn Walker. 2026. The Weakness of Anti-Christian Nationalism: When Religiously Inclusive Orientations Can’t Increase Tolerance. *Politics and Religion* 19: 166–83. [CrossRef]
- Douglas, Kelly Brown. 2022. Doing Theology When Whiteness Stands Its Ground. In *Political Theology on Edge: Ruptures of Justice and Belief*. Edited by Clayton Crockett and Catherine Keller. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 139–48.
- Du Mez, Kristin Kobes. 2020. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York: Liveright.
- Dzah, Godwin E. K. 2025. International law and the history of resource extraction in Africa: Capital accumulation and underdevelopment, 1450–1918 by George Forji Amin, Routledge, 2024, pp. 296. *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law* 34: 678–81. [CrossRef]
- Edwards, Jonathan J. 2024. Democracy’s End: Far-Right Fundamentalism and the Rhetoric of R. J. Rushdoony. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 54: 351–65. [CrossRef]
- Endres, Danielle. 2009. The Rhetoric of Nuclear Colonialism: Rhetorical Exclusion of American Indian Arguments in the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Siting Decision. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6: 39–60. [CrossRef]

- Fanon, Frantz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fitzpatrick, Peter. 2002. Doctrine of Discovery. In *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*. Edited by David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 25–30.
- Forbes, Jack D. 1972. Constitutional Powers of the U.S. in Indian Affairs. In *Indian Voice*. Santa Clara: Native American Publishing Company, vol. 2, pp. 28–29.
- Forbes, Jack D. 2008. *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism*, Rev. ed. New York: Seven Stories Press. First published 1979.
- Gagné, André. 2024. *American Evangelicals for Trump: Dominion, Spiritual Warfare, and the End Times*. Translated by Linda Shanahan. New York: Routledge.
- Gardner, Andrew. 2026. 'Patriotic Christians': Nationalism, Imperialism, and the Origins of Theological Education in the United States. *Church History* 1–19. Available online: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/church-history/article/patriotic-christians-nationalism-imperialism-and-the-origins-of-theological-education-in-the-united-states/F16B02D6E70B8B9BDB1A2548CCF15D86> (accessed on 15 April 2026).
- Gerbner, Katharine. 2018. *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gonzalez, Juan. 2015. Indians Want Vatican to End Its Silence on Doctrine of Discovery. *New York Daily News*, August 11. Available online: <https://www.nydailynews.com/2015/08/11/gonzalez-indians-want-vatican-to-ends-its-silence-on-doctrine-of-discovery/> (accessed on 15 April 2026).
- Goodell Ugalde, Elliot. 2026. Kinship Beyond Borders: Relational Sovereignty and the Limits of Liberal Statist Secession. *Constellations* 33: 83–90. [CrossRef]
- Gorski, Philip S. 2026. The End of White Christian Nationalism. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 248–53. [CrossRef]
- Gorski, Philip S., and Samuel L. Perry. 2022. *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goudy, Jode. 2026. Right and Respectful Relations: A Memoir of the Road to the Historic Yakama Nation Amicus Brief Challenging 'Christian Discovery' in *Washington State v. Cougar Den*. *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 25: 16–50.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.
- Greenberg, Joy H. 2016. The Doctrine of Discovery as a Doctrine of Domination. *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 10: 236–44. [CrossRef]
- Hall, Kim F., Scott Manning Stevens, and L. Lehua Yim. 2023. On Critical Indigenous Studies and Early Modern Critical Race Studies: A Tri-Interview. In *Seeing Race Before Race: Visual Culture and the Racial Matrix in the Premodern World*. Edited by Noémie Ndiaye and Lia Markey. Tempe: ACMRS Press, pp. 217–28.
- Harring, Sidney L. 1994. *Crow Dog's Case: American Indian Sovereignty, Tribal Law, and United States Law in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Harris, Cheryl I. 1993. Whiteness as Property. *Harvard Law Review* 106: 1707–91. [CrossRef]
- Harrison, Robert Pogue. 2003. *The Dominion of the Dead*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hawkins, J. Russell. 2021. *The Bible Told Them So: How Southern Evangelicals Fought to Preserve White Supremacy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hawkey, Ethan P. 2014. Reviving the Reconquista in Southeast Asia: Moros and the Making of the Philippines, 1565–1662. *Journal of World History* 25: 285–310. [CrossRef]
- Heath, Joseph J. 1998. Review of the History of the April 1997 Trade and Commerce Agreement among the Traditional Haudenosaunee Councils of Chiefs and New York State and the Impact Thereof on Haudenosaunee Sovereignty. *Buffalo Law Review* 46: 1011–21.
- Heng, Geraldine. 2018. *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heuser, Andreas. 2021. Outlines of a Pentecostal Dominion Theology. In *Political Pentecostalism: Four Synoptic Surveys from Asia, Africa, and Latin America*. Edited by Leandro L. B. Fontana and Markus Luber. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, pp. 187–246.
- Hill, Richard. 1992a. Continuity of Haudenosaunee Government. In *Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Edited by José Barreiro. Ithaca: Cornell University, pp. 166–75.
- Hill, Richard. 1992b. Oral Memory of the Haudenosaunee: Views of Two Row Wampum. In *Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Edited by José Barreiro. Ithaca: Cornell University, pp. 149–159.
- Holy See Press Office. 2023. *Joint Statement of the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development on the 'Doctrine of Discovery'*. Vatican City: Holy See Press Office. Available online: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2023/03/30/230330b.html> (accessed on 17 May 2026).
- Homewood, Nathanael. 2026. Editor's Introduction to Unsettling Religious Nationalisms. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 237–39. [CrossRef]

- Hucks, Tracey E. 2012. *Yoruba Traditions and African American Religious Nationalism*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Hulsether, Lucia. 2026. Unlearning Christian Nationalism. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 254–58. [CrossRef]
- Hutagalung, Toar. 2026. Towards a Decolonial Ecotheology: An Asian Contrapuntal Reading of Ecojustice. *Colloquium* 56: 65–76. [CrossRef]
- Indigenous Values Initiative. 2018. Dum Diversas. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/dum-diversas/> (accessed on 17 May 2026).
- Ingersoll, Julie J. 2015. *Building God's Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstruction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ingersoll, Julie J. 2024. From Christian Reconstruction to Christian Nationalism: What the Media Need to Know about the 75-Year Effort to Establish Theocracy in the U.S. *Journal of Media and Religion* 23: 38–49. [CrossRef]
- Jackson, Moana. 2012. Statement on the Doctrine of Discovery. Paper presented at United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 11th Session, New York, NY, USA, May 7–18.
- Jennings, Willie James. 2010. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jennings, Willie James. 2020. *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Johnson, Andre E. 2010. The Prophetic Persona of James Cone and the Rhetorical Theology of Black Theology. *Black Theology* 8: 266–85. [CrossRef]
- Johnson, Andre E. 2012. *The Forgotten Prophet: Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Johnson, Andre E. 2020. *No Future in This Country: The Prophetic Pessimism of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Jones, Robert P. 2016. *The End of White Christian America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Jones, Robert P. 2024. *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy and the Path to a Shared American Future*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Kaye, Melanie. 1996. Jews in the U.S.: The Rising Costs of Whiteness. In *Names We Call Home: Autobiography on Racial Identity*. Edited by Becky Thompson and Sangeeta Tyagi. New York: Routledge, pp. 121–38.
- Kennedy, Simon P. 2024. Christian Worldview and Cosmic War: Contexts and Origins of a Religious Combat Concept. *Church History* 93: 63–84. [CrossRef]
- Kivel, Paul. 2013. *Living in the Shadow of the Cross: Understanding and Resisting the Power and Privilege of Christian Hegemony*. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.
- Laats, Adam. 2010. *Fundamentalism and Education in the Scopes Era: God, Darwin, and the Roots of America's Culture Wars*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lamana, Gonzalo. 2008. *Domination without Dominance: Inca-Spanish Encounters in Early Colonial Peru*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Lauwers, A. Sophie. 2023. Religion, Secularity, Culture? Investigating Christian Privilege in Western Europe. *Ethnicities* 23: 403–25. [CrossRef]
- Li, Ruiqian, and Paul Froese. 2025. For the Power or the Glory? The Religiosity of America's Religious Nationalists. *Socius* 11: 23780231251351703. [CrossRef]
- Lloyd, Dana. 2023. *Haaland v. Brackeen* and the Logic of Discovery. *U.S. Catholic Historian* 41: 95–115. [CrossRef]
- Long, Charles H. 1969. Silence and Signification: A Note on Religion and Modernity. In *Myths and Symbols: Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade*. Edited by Joseph M. Kitagawa and Charles H. Long. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 141–50.
- Long, Charles H. 1986. *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Long, Charles H. 2018. *Ellipsis. . . : The Collected Writings of Charles H. Long*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Lyons, Oren R. 1992. Land of the Free, Home of the Brave. In *Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Edited by José Barriero. Ithaca: Cornell University, pp. 30–35.
- Lyons, Oren R. 1993. Law, Principle, and Reality. *New York University Review of Law & Social Change* 20: 209–16.
- Lyons, Scott Richard. 2000. Rhetorical Sovereignty: What Do American Indians Want from Writing? *College Composition and Communication* 51: 447–68. [CrossRef]
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. 2014. Religion, Conquest, and Race in the Foundations of the Modern/Colonial World. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82: 636–65. [CrossRef]
- Martin, Lerone A. 2023. *The Gospel of J. Edgar Hoover: How the FBI Aided and Abetted the Rise of White Christian Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [CrossRef]
- McCrary, Charles. 2026. Snakes in the Rotunda: Representing Christian Nationalism. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 240–42. [CrossRef]
- McDaniel, Eric Leon, Irfan Nooruddin, and Allyson Faith Shortle. 2011. Divine Boundaries: How Religion Shapes Citizens' Attitudes toward Immigrants. *American Politics Research* 39: 205–33. [CrossRef]
- McVicar, Michael J. 2015. *Christian Reconstruction: R. J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Message from the Indigenous Peoples Pre-Assembly Meeting. 2023. *The Ecumenical Review* 75: 125–29. [CrossRef]
- Milbank, John. 2006. *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Miller, Robert J. 2006. *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny*. Westport: Praeger.
- Miller, Robert J. 2019. The Doctrine of Discovery: The International Law of Colonialism. *The Indigenous Peoples' Journal of Law, Culture, & Resistance* 5: 35–42. [CrossRef]
- Miller, Robert J. 2026. The International Law of Colonialism: The Doctrine of Discovery. *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 25: 61–67.
- Miller, Robert J., and Jacinta Ruru. 2009. An Indigenous Lens into Comparative Law: The Doctrine of Discovery in the United States and New Zealand. *West Virginia Law Review* 111: 849–918.
- Miller, Sirkka. 2024. Knowledge(s) and Power in the Stop Line 3 Movement: From Colonial Logics to Epistemic Justice. *Antipode* 57: 350–71. [CrossRef]
- Modrow, Sebastian, and Melissa Smith, trans. 2022. The Papal Bull Inter Caetera of 4 May 1493: Introduced and Translated by Sebastian Modrow and Melissa Smith. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*. June 13. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/inter-caetera/> (accessed on 15 May 2026).
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. 2015. *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Morgenstein Fuerst, Ilyse, and Megan Goodwin. 2024. *Religion Is Not Done with You: Or, the Hidden Power of Religion on Race, Maps, Bodies, and Law*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Morris, Glenn T. 2003. Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Development of a Decolonizing Critique of Indigenous Peoples and International Relations. In *Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance*. Edited by Richard A. Grounds, George E. Tinker and David E. Wilkins. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, pp. 97–154.
- Mutu, Margaret. 2019. 'To Honour the Treaty, We Must First Settle Colonisation' (Moana Jackson 2015): The Long Road from Colonial Devastation to Balance, Peace and Harmony. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 49: 4–18. [CrossRef]
- Nahar, Sarah. 2023a. Part 1: The Origins of the Combahee River Collective Statement. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*. May 8. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/blog/river/combahee-river/> (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Nahar, Sarah. 2023b. Part 2: The Beginning of an Analysis of Settler Colonialism Emerges at AMC 2022. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*. May 9. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/blog/river/beginning-analysis-settler-colonialism/> (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Nahar, Sarah. 2023c. Part 3: Using the Doctrine of Discovery to Foreground an Analysis of Settler Colonialism. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*. May 10. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/blog/river/settler-colonialism-analyzed/> (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Nahar, Sarah. 2023d. Part 4: Making Common Cause: Imagining Shared Futures. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*. May 11. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/blog/river/imagining-shared-futures/> (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Nahar, Sarah Elizabeth. 2026. Religious Moral Suasion and Material Support for the Environmental Justice Movement. *International Journal on Responsibility* 9: 1. [CrossRef]
- Nalani, Andrew, and Hirokazu Yoshikawa. 2023. White Christian Nationalism and Youth Development in the USA. *Society* 60: 551–65. [CrossRef]
- Newcomb, Steven T. 1992. Five Hundred Years of Injustice: The Legacy of Fifteenth Century Religious Prejudice. *Shaman's Drum*, 18–20. Available online: https://indigenouslawinstitute.com/sdrm_art/ (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Newcomb, Steven T. 1993. The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law: The Doctrine of Discovery, Johnson v. McIntosh, and Plenary Power. *New York University Review of Law & Social Change* 20: 303–41.
- Newcomb, Steven T. 2008. *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*. Golden: Fulcrum.
- Newcomb, Steven T. 2016. Original Nations of 'Great Turtle Island' and the Genesis of the United States. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Politics in the U.S.* Edited by Barbara A. McGraw. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 5–17.
- Newcomb, Steven T. 2017. Domination in Relation to Indigenous ('Dominated') Peoples in International Law. In *Indigenous Peoples as Subjects of International Law*. Edited by Irene Watson. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Newcomb, Steven T. 2018. Original ('Indigenous') Nations and Philosophical Activism. In *Being Indigenous: Perspectives on Activism, Culture, Language and Identity*. Edited by Neyooxet Greymorning. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 156–70.
- Newsom, Jennifer, and Tom Carruthers. 2022. A Space of Problems: The Child-Cities of Columbus. *Architectural Design* 92: 68–77. [CrossRef]
- Ngata, Tina. 2019. *Kia Mau: Resisting Colonial Fictions*. Wellington: Rebel Press.
- Nguyen, David Hoa Khoa, Jeremy F. Price, and Duaa H. Alwan. 2021. The Influence of Christian Nationalism on U.S. Public Educators' Speech: Implications from Meriwether vs. Hartop. *Laws* 10: 91. [CrossRef]
- Nicholas, Pope V. 1455. Romanus Pontifex. *Doctrine of Discovery Project*. Available online: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/the-bull-romanus-pontifex-nicholas-v/> (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Norgren, Jill. 1996. *The Cherokee Cases: The Confrontation of Law and Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- North, Gary. 2012. *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis*. Dallas: Point Five Press, vol. 2.

- Oosterhoff, Micah. 2026. Americanizing the Reformation: American Christian Nationalism, History, and Selective Memory. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 94: 358–79. [CrossRef]
- Orozco, Luz. 2024. When All Began: A Path of Resilience. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum* 33: 5–6. [CrossRef]
- Paradise, Brandon, and Terri Y. Montague. 2025. Symposium Introduction: Law, Christianity, and Racial Justice: Shaping the Future. *Political Theology* 26: 463–68. [CrossRef]
- Parmenter, Jon. 2013. The Meaning of Kaswentha and the Two Row Wampum Belt in Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) History. *Journal of Early American History* 3: 82–109. [CrossRef]
- Perry, Samuel L. 2025. How Christian Nationalism Promotes White Supremacy: An Examination of Racial Stereotypes. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, Online First. [CrossRef]
- Piccolo, Samuel. 2024. Indigenous Sovereignty, Common Law, and Natural Law. *American Journal of Political Science* 68: 1139–51. [CrossRef]
- Porter, Robert B. 1998. A Proposal to the Hanodaganyas to Decolonize Federal Indian Control Law. *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* 31: 899–1005. [CrossRef]
- Postone, Moishe. 1993. *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Poulos, Elenie. 2026. Understanding the Unique Minority Threat of Australian Christian Nationalism. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 304–8. [CrossRef]
- Powell, Malea. 2002. Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing. *College Composition and Communication* 53: 396–434. [CrossRef]
- Raschke, Carl. 2023. Evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, and the Quotidian Academic Terror of Christian Nationalism. *Religious Theory (blog)*, *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, February 23. Available online: <https://jcrt.org/religioustheory/tags/nationalism/> (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Ribovich, Leslie Beth. 2024. *Without a Prayer: Religion and Race in New York City Public Schools*. New York: New York University Press.
- Riccardi-Swartz, Sarah. 2026. The Imperial Politics of Christian Nationalism. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 259–62. [CrossRef]
- Robertson, Lindsay G. 2005. *Conquest by Law: How the Discovery of America Disposessed Indigenous Peoples of Their Lands*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 2007. *America, Amerikkka: Elect Nation and Imperial Violence*. London: Equinox.
- Saiya, Nilay. 2025. The Varieties of American Christian Nationalism. *Politics and Religion* 18: 171–89. [CrossRef]
- Savage, J. P. Tyrone. 1997. *The Ambiguity of God: A Post-colonial Inquiry into the Politics of Theistic Formulation in South Africa*. Master's thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Schaefer, Donovan O. 2020. Whiteness and Civilization: Shame, Race, and the Rhetoric of Donald Trump. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 17: 1–18. [CrossRef]
- Schlebusch, Jan Adriaan. 2022. Is Theocracy Inescapable? Presuppositionalism, the Public Domain and Post-Secular Theory. *Journal for Christian Scholarship* 58: 79–95.
- Scott, James C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Seed, Patricia. 1995. *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Seidel, Andrew L. 2022. *American Crusade: How the Supreme Court Is Weaponizing Religious Freedom*. New York: Union Square.
- Sharp, Isaac B. 2023. *The Other Evangelicals: A Story of Liberal, Black, Progressive, Feminist, and Gay Christians—And the Movement That Pushed Them Out*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Smallwood, Teresa L. 2023. Their Words Became Flesh. In *Moved by the Spirit: Religion and the Movement for Black Lives*. Edited by Christophe D. Ringer, Teresa L. Smallwood and Emilie M. Townes. Lanham: Lexington Books, pp. 35–48.
- Smith, Jesse, and Jonathan Tran. 2026. On Christian Nationalism. *Religious Studies Review* 52: 263–76. [CrossRef]
- Stewart, Katherine. 2020. *The Power Worshipers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Strait, Drew J. 2025. Dominionism in the Trumpocene: Toward a Biblical Hermeneutic of Resistance. In *On Christian Nationalism: Critical and Theological Perspectives*. Edited by David M. Gides and Joan Braune. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 350–79.
- Stuckey, Mary E., and John M. Murphy. 2001. By Any Other Name: Rhetorical Colonialism in North America. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 25: 73–98. [CrossRef]
- Sumner, Colin. Forthcoming. The Doctrine of Christian Discovery: How Medieval Papal Authority Shaped U.S. Property Law and Continues to Deny Justice to Indigenous Nations. Student Works, Seton Hall University School of Law, Newark, NJ, USA. Available online: https://scholarship.shu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2771&context=student_scholarship (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Syracuse.com. 2015. Onondaga Nation Members Felt Disrespected during Pope Francis Visit in NYC. *Syracuse.com*, September 25. Available online: https://www.syracuse.com/news/2015/09/onondaga_nation_members_felt_disrespected_during_pope_francis_visit_in_nyc.html (accessed on 7 May 2026).
- Taliman, Valerie. 1994. Revoke the Inter Cetera Bull. *Turtle Quarterly*, 7–8. Available online: <https://indigenoulawinstitute.com/ricb/> (accessed on 7 May 2026).

- Taylor, Matthew D. 2024. *The Violent Take It by Force: The Christian Movement That Is Threatening Our Democracy*. Minneapolis: Broadleaf Books.
- Throckmorton, Warren. 2026. *The Christian Past That Wasn't: Debunking the Christian Nationalist Myths That Hijack History*. Minneapolis: Broadleaf Books.
- Tillman, Patricia. 2026. Christendom College, the Spanish Civil War, and Constructing the Past in Religious Conservatism. *Journal of the Council for Research on Religion* 7: 67–90. [CrossRef]
- Tinker, Tink. 2024. The Land, Creation, Sovereignty, and Property. In *T&T Clark Handbook of the Doctrine of Creation*. Edited by Jason Goroncy. London: T&T Clark, pp. 322–34.
- Torba, Andrew, and Andrew Isker. 2022. *Christian Nationalism: A Biblical Guide for Taking Dominion and Discipling Nations*. Clarks Summit: Gab AI Inc.
- Townes, Emilie M. 2006. *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1: 1–40.
- Tveit, Olav Fykse. 2013. Report of the General Secretary to the 10th Assembly of the WCC (Full Version). *The Ecumenical Review* 65: 429–52. [CrossRef]
- Tyler, Amanda. 2024. *How to End Christian Nationalism*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- United Nations. 2007. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. A/RES/61/295. New York: United Nations.
- Voekel, Pamela. 2022. *For God and Liberty: Catholicism and Revolution in the Atlantic World, 1780–1861*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Waggoner, David P. 2015. The Jurisprudence of White Supremacy: *Inter Caetera*, *Johnson v. M'Intosh* and *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*. *Southwestern Law Review* 44: 749–65.
- Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wenger, Tisa. 2026. *Spirits of Empire: How Settler Colonialism Made American Religion*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Whalen, Brett Edward. 2009. *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Whitehead, Andrew L. 2023. *American Idolatry: How Christian Nationalism Betrays the Gospel and Threatens the Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.
- Whitehead, Andrew L., and Samuel L. Perry. 2020. *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Whitehead, Andrew L., and Samuel L. Perry. 2025. Christian Nationalism and the Vote for Donald Trump in the 2024 Presidential Election. *Nations and Nationalism*. early view. [CrossRef]
- Wilkins, David E. 1997. *American Indian Sovereignty and the U.S. Supreme Court: The Masking of Justice*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Williams, Robert A., Jr. 1990. *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wolfchild, Sheldon P., dir. 2015. *The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code*. Documentary. Produced by Steven T. Newcomb and Sheldon P. Wolfchild. 38 Plus 2 Productions. Streaming, 01:02:04. Available online: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/dominationcode> (accessed on 7 May 2026). [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Woodley, Randy S. 2022. *Indigenous Theology and the Western Worldview: A Decolonized Approach to Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Yadgar, Yaacov. 2024. *To Be a Jewish State: Zionism as the New Judaism*. New York: New York University Press.
- Younging, Gregory. 2018. *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples*. Edmonton: Brush Education.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.