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Title:

“God bless the Red, White, and Blue:”

Eastern Orthodoxy and Internationalization of Christian Nationalism

Abstract:

Religious nationalism is a networked project. It moves across geographies, boundaries, and borders in variegated forms that are often linked by ideological convictions and the need to build alliances with disparate communities to advance political and social aims. As such it demands that we look at more than just the bureaucratic, state-level forms of nationalism; it demands that we take seriously the globalizing flows of nationalism, especially in digital spaces, through which political discontents exchange ideas, craft ideological partnerships, and mobilize local communities to (re)act. As a contribution to an interdisciplinary edited volume on the theoretical concept of Christian Nationalism, this book chapter considers the long history of Russian Nationalism(s), their varied engagement with Orthodox Christianity, and the networked geo-political links these projects have had to contemporary iterations of Christian Nationalism in the United States. Along the way, I pay close attention to how moral economies have long provided ideological, financial, and political couplings to advance religious nationalism in the U.S. and Russia in culturally different yet conversant ways. I argue that Christian Nationalism should not be thought of as uniquely American, but rather a legacy product of geo-imperialism and Christian colonization that are found in wide variety across the globe, including Russia. In this way, the chapter shifts the cartography of Christian Nationalism, resettling it in the larger framework of international religious nationalisms. In doing so, I gesture to the power of Western privilege that is attached to the creation and use of Christian Nationalism, both in academe and by far-right actors, and its deleterious effects on understanding the international dynamics of Christian domination.