

# Christian Nations in Early Modern Europe



## Pope Gelasius I (494)

“There are two powers, august Emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled, namely, the sacred authority of the priests and the royal power. Of these that of the priests is the more weighty, since they have to render an account for even the kings of men in the divine judgment. You are also aware, dear son, that while you are permitted honorably to rule over human kind, yet in things divine you bow your head humbly before the leaders of the clergy and await from their hands the means of your salvation. In the reception and proper disposition of the heavenly mysteries you recognize that you should be subordinate rather than superior to the religious order, and that in these matters you depend on their judgment rather than wish to force them to follow your will. If the ministers of religion, recognizing the supremacy granted you from heaven in matters affecting the public order, obey your laws, lest otherwise they might obstruct the course of secular affairs by irrelevant considerations, with what readiness should you not yield them obedience to whom is assigned the dispensing of the sacred mysteries of religion. Accordingly, just as there is no slight danger in the case of the priests if they refrain from speaking when the service of the divinity requires, so there is no little risk for those who disdain - which God forbid - when they should obey. And if it is fitting that the hearts of the faithful should submit to all priests in general who properly administer divine affairs, how much the more is obedience due to the bishop of that see which the Most High ordained to be above all others, and which is consequently dutifully honored by the devotion of the whole Church.”

## Boniface VIII (1302)

“We are informed by the texts of the gospels that in this Church and in its power are two swords; namely, the spiritual and the temporal. For when the Apostles say: ‘Behold, here are two swords’ [Lk 22:38] that is to say, in the Church, since the Apostles were speaking, the Lord did not reply that there were too many, but sufficient. Certainly the one who denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter has not listened well to the word of the Lord commanding: ‘Put up thy sword into thy scabbard’ [Mt 26:52]. Therefore, both are in the power of the Church, namely, the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly, the former is to be exercised by the Church. The former is of the priest; the latter is by the hand of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.”

Is Christian Nationalism is incompatible with Catholic hierarchy?

## Martin Luther (1520)

“It has been devised, that the Pope, bishops, priests and monks are called the Spiritual Estate; Princes, lords, artificers and peasants, are the Temporal Estate; which is a very fine, hypocritical device. But let no one be made afraid by it; and that for this reason: That all Christians are truly of the Spiritual Estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office alone. I say: forasmuch as the temporal power has been ordained by God for the punishment of the bad, and the protection of the good, therefore we must let it do its duty throughout the whole Christian body, without respect of persons: whether it strike popes, bishops, priests, monks, or nuns.”

What role does Lutheran theology play in the emergence of the nation?

## Richard Hooker (1598)

“We hold; that seeing there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the commonwealth; nor any man a member of the commonwealth, which is not also of the Church of England; therefore as in a figure triangular the base doth differ from the sides thereof, and yet one and the selfsame line is both a base and also a side; a side simply, a base if it chance to be the bottom and underlie the rest: so, albeit properties and actions of one kind do cause the name of a commonwealth, qualities and functions of another sort the name of a Church to be given unto a multitude, yet one and the selfsame multitude may in such sort be both, and is so with us, that no person appertaining to the one can be denied to be also of the other.”

Is Hooker's vision of the Church of England naive?

## James I (1610)

“The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon the earth. For kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods. Kings are justly called gods for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth. For if you will consider the attributes to God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God has power to create, or destroy, make, or unmake at his pleasure to judge all, and to be judged nor accountable to none. And the like power have kings: they make and unmake their subjects; they have the power of raising and casting down, of life and of death; judges over all their subjects and yet accountable to none but God only. They make of their subjects like men at chess: a pawn to take a bishop or a knight. Now a father may dispose of his inheritance to his children at his pleasure: yea, even disinherit the eldest make them beggars or rich at his pleasure; restrain, or banish out of his presence. So may the king deal with his subjects. As to dispute what God may do is blasphemy, so is it sedition in subjects to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power. I will not be content that my power be disputed upon.”

What did James mean when he said that kings *are gods*?

## Edmund Calamy (1641)

"It cannot be denied but that this Nation needs Reformation, not onely in reference to the Common-wealth, but also to the Church... the House of the Lord lieth waste, and there is much rubbish in it. Many pollutions have crept into our Doctrine, much defilement into our Worship, many illegall innovations have been obtruded upon us; the very posts and pillars of this House, many of them are rotten... The Garden of this Nation is over grown with weeds; and there are many not onely unprofitable, but hurtfull trees planted in this Garden. Now this is the great work that the Lord requireth at your hands, Oh ye Worthies of Israel! To stub up all these unprofitable Trees, and to repair the breaches of Gods House... and to bring us back not onely to our first Reformation in King Edwards dayes, but to reform the Reformation it self. For we were then newly crept out of Popery, and (like unto men that come newly out of prison, where they have been long detained) it was impossible but our garments should smell a little of the Dungeon from whence we came... So must we bury all superstitious Ceremonies in the grave of oblivion, and perfect a Reformation according to the Word of God."

Why was Biblical Israel such a powerful metaphor for English Puritans?

# Solemn League and Covenant (1643)

"That we shall, in like manner, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy (that is, Church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissioners, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy), superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of Godliness; lest we partake in other men's sins, and thereby be in danger to receive of their plagues; and that the Lord may be one, and his name one, in the three kingdoms... And because these kingdoms are guilty of many sins and provocations against God, and His Son Jesus Christ, as is too manifest by our present distresses and dangers, the fruits thereof: we profess and declare, before God and the world, our unfeigned desire to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of these kingdoms; especially that we have not as we ought valued the inestimable benefit of the Gospel; that we have not laboured for the purity and power thereof... and our true and unfeigned purpose, desire and endeavour, for ourselves and all others under our power and charge, both in public and in private, in all duties we owe to God and man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the example of a real reformation, that the Lord may turn away His wrath and heavy indignation"

How is this vision of the nation different from:

a.) What came before?

b.) What would come after?