

John Carter Wood (ed.)

# Christianity and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Europe

Conflict, Community, and the Social Order



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Cover picture: The Corpus Christi Procession Leaving the Church of  
Santa Maria del Mar (detail) by Ramon Casas (1907).

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In memory of  
Marvin Rosen (1934–2001) and  
James S. Cockburn (1938–2010):  
mentors and friends



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## Preface

The idea of putting together this collection began with a panel I organised on the issue of Christianity and national identity for the European Social Science History Conference in Vienna in April 2014. The papers (three of which – in much altered form – appear in this volume) focused on diverse contexts, but in the session’s discussion and in post-conference exchanges I had with colleagues certain common issues centring on community, conflict, and the social order nonetheless recurred. The realisation emerged that, although much research has been done on religion and nationalism, there seemed to be room for a collection that could capture the specificities of particular historical moments while evoking broader European commonalities. With this aim in mind, I was inspired to assemble the essays that follow.

In this process, it seemed particularly important to account for the motivations and strategies of specific kinds of historical protagonists, whether clergy, government officials, union leaders, or religiously motivated “intellectuals” of one kind or another. Moreover, although focused on the twentieth century, this volume also points to its permeable borders. It was apparent that, especially for some nations, twentieth-century patterns originated a century before; at the same time, twentieth-century experiences of war and totalitarianism – and of the efforts to resist and overcome them – linger on in twenty-first-century intermixtures of national and religious identity.

While this collection does not aim to offer a comprehensive overview of the multifarious Christian engagement with national identity in twentieth-century Europe (which would require a vastly larger scope), it brings together specific studies – spanning denominational boundaries and European regions – that highlight common issues. I hope that it will be useful to other scholars in thinking about the different levels and scales on which the cultural and intellectual history of twentieth-century European religion must be developed. Some absences in the volume’s coverage proved unavoidable, whether with regard to particular countries or regions (such as Italy or Scandinavia), historical processes (such as, above all, migration), and interactions with non-Christian faiths (particularly Judaism and Islam); nonetheless, the collection makes an important contribution to the historical and sociological study of Christianity’s place in modern European culture.

I am grateful to the authors of the chapters that follow for contributing their work and for their helpful and collegial discussions over the past couple

of years. Colleagues at the Leibniz Institute of European History have offered valuable advice and assistance along the way. In particular, I thank Professor Johannes Paulmann for his enthusiasm for this collection and support in publishing it.

John Carter Wood

Mainz, March 2016

John Carter Wood

“Blessed is the nation”?

Christianity and National Identity in  
Twentieth-Century Europe<sup>1</sup>

Christians, like adherents of other faiths, have always had to consider the balance between their relationship to the deity they worship and the polity in which they live. The Bible offers a range of guidance. On the one hand, the Old Testament notion of a “chosen people” – closely linking religious and political allegiance – has been historically influential, often mediated through a myth of collective divine “election”.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, Jesus’ injunction to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” has given a reference point for strictly distinguishing between two realms: one earthly, temporal, and finite, the other heavenly, eternal, and infinite.<sup>3</sup> At various points, the Bible accepts “nations” as legitimate forms of community<sup>4</sup> – though it is important to keep in mind that the use of the term “nation” in many translations does not necessarily have the same political resonances that it would later acquire in the modern period<sup>5</sup> – and conditional support for a *particular* kind of nationality is found in the psalmist’s assertion that “blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord”.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, universalist conclusions have been drawn from Paul’s claim that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free:

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1 I thank Paul Lawrence, Hugh McLeod, and Anja Müller-Wood for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this introduction.

2 W.R. Hutchison/H. Lehmann (ed.), *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis 1994); Philip S. Gorski, “The Mosaic Moment: An Early Modernist Critique of Modernist Theories of Nationalism”, in *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (2000), 1428–1468; Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford 2003).

3 Mark 12:17 (King James Bible). Also Matthew 22:21 and Luke 20:25.

4 E.g., Proverbs 14:34: “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people”; Matthew 28:19: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

5 English translations, notably the King James Bible, have been especially prone to rendering diverse original terms as “nation”, arguably reflecting early-modern “nationalist” sentiments on the part of the translators: Liah Greenfield, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA 1992), 52–53.

6 Psalms 33:12: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance”.

but Christ is all, and in all”.<sup>7</sup> Beyond biblical texts, various, and sometimes opposed, denominational traditions have developed on the relation between the “Kingdom of Heaven” and the temporal social order. The “City of God” and the “City of Man” might be seen as two “imagined communities”, and working out how they fit together is as old as Christianity itself.

Relating faith to any political collective involves addressing not only the responsibilities of the individual believer toward a given polity (e.g., in terms of taxation, political participation, or military service) but also “identity”, in the sense of defining oneself and one’s relations to a larger group, an effort that has taken place under changing constellations of political rule. In the Roman Empire, the Christian was part of his or her province, tribe, or city but also under imperial jurisdiction. The medieval notion of a supra-national “Christendom” coexisted with feudal territories (kingdom, dukedom, shire, principality, etc.), and it has lived on as an ideal or myth of European unity.<sup>8</sup> Europe has seen countless wars and treaties that have shifted borders, with consequences for political and (especially since the Reformation) religious identities. Religion may have supplied national identity’s precursor phenomena or even been the most important long-term ingredient of national feeling.<sup>9</sup> The victorious march of the “nation” in the modern sense set off from the French Revolution, gaining momentum across the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> With the collapse of European empires after 1918, the nation-state finally became the norm of political organisation throughout Europe.<sup>11</sup> While much attention has long been given to nationalism in the period between the French Revolution and the Treaty of Versailles, there has more recently

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7 Colossians 3:11. See also Galatians 3:28 and Romans 3:22.

8 Hugh McLeod/Werner Ustorf (ed.), *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000* (Cambridge 2003); Mary Ann Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity: The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789* (Berlin 2004); Philip M. Coupland, *Britannia, Europa and Christendom: British Christians and European Integration* (Basingstoke 2006); Patrick Pasture, *Imagining European Unity since 1000 AD* (Basingstoke 2015).

9 Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London 1993); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge 1997); Gorski, “Mosaic Moment”; David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800* (Cambridge, MA 2001); Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundation of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic* (Oxford 2008); Samantha May et al., “The Religious as Political and the Political as Religious: Globalisation, Post-Secularism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Sacred”, in *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 15 (2014), 331–346.

10 Peter Burke, “Nationalisms and Vernaculars, 1500–1800”, in John Breuilly (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), 21–35, emphasises a “great divide” regarding the nation: “It is only after 1800 that we find what has been called ‘the normative isomorphism of language, nation and state.’” *Ibid.*, 22.

11 The nation-state has become the “ethnonational master scheme of modern society”: A. Wimmer, “The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory”, in *American Journal of Sociology* 113 (2008): 970–1022, on p. 992.

been a growing interest in the relationship between religion and nation in the *twentieth* century.<sup>12</sup>

Given the contrary potentials of different biblical passages, various denominational traditions, and diverse relationships between church and state in specific countries, there is no single “Christian” view, first, of the proper relationship between the believer and his or her nation or, second, of the kind of social order that should properly express the nature of that political collective. There have been many “Christian” national identities with specific denominational colourings, and they have typically been in tension (or even open conflict) with *other* “Christian” perspectives, especially in “multi-confessional” societies.<sup>13</sup> Intercultural and cross-denominational transfers have also been important, particularly though the circulation of ideas in transnationally organised churches (notably the Roman Catholic Church), Christian organisations (such as the “ecumenical movement”), and intellectual circles.<sup>14</sup> Such factors were influential throughout the twentieth century, contributing to a diversity in Christian understandings of both “the nation” *as such* and of individual nations *in particular*.

Historians have emphasised the nineteenth-century competition between nationalist movements (which created and sought to define modern nations) and the churches.<sup>15</sup> Nationalism and Christianity were each too powerful as sources of collective identity for the other to ignore, bringing conflict,

12 Hartmut Lehmann, “Die Säkularisierung der Religion und die Sakralisierung der Nation im 20. Jahrhundert: Varianten einer komplementären Relation”, in Hans Christian Maner/Martin Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Religion im Nationalstaat zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1939. Polen – Tschechoslowakei – Ungarn – Rumänien* (Stuttgart 2002), 13–27; Philip W. Barker, *Religious Nationalism in Modern Europe: If God Be for Us* (London 2009); Willfried Spohn et al. (ed.), *Religion and National Identities in an Enlarged Europe* (Basingstoke 2015). For a recent contribution that addresses relevant issues from a primarily American perspective, see Michael G. Thompson, *For God and Globe: Christian Internationalism in the United States between the Great War and the Cold War* (Ithaca 2015).

13 Heinz-Gerhard Haupt/Dieter Langewiesche (ed.), *Nation und Religion in Europa. Mehrkonfessionelle Gesellschaften im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M. 2004). “Der Nationalismus geht oft mit anderen Loyalitätsbeständen eine feste oder vorübergehende Fusion ein, z.B. mit den Konfessionen oder historischen Regionen, den städtischen Traditionen oder Ideensystemen wie dem Neuhumanismus.” Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Nationalismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen* (Munich 2001), 11.

14 Jurjen Zeilstra, *European Unity in Ecumenical Thinking, 1937–1948* (Zoetermeer 1995). On Roman Catholicism, see the chapter in this volume by Pasture. See also Alexandru Zub “Die rumänische Orthodoxie im ideen- und kulturgeschichtlichen Kontext der Zwischenkriegszeit” and Éva Mártonffy-Petrás “Eine Alternative zum politischen Katholizismus: Die Rezeption der Soziallehre im Kreise der katholischen Intelligenz Ungarns in den dreißiger Jahren”, in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*, 179–188 and 199–219.

15 Elie Kedourie saw religion and nationalism to be, as John Hutchinson has put it, “incompatible”: *Modern Nationalism* (London 1994), 68, citing Kedourie, *Nationalism* (1966). See also Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “Religion and Nation in Europe in the 19th Century: Some Comparative Notes”, in *Estudos Avançados* 22 (2008), 77–94. “Nationalism was supported by a system of symbols parallel to and in competition with religious symbols”: Burke, “Nationalisms and

extended negotiation, and mutual adjustment – “nation-building” matched by “church-building” – as organised Christianity came to terms with (and sought to influence) new political realities.<sup>16</sup> Hartmut Lehmann sees in this process a parallel “secularisation of religious thought” and “sacralisation of national values and politics”.<sup>17</sup> Others have suggested tendencies towards, alternatively, “confessionalisation” (orienting national identity around a single denomination) or “laicisation” (a more neutral model); both brought Christian nationalisms into competition with each other, particularly in multi-denominational societies, and with more secular identities, especially in states where a dominant church (typically Catholic) faced states that were attempting – whether successfully or not – to secularise at least certain areas of public life (e.g., France, Belgium, and Italy).<sup>18</sup> (In both cases, conflict also occurred *within* denominations.) In the twentieth century, nations and churches were often partners rather than rivals; moreover, specific national identities continued to be shaped by confessional conflicts, whether anti-Catholicism in some Scandinavian nations or anti-Protestantism in strongly Catholic ones.<sup>19</sup> However, the conditions shaping the relationship between faith and nation changed across the century.

### Patterns and Turning Points in the Long Twentieth Century

Nineteenth-century debates about faith and nation did not end at the century’s close: movements, struggles, and ideas flowed on into the era that followed (see the chapters by Luengo, Grigore, and Pasture). But direct competition between Christian and national identities waned: indeed, Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox church hierarchies – and majorities of their adherents – came to see national and religious belonging as mutually reinforcing. Churches encouraged identification with the nation while using “universal” (or, in practice, transnational) aspects of faith to draw limits around national identities

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Vernaculars”, 28. See also Christopher Clark, *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflicts in Nineteenth-century Europe* (Cambridge 2003).

16 Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, “‘Church-building’ im östlichen Europa. Ein komplementärer Ansatz zur Beschreibung von Vergemeinschaftung im östlichen Europa: Die ‘Volkskirchen’ in Polen und den baltischen Ländern”, in Markus Krzoska (ed.), *Zwischen Glaube und Nation? Beiträge zur Religionsgeschichte Ostmitteleuropas im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich 2011), 11–34.

E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge 1990), 68, and, generally, 67–73 and 123–124.

Matthias Koenig/Wolfgang Knöbl, “Religion, Nationalism, and European Integration: Introduction”, in Spohn et al., *Religion and National Identities*, 1–16.

17 Lehmann, “Säkularisierung der Religion”, 22.

18 Haupt/Langewiesche, *Nation und Religion in Europa*; Haupt, “Religion and Nation”.

19 See the essays in Yvonne Maria Werner/Jonas Harvard, *European Anti-Catholicism in a Comparative and Transnational Perspective* (Amsterdam 2013).

and supplement them with senses of belonging based in transcendental belief and global community.<sup>20</sup> Even churches that had been in intense conflict with the state in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – e.g., those in France and Germany – developed patriotic stances toward their respective *nations* (if not necessarily toward their *states*). Nations and churches reached an accommodation, and from a Christian standpoint identification with “the nation” was normalised; the *kind* of nation with which the Christian should identify, however, remained a live issue. The faith was a rich and varied resource for the construction of a broad spectrum of social politics, from a “cult of authority” to the “articulation of social protest”.<sup>21</sup> Christians have often sought to promote their perspective on the social order as a “moral regeneration of the community”, a “moral critique of the anomie of secular modernity”, and “an alternative vision of ‘modernity’ to that of secular liberals, socialists, and nationalists”.<sup>22</sup> The acuteness of the encounter among Christianity, nation, and society has varied according to the religious homogeneity (or heterogeneity) of a given population, the intensity of its faith, the presence of sudden social or political changes (e.g., war, migration, or regime change), and the activities of political movements. But if Christianity’s greatest nineteenth-century competitor was the nation-state *as such*, in the twentieth century it faced two other challenges: growing state power (most notably in the form of totalitarianism) and what has been labelled “secularisation”. Also, national identity and sovereignty after 1945 had increasingly to be imagined and exercised vis-à-vis the supra-national category of “Europe”; here, too, Christians sought institutional and intellectual responses.

Each of the following chapters considers specific contexts; however, there were some turning points relevant to Europe as a whole (albeit with national and regional variations). While twentieth-century relations between Christianity and national identity are rooted in the nineteenth century, the Great War of 1914–1918 marked a significant transition, bringing new factors and accelerating pre-existing trends. The demands of modern war compelled states to mobilise their populations through patriotic imagery, and the war’s enormous human cost was valorised as a “national” sacrifice. Christianity

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20 Religious difference has encouraged the formation of distinct cultural “milieux” when religious and ethnic identities overlapped: Hans-Christian Maner/Martin Schulze Wessel, “Einführung”, in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*, 7–12. Protestant churches’ failure in inter-war Hungary to develop a “trans-ethnic confessional consciousness” (*überethnisches konfessionelles Bewußtsein*) saw them “instrumentalised” by competing nationalisms: Juliane Brandt, “Konfessionelle und nationale Identität in Ungarn im 19. Jahrhundert: die protestantischen Kirchen“, in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*, 31–71, on p. 63.

21 Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, “Euro-Gott im starken Plural? Einige Fragestellungen für eine europäische Religionsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts”, in *Journal of Modern European History* 3 (2005), 231–256, on pp. 241–242.

22 Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*, 41, 65, 66.



responded to both needs: the patriotism of the Churches (and of countless individual Christians) and the religious (or at least religious-tinged) memorialisation of the war-dead helped cement the connection between church and nation (though not without disagreements, as Wolffe's chapter shows).<sup>23</sup> Tensions continued between nation and faith but in a qualitatively new situation. In central and eastern Europe, the war was transformative in a different way. Political and cultural movements in the new states created after the war rapidly engaged in defining their respective national communities as homogenous "peoples" sharing distinct "racial", ethnic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics (including religion). The war set off an intense period of nation-building accompanied by strongly religious inflections of national belonging; however, imagined homogeneity confronted factual diversity, and tensions over "minority" populations led to conflict and violence.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the inter-war period also saw the emergence of supra-national ideals and institutions, from the League of Nations to plans for a "United States of Europe".<sup>25</sup> Christians found themselves on both sides of the confrontation between democracy and totalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s (as the essays by Hockenos and Wood discuss). In the Second World War, all combatant nations again claimed to have God on their side, and significant parts of their Church hierarchies helped propagate this message; however, the Fascist and National Socialist totalitarianism of the Axis powers – and the Communist totalitarianism on the Allied side after 1941 – also caused particular tensions and efforts at resistance on the part of Christian churches, organisations, and individuals.<sup>26</sup>

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23 Gerhard Besier, "The Great War and Religion in Comparative Perspective. Why the Christian Culture of War Prevailed over Religiously-Motivated Pacifism in 1914", in *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 28 (2015), 21–62.

24 Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York 1998), 40–76. The war and the dissolving of Europe's multi-ethnic empires "signalled the triumph not only of democracy but also – and far more enduringly – of nationalism": *ibid.*, 40. See also Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven 2011), 21–23. On central and eastern Europe, see the essays in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*. Summarising this collection, John Connelly has written that the "soundest general lesson" it provides "is about the churches' chronic inability to resist the demands of the respective national state, especially in issues of nationalist legitimation. At best, one seems to detect differences in degree, by country and by period, with the 1930s witnessing extremes of subservience." John Connelly, review of Maner/Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Religion im Nationalstaat zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1939*, in *sehepunkte* 3, no. 9, 15 September 2003, <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2003/09/3758.html>.

25 Luisa Passerini, *Europe in Love, Love in Europe: Imagination and Politics in Britain between the Wars* (London 1999).

26 John Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy: Religion, Society and Politics since 1861* (London 2008), 104–106; Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (London 2008), 546–553; Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (London 2006), 347–385; Steven Merritt Miner, *Stalin's Holy War: Religion, Nationalism, and Alliance Politics, 1941–1945* (Chapel Hill 2003).

The immediate post-war period saw further shifts. Europe remained a continent of nation-states – each made more culturally homogenous than ever through the forced movement of populations<sup>27</sup> – but there were also new factors shaping national identity. In the west, the defeat of Fascism and Nazism brought a more democratic and broadly pluralist political context in which the churches (and “Christian democratic” parties) could act;<sup>28</sup> there were also reconsiderations of national identity (and of Christianity’s place in it) after the war’s end, which played out differently in countries that had been defeated (especially Germany and Italy), in those that had been occupied (such as France), and in those (such as Britain) that had been neither. Such processes involved not only remembering but also forgetting, helping ease efforts toward European unification.<sup>29</sup> Post-war dictatorships in Spain, Portugal, and Greece – each of which claimed religious legitimation – added to this complex mixture. In the east, the imposition of Communist states that were officially atheist provided a very different context for melding national feeling and religion. There was accommodation by churches with the new regimes; however, Christians – and, at times, entire churches – also found in their faith a resource for a sustained critique of (and resistance to) state socialism, in part through assertions of an alternative vision of national identity (as is made clear in Feindt’s chapter).

From the late 1940s, the Cold War framed four decades of European history, including that of Christianity and national identity. In the midst of this global conflict came other relevant factors: a turn toward more “secular” cultures, the development of materially prosperous (and highly individualist) consumer societies, and the re-thinking of traditional (often religiously legitimated) ideals of family life and related gender roles. For Catholics, the Second Vatican Council marked a liberalisation of faith and an opening to contact with other churches, influencing national identities in some predominantly Catholic states.<sup>30</sup> The post-war period also witnessed growing immigration to several European countries, especially those implementing policies of decolonisation, such as Britain and France. This process introduced a further arena in which debates about national identity intersected with religious elements, particularly regarding the relationship between Christianity and Islam or that

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27 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London 2007 [2005]), 24–28.

28 Müller, *Contesting Democracy*, 132–143; Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, from the Great War to the War on Terror* (New York 2007), 290–313; Emiel Lamberts (ed.), *Christian Democracy in the European Union (1945–1995)* (Leuven 1997).

29 Judt, *Postwar*, 60–62.

30 Madalena Meyer Resende, *Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing Nature of Party Politics* (London 2015).

of a putatively “secular” public sphere to either (or both) of them. The growth of culturally, ethnically, and religiously distinct minorities also increased the relevance of “hybrid” identities.

The complex events taking place since (and often summarised under the label of) 1989 brought changes – the extension of democratic pluralism and economic capitalism to formerly Communist countries as well as an acceleration of the supra-national institutional structure of the European Union (EU) – whose consequences continue to be worked out up to the present day.<sup>31</sup> Religious elements in western European national identities appeared to have become more diffuse or indirect; at the same time, there seemed to be a flowering of Christian-inflected nationalisms in eastern Europe, which, however, given the new post-Communist pluralism were confronted by secular alternatives.<sup>32</sup> More recently, the east may be turning, belatedly, toward western secularising patterns.<sup>33</sup> Finally, there is no necessary contradiction between national and “European” identities (whether Christian or non-Christian), as the chapters by Pasture and Miliopoulos emphasise.

### Common Themes and Interests

Against this background, the following chapters address episodes in the interaction between Christianity and national identity, touching on issues raised in decades of research into religion, nationalism, and secularisation. Despite glances toward other faiths (e.g., in the chapter by Wolffe), the focus in this volume is firmly on Christianity. Other religions (especially Judaism and Islam) have certainly been crucial points of identification for minority or immigrant populations in twentieth-century Europe, and have often formed

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31 Willfried Spohn, “Europeanization, Multiple Modernities and Religion: The Reconstruction of Collective Identities in Postcommunist Central and Eastern Europe”, in Gert Pickel/Kornelia Sammet (ed.), *Transformations of Religiosity: Religion and Religiosity in Eastern Europe 1989–2010* (Wiesbaden 2012), 29–50.

32 See Geneviève Zubrzycki, “‘We, the Polish Nation’: Ethnic and Civic Visions of Nationhood in Post-Communist Constitutional Debates”, in *Theory and Society* 30 (2001): 629–668; Mikołaj Lewicki/Sławomir Mandes, “Changing Frameworks of National Identity in Post-communist Poland”, in Spohn et al., *Religion and National Identities*, 39–67. Comparative data is provided in Sabine Trittler/Sławomir Mandes/Matthias Koenig, “Religious Dimensions of National and European Identities: Evidence from Cross-national Survey Research”, in Spohn et al., *Religion and National Identities*, 124–145. They find confessional variation but also an east-west divergence: “for substantial parts of the population in Eastern Europe the [EU] integration process has strengthened national identification and their religious content”: *ibid.*, 144.

33 Lehmann suggests the possibility in eastern Europe of a mix of “retarded nation-building” and “retarded secularisation”: “Säkularisierung der Religion”, 27. For re-emphasis on secularisation in east and west: Detlef Pollack/Gergely Rosta, *Religion in der Moderne: Ein internationaler Vergleich* (Frankfurt a.M. 2015).

an internal or external counterpoint against which dominant (mostly Christian) cultures have – sometimes violently – defined themselves.<sup>34</sup> Without wishing to downplay the role of inter-religious interaction, I have sought greater analytical clarity by focusing only on Christianity. The chapters also concentrate on larger, mainstream denominations: small churches, “sects”, and organisations whose status as a “religion” is contested are not considered.

It has been easier for scholars to assert the importance of religious and national “identity” than to agree on what that term means. Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker have summarised such efforts and persuasively argued that “identity” has been defined in so many (often contradictory) ways as to make it appear to be both “everywhere” and “nowhere”. Without discarding the term “identity”, I agree that the focus should be on its component *processes* and *aims*: “identification”, “categorisation”, “self-understanding”, “social location”, “commonality”, “connectedness”, and “groupness”.<sup>35</sup> Sensitivity to such issues recurs in the chapters that follow and “national identity” is seen to result from discourses of citizenship, attributions of cultural or linguistic belonging, narratives of historical community development, evocations of traditions, and/or claims of a distinct national “character”.

“Nationalism” has been one way to assert national identity, but despite a scholarly consensus that nationalist movements – working with pre-existing elements of group identity – create nations (rather than vice-versa), that term has also been, to put it mildly, variously defined.<sup>36</sup> It has been used broadly, akin to “national identity”, as just described. Anthony Giddens, for example, calls nationalism “the affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasising communality among the members of a political order”.<sup>37</sup> Roger Friedland sees it more narrowly as “a program for the co-constitution

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34 “Because democracy was about the creation of *national* communities”, Mazower argues, “it was generally anti-Semitic, or at least more ready to allow anti-Semitism to shape policy... than old-fashioned royalists had been.” Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 59. Centuries of anti-Semitism feature as the “structuring force” of German history in Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge 2008). An important comparative study of Jewish identity around the Great War is Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen 2014). On Islam, see, Barbara Thériault/Frank Peter, “Introduction: Islam and the Dynamics of European National Identities”, in *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 13 (2005), 261–266.

35 Frederick Cooper/Rogers Brubaker, “Identity”, in Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley 2003), 59–90, on pp. 70–77.

36 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford 1983), 54–55; Wehler, *Nationalismus*, 9. “Nationalism has been variously categorized in the titles of works devoted to it as both ‘primordial’ and ‘banal’, as a ‘myth’ and as a ‘reality’, as ‘imagined’ and as ‘invented’, at once ‘the tragedy of a people’ and the ‘god of modernity’.” Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow 2005), 7–8.

37 Quoted in Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London 1998), 71.

of the state and territorially bounded population in whose name it speaks".<sup>38</sup> Nationalism is perhaps best understood as a *kind* (or *degree*) of national identity, urged by individuals or pursued by groups, aiming for a stringent "congruence between culture and polity" and demanding "cultural homogeneity within political units and cultural heterogeneity between them".<sup>39</sup> This provides a way of distinguishing more fervent forms of nationalism from national imaginations of a looser or more pluralist kind, a distinction important to many twentieth-century European Christians.

There have been various claims about religion's role in national identity or "nationalism". Ernest Gellner has pointed to Durkheim's view that while "in religious worship society adores its own camouflaged image", in a "nationalist age, societies worship themselves brazenly and openly, spurning the camouflage".<sup>40</sup> Philip S. Gorski, focusing on North America, distinguishes among "religious nationalists" (who want to make religious and political communities "as coterminous as possible"), "liberal secularists" (who want to keep them "as separate as possible"), and "civil religionists" (who "imagine the two spheres as independent but interconnected").<sup>41</sup> The Old Testament and "ethno-nationalism" have been important sources for religious nationalism, with emphases on blood, sacrifice, purity, sacred homelands, and "the apocalyptic nature of geopolitical struggles".<sup>42</sup> Such overlapping ethno-cultural/religious nationalisms can be found in the chapters on Spain (Luengo), Ireland (Ganiel), Germany (Hockenos), Poland (Feindt), and Romania (Grigore). Friedland stresses seeing religious nationalism in terms of its own "cultural premises" and not only as a proxy for other issues: religion offers "the symbols, signs, and practices" through which a "collectivity" (e.g. a nation) "knows itself to be".<sup>43</sup> Mixed forms of these categories are possible:

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38 Roger Friedland, "Money, Sex, and God: The Erotic Logic of Religious Nationalism", in *Sociological Theory* 20 (2002), 381–425, on p. 386.

39 Rogers Brubaker, "Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches", in *Nations and Nationalism* 18 (2012), 2–20, on pp. 7–8. "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent": Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1. Nationalism is a "program" for "the joining of state, territoriality and culture": Friedland, "Money, Sex, and God", 386–387. Wehler calls it "das Ideensystem, die Doktrin, das Weltbild, das der Schaffung, Mobilisierung und Integration eines größeren Solidarverbandes (Nation genannt), vor allem aber der Legitimation neuzeitlicher politischer Herrschaft dient. Daher wird der Nationalstaat mit einer möglichst homogenen Nation zum Kardinalproblem des Nationalismus." *Nationalismus*, 13.

40 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 55.

41 Philip S. Gorski, "Civil Religion Today" (ARDA Guiding Paper Series), State College, PA: Association of Religion Data Archives at The Pennsylvania State University, 2010, <http://www.thearda.com/rrh/papers/guidingpapers.asp> (accessed 9 February 2015), 7. "In a word, religious nationalists advocate total fusion, liberal secularists advocate total separation and civil religionists imagine them as overlapping": *ibid.*

42 Gorski, "Civil Religion Today", 7.

43 Friedland, "Money, Sex, and God", 381 and 387.

Christians have at times combined faith and national identity while opposing extreme ethno-nationalism (see my own essay in this volume), while ecumenical Christians have often sought to *downplay* territorial sacredness or apocalyptic political understandings.

Rogers Brubaker has evaluated four analytical claims about religion and “nationalism”, the latter term being used in a sense similar to “national identity” as defined above.<sup>44</sup> First, nationalism has been seen as “analogous” to religion (e.g. as an ersatz religion following secularisation);<sup>45</sup> second, religion has been called a “cause or explanation of nationalism” (e.g. by creating a sense of “chosen-ness”); third, it has been analysed as “imbricated or intertwined with nationalism”;<sup>46</sup> fourth, “religious nationalism” has been seen as a “distinctive kind of nationalism”.<sup>47</sup> This collection tends to reflect Brubaker’s third category in which religion and national identity are “imbricated or intertwined” through assertions of “the coincidence of religious and national boundaries” or “myths, metaphors and symbols that are central to the discursive or iconic representation of the nation”.<sup>48</sup> Christians in each case adopted *some* version of national identity, confirming a mutual “accommodation”:

Nationalist politics can accommodate the claims of religion, and nationalist rhetoric often deploys religious language, imagery and symbolism. Similarly, religion can accommodate the claims of the nation-state, and religious movements can deploy nationalist language.<sup>49</sup>

Such an accommodation is eased by similarities in the kinds of markers of religious and national belonging: the hymn and the anthem, the cross and the flag, the cathedral and parliament, and the procession and parade. But

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44 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”.

45 Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*; Wehler, *Nationalismus*, 27–35; Stephen Backhouse, “Nationalism and Patriotism”, in Nicholas Adams et al. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought* (Oxford 2013), 41–60. “A common engine drives the original creation of the nation, and that engine is faith”; “the logic of nationalism follows contours recognizable to Christian theology”: *ibid.*, 49–50.

46 Hutchinson also stresses the intertwining of religion and nationalism: *Modern Nationalism*, 70–77.

47 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 12. “Religion, with its universal claims, is not inherently inconsistent with nationalism; religious nationalism is not an oxymoron”: Friedland, “Money, Sex and God”, 387.

48 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 9.

49 *Ibid.*, 16. See also: “Die ‘Erfinder’ der Nation sind auf religiöse Symbolsprache angewiesen, um eine emotional bindende starke Vergemeinschaftung erzeugen zu können. Sie rekurrieren auf überkommene religionssemantische Bestände, religiöse Riten und kirchliche Liturgien, um die hohen emotionalen Energien, die fromme Menschen in ihren Glauben investieren, auf die Nation hinlenken zu können.” Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Wiederkehr der Götter: Religion in der modernen Kultur* (Munich 2004), 119.

“intertwining is not identity”, and the two remain distinct.<sup>50</sup> In the nineteenth century, the “secular religion of nationalism”, Peter Burke has argued, “did not so much replace traditional religion – rather it coexisted and interacted with it”.<sup>51</sup> This remained true for the twentieth century (and continues in the twenty-first).

As the foregoing suggests, “religion” and “national identity” should be seen as *arguments* rather than *things*: neither has an unchanging cross-cultural or trans-historical “essence”, and both emerge from patterns of dispute. An assertion about the meaning of a nation is “a contingent and contested claim”, and such claims should be seen as “perspectives on the world rather than things in the world”.<sup>52</sup> This view applies equally to “religion”, definitions of which remain debated even specialist contexts, especially when the goal is an integrated analysis of Western and non-Western beliefs and practices.<sup>53</sup> What it “means” to be a Christian or belong to a particular nation has, potentially, as many answers as there are believers or citizens,<sup>54</sup> and one difficulty with analysing this topic is that nearly every positive statement (e.g., that Christians supported nationalism, subordinated faith to nation, or refrained from interfering in the secular social order), while sometimes true, can be met by counterexamples (e.g., at least some Christians opposed nationalism, placed their religious identity above their national identity, or sought to influence social policy in line with their interpretation of their faith). In practice, of course, some views become more “orthodox” or “hegemonic” than others, but alternative definitions continue to be asserted. Far from seeking to answer the question of what Christianity’s stance toward the nation “is” or “should be”, this collection considers the answers of specific historical

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50 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 16.

51 “Polish nationalism had a Catholic colouring, Russian nationalism had an Orthodox one, while English xenophobia was fuelled by a Protestant hatred of ‘Popery’.” Burke, “Nationalisms and Vernaculars”, 28.

52 Friedland, “Money, Sex and God”, 386; Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 4. For a broad statement of the variability and constructed nature of religious beliefs, see Graf, “Euro-Gott”.

53 Michael Bergunder, “What is Religion? The Unexplained Subject Matter of Religious Studies”, in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 26 (2014), 246–286; Peter Beyer, “Defining Religion in Cross-National Perspective: Identity and Difference in Official Conceptions”, in Arthur L. Greil/David G. Bromley (ed.), *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries between the Sacred and the Secular* (Oxford 2003), 163–188. Graham Harvey, “Defining Religion”, in John Wolffe/Gavin Moorhead (ed.), *Religion, Security and Global Uncertainties*, report from a “Global Uncertainties Leadership Fellowship”, 2014, <http://www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/religion-martyrdom-global-uncertainties/reports>, 7; Richard Madsen, “What is Religion? Categorical Reconfigurations in a Global Horizon”, in Philip Gorski et al. (ed.), *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York 2012), 23–42.

54 See, e.g., Timothy Fitzgerald, *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity: A Critical History of Religion and Related Categories* (Oxford 2007). “Despite the appearance of common sense, a term such as ‘religion’ does not tell us what is in the world, but what we collectively think ought to be in the world”, *ibid.*, 24.

protagonists and the contexts in which they reached them, mindful that not all religious arguments are, strictly speaking, “religious”, as religion can provide an interpretive framework “through which to interpret and respond to *immanent* contexts, events and experiences”.<sup>55</sup> “Religion”, McCutcheon argues, describes not a separate realm but rather a set of social practices through which categories of “secular” and “sacred” are used to assert and defend particular constellations of group identity.<sup>56</sup>

That comment raises the need to understand not only “religion” but also “the secular” (an ontological or epistemological category), “secularisation” (a sociological process), and “secularism” (a “worldview or ideology”).<sup>57</sup> In recent decades the concept of a “secularisation process” has faced vehement attack,<sup>58</sup> vigorous reassertion,<sup>59</sup> and efforts at revision.<sup>60</sup> Some historians have revised the timeline of change (with the 1960s claimed as an important turning point in many countries<sup>61</sup>) or offered different concepts to understand it. Patrick Pasture, for example, emphasises individualisation and the growing diversity of the “religious landscape” as alternative processes, and in her essay in this volume, Gladys Ganiel suggests that “individualisation, de-institutionalisation and liberalisation” describe trends in Ireland better than “secularisation”.<sup>62</sup> Brubaker, on the other hand, asserts that the “distinctive form of politics” of nationalism occurred within a “process of secularisation” characterised by the “differentiation of various autonomous realms

55 May et al., “Religious as Political”, 339. Emphasis added.

56 Russell T. McCutcheon, “‘They Licked the Platter Clean’: On the Co-Dependency of the Religious and the Secular”, in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 19 (2007), 173–199, 195.

57 José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms”, in Craig Calhoun/Mark Juergensmeyer/Jonathan VanAntwerpen (ed.), *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford 2011), 54–74, on p. 54.

58 Rodney Stark, “Secularisation R.I.P.”, in *Sociology of Religion*, 60 (1999), 249–273; David Nash, “Reconnecting Religion with Social and Cultural History: Secularization’s Failure as a Master Narrative”, in *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004), 302–325.

59 Roy Wallis/Steve Bruce, “Secularization: The Orthodox Model”, in Steve Bruce (ed.), *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford 1992), 8–30; Steve Bruce, “Secularisation in the UK and the USA”, in Callum G. Brown/Michael Snape (ed.), *Secularisation in the Christian World* (Farnham 2010), 205–218; Pollack/Rosta, *Religion in der Moderne*.

60 See José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago 1994).

61 Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London 2000); Hugh McLeod, “Introduction”, in Hugh McLeod/Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000* (Cambridge 2003), 1–26.

62 Patrick Pasture, “Religion in Contemporary Europe: Contrasting Perceptions and Dynamics”, in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 49 (2009), 319–350; id., “Dechristianization and the Changing Religious Landscape in Europe and North America since 1950: Comparative, Transatlantic, and Global Perspectives”, in Nancy Christie/Michael Gauvreau (ed.), *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization in North America and Western Europe, 1945–2000* (Toronto 2013), 367–402. On individualisation, see also Thomas Grossbölting, “Religionsgeschichte als Problemgeschichte der Gegenwart: Ein Vorschlag zu künftigen Perspektiven der Katholizismusforschung”, in Wilhelm Damberg/Karl-Joseph Hummel (ed.), *Katholizismus in Deutschland: Zeitgeschichte und Gegenwart* (Paderborn 2015), 169–185, on pp. 180–184.



of human activity from religious institutions and norms” central to “Western modernity”, an argument not unlike José Casanova’s.<sup>63</sup> Relatedly, Charles Taylor has described the emergence of modern “secularity” as “a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace”.<sup>64</sup> This kind of secularity has framed interactions between religion and national identity in twentieth-century Europe. Claims that religion has simply “declined” (or soon will disappear) may be simplistic, but the argument for secularisation as a “diminution of the social significance of religion”<sup>65</sup> in most European countries across the twentieth century (with the 1960s marking an important shift) seems convincing, even though many regional variations and deviations have to be accounted for. Consequences for secularisation’s applicability to non-European contexts or longer time-spans is beyond this volume’s scope.

While an objective, sociological account of secularisation is (in the present author’s view) likely possible, most chapters in this collection are concerned more with what might be called *subjective secularisation*: the perception by religiously motivated protagonists of living in societies where Christianity was being marginalised by secular movements or simply by religious indifference. “Secularisation”, thus, refers to a *changing argumentative and motivational context* for social, political, or cultural claims: it was relevant – as Peter Itzen has put it – because large numbers of people *believed* it was and acted accordingly.<sup>66</sup> Some Christians saw secularisation as a threat to the nation – or to the social order they thought should define it – and tried to counteract it; others preferred acceptance and accommodation. Still others mixed these responses. “Secular” and “religious” have, as a result,

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63 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 16. A “progressive, though highly uneven, secularization of Europe is an undeniable social fact”: José Casanova, “Secularization Revisited: A Reply to Talal Asad”, in David Scott/Charles Hirschkind (ed.), *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors* (Stanford 2006), 12–30, on p. 17. “Auch empirisch schützt das Zurückweisen der Säkularisierungsthese in ihrer verballhornten Form nicht vor der Einsicht, dass zumindest in Teilen der Welt die Bedeutung des Lebens mit einer Transzendenz vor allem in seiner kirchengebundenen Form, aber auch darüber hinaus abnimmt.” Grossbölting, “Religionsgeschichte”, 177.

64 He calls this condition “secularity 3”: Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA 2007), 3.

65 The definition of “secularisation” provided in Wallis/Bruce, “Orthodox Model”, 11.

66 “Säkularisierung war existent, weil sie von den Akteuren erfahren und reflektiert wurde und sie ihr Handeln danach ausrichteten.” Peter Itzen, *Streitbare Kirche: Die Church of England vor den Herausforderungen des Wandels 1945–1990* (Baden-Baden 2012), 13. Casanova argues similarly: “We need to entertain seriously the proposition that secularization became a self-fulfilling prophecy in Europe once large sectors of the population of Western European societies, including the Christian churches, accepted the basic premise of the theory of secularization. ...”: Casanova, “Secularization Revisited”, 17.

been mutually defining concepts<sup>67</sup> and subject to various cultural pressures, including nationalism: even in some “secular” societies, models of “civil religion” see faith as a “societal resource” with “symbols and practices” to be “used politically to foster national integration”.<sup>68</sup>

### The Chapters: An Overview

This collection offers case studies of the relationship between Christianity and national identity in what might be called the “long” twentieth-century, with some chapters considering nineteenth-century origins of later developments and others looking beyond 1989 (and the millennium) to consider relevant events and patterns into the twenty-first century. The context of conflict, an emphasis on the formation and maintenance of community, and a concern for the structure of the social order recur, to differing degrees, throughout the essays. Attention is given to Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox perspectives, with examples from eastern, northern, western, southern and central Europe. While most of the protagonists considered take for granted the legitimacy of the nation as a category of identity (a result of the “accommodation” noted above), they were engaged in an open, public struggle to define its meaning, whether against contrary Christian perspectives or against secular viewpoints. There is a concentration on the period between the 1910s and the 1940s, the experience of the two world wars, and Christianity’s engagement with the totalitarianisms of the left or right. The influence of factors such as political allegiance or institutional or cultural milieu (e.g., membership in a given church, linguistic community, or intellectual circle) and the expression of identity in texts, symbols, rituals, or material objects are highlighted. The issue of “secularisation” recurs. The chapters are organised into three thematic sections: “Christianity, Conflict, and Community”, “Religion, Nation, and the Social Order”, and “Faith, Nation, and ‘Europe’”. These issues cannot be firmly separated – understandings of community have, for example, been intertwined with attitudes toward the social order, and both have had to be considered vis-à-vis “Europe” – but such divisions help bring out common emphases.

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67 McCutcheon, “Co-Dependency”; Fitzgerald, *Discourse*, 24; Markus Dressler/Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, *Secularism and Religion-Making* (Oxford 2011), 21; Philip S. Gorski et al., “The Post-Secular in Question”, in id. (ed.), *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York 2012), 1–22, on p. 7; Marion Eggert/Lucian Hölscher, *Religion and Secularity: Transformations and Transfers of Religious Discourses in Europe and Asia* (Leiden 2013).

68 David Westerlund, *Questioning the Secular State: The Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics* (London 2002), 3.