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In convos about Christian nationalism, it's important to define terms clearly.

"Christian nationalism" is a specific ideology that ties the future of the Church to the future of the State. It overlaps w/ secular nationalism but has incredibly toxic implications for gospel.

Some folks might say, "Well, I'm a Christian & I think we should prioritize America 1st over global concerns. Does that make me a Christian nationalist?"

The answer is a strong... maybe.

To know if you're ascribing to Christian nationalism of simple political nationalism, you'll need to interrogate your relationship btwn your nation & practice of your faith.

This will be extremely hard to do especially if you've been discipled in American evangelicalism in the last 40 years. Rhetorically speaking, we have conflated God & country to extent that it's hard to know where one stops & other begins.

Here's an example: In early 2000s, I had an ESL student from Bavaria. He was devout Lutheran & wanted to go to church for Easter. But when he got there, he saw an American flag on platform & was so disturbed that he left the service. He told me about it in class next day.

The funny thing was that it had literally never occurred to me that having an American flag on platform could in any possible way signal a conflict of interests. He could, especially given Germany's religious history. As outsider, he had perspective on something I was blind to.

The point isn't about flag. It's about what the flag represented & its presence in the church. What exactly was the relationship btwn my Christian faith & my American citizenship?

To what degree did my sense of America as a "Christian nation" affect my worship of God & commitment to his Kingdom? How easy was it to conflate the two--to wage political battles in the name of Christ?

A Christian nationalist isn't someone who is simultaneously patriotic & Christian. It's someone who thinks their patriotism makes them a better Christian.

Here's the dilemma: Our Christian faith should make us better neighbors in the nation in which God has placed us. But it might not always make us more loyal citizens & being a loyal citizen will definitely not make us better citizens of the Kingdom.

(As an aside, the solution to Christian nationalism is not globalism b/c that doesn't necessarily deal w/ the core problem. Instead, we must wrestle w/ the relationship btwn our allegiance to Christ & our allegiance to man-made govt.)

All that to say, the threat of Christian nationalism to the Church & to the gospel is deep. Not only will it divert our attention from eternal realities, it will divide our allegiances.

When the pursuit of political power calls us to act in ways antithetical to the gospel, we'll have to decide which master to heed. But insofar as we've already convinced ourselves that God & country are the same, we can justify anything as righteous pursuit of God's kingdom.