

God's Nation

Four things must be present to have a nation, according to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*. Not surprisingly, the church has each of those four parts, too.

A nation is a community of people. The church is the community of the saved (Acts 2:47). Luke describes them as being of "one heart and one soul." They were concerned about the needs of every member, and those disciples readily sold their possessions and gave the money to the apostles, expecting any in need to receive care (Acts 4:32, 34-35).

God's kingdom, the church, is also composed of one or more nationalities. Jesus spoke of other sheep who were "not of this fold" (i.e., Israel) (John 10:16). Paul carried the Gospel to all sorts of people and nationalities (Romans 1:14-16). In Christ, all those are melded into one body (Galatians 3:27-28).

Christ's kingdom possesses a more or less defined territory. Jesus said, "Nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). Jesus told the disciples that He and His Father would make their home with anyone who loved Him and kept His Word (John 4:23). Jesus' letter to the church at Laodicea included a description of Him standing at the door of their hearts, desiring to come in and dine (Revelation 3:20).

Webster said a nation has a government. The "saints and faithful brethren in Christ" who lived in Colosse were told, "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). Jesus declared all authority had been given to Him immediately before ascending into Heaven (Matthew 28:18). Paul said Jesus "must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." Once that is accomplished, the Lord will deliver up the kingdom to His Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-26).

We are God's nation. Christ charges us through Paul to obey those ruling over us, but only so long as they do not ask us to violate His will (Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:29). Let us pledge our ultimate allegiance to God and recognize His Son as our King.

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