

Week Two: Matters of Citizenship

For the video discussed in
this lesson, please go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpH5L8zCtSk>

INTRODUCTION

Question:

Growing up, what were you taught to think about how love of God and love of country related to one another?

RONALD REAGAN, 1964



INTRODUCTION

Question:

Why should we care if there isn't a clean line between loving our country and loving God?

INTRODUCTION

World War II-era Christian thinkers warned against confusing patriotism, nationalism, and allegiance to God.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- C.S. Lewis

INTRODUCTION

Dietrich Bonhoeffer—

“Do we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, or do we believe in the eternal mission of France? One can't be a Christian and a nationalist at the same time.”

INTRODUCTION

C.S. Lewis - *Screwtape Letters*

“Your best plan [to seduce your patient] would be to attempt a sudden, confused, emotional crisis from which he might emerge as an uneasy convert to patriotism.

Let him begin by treating Patriotism as a part of his religion. * * * *
Then quietly and gradually nurse him on to the stage at which the religion becomes merely part of the 'cause', in which Christianity is valued chiefly because of the excellent argument it can produce in favor of the war-effort. Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing.”

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

- What does the Bible say we are to do with ideas like **patriotism** and **nationalism**?
- How do we avoid confusion between the two?
- Does obedience to God ever bring us into conflict with our “civic” duties?

A QUESTION THAT VEXES PASTORS:

Should the United States Flag be present in sanctuaries?

Yes?

No?

Because we LOVE our pastors, we promise never to raise the issue!!

DEFINITIONS:

Patriotism:

- Love of homeland
- Includes a willingness to admit faults and love anyway

Nationalism:

- Sense of superiority
- Can include a willingness to elevate one's own country at expense of others

DEFINITIONS:

Nationalism

"My country is better than yours, and it doesn't make mistakes."

Patriotism

"Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved."

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF "PATRIOTISM"

- Praying for your nation
- Paul, Romans 10:1
- Expressing love for your nation
- Jesus, Luke 13:34
- Expressing sorrow for your nation
- Jesus, Luke 19:41

PATRIOTISM/NATIONALISM

1 Peter 1:1-2, Recipients:

- "[E]xiles of the Dispersion"
- Jews scattered about and dwelling about in Gentile countries
- Called to be "obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood."

PATRIOTISM/NATIONALISM

1 Peter 2:9-10, Message:

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God...."

PATRIOTISM/NATIONALISM

Letter to Diognetus:

- 195 A.D.
- Christians live in the culture and you they don't look different than others
- They live like they're just passing through, because their citizenship is in heaven.

PATRIOTISM/NATIONALISM

God	Country
Eternal	Temporary
Who I am	Where I live
Why I am	Where I live

BIBLICAL VIEW: GOOD GOVERNMENT

Question:

How does the Bible define "good" government?

BIBLICAL VIEW: GOOD GOVERNMENT

Winthrop: democracy would breach the 5th commandment

"If we should change from a mixed aristocracy to mere democracy, first we should have no warrant in scripture for it: for there was no such government in Israel ... A democracy is, amongst civil nations, accounted the meanest and worst of all forms of government. [To allow it would be] a manifest breach of the 5th Commandment."

BIBLICAL VIEW: GOOD GOVERNMENT

- **Bible**: does not describe an ideal form of civil government
- **1 Timothy 1:1-2**: Paul describes what we are to pray for as to civil government

BIBLICAL VIEW: GOOD GOVERNMENT

1 Timothy 2:1-3:

- Pray for authorities
- That we might lead
- Quiet and peaceable lives
- In all godliness and honesty

We pray for our leaders to be wise, and the protection of the government so we can live out our faith, train our children in the faith, and preach the gospel.

DEMOCRACY

Questions:

- Is democracy ordained by God?
- Is it compatible with Christianity?