

Contrasting the Kingdom of God and Christian Nationalism

During the past several months, there has been much talk and concern regarding Christian nationalism.

There is a fine line, an almost indiscernible line, between Christian nationalism and patriotism.

I am willing to die for my nation. I believe the United States of America is the greatest nation on the earth despite all its flaws and sins. Hence, I am a patriot. I support our right to have a strong military, and I believe God had a special plan for the nation from its very inception. I would love to see the United States build its laws upon the Scriptures' standard of morality and justice. I am strongly pro-life and pro-biblical marriage. I also advance a biblical worldview in many of my teachings.

These beliefs do not make me a Christian nationalist.

I am more committed to advancing the Gospel of the kingdom of God than a set of policies of a particular political party. While being a patriot is a noble thing, it's more important for a person to be "born from above" and become part of the kingdom of God (see John 3:3-8). I am first a Christian, secondarily an American. As a Christ-follower, I am a citizen of the world; my concern is global. I desire for God's kingdom to influence every nation, not just the United States.

In the context of this article, most of the recent concerns about the rise of Christian nationalism are coming from the radical Left. This is primarily because most evangelicals support President Trump's policies. The radical Left utilizes a lens of interpretation skewed against anything for what conservative evangelicals stand. However, there are also important concerns coming from conservative evangelicals. Joel

McDurmon criticized Trump supporters for desiring top-down power and control. Although I thought the article in which Joel criticized Trump raised some crucial issues, Joel failed to mention that it is the radical Left themselves who seek top-down control. It is the Left themselves who promote laws and celebrate court decisions that most Americans would never vote for (such as those related to abortion and gay marriage).

Some in the body of Christ have done an excellent job addressing Christian nationalism.

The purpose of this article is to further clarify the issue by contrasting the kingdom of God from Christian nationalism.

1. **The kingdom of God focuses on the advancement of the gospel.** Nationalism focuses on the advancement of the politics of the nation. As much as I believe politics and economics are vital and, to an extent, can represent biblical ethics, I am much more committed to making disciples and seeing humanity change. (It is also possible for a committed Christian to be a faithful witness for Jesus while serving in public life as an elected official.) For me, anything that potentially distracts my energy and focus away from advancing the Gospel takes a backseat in my personal life and ministry.
2. **The kingdom of God produces loyalty to Christ above all else.** Nationalism produces loyalty to the nation above all else.

I have studied the behavior and writings of Christians for many years. In some cases, I have concluded that some Christians are more committed to their nation and ethnic heritage than they are to God. The kingdom of God transcends all nations and ethnic identities (see).

In the mid-20th century, we witnessed Christian nationalists turn a blind eye to the 3rd Reich when most of the German

churches aligned themselves with Hitler. If it happened once, it can and will continue to happen again, especially to a non-discerning church.

3. **The kingdom of God produces martyrs for the cause of Christ.** Nationalism produces citizens who are willing to die for their nation.

Although I am willing to defend my neighbor and die for my nation, I believe the greatest honor is to die for the sake of Christ and His kingdom. (Some may argue that I am a better citizen not because I am willing to die for my nation but because of my faith in God.) Hence, it has to do with motive, not merely actions.

4. **The kingdom of God raises the banner of Jesus above all else.** Nationalism raises the national flag above all else.

During this acerbic political season, I have witnessed Christians fighting on social media, becoming irate and condescending towards those with a different political view. (Consequently, Christians are jeopardizing the eternity of unbelievers who may be the recipients of their political rants!)

We are called to walk in the ideals set forth by Jesus in the "Sermon on the Mount" and aspire to represent His kingdom. We must be the "salt of the earth and light of the world" (see Matt. 5-7).

5. **The kingdom of God promotes the interests of God above the world.** Nationalism promotes the interests of the nation above the kingdom.

In the Old Testament, we have seen many times that prophets like Jeremiah, Amos, Jonah, Isaiah, Elijah and more, declared words from the Lord that were not always good for Israel. They risked their lives because their first allegiance was to His

kingdom rather than the nation of Israel. Jesus even corrected Peter because he was more interested in the things of men rather than the things of God (Mark 8:33). Consequently, we in the kingdom of God should have our essential allegiance to Christ and His gospel, even if it does not comport with our nation's rank and file and the policies they espouse. {eo}

Dr. Joseph Mattera is an internationally-known author, consultant and theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence culture. He is the founding pastor of Resurrection Church and leads several organizations, including The U.S. Coalition of Apostolic Leaders and Christ Covenant Coalition. Dr. Mattera is the author of 12 bestselling books, including his latest *The Jesus Principles*, and is renowned for applying Scripture to contemporary culture. To order his books or to join the many thousands who subscribe to his newsletter go to .