

September 26, 2021

## 4. Citizens of God's Household— Philippians 3:1b-4:1

I once was the choir director (paid staff) at a church where a Christian flag and a US flag adorned the front of the sanctuary, a visual representation of the church's dual allegiance. I often contemplated those flags, wondering how members could accomplish loyalty to two kingdoms. The music cabinets were full of patriotic songs and musicals. What would I do? My husband has triple citizenship: his motherland, Mexico; the United States; and the kingdom of God. How does he juggle all that? These days, the secular kingdom is further divided by political parties, sometimes manifesting in tension within the church. Consider the recent US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan or the patriotic expressions surrounding the recent commemoration of the 20th anniversary of 9/11. My Christian friend, who lost her first-born son in Afghanistan, undoubtedly had a strong reaction to both events. My heart goes out to her, even though my beliefs prompt questions about his decision to go to war.

Robert M. Solomon asks, "What does it mean for us Christians to belong to a nation?" He says we all have a connection with the land we inhabit. Yet, "if we are clear about our ultimate identity as citizens of heaven, then we can be better citizens of an earthly nation." He cites Joseph's and Daniel's significant contributions to society in their times and John Wesley, "whose ultimate identity as a Kingdom person gave vibrant life and effective meaning to his temporary identity as a citizen of an earthly nation."<sup>1</sup>

The *Salt & Light* writers have done a superb job of providing us with great questions and teaching strategies. Invite God into the discussion and pray for compassion and wisdom to lead it. If I were leading, I'd like to hear why participants love their country. What about their personal history causes feelings of attachment? Do they love Jesus more than country? Why? Have they lived out kingdom values for the benefit of their country? What steps can each of us take to help bring about Christ's rule on earth and "press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus" (v. 14)?

—Helen Tellez

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1. ["What Does It Mean to Be a Christian Citizen?"](#) *Our Daily Bread*.



**Helen Tellez** has been a writer, editor, and copy editor for church and secular organizations for more than four decades. Formerly from northern Indiana, she now resides in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with her husband, José, where they run a clothing alterations business. Being married to José for 18 years has opened her eyes to the world beyond rural, white America, and she is grateful for the changes in her Christian perspective.

## Resources for this session

### *Salt & Light Videos*

These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each session. They are available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#). **Joe Yoder** is the presenter for Unit 1, Belonging to God. He attends East Goshen Mennonite Church in Indiana.