



— Issachar Project —

**LOVING  
YOUR NATION  
WELL**

EEA Socio-political team

Spring 2024

## Loving our nation well: A discussion resource for Christians

God created people groups, He encouraged their diverse creativity, and the glory and honour of every nation will be celebrated in the New Jerusalem at the end of time<sup>1</sup>.

As Christians, we have dual citizenship - our national and our eternal one in Christ<sup>2</sup>. We can be proud of both.

But what does it mean to love our nation from God's perspective and to be loyal to it when we know that Christ demands that we put our loyalty to Him and His Kingdom first?

And how do we do this in our troubled, changing times where politics seems so confusing and angry?

It is important that we work this out: Individually, as local Church and as Church across the nation. If we find it hard to talk with fellow Christians about the state of our country and politics without getting emotional, it is even more important that we do so! We will just need to take more time to pray, to listen to one another and to learn to understand without judging.

## A few biblical foundations before we go any further

Christ is Lord and creator of all, and He will judge all government that does not follow His ways<sup>3</sup>. It is the Bible, both Old and New Testament, which tells us what these ways are. Let us continue to look carefully at all of Scripture to understand what our country would look like if it were truly "Christian". The standard is radically challenging<sup>4</sup>.

The Church is not a human institution but the Bride of Christ and one day will have members from every tribe and nation on earth<sup>5</sup>. A particular denomination may have special status as national Church, but it is still, or should be, independent from the State. Christians are a holy people belonging to God<sup>6</sup>. We must be in the world but not of it. Christians engage with society and with politics but we remain distinct. We must always protect our freedom to live in obedience to Christ, to proclaim the Gospel to all and to make disciples, to affirm what is good in our culture and to speak prophetically when things are wrong. If rulers, political or spiritual, try to limit or oppose our obedience to Christ, there is a place for challenging their authority<sup>7</sup>.

The role of government is God-given but limited. It is to maintain peace, administer justice and ensure that the weak are protected. Government is also subject to God's law, whether it acknowledges this or not. Rulers are to bring blessing<sup>8</sup>.

## How to love our nation well? Questions to consider.

*Starting with these biblical foundations and taking more time to study the Scriptures if necessary, we invite you to take time to consider the following questions with other Christians. Please pick the questions that are appropriate for you. It is better to look at just a few questions prayerfully and well than to rush. If disagreement arises when you discuss with others, please work to listen carefully to one another, pausing to pray as necessary. Do not dismiss each other's concerns or points of view. Let people share without judging. Seek to understand, even if you may not agree. Take time to pray at the end.*

What do we love most about our nation?

When the Lord looks at our nation, what brings Him joy?

When the Lord looks at our nation, what makes Him sad?

What are the biggest dangers that our nation faces?

To what extent do politicians leave room for loyalties that go beyond the nation? To what extent do they acknowledge that there is a power higher than them?

The wellbeing of our nation needs good, accountable government and a fair justice system to protect all who live in our land. How well are we doing?

We are proud of our nation. What does it mean for our nation to act honourably towards the most vulnerable, both at home and abroad?

We are proud of our nation. What does it mean for politicians and citizens to take care of the natural beauty of our land for future generations?

We are proud of our nation. How free are we to celebrate our culture? How well do we make room for those of other cultures living among us both to join in with our national expressions and also have space to treasure the cultures they have come from?

The Gospel is for all<sup>9</sup>. In Christ, there is no Jew or Gentile<sup>10</sup>, and we are called to love “the Samaritan<sup>11</sup>”, our enemies, the one that society despises. Is there anything in our nation’s political rhetoric which is making it harder for the Church to welcome all, including those that present day culture rejects?

How do our politicians speak about our country’s neighbours? Have we forgiven those that have harmed us in the past? Are cooperation, mutual respect and solidarity likely to increase or decrease in the coming years? How can Christians help?

Do we think that our nation has a Christian heritage? In what ways is this heritage expressed today? How much are these expressions supportive or against biblical values?

We are proud of our nation. Bearing in mind the current political atmosphere and the character and teachings of Christ, are we optimistic or pessimistic about the future? What are our hopes for our nation?

How can we pray for our nation and the wellbeing of all in our community in ways that all Christians can wholeheartedly support?

## Final questions

What have we learned from considering these questions?

Do we need to do some more praying, thinking or talking?

Are there any practical steps that the Lord wants us to take?