

The Citizens Of The Kingdom

John Hess-Yoder wrote, "While serving as a missionary in Laos, I discovered an illustration of the kingdom of God. Before the colonialists imposed national boundaries, the kings of Laos and Vietnam reached an agreement on taxation in the border areas. Those who ate short-grain rice, built their houses on stilts, and decorated them with Indian-style serpents were considered Laotians. On the other hand, those who ate long-grain rice, built their houses on the ground, and decorated them with Chinese-style dragons were considered Vietnamese. The exact location of a person's home wasn't what determined his or her nationality; instead, each person belonged to the kingdom whose cultural values he or she exhibited."

The citizens of God's kingdom are likewise distinguished by standards and values. They do not live according to the world's standards, but according to the regulations and values of the heavenly kingdom. Hebrews 12:28-29 says, "*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear ...*" Righteous living is paramount! It is shameful to see those who profess to be Christians drinking, dancing, wearing clothes that expose their bodies, using profanity and crude language, committing fornication, gossiping, cheating, lying, etc., faithfully and pridefully wearing the name "Christian." A citizen of the kingdom should be known as "*salt*" and "*light*" in their community (Matthew 5:13-16). They should "*be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation ...*" (Philippians 2:15). This kind of behavior means you cannot "*inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

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