

Justice and peace by
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chapter 5



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s and Nations The term nation refers to a group of people with a well-defined identity based on common history, language and culture. Membership in a certain nation is determined by a person's psychological and emotional identity with the nation's shared beliefs, history, language and culture and acceptance by the existing members of that particular nation. For as long as one is able to identify himself with a certain group of people on the basis of race or ethnicity and that person is recognized as a member by that particular community, then he belongs to that particular nation. There really are no defined rules and procedures in joining and leaving a nation. It all depends on the concerned individual or family if they still want to be and consider themselves a part of the nation in which they belong. An example of a nation is the Chinese nation. Wherever they are, they all share the same pride of their language, culture and traditions. Almost in every country around the world, there is a Chinatown where the Chinese people continue with their age-old culture and traditions. They still speak their language, celebrate Chinese holidays, use Chinese medicine and follow Feng shui. These people are already citizens of the countries where they reside and yet they are still distinguishable from the rest of the population. These people may be American citizens or Canadian citizens and yet they still identify themselves as Chinese and the rest of the country's citizens recognize them as such. On the other hand, the term state refers to a sovereign country that exercises control over a population within a defined territory. A state is managed and administered by a government which has legal authority over its people. Membership in a state is determined by the criteria set forth by the government. A state is considered as a legal person in international law that may enter into contracts and agreements with other countries,

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corporations and individuals. Members of a state are called citizens. In contrast to a nation which is a group of people bound by heart and mind, a state is composed of people who are bound in law. An example of a state is the United States of America. It is a sovereign country with a population occupying a definite territory. The US government defines the rules of citizenship which is by birth. All children who are born on American soil are automatically US citizens and are bound by its laws and legal authorities. It is important to know the distinction between nation and state because technically, the two terms are not interchangeable like they are used in common parlance. There is a world of difference between a nation and a state. There are nations which have not yet attained the status of statehood and there are states which are composed of several different nations. Knowing one from the other provides for a deeper understanding of the sentiments of the people within a nation and a state. References: Thompson, J. M., Justice and Peace: A Christian Primer. Orbis Books, 1997