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Every Tribe And Tounge And Nation

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Every Tribe and Tongue and Nation

LEE MAGNESS

A liturgical reading celebrating God's love for all nations and all peoples, especially appropriate for worship services held near our national holidays. The reading is configured for a lector (L) who reads the scripture passages and two other speakers (1 and 2) who reflect on the scriptures.

PART I

- 1 Which country does God comfort?
For which kingdom does he care?
- 2 Which nation does God nurture?
Which language does he share?

- 1 Which land does God love the least?
Which tribe does he treat best?
- 2 Which empire is our God's elect?
Which people are his pets?

PART II

- L Then God said, "Let us make [humankind] in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created [humankind] in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."
(Gen 1:26-28)
- 1 God made them
 - 2 God made them all
 - 1,2 God made them all in his image
 - 2 All in his likeness

- 1 God blessed them
- 2 God blessed them all
- 1,2 God blessed them all to rule them all
- 2 To bless them all

PART III

- L The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen 12:1-3)

- 1 Abram was blessed
- 2 Abram was blessed to bless
- 1 A name to bless their names
- 2 A nation to bless their nations

- 1 All peoples on earth would be blessed through him
- 2 Could be blessed through him
- 1,2 Should be blessed through him
- 2 God's covenant was with all peoples on earth

PART IV

- L "You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." (Exod 19:6)
 Then the Lord said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you." (Exod34:10)

- 1 Israel was a kingdom
- 2 A priestly kingdom
- 1 Priests—not just the ones who worship God
- 2 But the ones who serve the ones who would worship God

- 1 Israel was a nation
- 2 A holy nation
- 1 Holy—not just the ones set apart to see God
- 2 But the ones set apart so others could see God

PART V

L In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. (Isa 2:2-4)

- 1 A mountain, not a nation, will be raised up high
- 2 A temple, not a tribe, will be raised above the hills
- 1 To that mountain all nations will flow
- 2 To that temple all peoples will go
- 1 For we are the temple of the living God
- 2 Here we learn the ways of the Lord
- 1 Here we pursue the paths of the Lord
- 2 Here we practice peace among the nations

PART VI

L The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all [humans] life and breath and everything else. From one [human] he made every nation of [humans], that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that [humans] would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. "For in him we live and move and have our being. "As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring." (Acts 17:24-28)

- 1 God made the world and everything in it
- 2 God made the world and every one in it
- 1 He himself gives us, every one
- 2 Life and breath and every thing
- 1 We are his children, all his children
- 2 He is not far from us, from each one of us
- 1 We are made for seeking him
- 2 All made to seek him, and perhaps find him

PART VII

L But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,
 a holy nation, a people belonging to God,
 that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;
 once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet 2:9-10)

- 1 The *church* is the chosen, the chosen people of God
 Not China or Chechnya, not Chile or the Czech Republic
- 2 *Believers* belong, a people belonging to God
 Not Belarus or Bolivia, not Belgium or Bulgaria

- 1 *Saints* form a nation, a holy nation
 Not Sudan or Spain, not Sri Lanka or Saudi Arabia
- 2 *We* are the people of God, the mercied people of God
 Not Algeria or Afghanistan, not even America

PART VIII

L Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain....
 He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.
 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders
 fell down before the Lamb....
 And they sang a new song:
 "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,
 because you were slain, and with your blood
 you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.
 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
 and they will reign on the earth." (Rev 5:6-10)
 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count,
 from every nation, tribe, people and language,
 standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.
 They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.
 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God,
 who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev 7:9-10)

- 1 Because of the Lamb, the worthy lamb that was slain
- 2 All people have been purchased, purchased by his blood
 All people may be priests, priests to serve God
 All nations are a nation, the kingdom of God

- 1 Every tribe as one tribe, gathered before the throne
Every tongue as one tongue, crying out in one voice
Singing the same song, celebrating the same salvation
- 2 Every nation one, one before God

PART IX

- L The seventh angel sounded his trumpet,
and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:
“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,
and he will reign for ever and ever.” (Rev 11:15)
- 1 The kingdom of this world
 - 2 The kingdom of this world has become
 - 1 The kingdom of this world has become
 - 1,2 The kingdom of our Lord
 - 1 The kingdom of this world has become
 - 2 The kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ
 - 1,2 And he will reign *for ever and ever*
 - 1,2 And *he* will reign for ever and ever

PART X

Which country does God comfort?
For which kingdom does he care?
Which nation does God nurture?
Which language does he share?

Which land does God love the least?
Which tribe does he treat best?
Which empire is our God's elect?
Which people are his pets?

God comforts every country
that calls upon his name
God cares for every kingdom
and cares for each the same
God nurtures every nation
with the nourishment it seeks
God speaks to every nation
in the language that it speaks

God loves no land the least,
he loves them all alike
God treats each tribe that trusts him
and keeps him in their sight
God's empire is no nation,
no one land we select
From every tribe and tongue and nation
comes forth God's elect

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