

FOR ALL PEOPLES

Rob Robinson

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

Throughout our nation’s history, there has been an ongoing struggle to live up to the vision of a nation of one people from many (e pluribus unum). That struggle continues today. This week’s news includes stories of extended vandalism in Jewish cemeteries and the sentencing of white supremacists whose 2-day rampage included raiding a children’s birthday party. The vision is that in this land men and women, boys and girls, can live, work and play together regardless of skin-color, national origin or socioeconomic status; that such diverse people can live as neighbors, friends, co-workers, even brothers. It’s a noble cause and one we must continue pursuing as a nation.

That is much like the vision Jesus Christ had for his church 2000 years ago. He came to ancient Israel to bring a new covenant that would reach out with God’s grace and salvation, not only to the Jewish people, but to all nations and all people. The purpose of his new kingdom was to bring all people into God’s kingdom. When he became quite angry with the Jewish people on one occasion, he cited from the prophet Isaiah the words that appear above. The prophet had foretold that *“the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants...”* would come to his holy mountain and be joyful in his house. He added, *“The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, ‘I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.’”* (Isaiah 6:5-8)

It was Jesus’ plan that his house would be a house to draw all people to God. It is clear he is not referring to a literal building, but to the spiritual house of God, the church. He sent his apostles to take the gospel to all nations. Millennia before anyone conceived a nation such as ours, one people out of many, Jesus called people from every nationality, race and ethnic group into his spiritual kingdom, in which *“there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* (Gal 3:27–28)