



Deut. 4:6 ... for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say,

“Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!”



Confessing Jesus Christ in a Religiously Pluralistic World

**A document
for discussion**

**Annual Assembly
July, 2008**

*"Surely this great nation is a wise
and discerning people!"*



Psalm 67

1. May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us
2. that your way may be known upon the
earth,
your saving power among all nations.

*“Surely this great nation is a wise
and discerning people!”*



3. Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the people praise you.
4. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon the earth.
- 5. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let
all the peoples praise you.**

*"Surely this great nation is a wise
and discerning people!"*



6. The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God has blessed us.

7. May God continue to bless us;
**Let all the ends of the earth revere
him.**

*"Surely this great nation is a wise
and discerning people!"*



“For the Healing of the Nations”

HWB #367

*“Surely this great nation is a wise
and discerning people!”*



1. Naming the context and the issue

- The church is called to be an agency of God's mission.
- There are trends in our society which challenge our missional urge.
- Some welcome post-modern pluralism while others affirm that only in Jesus Christ is there truth and salvation.

*"Surely this great nation is a wise
and discerning people!"*



The beginning point in our discussion is to:

- a) Affirm that God is universally present in the world.

- b) Affirm that we have received a particular revelation in Jesus Christ.

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Acts 17:22-28

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way.

For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said.

“Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!”



2. What do we learn from the Bible?

2.1. God is present and active in the whole world. God is not limited to one story or one culture.

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- Man and woman will dialogue with God
- God talks with Adam and Eve
- God walks with Enoch
- God makes an eternal covenant with Noah

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- Melchizedek blesses Abraham
- Wisdom literature reflects common, international experience
- Prophets recognize that God is at work among the nations



In the New Testament:

- The magi from the East come to worship

*“Surely this great nation is a wise
and discerning people!”*



- The titles to describe Jesus have a pre-Christian context
 - Messiah
 - Lord
 - Saviour
 - Son of God
 - Wisdom
 - Word of God



2.2. The Bible draws our attention to God's formation of a particular people.

"Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!"



- Call of Abram
- Formation of Israel
- The incarnation of the Word in Jesus
- Philippians 2:9-11
- The Great Commission



Paul's speech in Athens:

- Reflects on the relationship of the Creator to the creation
- Acknowledges the unity of humanity
- Proclaims that God is available to all
- Issues a call to repentance

"Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!"



“Strangers no More”

HWB #322

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3. We must value the universal and the particular work of God

- God is involved in unexpected ways and places and we can learn from that
- God's fullness has been revealed in the particularity of Christ

"Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!"



“My hope is built on nothing less”
HWB #343



4. What are the implications?

- We are called into respectful dialogue with those who profess a different faith
- We are called to proclaim faithfully and courageously the gospel of God's grace
- We are called to live in peace with those of different religious persuasion

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5. Issues requiring further reflection:

- At what point does being faithful require a prophetic word?
- What is the place for the biblical theme of judgment?
- Can we and how do we make biblical claims for universal truth?
- What does it mean to engage our neighbor in matters of faith?

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“We worship God the Rock”

SJ #28

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6. Questions for discussion:

- a) How are we to confess Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic society?
- b) What issues need further attention?
- c) What does Acts 17 or other biblical texts say to us about our topic?
- d) What further questions does the presentation by the FLC evoke?

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The complete text of this presentation is
available at:

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/688

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