

police or popular vote anywhere can resist him when he determines to act. Though his influence remains invisible to me, nevertheless, he is at work:

**The king's heart is a water channel in the hand of the Lord;
he turns it wherever he will.** (Proverbs 21:1)

And in this great, hidden work of shaping history—of toppling arrogant rulers, or bringing them to power; of establishing just law or allowing it to be trampled—in all this, the Jesus who loves me is acting as Lord, strangely working all things together for the good of his people, those who love him.

Soon, what is hidden will be revealed; the invisible Hand that governs nations and peoples will become visible and everyone will know for sure what Nebuchadnezzar, that ancient despot, learned most painfully: **Heaven rules.**

I mean a great deal then, when I say as a Christian: Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, is Lord of the nations.

—Ron Lutjens

Be Unto Your Name

Gary Sadler / Lynn DeShazo

Words are in the print copy.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Credits

Cover art: Pencil rubbing of a Celtic cross on a leather journal. The Celts were an ancient “barbarian” people that come onto the scene in Europe in the 6th century BCE, and are eventually suppressed by the Romans. Celtic culture survives though, in Ireland. Eventually many Celtic tribes there surrender to Christ under the preaching of St. Patrick in the 5th century AD.

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Old Orchard Church

February 3, 2013 – 10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

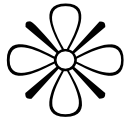
All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,
for dominion belongs to the LORD
and he rules over the nations.

Psalms 22:27-28

Celebrating Christ, Incarnate Son of God: Lord of the Nations

And the Baptism of Lydia Ji and Naomi Gear

Jesus Christ is Lord—
Lord of the shapes of countries;
Lord of commerce and progress,
of the rise and fall of civilizations;
he is Lord over the nations and over this nation;
he presides over the endless stream of rulers
and governors of the states of the world.
Once subjected himself to the fickleness
of what we call history,
a pawn in the power struggle of little men,
he was, in his resurrection and ascension, confirmed
as the unseen Ruler over every historical contingency;
the One who decides all things
out of the richness of his mercy,
the power of his passion for justice,
and his patience with a broken world.
And blessed be his Name for this:
From all the nations in their broken glory
He gathers his very imperfect people,
Making them, by his own atoning sacrifice at the cross,
One people—the only Holy Nation in the world.
Alleluias and praise be to him who so loves the world!



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: from Isaiah 2

Gospel Reading: John 18:33-40; 19:7-16

Sermon

“Power and Influence”

Psalm 33:6-22

Mark Robertson, associate pastor, preaching

A Meditation On Our Words

What do I mean when I say as a Christian: Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, is Lord of the nations?

I mean, first, that the nations are in great need of a man to lead them to live in peace with order and justice, and to atone for them; a man to give them what no nation or state can give its citizens: peace with God; a man to heal the ravages of war and ethnic cleansing and poverty, and the pretentiousness that haunts their prosperity; and I mean too, that they have that man in Jesus, because he really is the Son of God in human flesh.

But when I say that Jesus is Lord of the nations *I mean, secondly, that in his mercy he gives a grace common to all human beings* in the fantastic variety of created nature, and in every rich cultural blessing; in the restraint against chaos provided by government—even bad government; and that he calls on his people to live with courage and self-sacrifice, standing for what is just and good in the life of their nation.

But when I say I believe that Jesus is Lord of the nations, *I also mean that in every historical moment, he supervises and governs the nations*; he rules their rulers. Christ causes the rise of governments and civilizations and takes credit in his Word for their downfall. He holds sway over congresses and parliaments and dictatorships; over their lies and cover-ups, over their navies and armies, mysteriously influencing all things. Yet he regards human choices as fraught with significance and utterly accountable to him.

But let me not forget this, that when I say Jesus is Lord of the nations *I mean too, that when he returns he will sift the nations, punishing their evil.* And perhaps too, he will save from their historical life and purify, whatever has been good, true, and beautiful in the nations, bestowing it all on the City of God, according to that cryptic promise,

The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into the city.
(Revelation 21:26)

And when I say Jesus is Lord of the nations *I freely confess that he uses secondary causes*, orchestrating them all as Supreme Governor of the world. He will use war; economic free falls; he will use the political laziness of electorates or he will use their passion; he will use the treaties of nations and prayers and the propaganda of ideologues. But make no mistake: when I call Jesus Lord of the nations I mean to say he brought down atheistic Soviet communism in eastern Europe; that he humbles American pride as he sees fit; I mean that in his mercy he restrains the dark powers of secularism in Europe so that people are not crushed by the destructiveness of writing God out of their own worldviews; I mean that it is he, the sovereign Lord, who has given rise to the Arab Spring.

I say, then, a great deal when I confess that Jesus, the Man-God, is Lord of the nations. I say what ought to make me more bold and more confident as a disciple of him who loved me and gave himself up for me: I say that no elected official, no tyrant-usurper of political power, no fighter plane, no secret