

ep

R. D. Alexander, 5/04

## Prayer for the Kindred of the World

1. *Dear God*, we pray to you as *our personification of the common spirit of cooperativeness, empathy, and goodness residing within the minds of all who are human*, which shared spirit indeed makes us human. Our images are reflected in this common spirit, and in our understanding of the value in communicating among ourselves about its existence and possible consequences.
2. We seek your support as we strive together to extend and magnify the benevolent qualities of all humanity.
3. We have come to realize that while the socially positive passions are pervasive in all humanity and generate the most rewarding of all proximate indicators and guides of ultimate functions – of all pleasures, inner warmths, and satisfaction -- they nevertheless have been honed across history as to benefit different kindreds, clans, and tribes separately. We know that the extent to which we employ them within our own groups, even now, reflects our history of conflicts of interest and reveals a correlated prevalence of adversarial attitudes toward other groups like our own.
4. Help us, therefore, to prevent ourselves from restricting the socially positive passions to our own families, kindreds, clans, tribes, or nations; from using those passions within our groups to designate as hostile forces other such groups of our own species anywhere in the world; from continuing to keep their effects solely within our groups after we have resisted or defeated forces whose aggressiveness we felt we were unable to prevent or remove without your special help – without employing an ardent and almost implacable temporary patriotism; from ignoring histories and circumstances to convince ourselves that only we are right, only our causes just; and from continuing our pervasive and deep-seated inclination to divide the world into we's and they's.
5. We know we need your help because we recognize that not merely we but all the we's and they's everywhere must counteract tendencies to do these very things – tendencies arising from our history of both individual-against-individual and group-against-group competition, the sources, surely, for our ideas about “original sin.”
6. Dear God, our God, everyone's God – as universally shared spirit of benevolence -- help us to display the greatest possible humanity in all our dealings with others, and to resolve peacefully all our human differences, real and perceived, in any time, and at any and every level.
7. Help us to find ways to spread among all people, without prejudice, both the material benefits and the good feelings that arise from the expressions of the socially positive passions.
8. Help us to turn the constant flow of social reciprocity into a mutualistic enterprise from which every participant is able to realize gain, accompanied by the gratifying surge of those proximate pleasures, evolved because they inform us of positive outcomes.
9. Help us, indeed, to enjoy extending such good feelings reasonably to all living creatures that might have sensory and social capabilities appropriate to them.
10. Reveal to us your greatest potential, therefore our own, by blessing all sentient beings

11. Everywhere [Note: I numbered units to make it easy to identify short prayers (e.g., 1, 2, 13; 1, 2, 10-13; 1, 2, 8-13. My aims are to make prayer consistent with our being knowledgeable about organic evolution, including the ability to diminish its unpleasant “gifts,” and to help modify the tenets of religion
12. Equally
13. Amen. away from unproductive self-righteousness and exclusivity.—RDA 4-25-04  
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