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If performed indoors, this libation ceremony requires a green potted plant large enough to be seen by the people and a pitcher of water. The plant symbolizes all of nature, life, God's blessings, renewal, resurrection, and immortality. The water represents the living water of God that springs up into eternal life. If this ceremony is performed outside, it ought to be performed where the water can be poured directly into the earth.

Libation Ceremony

To Commemorate the Red Summer of 1919

We gather at this moment believing in God who is Divine Love, believing in his son Jesus who is Divine Love incarnate, who walked the earth as a human being and demonstrated a life of compassion and care, even for those who are our enemies. We gather believing in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and the holy presence of God with us and within us.

We gather at this moment remembering the prayer of unity that Jesus prayed. God in Jesus; Jesus in God; we in Jesus and God (John 17:21). We are sanctified in God's truth. God's Word is truth. (John 17:17).

We gather at this moment convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38). We are one in God's love.

We gather at this moment understanding that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed by faith our ancestors received approval (Hebrews 11:1-2).

We gather at this moment mindful of the seven principles of African communal life: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination); Ujima (collective work and responsibility); Ujamaa (cooperative economics); (Nia (purpose); Kuumba (creativity); Imani (faith).

We gather at this moment knowing that the unity of community includes our ancestors, the living and the not yet born.

We gather at this moment to pour cool water upon the earth in honor of our ancestors. This water represents Holy Spirit of God, prophetic healing, prosperity and the living waters that flow from a spring of water gushing up to eternal life (John 4:14).

We pour these libations in gratitude to God for our ancestors who built civilizations, survived the horrors of the Middle Passage, who stayed faithful to God through slavery, who maintained their dignity in the

face of physical and psychic violence, who lived, laughed, loved, and who gave us life. In the name of Jesus

(pour out water)

We ask forgiveness for the things we have done that did not bring glory to God which hurt or disappointed our ancestors. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We forgive our ancestors for the things they did that did not bring glory to God which hurt or disappointed us. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We realize that our lives on this earth are fleeting and soon those who are not yet born will stand and pour libations to us. God's Word says: "For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring."(Isaiah 44:3) We thank God for this promise. We stand on and trust this promise. In the name of Jesus.

(pout out water)

We come today with the particular purpose to commemorate the Red Summer of 1919. The Red Summer was part of a particularly violent year -- between late 1918 and late 1919 -- when white mobs attacked African-American people in the United States with more than ten major pogroms, dozens of smaller racial attacks and more than 100 lynchings. More than 150 died due to racial violence. This barbarism happened across the country from the east coast to the west coast. Major pogroms happened in Charleston, South Carolina; Longview, Texas; Bisbee, Arizona; Washington, DC, Chicago, Illinois; Knoxville, Tennessee; Phillips County, Arkansas; Gary, Indian; and Bogalusa, Louisiana. We are mindful of what our ancestors endured and what God has brought our people through. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We are mindful of the response of our ancestors to this violence. They organized to defend the community from the violence by any means necessary. Black veterans returning from World War I organized active duty servicemen along with working class and professional men to protect the community. This became a part of a long tradition of black people arming themselves against white mob violence that continued into the civil rights era of the late 20th century. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We are mindful that the African-American response to white mob violence intended to maintain and enforce white supremacy was to insist upon the dignity, beauty and intellectual capabilities of African-American people. The Red Summer provided a spark that ignited the Harlem Renaissance. The NAACP and other organizations became stronger so that they could not only help the black community survive, but they could defend black people in court who were accused of starting the violence and call for just punishment for white perpetrators of the violence. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We honor the white people who gave their lives defending black people during this horror. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We lament the original sin of white supremacy that sickens the soul of America. We pray for the nation that it will understand the necessity for recognition, repentance, reparation, reconciliation, and restoration. We especially pray for our sisters and brothers who call themselves Christians that they will heed the direction of the Word of God in II Chronicle 7:14 "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We repent of our own failure to remember. We understand that we have allowed our community to stray from the life sustaining values of protection of the entire community to the death-dealing values of the world – the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches. We believe the Word when it says that these things do not come from God the Father who is Divine Love, but rather comes from the world. (I John 2:16) We have become too focused on our own individual prosperity, and we have failed to live the values of the realm of God in the world so that God is glorified. Help us to be a peculiar people. (Titus 2:14) Help us to bring clarity where there is confusion. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We remember the instruction of Ida B. Wells-Barnett who told a group of black men who were unjustly imprisoned that they ought to pray in faith for their liberation. We pray for the liberation of our community from the structural violence of poverty, poor educational systems, inadequate healthcare, and urban and rural blight. We pray for the liberation of our people from the personal violence that we perpetrate against each other. We pray for the end of gang violence in our communities. In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We echo the faith of W.E.B. Du Bois who writes in his Credo: "Finally, I believe in Patience—patience with the weakness of the Weak and the strength of the Strong, the prejudice of the Ignorant and the ignorance of the Blind; patience with the tardy triumph of joy and the mad chastening of Sorrow; patience with God!" In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

We accept our responsibility and rededicate ourselves to live lives that are a praise to the glory of God, that honor our ancestors, and that will allow the realm of God to come on earth as it is in heaven. Now, please name either aloud or in silence the ancestors you remember and honor today.

(the people speak)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking

to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrew 1:1-2) In the name of Jesus.

(pour out water)

Sing: We've Come this Far by Faith

This libation ceremony is complete. Amen and Ashe.

For Further Reading on Red Summer of 1919:

1919, The Year of Racial Violence: How African Americans Fought Back. David F. Krugler. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America. Cameron McWhirter. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011.

Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil. W.E.B. DuBois

Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells. Alfreda M. Duster Editor. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

For a partial list of Red Summer events see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Summer