

for Voce Bella Women's Chorus

'KE BONA LESELI

(I Have Seen the Light)

Inspired by Chief Moshesh,
founder of the Lesotho Nation

Barbara Bridge

(♩ = ca. 120)

Soprano I
Soprano II

mp unis.

'Ke bo-na le - se-li! _____ 'Ke bo- le - se - li! 'Ke

Alto I
Alto II

mp unis.

mf

div.

bo-na le - se-li! 'Ke bo-na le - se - li! 'Ke bo-na le -

div.

'Ke bo- le - se-li! _____

f

le - se - li! _____ *mf*

se - li! 'Ke bo-na le - se - li! 'Ke bo-na le - se - li! 'Ke

f

le - se - li! _____ *mf*

'Ke bo- le - se-li! _____ 'Ke

f

bo-na le - se - li! 'Ke bo-na le - se-li! _____ *mp*

I have

unis.
mp

bo-na le - se - li! _____ I have seen the light! _____ I have

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Phonetic pronunciation: Kee BOH-nah leh-SEH-dee. (Some "L's" in the Northern Sotho language are pronounced as "D".)

seen the light! — I have seen the light! — I have
 seen the light! — I have seen the light! — I have seen the light! —

mf *sub. p* *mf* *sub. p*

seen the light, — the light of God. I have seen the light, — the
 light of God. — I have seen the light! — I have seen the light! — 'Ke

mp *mf* *mf*

bo - na le - se - li! 'Ke bo - na le - se - li! — I will
 walk in the light! — I will walk in the light — of God. —

f *f* *mf* *mf*

bo - na le - se - li! 'Ke bo - na le - se - li! — I will
 walk in the light! — I will walk in the light — of God. —

mp *div.* *mp* *mf*

bo - na le - se - li! 'Ke bo - na le - se - li! — I will
 walk in the light! — I will walk in the light — of God. —

mf *mf* *mf*

bo - na le - se - li! _____ 'Ke bo - na le - se - li, _____

mp *mf*

I will walk in the light. _____ I will

mp *mf*

bo - na le - se - li! _____

_____ the light _____ of God. _____

f

walk in the light _____ of God. _____ 'Ke bo - na le - se - li! 'Ke bo - na le -

f

unis. _____

1 *mp* 2 *sub. p*

se - li! _____ I have _____ se - li! _____ 'Ke

mp *div.* *sub. p*

I have seen the light! _____ I have

f

bo - na le - se - li! 'Ke bo - na le - se - li! _____ I will walk in the light! _____

f

ff *molto rit.*

'Ke bo - na le - se - li! _____

ff *molto rit.*

'Ke bo - na, _____ 'Ke bo - na le - se - li!

PERFORMANCE NOTES

As dawn broke each day, Moshesh, founder of the Lesotho nation, would emerge from his hut with the greeting, “‘Ke bona leseli!” *I have seen the light!* According to tradition, Moshesh adopted this habit during the terrible Difaqane wars between 1820 and 1830, when the probability of being murdered in the night by marauding tribes was so great that the dawning of each new day brought this grateful cry. Under his leadership the infant nation was able to defend itself against overwhelming odds. Moshesh, a man of compassion and kindness, was loved and revered by all around him. In 1833, he welcomed the first Christian missionary to his country. That day was regarded by Moshesh as one of the most important days in the history of Lesotho.

Geographically surrounded by South Africa, Lesotho is a small country with much beauty and much suffering. Today the country is ravaged by drought, hunger and the spread of the AIDS virus. In spite of their hardships, the people of Lesotho, possessing exceptional musical abilities, sing continuously, spontaneously breaking into four-part harmony.

A common greeting in Lesotho is the lovely phrase, “knoiso, Pula, Nala!” *Peace, rain, and plenty*—in that order. And in Lesotho, “nala” means sufficiency; not more than one needs, but to be a human being, and to be free.

This song was first performed in a benefit concert for the people of Lesotho and to honor the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, who served as missionaries in Lesotho for nearly 75 years.

—Barbara Bridge

W
L
P
S
A
M
S