



## **The Power of Hymns**

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## POWER IN THE HYMNS

by Bruce T. Forbes, 2010

This book is a compilation of writings and addresses on the power of music, centering on hymns. Part One is my voice; Part Two are others' voices.

For more on Hymns in general and about LDS Hymody in particular, see my website at:  
[www.losthymnsproject.com](http://www.losthymnsproject.com)

# **Part 1**

## **My Voice**

## Power in the Hymns

This is a transcript of an address I gave in 2007 to my home congregation and was then invited to deliver it in other congregations.

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I have with me today replicas of two of the first books published by the Church. This is a replica of the first edition of the Book of Mormon. Recently an original copy of this book sold at auction for 110,000 dollars, including agent's fees.

This second book is a replica of the first LDS hymnal, the 1835 Kirtland Hymnal. Last year an actual copy of this book sold at auction for 273,000 dollars – plus agent's fee. Obviously, the 16 dollars I paid for this replica was a really good deal.

What's the power of this book? I would like to speak about the power of this book – about the power in the hymns.

Recently many of the national news services have run articles on how the events of the year 1957 – fifty years ago – changed the world. It is a very interesting list:

- The National Guard escorted the first students of color to their classes at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas
- The Russians launched the first man-made satellite, and test pilot John Glenn flew a jet plane faster than a speeding bullet.
- The Brooklyn Dodgers defected to Los Angeles, and Jim Brown broke the color barrier in the National Football League.
- The powdered orange drink TANG appeared on store shelves.
- The European Economic Union was formed, which we know today at the European Union.
- Ford Motor company marketed the first mechanized hardtop convertible. Ford and Chevy put fins on the Thunderbird and the Bel-Air, creating the two modern cars that still command the highest dollar at a classic car auction. On the flip side, Ford also came out with the Edsel.
- The first workable medical laser was unveiled, and the computer language FORTRAN was first used.
- Feminist Betty Freidan published *THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE*, warning us of the dangers of becoming an enslaved housewife; Ayn Rand published *ATLAS SHRUGGED*, warning us of the dangers of socialism; and Dr. Seuss published his first book - *THE CAT IN THE HAT*, warning us of the dangers of bored children on a rainy day.

- C. S. Lewis' seventh and final volume to the "Chronicles of Narnia" was published in the U.S.; having been published in Great Briton the year before.

- The birth control pill was first marketed, and smoking was first linked to lung cancer.

- The Sharks and the Jets made Broadway their turf in 'West Side Story', and a very young Julie Andrews became Rogers and Hammerstein's 'Cinderella'; a production repeated many times but never topped by any other actress.

- Paul McCartney and John Lennon met for the first time at a church social in Liverpool, England

Nearly every one of these events were life-changing, but the national magazines missed the most important event of 1957, and it happened right here in Utah.

Each of the LDS Church auxiliaries used to hold a yearly conference, usually held at the same time as General Conference. For the April 1957 Primary Association conference, Primary board member Naomi Randall was asked to write a song to express the conference theme of the importance of teaching children the Gospel. She spent much time in prayer and meditation until the words flowed. She sent them to her friend and fellow Primary board member Mildred Pettit, who through prayer and meditation wrote the music.

This hymn actually debuted at a dinner for the conference attendees. A choir of Primary children stood at the head of the room and sang what is now hymn #301 in our hymnal:

I am a child of God,  
And he has sent me here.  
Has given me an earthly home  
With parents kind and dear.

Chorus: Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,  
Help me find the way.  
Teach me all that I must do  
To live with him some day.

I am a child of God,  
And so my needs are great;  
Help me to understand his words  
Before it grows too late.

I am a child of God,  
Rich blessings are in store;  
If I but learn to do his will  
I'll live with him once more.

President David O. McKay stood as the hymn ended and responded: "O little children of God, we will listen to your plea. We'll lead you, we'll guide you, we'll teach you, so that you may get back to your Father in Heaven with the help of General Authorities, the Priesthood, Relief Society, teachers, and parents. The children have shown us what our responsibility is. With the help of the Priesthood, and auxiliaries, we'll accept the challenge and listen to their plea."

This simple hymn set the course for the rest of President McKay's administration.

At a 1998 party to celebrate Sister Randall's 90th birthday, gospel singer Pat Boone sang this hymn to Sister Randall and proclaimed it to be the most important hymn of the 20th century. What is the power and importance of this simple text? Let's consider the five great truths this hymn teaches:

First, "I AM A CHILD OF GOD". We are literal spirit children of God. He is the Father of our spirits. Armed with this knowledge, we no longer think of ourselves as the top of the animal evolutionary ladder; we realize we are something greater than all that - "a little lower than the angels", the scriptures say, but a literal translation is "a little lower than the gods". Suddenly we realize we are something pretty important.

Second, "HE HAS SENT ME HERE". We are not here by accident. We are on Earth on purpose and with a purpose.

Third, "MY NEEDS ARE GREAT". We only have a certain amount of time here on earth to learn and do the things we were sent to learn and do. Not only must we learn and do, but we must turn around and help all those around us learn and do.

Fourth, "RICH BLESSINGS ARE IN STORE". Yes! There is a reward awaiting those who live like they are a child of God. Knowing this makes the struggle easier. Knowing there is a reward gives us the hope and courage to continue on the gospel path. As the Lord has said; "... if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God."

With the fourth verse Sister Randall wrote in 1978, we learn "HIS PROMISES ARE SURE". Heavenly Father keeps His promises. Even if no

one else does, He does. "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."

Most people are surprised that so much doctrine can be taught through such a single children's hymn! This knowledge is POWER in the hands of a little child. It's also a lot of pure testimony to help the weary adult when they're discouraged and depressed. Whether it's a child or an adult who holds on to this hymn, this simple text holds a lot of POWER.

And this is one of the great truths about hymns – they are POWER.

### **HYMNS HAVE THE POWER TO PREACH AND TEACH**

It is said that at the beginning of a sermon the great Reformer Martin Luther held up a Bible and said: "This is the Gospel." And then in the other hand he held up a hymnal and continued: "And this is how we remember it." This concept is so true!

My older sister once told me that "everything I know about the Gospel I learned through the hymns." Now, I know for a fact my sister attended Sunday School and learned the Gospel from some wonderful gospel teachers - she and I were in the same classes, so I know. And I also know she was taught at home - I was there; I saw it happening; I was also participating. Her statement is a tribute to the fact that somehow everything we learned had a hymn attached. I can also testify that our mother's piano was not silent in reinforcing gospel truths! And our mother was quick to stop in the middle of a hymn to ask if we understood what we were singing - and then reinforce the song with her personal teachings and witness. Hymns gave my mother an opportunity to teach and testify witness to her children.

Recently I've been surfing the internet and collecting the hymnals that have been posted there. I've been taking the time to read one of them while I reformat it on my computer, and I've been amazed how I keep hearing some of the phrases in my Grandmother's voice. I couldn't understand this until I realized that it was the hymnal she used as a child – it was the hymnal through which she learned the gospel. It then came to my mind the many times she'd actually repeated to us the phrases and sayings that were all right there in the 1899 Methodist hymnal.

One hymn inspired me as a little child to reverence and love my Savior for what He had done for me was #194 in our hymnal. As a little boy I was sure this hymn had been written especially to teach children, so imagine how excited I was to discover that it was in fact written as a children's hymn. I would like to read the original text:

There is a green hill far away, outside a city wall,

Where the dear Lord was crucified, who died to save us all.

CHORUS: O dearly, dearly, has He loved, and we must love Him, too,  
And trust in His redeeming blood, and try His works to do.

We may not know, we cannot tell, what pains He had to bear;

But we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there.

CHORUS: O dearly, dearly, has He loved, and we must love Him, too,  
And trust in His redeeming blood, and try His works to do.

He died that we might be forgiven, He died to make us good,

That we might go at last to heaven, Saved by His precious blood.

CHORUS: O dearly, dearly, has He loved, and we must love Him, too,  
And trust in His redeeming blood, and try His works to do.

There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin;

He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

I think we all know the chorus by now:

O dearly, dearly, has He loved, and we must love Him, too,

And trust in His redeeming blood, and try His works to do.

Again, that's a lot of doctrine for a child's hymn! As a child, this hymn helped me understand that I could love and worship and thank my Savior for what He'd done without understanding why He did it and why it was required for Him to do it - and that to show my love for Him I needed to trust Him and do those things He did. This hymn above all others inspired me to be a "good boy", because Jesus loved me enough to make sure I could return to Heaven, and I could NOT waste such love.

#### **HYMNS GIVE US THE POWER TO RECALL TRUTHS**

One day at work I was playing the Children's Songbook CD's - it was the 'music only' CD's so as to not offend those who would object to the message of the words. A co-worker, who had left the church some thirty years before and had nothing to do with it since, stopped at my desk and sang the words to "I Am a Child of God" word-perfect - after thirty years of being away from the church! When the song finished he turned to me and said: "That song is so true!" I replied: "But you don't believe in God." He looked at me and answered - "I don't, but this song is true." I didn't need too many more hints from the Spirit to know what to do! I play the Children's Songbook whenever this man comes around my desk!

## **HYMNS HAVE THE POWER – AND GIVE US THE POWER - TO BEAR WITNESS**

How many of us who understand the words to Samuel Medley's 'I Know that My Redeemer Lives' (hymn #136) can doubt the testimony of that text? I believe that although I learned the scriptures as a child and had them explained to me by loving parents and teachers who would testify of their truthfulness, it was through this hymn that I obtained for myself a testimony of Jesus Christ.

One person wrote this experience:

"Years ago I was singing Handel's Messiah with a group of people from different faiths. Even though our beliefs were different, we were all singing about the same Messiah, our own personal Savior. I had sung this oratorio many times, but during one particular practice, the Spirit told me that I was not only singing notes, I was singing my testimony: "Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4). I knew with all my soul that He had done that for me. For a moment the 300 other voices became a whisper and I felt like I was all alone with the Lord. I felt His love and reassurance that He had carried the griefs and the sorrows of my teenage heart, and through my obedience, He would continue to walk with me for the rest of my life. To feel that blessing and comfort and complete love from the Lord is worth any price." ("Standing in Holy Places", Sharon G. Larsen, April 2002 LDS Young Women's Meeting)

But what good is this power of testimony if we don't do something about it? As long as we remain silent through a hymn or simply mumble our way through it, we are withholding that testimony from those who need to hear it from us. It is our responsibility to come to church and share this testimony through our singing – through our "joyful noise".

## **HYMNS HAVE THE POWER TO HEAL, COMFORT, and GIVE HOPE**

President Ezra Taft Benson said - "Inspiring music may fill the soul with heavenly thoughts, move one to righteous action, or speak peace to the soul. When Saul was troubled with an evil spirit, David played for him with his harp and Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed ... This could also be done to crowd out debilitating, depressive thoughts." (October 1974 LDS General Conference)

I'm convinced King Saul suffered from bi-polar depression far more than the pride and arrogance most of us might have been taught about in Sunday School - I believe the pride and arrogance was a bi-product of an untreated mental condition. He, like many other depression sufferers,

found a certain amount of relief from this ailment through the influence of the spirit of the hymns.

In the second half of the 1990's I myself traveled the long, lonely road of suicidal depression, and, besides a good therapist and a daily dose of St. John's Root, staying close to my Heavenly Father through prayer and song were the only way I survived that awful time. During this time I literally could not listen to many, many of the music albums I own as there is at least one or two 'broken heart' songs to any album, and my mind and heart couldn't take even one. I learned to lean on the hymns even more than I ever had as it was only hymns and other inspirational music that so completely sang of Hope.

One of the great hymns of hope and comfort was written by a man who struggled all his life with suicidal depression. In a day and age that depression was totally misunderstood and God was pictured and a hateful, revengeful Being who frowned a lot, it's an absolute miracle to hear a hymn like #285. Again, I would like to read the original text:

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

Do any of you know what it means to a depression sufferer to know that God rides that storm with them? I can tell you – it means everything. It continues:

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs  
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

#### **HYMNS HAVE THE POWER OF PEACE**

It was during this time of my life that I had to pull off to the side of the road one day and, through my tears, beg God to let me know that someone in this terrible, ugly world loved me. I needed to know this or it would not be worth the continued, agonizing pain of living. (Such was the state of my depression.) The song playing on my car radio literally faded out and - on a weekday; not even on a Sunday! - Judy Collin's sublime rendition of 'Amazing Grace' played out from the radio. When she was done singing the regular station came back on. It was very plain to me that God had spoken. God's message was very plain and very well received, and from that day, no matter what stage of depression I've been in, I have never doubted or questioned the love of God and the love of my Savior. Some would say that I don't dare doubt.

Chicago businessman Horatio G. Spafford lost his home and his business in the Great Chicago Fire of October 1871. Shortly after this, all four of his daughters died in a collision with another ship at sea. Spafford's wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone." Several weeks later, as Spafford was on his way to join his wife in London, and as his ship passed near the spot where his daughters had died, he stood at the ship's railing and wrote the words he says the Holy Spirit dictated to his heart:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! ...

... And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.

### **HYMNS HAVE THE POWER OF COURAGE**

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

(Matthew 26:30; see also Mark 14:26)

Facing the most terrible ordeal of His life, the Savior and his followers sang a hymn before going to the garden where the Savior of all Mankind would pray for the strength to face the agony of His role in our Atonement. Following His example, the hymns can bring the power of courage into our lives as we face our life's challenges.

When Joseph Smith was in Carthage Jail, I'm sure he had an idea that the end of his earthly ministry was upon him. What did he do for courage? He asked Elder John Taylor to sing a hymn – 'A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief'. And then he asked him to sing it a second time.

When my ancestors walked across this continent in search of religious freedom, there were no community scripture-quoting sessions recorded in their histories, but there was plenty of hymn-singing:

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand  
and cast a wishful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land,  
where my possessions lie.  
I am bound for the promised land,  
I am bound for the promised land  
O who will come and go with me;  
I am bound for the promised land."

And –

"Ye Saints who dwell on Europe's shore,  
prepare yourselves for many more

To leave behind your native lands  
for sure God's judgments are at hand.  
For you must cross the raging main  
before the promised land you gain,  
Then with the faithful make a start  
to cross the plains with your handcart."

And –

"We'll find the place that God for us prepared -  
far away in the west  
where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;  
there the Saints will be blest  
We'll make the air with music ring;  
shout praises to our God and king..."

Notice it doesn't say that we will mumble our praises to our God and King! I don't think our God and King approves of mumbled praises.

One of the remarkable features of Hymn #85 is that it is, I think, the only hymn in our hymnal in which God is addressing His people. Let's read this text in it's original form to discover what message was so important that God delivers it to us in first-person and in the form of a hymn:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

In every condition, in sickness, in health;  
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;  
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,  
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

Every single military member who has also served in battle that I have asked concerning the power of hymns quoted the next verse word-for-word and attributed great comfort and hope to those times that the Lord spoke these words to them as they went into a battle situation. I asked my son, who served on night patrols and guarding schools and other institutions in downtown Bagdad, if there was something - "some scripture or..." - He didn't even let me finish before quoting this verse to me. "It wasn't just in my head," he explained forcefully; "Heavenly Father was

speaking it to me every time I was entering danger. He was promising me... " -

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand."

Beginning with verse four God speaks to the heart of the distressed, depressed, despairing soul:

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"Even down to old age all My people shall prove  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne."

Finally, the grand climax of God's promise to His children; a promise I sang many, many times as I fought my fiercest battles with depression and suicide, hoping to simply survive from day to day:

"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

It is a very powerful thing to know that your God will never forsake you. And nowhere is it so brought home as in this hymn.

#### **HYMNS GIVE THE POWER OF PROTECTION**

When the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was readying for a European tour, President James E. Faust of the LDS Church's First Presidency gave them the following admonition:

"Through your music, you will be able to rise above the physical into the spiritual. You will be watched over and kept, and angels will attend you and be with you." (October 1998 ENSIGN Magazine)

Now that is what's called 'preaching to the choir'.

Hymns can keep us in remembrance of God's commandments so that we can keep our feet on the strait and narrow, where God can walk with us and guide us and protect us. When our feet begin to wander, I promise you there's a hymn waiting to be heard to turn those feet back to the right path. Sacred and inspirational music invites the angels to line our route and keep us on the strait and narrow - and to protect us.

When I was in the Air Force I had the chance to go to Israel twice to participate in joint war games. The first time I was there I had to walk every midnight from our barracks to our communications site - and this was all in the dark. One night it was apparent to me I was being followed. I couldn't see the person but I could hear them. The historian and the 'Friend of Israel' that I am, I was painfully aware of what sort of person could be following me in the utter dark of the Israeli desert. I tried very to pray, but hymns are what came out of my mouth: "Lead me, guide me, walk beside me... "; 'Come, Come Ye Saints'; 'Lead, Kindly Light', and 'Heavenly Father, Are You Really There?' The scared little boy inside of me really, really needed to know if Heavenly Father was there! The peace that came over was more than just the Spirit of the Lord comforting me. I have an unshakable confidence that angels made that long, three mile walk with me that night, and it was the plea in my singing that brought them and kept them with me, protecting me.

#### **HYMNS HAVE THE POWER TO INSPIRE GOOD WORKS**

When I was Primary Chorister, there were times the children were just plain brats during singing time - I'm sure many of you can relate to that. I soon discovered the only thing that would calm them down was to sing "I Am a Child of God" - by the end of the first verse and chorus the majority of them were quieted down, had their arms folded, and were singing reverently. As one seven-year-old said, "I just can't be bad during that song."

When the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada reviewed the current LDS hymnal, the reviewer concluded with these words:

"If hymns whose worst crime is their disregard for fashion can inspire rank-and-file Mormons to go out from worship week by week and put their faith into practice, might not editorial committees of other denominations profitably take note?" (Hugh D. McKellar, "Hymns of the

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1985" (Boston, MA: HYMN Magazine, April 1986) page 45)

In my years of hymn-writing and submitting texts to hymn contests sponsored by various churches, I have come to realize one of the great differences between new hymns in other churches and new hymns in the LDS Church. Now, I'm going to make a highly-generalized statement that has already gotten me in trouble with fellow hymnists, so take the generalization for what it's worth. 'Generally-speaking', new hymns that seem to be the 'award winners' in most hymn writing contests are to the effect of "somebody needs to do something" about whatever issue is being addressed. New hymns in the LDS hymn library, however, whether written by a Latter-day Saint composer or not, are to the effect of "'I must do something". I think a fine example of this is hymn #219, "BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN GIVEN MUCH, I TOO MUST GIVE", which many Latter-day Saints are shocked to discover was not written by an LDS composer – proving that there are other Christians out there willing and in need of serving others.

#### **THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES**

When our seventh child was born, it was evident he would not live long, and he only lived for three weeks. All through that final night of his life, I played the Children's Songbook over and over on a small cassette player while I held my baby. Above our baby's bed was taped a picture of the magnificent Washington DC temple and a picture of the Christus statue. The doctor attending our baby that night later told me that she drove by that temple every day to and from work, and that after that night in which the Children's Songbook played over and over all night she would never again drive past the temple without knowing that she is a Child of God and that she intended to teach this to her children. She said she felt as if she had been born anew having this knowledge come into her heart. Suddenly her life had a purpose. She told me she was going to take her children to the temple's visitors center and learn more about this hymn, and I have every confidence the visitor's center very gladly accommodated her.

#### **CONCLUSION**

I am alive today because hymns reached out and healed a wounded soul.

I have courage to live because hymns confirm to me that God will not forsake me.

I strive to be a better person because hymns (among other sources of revelation) confirm to me that I am a child of God and that His promises are sure.

I have hope because hymns - among other sources - bring it to me.

I can go out the front door every day and face the world because, as Della Reese sang so very clearly for ten years every Sunday night - "You are not alone, And I will walk with you." (the 'Touched by an Angel' Theme')

I know God hears my prayers and is there for me because - well, because He has heard and answered my prayers! But also because a hymn asked "Heavenly Father, are you really there?" and this question was followed by an inspired, affirmative answer.

Brothers and Sisters, music is used by Satan as the great 'desensitizer' of entire generations; using it to pull us away from the still small voice through which the Holy Spirit speaks. But is it also used by the Lord as the great 'sensitizer' of those same generations; helping us to learn to sense and feel His Spirit, helping us gain firmer and stronger connections with the Holy Spirit and with our Father's will. It can, as President Faust told the Tabernacle Choir, help lift you above the world and into a more spiritual realm. It instills hope and faith and leads us to good works. It lifts our hearts to God. It surrounds us with angels who are there to aide us through life.

But we have to do something more then just mumble!

Hymns and other inspirational, positive songs are vehicles for the Holy Spirit to reach out and touch and change lives. But the key is that we must be willing to receive the Spirit and allow Him to speak to us and then speak and work through us. As we come together to worship, we become the Spirit's voice in reaching out and touching those around us. We must lift up our voices and sing so that the Spirit can reach out and touch not only our lives but also the lives of those around us.

A song is a wonderful kind of thing,  
So lift up your voice and sing!  
Just start a glad song, let it float, let it ring,  
And lift up your voice and sing!

To this I add my further witness:

A hymn is a prayer that we sing from the heart,  
So lift up your voice and sing!

A most joyful noise you must raise; you must start  
to lift up your voice and sing!

The Spirit will whisper God's truths to your mind,  
So lift up your voice and sing!  
Your Faith will be strengthened; fresh knowledge you'll find;  
Just lift up your voice and sing!

Through song He'll reign blessings on each weary soul,  
So lift up your voice and sing!  
Your burdens He'll lighten, your hearts He'll make whole;  
Just lift up your voice and sing!

He'll give you the courage to do what is right,  
so lift up your voice and sing!  
He'll teach you to serve well - with all of your might!  
Just lift up your voice and sing!

## Music to Calm the Beasts of Depression, Grief, and Trauma

This is a chapter from my 2007 book titled “Men and Depression: One Man's Journey”, and illustrates the healing effect music – and especially hymns – has had in my life.

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*“Inspiring music may fill the soul with heavenly thoughts, move one to righteous action, or speak peace to the soul. When Saul was troubled with an evil spirit, David played for him with his harp and Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed. (1 Samuel. 16:23) Elder Boyd K. Packer has wisely suggested memorizing some of the inspiring songs of Zion and then, when the mind is afflicted with temptations, to sing aloud, to keep before your mind the inspiring words and thus crowd out the evil thoughts. This could also be done to crowd out debilitating, depressive thoughts.” (“Do Not Despair”: President Ezra Taft Benson, October 1974 General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)*

*“Next to theology, I give a place to music: for thereby all anger is forgotten, the devil is driven away, and melancholy [depression], and many tribulations, and evil thoughts are expelled. It is the best solace for a desponding mind.”*  
Martin Luther

*“Music gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, and Life to everything else.”*Plato

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Music has been one of the great passions of my life. It is the art form I turn to in times of crisis as well as in times of joy and happiness. Each man has something in his life for which he is passionate; I hope you can take my experience and apply it to that thing for which you are passionate.

In all our life's passions, the wise man applies the Apostle Paul's council:

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Philippians 4:8-9)*

**“Accentuate the Positive... ”**

In Chapter Two I talked about removing all negative influences from your life and replacing them with as much positive influence as possible. I mentioned a test I created for myself in regard to the music I surround myself with in times of distress and despair. The music with which I choose to surround myself with during these times must -

- inspire me
- lead me to positive aspirations
- give me hope
- leave me happy or at least smiling, inwardly or outwardly

Although my journey through depression has led me to hymns and on to become a hymnist, the hymnal was not my first stop for music to fit this litmus test; there were many good albums along the way which I still cherish and enjoy; each having their time, place, and mission. Let's discuss that part of the journey first.

### **"... Eliminate the Negative"**

I strongly recommend that those suffering through despair or distress in any form examine the music with which they surround themselves and determine if it is aiding or retarding their recovery - and then take the appropriate steps. Change your listening habits for the duration of your recovery, and afterwards reexamine your collection and determine how much of what you put into storage you really want to bring back out.

There is so much good and inspiring music from many different sources. But in a day and age before downloading and making your own CD's, the consumer was pretty well stuck with listening to an entire album or nothing at all, so even if there was just one song on the album that didn't pass the test, that entire album had to go into storage for the duration of my bout of depression. So, before copyright laws forbid it, I would pick and choose songs from the albums I owned and compile cassette tapes of positive music. I would label those tapes "Hope", "Inspire", "Thanks", "Calm Down", and other attitudes with which I needed to buttress up my spirit. My wife remarked once that she could tell what mood I was in by which of these tapes I was listening to.

### **Don't Just Listen!**

You need to do more than just listen to positive music. You need to actually sing. A song isn't part of you until you have vocalized it, because that is when your spirit finally speaks through that song and makes it a song from your heart.

At one particular place we lived I chose to walk to work each day; a thirty-minute walk through a golf course and around the end of the

runway for the Air Force base on which we lived. During this walk I was alone most of the time, and this walk to and from work became a twice-a-day concert as I sang songs with positive messages without fear of being overheard and laughed at - stage fright is another issue with which I deal.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us that “... *the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads*” (Doctrine & Covenants 25:12), and there were many of those walks in which my singing was literally a prayer; the calm and peace that came with these walking concerts were gratefully-received blessings in a time of great need.

### **There Is Much Good in Secular Music**

Most people would be tempted to pass by secular artists in search for music to set good moods. You would be surprised how you can find a song on a secular album that sparks something in you and inspires you along. Imagine anyone my age having missed out on Debbie Boone's 'You Light Up my Life' or Barry Manilow's 'I Made it Through the Rain' just because they were on pop albums. Imagine not hearing Josh Gorban's messages of hope and aspiration just because his CD's aren't sold in the religious section of the music store! Imagine never having heard 'The Prayer', 'Candle on the Water', or 'You Know Better Than I' just because they were from children's movies!

Because of the musical background my mother gave to her children, I have always been an appreciative listener of Rogers and Hammerstein. Two artists who believed in promoting all that was good and positive in the world, their music contains little if any negative messages. In times of sorrow or pain even the best hymns have a hard time equaling the messages of 'Climb Every Mountain' or 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. There are those who stumble over these two songs because of their amazing simplicity, but that very simplicity is why they touch the hearts of those who so badly need their messages.

Other albums/CD's that have always inspired me are the official albums released for each of the Olympics. They are always full of songs with incredible messages of hoping and striving and reaching. I have even used them in church lessons – it was an interesting Sunday when my bishop walked in and there I was playing the Four Tops and Smokey Robinson to make a point about Christian brotherhood!

### **Inspirational Music**

There are many good albums of inspirational music waiting for you to discover them. Explore all the genres of inspirational and sacred music

that you already enjoy, and then try a few new ones. Expanding your musical base helps you discover new ways and methods to celebrate the messages, and you will also find new forms of songs and hymns you'll wish you'd known before.

A young friend once told me he disliked the television show 'Touched by an Angel' because he got tired of being told that God loved him. Today, following a divorce and a walk of his own through the Valley of Depression, he enjoys watching an episode or two while the Reverend Della Reese exclaims "God loves you, Baby!" The wise wife or friend of a man going through distress and despair should immediately go to the 'Touched by an Angel' website and order the official soundtrack CD, which opens with the Reverend Della Reese's full-length version of 'I Will Walk with You' and concludes with Wyonna Judd's powerful 'Testify of Love.' In between are fourteen other songs of inspiration, aspiration, and hope in about that same number of musical styles, all of which were featured on the program. Every home with a depressed soul who needs constant reminding that God loves them should have this album on-hand to apply liberally when needed.

### **The Medicinal Qualities of Children's Hymns**

The children's auxiliary in my church is called the Primary Association; commonly referred to as 'Primary'. I have always been grateful to have the assignment of teaching a Primary class during my years of trial. Beneath those loud, active exteriors, children are angels sent from God to remind us grown-ups what we all should be like. In a day and age when it was more appropriate than today, I hugged each child as they left my classroom, letting them know they were loved, and in return they were eager to let me know I was loved.

It did not take me long to realize the sheer spiritual beauty of the hymns and songs in the Children's Songbook! My goal as a Primary teacher was for the children to understand that Heavenly Father and Jesus loved them; all else centers on this simple truth. And in my observation, this also seems to be the goal of the Children's Songbook!

It was not long before I made a trip to the Church Distribution Center and purchased the Children's Songbook on CD so I could have the therapy of these plain, simple hymns playing at home or at work; whenever I needed the boost of hearing such plain, innocent truths. I even have coworkers - manly men who know all the correct times to spit, chew, burp, and scratch - come to my desk to borrow the CD's, explaining that "I just need the extra lift today" or "I need to hear that God loves me today." I have always obliged them.

### **“Whosoever ... Shall Humble Himself as this Little Child”**

What are the secret, healing qualities of Primary music and other children's hymns? The music and the lyrics are simple and direct; uncluttered by grown-up complications. They dwell on the basic teachings of Love, Faith, Hope, and Service. A man going through mental difficulties needs to strip away all the adult trappings and dwell on these simple child-like truths before he tries to take on the complicated grown-up world again.

As Primary chorister I once polled the adults in the congregation to discover their favorite “adult” hymns so the children could learn them, and a full one-half of the adults instead listed this simple children's hymn:

*I am a child of God, and he has sent me here.  
Has given me an earthly home  
with parents kind and dear.*

*(Chorus) Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,  
help me find the way  
Teach me all that I must do  
to live with him some day.*

*I am a child of God, And so my needs are great;  
Help me to understand his words  
before it grows too late.*

*I am a child of God, rich blessings are in store;  
If I but learn to do his will  
I'll live with him once more.*

*I am a child of God, His promises are sure  
Celestial glory can be mine  
if I can but endure.*

(Children's Songbook (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989) pgs 2-3)

I don't think this is our favorite hymn because Latter-day Saints are simpletons when it comes to music, as some hymnists have accused us. I think we embrace this hymn for the clear, plain message it delivers to a cluttered, confused, and often hopeless world. Those who think this a

hymn for a simpleton perhaps have not paused to feel how forcefully the Holy Spirit whispers through such childlike simplicity.

'I Am a Child of God', along with 'A Child's Prayer', 'Teach Me to Walk in the Light', and 'I Feel My Savior's Love', carry messages today's adults are able to respond to and desire to hold on to. I have heard more than one manly Primary teacher whisper under his breath "I needed to hear that today" as the children finished singing one of these hymns.

### **Graduating Back Up to the Congregational Hymnal**

Once I had stripped away all the adult trappings and complications and reminded myself of the simplicity of the Gospel through the Children's Songbook, I was ready to once again tackle the hymnal.

Having been raised by a mother who loved music and loved to teach the Gospel through music, there was not a hymn in the hymnal that was a stranger to me. But once you have been torn down by mental illness and are slowly rebuilding, even the hymnal of your childhood sounds new. You hear each hymn with fresh ears, wondering what it has to do with who you are now. You see what it has for the man who has clawed his way out of the dark (or is still clawing his way out) and is searching for those things that will give him a firm footing in the light.

### **Preparing Men and Hymns to Meet and Become Friends**

I have fond memories of attending men's meetings with my father while still a Primary-age child and sitting in a chapel full of men who stood as one and sang like manly men. The chapel literally shook with the power of their voices. Asked on the way home what I had learned, my reply was always about the message of the hymns.

Men used to love to sing, and they sang to show the Lord that they loved Him and believed the messages of the hymns. To me there was no more manly activity than the literal booming out of beloved hymns of faith and hope. Men, what has happened to our big, booming voices? What has happened to the male fellowship that used to be shared with such power and conviction?

### **Men Need To Sing Like Men**

I have had the opportunity to conduct music at church on many occasions, and as we moved around the world in the Air Force I watched congregations to see when they sang well and when they didn't. I have especially watched the men, and I have a few observations to share.

When I was a child, Christianity in general still viewed and taught about God as an all-powerful, authoritative, majestic, yet loving Being. And, we sang accordingly. Today, Christianity in general teaches about a God who is kind and gentle, and we sing accordingly. Both views of God

are correct, and when they are combined they create a complete picture. Somehow we need to be able to balance our teaching and singing so our children can learn about an all-powerful, authoritative, majestic Being who is equally kind, gentle, and loving.

I think one of the reasons the kind and gentle God is being taught and sung about over the all-powerful, authoritative God is because fewer men participate in leading or conducting the music or even teaching the Sunday School classes. Being left to the women, we now sing, teach, and learn more from the women's point of view and in fulfillment of their needs more than we do the men's point of view or needs. It is my observation that if more men participated the fuller would be the view and the music would become more rounded for both men and women – after all, the women need to hear the men sing like men and feel the power of conviction in their voices!

What I have said should not be taken as criticism of the women who teach the classes and lead the music. I would never, ever speak negative of how wonderfully the sisters of the church keep the music going as they give of themselves every week in this regard. If there is any criticism to be made from this observation it should be pointed towards the men who don't or won't help.

This is also not a criticism but an observation: We have a piano and an organ in the chapel. We have pianos for the Relief Society room, the Young Women's room and for the Primary Room. There is, however, rarely if ever a piano for the men in Priesthood Meeting. This leaves the men and the young men without music, and they then become the butt of the women's jokes when they sing off-key. Those in charge of Priesthood Meeting music need to meet with their leaders and stress the importance of the priesthood holders having the same musical foundation for worship as the rest of the congregation. It is my observation that music in Priesthood meeting should be taken serious enough that, if needed, a woman be assigned to come in and play the piano if there is no man available or able to do so.

### **The Right Tool for the Job**

When I was a boy our Sacrament Meeting conductor was a retired high school choir teacher. He led the congregation with a baton and he'd stop us if we weren't singing as a congregation should sing while praising their God. Even the men sang correctly for Brother Millet.

Many hymnists with which I've discussed the use of a baton in a worship service are against it, but my observation has taught me that men

sing better when the chorister uses one – especially if the chorister is a fellow man.

Why a baton? It comes down to the simple, sexist-stereotyped theory that men respect tools. Men also respect a man wielding a tool – it gets their attention and lets them know that a man is about to do something important and perhaps they should be ready in case they are called upon to assist. Preachers wave the Bible; choristers wave a baton - either action gets the mens' attention because a man is waving a tool.

I tried this out for myself one Saturday morning when I was asked to be the chorister for a regional leadership meeting. Having previously led this same group of men in nothing more than a mumble, it seemed a chance to test my theory. When I raised the baton, every head came up and watched the tool in my hand. The pianist even watched and played according to my conducting. And, the men sang loud enough I could hear them over my own voice. They weren't following me; they were following a tool.

### **Sing and Lead Like Men**

Men! Stop singing with soft tender voices and return to singing with manly, enthusiastic voices, and you will once again enjoy the hymns. Choristers! Men need to sing like men; give them a surprise and lead the congregation in a way that gives the men a chance to do so, and hopefully you will hear the fruits of your labor. Also: lead to the fast tempo; not the slow tempo. Rouse them out their Sabbath stupor and make Men out of them.

Men who conduct music need to take on more 'manly' movements and demeanor when leading men in song. Make yourself and your conducting something they will pick up on and follow. An example: when I lead the men in 'Onward Christian Soldiers', I turn my hand into a fist and literally "beat" the chorus as if I am striking a hammer on an anvil – and the mens' voices generally respond in kind!

How we move our hands and what we do with our body while we conduct the music is not established in any gospel commandment or covenant – it was not handed down on granite tablets from Mount Sinai or any other mountain. We do what we have to do to raise the singers' hearts and voices in song and worship. If we have to beat an anvil or wave a tool or even stomp a foot to illustrate the tempo, then we do it. Our mission is to get the men to sing.

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### **Hymns for the Distressed and Despairing Man**

I have limited myself to nine examples of hymns that are not only well-suited to men's voices but are also hymns I and other men feel have helped us through mental and emotional trials.

### **Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah**

Historically, Wales was renowned for its men's choirs, and many great Welsh hymns were written specifically for men's voices. The one old Welsh hymn that most Christians know was originally titled "Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer", and when it is teamed up with the tune "Cwm Rhondda" by John Hughes it is a hymn through which which men's voices and spirits simply shine with about as much masculinity as any hymn can contain.

Manly imagery abounding, this text evokes scenes from the Israel's exodus from Egypt. The text is a plea for the great Jehovah to lead us and guide us to His promised land, guarded by his fiery pillar and His strong arm. Are we not, as depression sufferers, trying to escape a world of bondage and servitude and flee to a better place? What better way to do it then by calling upon the almighty, all-powerful "warrior-god" (as some have called Him) of the Old Testament to lead us? The text culminates with praises to Him as we find rest on Zion's hill. Especially powerful for the troubled man is -

*"When the earth begins to tremble,  
Bid our fearful thoughts be still."*

In times of depression I have always invoked this hymn as a prayer while calling upon my Heavenly Father to guide me and protect me from the world and its influences. The power of the music and the text infuses my spirit with that power, leaving me with faith that He is there and He is guiding me.

### **God Moves in a Mysterious Way**

Not only is 'God Moves in a Mysterious Way' an ideal hymn for the depressed and distressed, but such an audience can certainly admire the man who wrote this text.

William Cowper was severely accosted by other boys in boarding school. He was admitted to the bar as a solicitor (lawyer) at twenty-three years of age, but due to poor physical health and failed mental health (caused by his years in boarding school) he never practiced law. After one severe bout of depression, during which he attempted suicide and was committed to an asylum, he found room and board with the family of the Reverend Morley Unwin, and he spent the rest of his life living with various members of this family.

After the death of the Reverend, he moved with the family to Olney, where they lived for nineteen years and where Cowper's association with John Newton ('Amazing Grace') took place. Cowper was fast to embrace the gospel movement headed John Newton - both men were avid poets, and Cowper found comfort in the work and companionship in the ministry and in the pursuit of poetry and hymn-writing. He helped organize and conduct meetings, and together they established the goal of writing a new hymn text for every meeting. The combination of assisting with the ministry and the shared love of poetry helped ease the horror of depression for Cowper, and his years in Olney were the healthiest and sanest in his life.

Knowing Cowper spent a lifetime battling suicidal depression increases the depth of this message - awe in the Lord's workings and hope in the courage available through Him. Knowing that in a day and age that God was viewed as a jealous, vengeful Being who frowned a lot and never, ever smiled, it was remarkable that Cowper could write about a God who not only "rides upon the storm" but -

*"... Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face."*

*"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head."*

*"His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower."*

Those of us who ride the storms of Life on a somewhat regular basis truly appreciate knowing that God rides those storms with us!

### **Redeemer of Israel**

W. W. Phelps had a natural gift for taking an existing text and adapting it to the Latter-day Saint experience. 'Redeemer of Israel' has been a staple of our hymnals since the first one in 1835. Some of the passages in which men's voices seem to catch and their hearts lay exposed are, quoted here from the 1835 hymnal:

*"Redeemer of Israel, Our only delight,*

*On whom for a blessing we call;  
Our shadow by day, and our pillar by night,  
Our king, our companion, our all.*

*“We know he is coming to gather his sheep,  
And plant them in Zion, in love,  
For why in the valley of death should they weep,  
Or alone in the wilderness rove?”*

*“How long we have wander’d ...  
And cried in the desert for thee!  
Our foes have rejoic’d when our sorrows they’ve seen;  
But Israel will shortly be free.”*

What a grand text, in which His sheep call upon Him while praising Him; reassuring themselves of His continual companionship as well as the eventual victory and freedom.

All despairing men beg to be brought out of the mental 'Egypt' they are in and into a promised land of Peace. They plead for the companionship the presence of the Lord can bring. The same pillar of fire and strong arm that led Israel will lead each and every one of us as we allow Him to do so.

### **The Lord Is My Light**

Open your current LDS hymnal and notice this hymn is to be sung 'resolutely'; not mumbled; not with tenderness – this message is not for the 'hymn whisperer' but for those willing to shout from the housetops. We must put some resolution into our voice and sing with conviction and joy – this above many other texts evokes the sheer joy Christ and His Gospel brings into our lives. We should not sing as if afraid; after all -

*“The Lord is my light; them why should I fear?  
By day and by night His presence is near...  
“The Lord is my light; the Lord is my strength.  
I know in his might I’ll conquer at length... ”*

I love it when the chorus starts up and those strong manly voices peak with the words “He is my JOY and my song”. As Primary chorister I once made the Senior Primary boys stand up and march around the room as they sang this hymn to get them to sing it to tempo and to an appropriate, 'joyful noise' volume level. This simple action brought power into their voices, and they rang with the joy this text evokes. It's a shame we can't do the same with the older priesthood men.

## **How Great Thou Art**

LDS President Ezra Taft Benson's favorite hymn, 'How Great Thou Art' is a powerhouse for men's voices and testimonies. It begins by being awed by Nature's power while acknowledging that all power comes from God and then proclaims - "Then sings my soul... How Great Thou Art!" The rest of the verses speak of the beauty of Nature and the mission of our Savior as further manifestations of God's greatness.

A hunter who never misses Deer Season told me of coming out of the forest to the view of the forested valley below and a powerful summer storm rolling into the valley. After the storm, the birds' songs returned with the sunshine. The power of Nature in the storm and in the singing of birds led his mind to the Savior and all He has done for us – in other words, his mind took him through each verse of this hymn! He told me that he shocked himself by spontaneously breaking out in song – this song. "I couldn't help myself!" he exclaimed; "I'm not a singer; I hate singing! But it just came out! I had to sing it!" To his 'horror', he even remembered all the words.

My hunter friend learned what many other men have discovered: there are ways and means to express the heart in manly ways, and it is not unmanly to release one's soul and let it sing of God's power and creation.

This is a hymn in which the chorus should double in volume and power as the mens' souls let loose and present a thundering witness to the power and greatness of a 'God of all Power' in their life. Such is the nature of the message and the composition of this hymn. By doing so the Spirit witnesses to the man's heart and turns Faith into something more.

## **I Know that My Redeemer Lives**

Samuel Medley's immortal 'I Know that My Redeemer Lives' is a staple of most Christian hymnals. LDS hymnals employ a tune that doubles up the verses, changing if from eight four-line verses to four eight-line verses. Looking at the music, we see that the first part of the verse is to be sung in unison and the second half in harmony. Although most men won't sing harmony while singing in a congregational setting, this is an indicator that we can freely increase our power and volume and even change the tempo with the message that comes in this part of the text. This tune is perfect for this transition, and when we sing it as such the Spirit of the message is as if a light was turned on, illuminating the soul of every singer.

Sung in this way, this hymn is what sparked a witness in my childhood concerning Jesus and His mission. For me, this is where it all

began. And in times of trial I often return to renew that spark from so many years ago.

### **I Stand all Amazed**

What hymn, other than 'I Stand All Amazed', allows a manly man to so freely and comfortably admit to being, upon occasion, a rebellious and proud sinner? The singer also confesses to being confused, to trembling, and to marveling. That's a lot of confession for so many manly voices! And then the chorus proclaims "Oh, it is wonderful... ", and if the singer has paid the least amount of attention to the message, their heart simply leaps and shouts the chorus. I remember as a child that the congregation would literally come to their feet with the word 'wonderful' because the raw power of the Spirit's witness would not allow them to sit.

A wise organist pulls out all the bass stops for this hymn so that the tenor, baritone, and bass voices are pulled out of the men's hearts as they literally shout -

*"Oh, it is WON-DER-FUL!  
That he should CARE-FOR-ME  
Enough to DIE-FOR-ME!  
Oh, it is WON-DER-FUL,  
WON-DER-FUL to me!"*

In times of despair this hymn has reminded me of how much my Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ love me! When, as this hymn states, I am kneeling at the Mercy Seat, praising and adoring my Redeemer, how can I possibly dwell on my own pain and anguish? For the few moments it takes to sing this hymn, I am left painless to my own sorrow while engulfed not only in His love for me but in my love for Him.

### **How Gentle God's Commands**

In an earlier article I pointed out that a correct translation of one of the Beatitudes would be "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5) This hymn is a wonderful vehicle through which the distressed and despairing man can remind himself that God is a gentle Being – sometimes the only gentleness in a world that has turned so cruel and hateful. Through this hymn the men's voices are given a chance to express that gentle nature, even if they still sing joyfully and noisily. What Real Men we sound like when we remind each other -

*"Why should this anxious load*

*press down your weary mind?"  
Haste to your Heavenly Father's throne  
and sweet refreshment find."*

And through fellowship among the men with whom we are singing, we help unburden our brother of his load even before he reaches the Father's throne.

### **How Firm a Foundation**

One of the remarkable features of 'How Firm a Foundation' is that it is one of few hymns in which God is addressing His people. Let's read this text in it's original form to discover what message was so important that God delivers it to us in first-person and in the form of a hymn:

*"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?"*

*"In every condition, in sickness, in health;  
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;  
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,  
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be."*

Every single military man or veteran interviewed for this article, who has also served in battle, quoted verse three word-for-word and attributed great comfort and hope to those times that the Lord spoke these words to them as they went into a battle situation. I asked my son, who served on night patrols and guarding schools and other institutions in downtown Bagdad, if there was something - "some scripture or..." - He didn't even let me finish before quoting this verse to me. "It wasn't just in my head," he explained forcefully; "Heavenly Father was speaking it to me every time I was entering danger. He was promising me..." -

*"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand."*

Beginning with verse four the Lord speaks to the heart of the distressed, despairing man:

*"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;*

*For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*“When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*

*“Even down to old age all My people shall prove  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.”*

Finally, the grand climax of God's promise to His children; a promise I sang many, many times as I fought my fiercest battles with depression and suicide, hoping to simply survive from day to day:

*“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.”*

Or, as we sing it to the tune used in the LDS hymnal,

*I'll never, no never, I'll never, no never,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

In classical western religion and literature, the number seven denotes wholeness and completeness, and when we sing this seven-verse hymn to the tune used in the LDS hymnal, the Lord uses the word 'never' seven times in the seventh verse to convince us that He will never forsake us. That is about as whole and complete as we can attain to in western literature! Let us trust His word!

When men sing this song they need to sing all seven verses - just in case there's a man who needs to be reminded of the message in those last, most important verses!

### **Are There Others?**

There are as many 'healing' hymns as there are different personalities among God's children. One that comes to mind is –

*“Come, O Thou king of Kings;  
we've waited long for thee -*

*With healing in Thy wings  
to set Thy people free..."*

Don't confine yourself to just one hymnal! Following the Apostle Paul's council of seeking out all that is virtuous, lovely, and of good report, seek out the good in the whole Christian hymnal library.

### **One Man's Final Word**

One veteran of the war in Iraq was adamant that 'How Firm a Foundation' was the message from God that sustained him, drove away his fear, and brought him home. Refusing to share personal stories, he instead instructed me to conclude this article with:

*"People will let you down.  
But hymns won't."*

Whatever music you surround yourself with in times of trial, make sure it is music that will see you through the trials and on to the correct conclusion. Use these songs and hymns not only as prayers but as His messages in reply to your prayers. As you do, the Holy Spirit will whisper more easily to your heart and mind and aide you along the way - as that television theme reminded us week after week for nearly a decade -

*"I will be there -  
And I will walk with you."*

As the songs and hymns I have included in this article so lovingly testify, He will not only be your Savior and Redeemer, He will also be your Companion – and, He will be your Friend when you feel there is no one else.

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### **ADDED in 2008:**

After 66 years apart, Holocaust survivors Irene Famulak, 83, was reunited with her long lost 73-year-old brother, Wssewolod Galezkij. They held each other close this time, cherishing the moment.

"He says he always thought he'd see me someday. He dreamt lots about me," Famulak said, as she sat next to her brother.

To keep his hope alive - for 66 years! - that he would meet his sister again, "he wrote a song for me. When he went to sleep, he sang every night and cried."

*With that, Galezkij, weakened by illness and age, burst into song. But this time, he sang the words with pure joy.*

## "What the Atonement Means to Me"

Easter Sunday Address, 2009

I share this as an example of how hymns help us express – and feel – Gospel Truths. I was asked to speak about what Christ's Atonement meant to me. I was slyly challenged to use a few hymns – my church leadership knows I quotes the hymns as fas as some speakers quote the scriptures. You need to know that the children's auxiliary in my church is called "Primary".

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I have been asked to talk about what the Atonement means to me. The last time I was asked to give this same talk was on an Easter Sunday about twelve years ago, when my family and I were trying to recover from the death of a three-week-old baby. I started that talk by saying that "Never did the Atonement of Christ seem so real to me as it had in the past few months." I don't think I did very well explaining why that day, but I would like to now.

One grandest and most glorious parts of the Atonement of Christ is that He willingly died so He could inaugurate the Resurrection – that which gives us the Hope of returning to Heaven, where we will find our precious little baby still alive and waiting to greet us home. The other part of the Atonement is that Christ suffered for our sins and pains and sorrows that we might have hope that we can be made clean enough and pure enough to return to Heavenly Father's presence, where that precious little baby will be waiting for us.

Hope is one of the great treasures we have because of the Atonement.

To tell you more of what the Atonement means to me, I would like to tell you about one of my heroes. I know that every time I get up to speak I tell you about one of my heroes – I *do* have many heroes; each one a good example in one respect or another.

John Newton was born in 1725 in London, to a God-fearing mother and a sea captain father. His mother died when he was seven, and at eleven he took to the sea as a captain's boy with only two years of formal education and a very basic knowledge of Latin. He made six voyages on his father's ship before his father's retirement, at which time he signed on with another captain. He quickly became an officer on that ship, but was shanghaied into the Royal Navy, where he rose again to an officer's position. He deserted the Royal Navy to return to his previous ship, and

when the Navy shanghaied him *back* he was publicly flogged and then held as a slave on the ship he'd deserted.

John Newton was sold into slavery in North Africa, but fifteen months later a friend of his father bought his freedom. He eventually went on to captain his own ship - a slaver that marketed between the African coast and the Americas. And there was nothing fouler or more evil or repugnant than a slave ship and its captain.

You see, through the years he forgot all the good, Christian teachings his parents had taught him, and became someone who was proud of how often he broke all ten of the Ten Commandments. He was considered one of the foulest, vilest sea captains on the ocean. He was so feared by one crew that when he fell overboard in a drunken stupor they fished him out of the sea with a harpoon, and he walked with a limp the rest of his life.

This doesn't sound like someone we should have as a hero yet, does it? The story *does* get better.

On one homeward voyage, while attempting to steer through a violent Atlantic storm, Newton experienced what he would forever call his "great deliverance." He recorded that when all seemed lost - his ship was literally in the midst of tearing itself apart! - he exclaimed, "Lord, have mercy upon us." The storm literally stopped. We all know that the Lord is rarely that obvious in answering our prayers, so it was apparent even to Captain Newton that the Lord seemed to have an interest in him. A month later he limped his broken ship onto an Irish beach, far, far off course but glad to see land on the very day their food and water gave out. He had a month between the storm and landfall to reflect on the ship's deliverance, and he began to believe that God had in fact answered him. He commemorated May 10, 1748 as the day of his conversion, which he defined as the day he subjected his will to that of God's Will - and the day that God's love and grace entered his life.

All this occurred before his twenty-fourth birthday!

John Newton married a childhood sweetheart, gave up the sea, and spent nine years as surveyor of tides in Liverpool Harbor. He met and learned from George Whitefield, a deacon in the Church of England and a prominent leader of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. He met and came to admire John and Charles Wesley, founders of Methodism and avid hymnists. During this time he also schooled himself in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and the Bible.

John Newton decided to become a minister - he applied to the Archbishop of York for ordination, but a mere nine years from the sea was *not*

enough to dispel the repugnant reputation of his youth, and the Archbishop stoutly refused. Newton persisted and was finally ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln in Lincolnshire. He accepted a post in the town of Olney, in Buckinghamshire, in 1764, at the age of thirty-nine. Newton's preaching so touched the citizens of Olney that several times meetings had to permanently move to larger quarters until finally they had to make do with meeting in an open field – those of you who have had the blessing of spending a few years in England can imagine what holding a Christmas service in a cold, drizzly field would be like, and yet his preaching concerning a loving God was so profound that the people of Buckinghamshire did so.

One of the goals in his ministry was to write a new hymn text for every meeting he held, and, along with his friend and companion William Cooper, they did so. As a result of this goal, in 1779 what simply has become known as the Olney Hymnal was published. (*hold book up*) This little book is one of the greatest hymnals in the English language and a foundation upon which all other hymnals have been created.

One of the hymns written by John Newton sounds as if he was writing about himself, and it is called -

"The Prodigal Son"  
Afflictions, though they seem severe;  
In mercy oft are sent;  
They stopped the prodigal's career,  
And forced him to repent.  
Although he no relentings felt  
Till he had spent his store;  
His stubborn heart began to melt  
When famine pinched him sore.  
"What have I gained by sin," he said,  
"But hunger, shame, and fear;  
My father's house abounds with bread,  
While I am starving here.  
"I'll go, and tell him all I've done,  
And fall before his face  
Unworthy to be called his son,  
I'll seek a servant's place."  
His father saw him coming back,  
He saw, and ran, and smiled;  
And threw his arms around the neck  
Of his rebellious child.

"Father, I've sinned—but O forgive!"  
 "I've heard enough," he said,  
 "Rejoice my house, my son's alive,  
 For whom I mourned as dead."  
 "Now let the fatted calf be slain,  
 And spread the news around;  
 My son was dead, but lives again,  
 Was lost, but now is found."  
 'Tis thus the Lord His love reveals,  
 To call poor sinners home;  
 More than a father's love He feels,  
 And welcomes all that come.

What does the Atonement mean to me? Because of the Atonement I have a hope that when I return to God's presence He may just come running down the road to greet me, even though I think I am so unworthy.

Unlike the parable of the Prodigal Son, however, because of the Atonement we can regain the lost inheritance and still inherit all that Father hath! While this flies in the face of all logic and reason, it is still a sacred truth that God loves us that much!

And speaking of Love, John Newton was a minister in a day and age that God was still seen as a fierce, frowning, mean old man, and yet he was able to teach the people about a loving Father in Heaven. Not just a loving Heavenly Father, but he also taught about a Jesus who holds his hands out to all who would gather to them, that He would redeem them because He loves them. LOVE! - A shocking teaching for his day and age! Gone were the fierce faces and frowns, and through his words, kindness and love were once more portrayed on the faces of God and His Son. As Newton's companion William Cooper wrote in this same grand old hymnal, "Behind a frowning Providence He hides a smiling face."

One of the greatest gift we have is God's love for his children. All we have and all we are is because God loves us and does everything He can to help us return to Him. The Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is, undoubtedly, the greatest of all manifestations of God's love for each and every one of us. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote his is book MORMON DOCTRINE that "the manifestation of God's love for His children" is the Latter-day Saint definition of the word 'Grace' as it is used in the Book of Mormon, by Latter-day Saint prophets, and by each of the 38 times the word appears in our current hymnal. Well did John Newton express the love God has for us with a hymn text he wrote for his 1772 New Years

Day sermon; a text that expressed what the Atonement had done for him:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.  
Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.  
The Lord has promised good to me,  
His Word my hope secures;  
He will my Shield and Portion be,  
As long as life endures.  
Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.  
The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, Who called me here below,  
Shall be forever mine.

What does the Atonement mean to me? It means that someone as vile and evil as John Newton had been can still turn to God and can find, through Christ, that he can be made clean and pure from this world's evil and can become an instrument for God's Love in his Savior's hands. Let's face it – Christ had to roll His sleeves up and get out a whole new case of scrubbing pads to cleanse John Newton's life! And yet it was done. If John Newton can so turn from evil and find his way back into his Savior's outstretched arms – well, that means that you and I can, too. There isn't anything anyone in this congregation has done that will keep them from their Heavenly Father – as long as we are willing to lay those sins and transgression upon the Savior's waiting shoulders and allow him to lead us on His path of repentance and conversion.

One of the most overlooked truths about the Atonement is that Christ did not just suffer for our sins. Isaiah tells us that -

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ... *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 52:4-5)

As a second witness to Isaiah's prophecy, Christ proclaimed -

"Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek (*which is more-correctly translated as 'gentle'*) and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Christ did not specify which loads He was willing to carry; He did not segregate for whom He would carry them. He simply said - "all ye that labor and are heavy laden".

What does the Atonement mean to me? It means that my Heavenly Father loves me enough to send a big brother to help this poor little child who continues to struggle. A big brother who will help me no matter how sinful, how stupid, how foolish, how sorrowful, how stressed, or even how depressed. He will always be there as long as I sincerely call upon Him. That means the world to me!

The Atonement means that I have a Savior and Redeemer and Big Brother who will never desert me. I may desert Him, but He will never desert me. As we have learned in Primary this year, and children, say it with me -

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose  
I cannot, I will not, desert to its foes.  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, I'll never, no never,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

Seven times in that verse He tells us He will not forsake us. Is that enough or do we need to repeat it a few more times? He suffered the agony of our sins and then died for us ... and we are terrible enough to think He will forsake us? ... this has to be the most wrong thing we could ever think! His Atonement PROVES how interested He is in us and that He will not forsake us! What more could He do to show His love and the He is with us "all the way"?

The Atonement means I owe everything good that I am or will be to my Savior Jesus Christ. He has bought my freedom from everything evil, wrong, scary, and stressful. All I have to do is give myself to Him and

follow Him for the rest of my life. This does *not* mean the rest of my life will be all peachy-keen and without trial! But it *does* means I will forever have someone to help shoulder the loads I cannot bear. And that means the world to this frightened little boy!

While pondering the Atonement one day, I wrote the following:

When all the wrong things we have done weigh heavy on our heart,

And when we have discovered that we aren't so very smart -

When godly sorrow works its way to help us change our ways,

But fear and doubt holds back the heart from turning pain to praise ...

When all the toils of mortal life wear out our heart and mind,

And comfort for our weary souls becomes so hard to find -

When hopelessness then overpow'rs all of our hopes and dreams,

And life comes crashing down on us - or so it surely seems ...

Remember His shoulders are broad - enough to bear the load.

Our dear bishop believes that "How Firm a Foundation" is my favorite hymn – and it *is* my favorite hymn in our hymnal. But I would like to close with the testimony that is written in what is my *real* favorite hymn. Again from the Olney Hymnal, it was written by the vilest of sinners who became a true Christian and a powerful, powerful instrument for God's Love when wielded by his Savior's hands. These were the thoughts of John Newton's heart, and they are from my heart as well:

How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,

And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,

And calms the troubled breast;

'Tis manna to the hungry soul,

And to the weary, rest.

Dear Name, the Rock on which I build,

My Shield and Hiding Place,

My never failing treasury, filled

With boundless stores of grace!

By Thee my prayers acceptance gain,

Although with sin defiled;

Satan accuses me in vain,

And I am owned a child.

Jesus! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,

O Prophet, Priest and King,

My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,  
Accept the praise I bring.  
Weak is the effort of my heart,  
And cold my warmest thought;  
But when I see Thee as Thou art,  
I'll praise Thee as I ought.  
Till then I would Thy love proclaim  
With every fleeting breath,  
And may the music of Thy Name  
Refresh my soul in death!

Today in Primary we start to learn the hymn "I'm Trying to Be Like Jesus." What does the Atonement mean to me? It means that Jesus and His Father – *our* Father – are willing to hold my hand through life, helping me become like Jesus. And because of the Atonement I will someday start to achieve that goal.

## Children Can Learn Hymns!

In February 2009 I was tasked in my call as music leader in the Primary to teach 'How Firm a Foundation' to the children. This is an article I wrote to share with other music leaders about that experience.

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As a Primary chorister I've learned that some of the greatest teaching moments in the church is when the Primary children teach their chorister, hence I was excited when I received the 2009 Primary Presentation outline and discovered the February hymn would be one of my favorite: "How Firm a Foundation".

Although the outline has the chorister only teaching verses one and three, the Spirit insisted I teach verse seven as well, so my preparation also included that verse. (Note: I later went back and also taught Verse two, so the children now sing four of the seven verses.)

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### WEEK ONE: Verse One

My artwork for teaching this hymn was a simple: a picture of the Tokyo temple with a picture of a family - both floating on a pool of water. We talked about the Tokyo temple and how it was built in one of the most active earthquake areas on earth. I asked if it would be smart to built such a large, beautiful building in a pool of water for a foundation, and that usual Primary chorus of "NO!" rang across the Primary room.

I added a picture of sand into the pool on which the temple and the family were floating and asked: "How about a foundation of sand in the water?" The 'No Chorus' rang out again, and I asked 'why not?', and a little four-year-old told me - "Because when the rain comes falling down it will wash the house away." It was as if she knew what song we were about to sing!

*"The wise man built his house upon a rock ... "...*  
*The foolish man built his house upon the sand... "*

At the end of this classic little song, I put up a big, strong stone foundation over the pool and the sand and asked: "What is our Firm Foundation?"

"Not 'what', said a six-year-old; "You mean 'who'."

"Jesus," added the girl next to him.

"And what is this foundation for?" I asked; "How do we stick to it?" I had them with this one, so I recited the first part of the verse:

*"How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your ... "*

I paused to verbally put quote marks around -

*"... Faith in His Excellent Word..."*

"Our 'Faith in His Excellent Word' is the glue that holds us to His foundation," I explained, and then I asked where we could find His word. All the usual and always correct 'Primary answers' were blurted out as I reminded them to first raise their hands: Prayer, scriptures, the prophets, and the FRIEND Magazine were immediately identified as sources through which we could build our Faith and glue ourselves firmly to the Savior's 'Firm Foundation.'

"Has the Lord told us much that is new recently?" I asked. They all agreed that He has pretty well repeated Himself for some time, which caused me to recite -

*"What more can He say then to you He has said -  
Who unto the Savior for refuge has fled?"*

"What is a refuge?" I asked.

"It's where you go to be safe," answered an older girl; "And for that there's only Jesus."

"Who stands on the foundation beside us?" I asked. A chorus of voices shouted out Mom, Dad, family, bishop, and, of course, Jesus.

It was time for an object lesson, even though the point would have been made better the following week as we learned Verse Three - I had a four-year-old come and stand on the step stool we use for the younger children to reach the top of the podium when giving talks, and then I invited his seven-year-old brother to come and try to push his brother off. The offer was received with great relish, but as soon as the elder brother reached the younger brother I stepped up on the step with the little one. As the older brother hesitated, I invited him to gather up a few friends to try to push his little brother off. As five 'big boys' stepped up in front of us, I pulled a bag black baseball bat from behind me, and wisely all the boys who were going to try to push us off the Firm Foundation melted back to their seats.

"That's how much Jesus loves you," I told the four-year-old as well as the rest of the room.

The real lesson was a week later, however.

The following Sunday a gust of wind blew the picture of the family off my poster as I pulled it out of my car, and there I was, chasing it through the parking lot, trying my best to catch it, poster still in one hand and my Primary bag in the other. At my age and size, I'm sure it was a sight to behold as the picture and I zigged and zagged. When I finally did catch it, it was right in front of three of my Primary children.

"Is that how much Jesus loves my family?" a little boy asked, wide-eyed.

It was a true 'out of the mouth of babes' moment! "Yes," I told him confidently as I recalled the parable of the shepherd who leaves the ninety-and-nine safely in the chapel and chases through the parking lot to gather in the one caught in the winds of Life and not able to quite reach the chapel door on their own. "That's how much He loves you and your family!" With that, I firmly placed the family picture back on the firm foundation and applied a fresh layer of tape to hold them firmly in place.

There are moments when a testimony is either born or reborn, and this was one of those moments! Jesus loves me and my family enough to chase us through the parking lot when the winds of the world are blowing us hither and thither and we don't think we have the strength to stand and make it to the chapel door. He commands what the Old Testament calls His Watchmen and His Shepherds to brave the storm and help with the roundup; facing extremely dire consequences should they sit comfortably in the chapel while exclaiming: "If he wanted to be fellowshiped he'd have come to church and told us - since he hasn't, there's nothing I can do."

I determined right there and then that I would henceforth always have a fresh pack of spiritual tape or glue with me, so when He finally pins me down in some upcoming storm of Life I will, once again, be able to hold fast to Him and His foundation.

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### **WEEK TWO: Verse Three**

In our ten-year-old class there is one helpless boy caught in the middle of a gaggle of giggly girls, and on Week Two of teaching this hymn he came to Primary on crutches. Any parent would have been proud of how kind the girls treated him! They gave him the aisle seat for his leg and even helped him with his crutches! It was one of those moments when you wonder where the real group of girls in that class are hiding but you don't say anything because you don't want to ruin the moment.

I invited the boy on crutches to come up and stand on the step from the pulpit, and asked if he felt safe. He did feel safe until he realized I

was about to pull something on him, which was to invite all the girls in his class to come stand around him. The girls giggled their way up and surrounded him, hands up and ready to push him off the Firm Foundation. They were simply too eager.

"Girls," I asked, "Why is he suddenly afraid?"

"Because he knows us," one of the girls all too truthfully replied.

I turned to the boy. "What was the first thing the angel choir said to the shepherds in Bethlehem?"

"Fear Not'," he said with a hint of panic in his voice.

"You would think the Messiah's birth was the more important thing for them to announce," I explained, "But the first thing they did was to tell them that there was nothing to fear." At that, the girls were sent back to their seats, having not been allowed to push him off the stool. One remained, however, to kindly help the boy manage his crutches as he got down off the stool. I was so very proud of her!

After teaching the children that to 'dismay' is to be so scared and worried that you don't think anything good will ever happen, I told them to listen to what Heavenly Father says:

*"Fear not, I am with thee; oh be not dismayed,  
For I am thy god and will still give thee aide.  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld my my righteous, omnipotent hand."*

'Omnipotent' was a word I thought I had to define for the children. 'Omni-' is a prefix that means 'all-encompassing', and 'potent' means 'full of power' (including the power of creation); 'strength'. "Jesus' hand is the strongest, most powerful hand anywhere, ever," I explained to the children.

Then came the teaching moment for the chorister. "In the Old Testament the Lord's omnipotent arm is talked about when His people need someone to fight their battles," I explained. "But this hymn talks about his hand. Why?" I had prayed all week for an answer but it had not come, so I asked this question with faith that the Lord would speak through a child. I was not disappointed.

"It's fine for Him to have a strong arm," a Senior Primary girl explained, "But even *He* can't help us until he opens his hand to us." She paused. "This hymn is about how He holds us and loves us more than how He fights our enemies."

A choir of angels could not have made this any more of a revelation than as this young girl spoke such simple truth! The Spirit, building on

this young girl's wisdom, whispered that the strength to fight our battles may be in his arms, but the power to wipe our tears and erase our fears is in His hands, and that is what we celebrate in this hymn.

When it comes to showing love and compassion; to wiping a tear or easing a burden; to being willing to lead us in love and hold us fast to His Father's will, there is no pair of hands stronger or more powerful - more omnipotent - than those of our Savior Jesus Christ.

That night in prayer I thanked Heavenly Father yet again for the privilege of serving in Primary!

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### **WEEK THREE: Verse Seven:**

To start week three, there were three words to teach the children: 'repose', 'desert', and 'forsake'.

Holding up my personal favorite picture of Jesus with children, I asked if the children in the picture looked calm or worried, stressed or at ease. Above all, did they look rested? "This is what the word 'repose' means - to be as calm and rested and happy - as 'at ease' - as the children in this picture," I explained. An historical note I added for the older children and the teachers is that the Hebrew word for 'repose' is 'shabbat', which we pronounce as 'Sabbath'. The Sabbath is a day in which our mind and heart should be at rest and 'at ease' (reposing) from the worries and cares of the world.

"And we can only do that on the 'Firm Foundation'," added a Senior Primary boy with all the authority of a newly-discovered truth.

Then we recited the first lines of Verse Seven:

*"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose  
I will not, I cannot, desert to its foes..."*

"What does it mean to be deserted and forsaken?" I asked, and the children responded with perfect definitions. "Will Heavenly Father or Jesus ever desert us? Will they ever, ever turn their backs on us?" The 'No Chorus' that rang out was so definite and sure that I didn't even remind them to raise their hands.

"We may turn our backs on them," I said, testifying so strongly that a bit of my testimony was leaking out of my eyes, "But they will never, never turn their backs on us. Even when we wander as far away from them as we can, they will still be there with their hands out to us to help us come back."

I put up the poster from Week One, but there was something added: an angry mob now stood on either side of the Firm Foundation,

throwing things at the family still standing strong on the foundation. "What kinds of things can people throw at us to knock us off the foundation?" I asked, and again the answers were as if I'd passed out slips of paper with the answers to get the perfect responses; each of the answers covering a different sort of sin or transgression - to include 'being mean to family members'.

"Should we throw these things back at the mob trying to knock us off the foundation?" I asked.

"NO!" exclaimed a five-year-old. "Then you would be one of them! Then Jesus would have to kick you off the foundation!" She paused and added: "You should only throw Love back at them, Brother Forbes," she quite literally instructed me.

As a Watchman and Shepherd of Israel, I pray I can help this precious little child hold on to that thought as she grows up and Life throws stronger and stronger things at her.

We then recited the full verse:

*"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose  
I will not, I cannot, desert to its foes.  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake  
I'll never, no never forsake."*

Or, as we sing it to the tune in our hymnal,

*"... I'll never, no never, I'll never, no never,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."*

"That's a lot of 'never'," one of the older girls commented.

"Heavenly Father and Jesus will never forsake you," I testified again; "They will never, never," and I held up a new finger for each of the seven times 'never' is used in that final verse, "never, never, never, never, never turn away from you."

It was born home to me again that if you want to truly learn the Gospel in its plainness and in its glorious simplicity, you really must be teaching the Gospel in Primary. I have loved hymns all my life, and I have especially loved this hymn all my life. This hymn has been God's light for my path through many of life's severest trials, but it has only been through teaching the hymn and its meaning to the children that it has truly shined with heavenly light on my heart.

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**Extra Thoughts:**

I have had many parents report back to me the change that "How Firm a Foundation" has made in their child's life, but my favorite story is the change it made in one of the mother's lives:

One little three-year-old girl on the front row of my Primary always used to raise and shake a finger to emphasize the words -

*"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid."*

Recently this girl's mother came to me to tell me that one day she was in her room, not handling an emotional crisis she was having. Unknown to her, this little girl had quietly entered the room and was standing by her mother, who was praying for help. According to this mother, that little girl's finger came right up as she recited -

*"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid."*

"Who taught you that?" the mother asked in amazement. The mother of course knew the hymn but didn't realize how well her little one knew that particular line.

*"Everybody knows it in Primary,"* the little girl explained.

"What does 'dismayed' mean?" the mother challenged her little one's knowledge.

*"It's how you're feeling right now. And He's here for you, Mama."*

It there any question as to why I love teaching these little ones?

# **Part 2**

## **Others' Voices**

## Inspiring Music - Worthy Thoughts

an address by Elder Boyd K. Packer, October 1973 LDS General Conference

President Lee concluded our last conference in April with the statement that in his 32 years as a General Authority he had learned that the most inspired preaching is always accompanied by beautiful, inspired music. I am grateful this morning to be sustained by the beautiful renditions of the choir.

"Music," Addison said, "is the only sensual gratification in which mankind may indulge to excess without injury to their moral or religious feelings."

If that were true in his day, it is not in ours. Music, once that innocent, now is often used for wicked purposes. It has been obvious for centuries that lyrics of the worst kind can be set to music that is innocent of itself. Words which are bad can be set to music which is otherwise good, and lead men astray. Recently the First Presidency restated this counsel:

Music can be used to exalt and inspire or to carry messages of degradation and destruction. It is therefore important that as Latter-day Saints we at all times apply the principles of the gospel and seek the guidance of the Spirit in selecting the music with which we surround ourselves." (Priesthood Bulletin, August, 1973.)

In our day music itself has been corrupted. Music can, by its tempo, by its beat, by its intensity, dull the spiritual sensitivity of men. Studies citing physiological effects from some of the extreme music of today neglect the most serious thing concerning it. Our youth have been brought up on a diet of music that is loud and fast, more intended to agitate than to pacify more intended to excite than to calm. Even so, there is a breadth of it, some soft enough to be innocent and appealing to our youth, and that which is hard, and that is where the problem is.

One of the signs of apostasy in the Christian churches today is the willingness of their ministers to compromise and introduce into

what had been, theretofore, the most sacred religious meetings the music of the drug and the hard rock culture. Such music has little virtue and it is repellent to the Spirit of God. The pity of it is, their foolishness has not accomplished the ends they sought. Their young people are not drawn to them as they hoped and expected. Rather, young people are inventing so-called churches of their own, groping and seeking for something that they find missing in their lives.

Some have been critical when our leaders have exercised restraint on the kind of music we will allow at Church activities. "Do you want to lose your youth?" they ask. I would remind all such that it is not the privilege of those called as leaders to slide the Church about as though it were on casters, hoping to put it into the path that men or youth will be safe within it. President J. Reuben Clark said:

"We may not, under our duty, provide or tolerate an unwholesome amusement on the theory that if we do not provide it the youth will go elsewhere to get it. We could hardly set up a roulette table in the Church amusement hall for gambling purposes, with the excuse that if we do not provide it the youth would go to a gambling hall to gamble. We can never really hold our youth thus. Our task is to help the home to plant better standards in the minds of the youth."

And so we urge parents in the Church to show as much interest in the records and tapes their children purchase as they would the books and magazines they bring into the home. There are many parents who would not for one moment tolerate a pornographic magazine in their homes who unwittingly provide money for music, some of which in its influence can be quite as damaging.

Someone said recently that no music could be degrading, that music in and of itself is harmless and innocent. If that be true, then there should be some explanation for circumstances where local leaders have provided a building?expansive, light, and inviting and have assembled a party of young people dressed modestly, well-groomed, with manners to match. Then

overamplified sounds of hard music are introduced and an influence pours into the room that is repellent to the Spirit of God.

The youth of the Church, by and large, have found a sensible and reasonable adjustment to the grooming and dress styles of our day. Our young men and women can dress with decency and modesty and yet not be unstylish or look all that different or odd. We have said a good deal through our youth organizations and at our Church schools about dress and grooming standards and have been successful. By comparison, we have not given sufficient counsel and attention, I think, to the music that our young people consume. And "consume" is a proper word. There is much of today's music that they may well enjoy, if they avoid the hard kind. Parents and Church leaders who counsel young people in this area soon learn that they must move very wisely.

If a little child picks up a sharp object, sometimes a foolish adult will grab for it, frightened for the safety of the child. Instinctively, the child will grip it more tightly and perhaps be injured. The wise parent will trade him for it? some equally appealing, but harmless object, given in exchange, so that he lets go willingly and without tears. Keep that in mind when you have a problem with young people and their music. To change it may take some time and require inspiration.

In the Church we have great confidence in our youth; and, particularly in the last year or two, we have moved to a pattern of programming where their desires and wishes are more dominant in our activities. This places great responsibility on you, our young people. Pay careful attention to the music you program for your activities. It is not that we lack confidence in you. However, the breach between the world and the extremes of its music and the Church is wider in our day than ever in generations past. And the middle of the road runs through an entirely different valley now than it did a few years ago. Remember, young leaders, He is your Lord, and it is your Church quite as much as it is ours.

I would recommend that you go through your record albums and set aside those records that promote the so-called new morality, the drug, or the hard rock culture. Such music ought not to belong to young people concerned about spiritual development.

Who not go through your collection? Get rid of the worst of it. Keep just the best of it. Be selective in what you consume and what you produce. It becomes a part of you.

If you are blessed with musical talent, develop a wide range of good music.

There is so much wonderful, uplifting music available that we can experience to our advantage. Our people ought to be surrounded by good music of all kinds.

Parents ought to foster good music in the home and cultivate a desire to have their children learn the hymns of inspiration.

The time for music lessons seems to come along when there are so many other expenses for the family with little children. But we encourage parents to include musical training in the lives of their children. Somehow Andrew and Olive Kimball did, and Spencer learned to play. Somehow Samuel and Louisa Lee managed to do it, and Harold learned to play. And now, as the leaders of the Church assemble for our sacred meetings in the upper room of the temple, we always sing a hymn. At the organ is President Spencer W. Kimball or President Harold B. Lee.

How wonderful is the music instructor who will teach children and youth to play and will acquaint them with good music in their formative years, including the music of worship. To have such music as a part of one's life is a great blessing.

The Lord has said, "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads." (D&C 25:12.)

I think I would like to share with the young people something about how such music has been very important in my life, although I am not trained as a musician. Probably the greatest challenge to people of any age, particularly young people, and the most difficult thing you will face in mortal life is to learn to control your thoughts. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) One who can control his thoughts has conquered himself.

When I was about ten years old, we lived in a home surrounded by an orchard. There never seemed to be enough water for the trees. The ditches, always fresh-plowed in the spring, would soon be filled with weeds. One day, in charge of the irrigating turn, I found myself in trouble. As the water moved down the rows choked with weeds, it would flood in every direction. I raced through the puddles trying to build up the bank. As soon as I had one break patched up, there would be another.

A neighbor came through the orchard. He watched for a moment, and then with a few vigorous strokes of the shovel he cleared the ditch bottom and allowed the water to course through the channel he had made. "If you want the water to stay in its course, you'll have to make a place for it to go," he said.

I have come to know that thoughts, like water, will stay on course if we make a place for them to go. Otherwise our thoughts follow the course of least resistance, always seeking the lower levels.

I had been told a hundred times or more as I grew up that thoughts must be controlled. But no one told me how. I want to tell you young people about one way you can learn to control your thoughts, and it has to do with music. The mind is like a stage. Except when we are asleep the curtain is always up. There is always some act being performed on that stage. It may be a comedy, a tragedy, interesting or dull, good or bad; but always there is some act playing on the stage of the mind. Have you noticed that without any real intent on your part, in the middle of almost any performance, a shady little thought may creep in from the wings and attract your attention? These delinquent thoughts will try to upstage everybody. If you permit them to go on, all thoughts of any virtue will leave the stage. You will be left, because you consented to it, to the influence of unrighteous thoughts. If you yield to them, they will enact for you on the stage of your mind anything to the limits of your toleration. They may enact a theme of bitterness, jealousy, or hatred. It may be vulgar, immoral, even depraved. When they have the stage, if you let them, they will devise the most clever persuasions to hold your attention. They can make it interesting all right. even convince you that it is innocent for they are but thoughts. What do you do at a time like that, when the stage of your mind is

commandeered by the imps of unclean thinking? whether they be the gray ones that seem almost clean or the filthy ones which leave no room for doubt. If you can control your thoughts, you can overcome habits, even degrading personal habits. If you can learn to master them you will have a happy life.

This is what I would teach you. Choose from among the sacred music of the Church a favorite hymn, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. Remember President Lee's counsel; perhaps "I Am A Child of God" would do. Go over it in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you have had no musical training, you can think through a hymn. Now, use this hymn as the place for your thoughts to go. Make it your emergency channel. Whenever you find these shady actors have slipped from the sidelines of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, put on this record, as it were. As the music begins and as the words form in your thoughts, the unworthy ones will slip shamefully away. It will change the whole mood on the stage of your mind. Because it is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will disappear. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light. In due time you will find yourself, on occasion, humming the music inwardly. As you retrace your thoughts, you discover some influence from the world about you encouraged an unworthy thought to move on stage in your mind, and the music almost automatically began.

"Music," said Gladstone, "is one of the most forceful Instruments for governing the mind and spirit of man." I am so grateful for music that is worthy and uplifting and inspiring.

Once you learn to clear the stage of your mind from unworthy thoughts, keep it busy with learning worthwhile things. Change your environment so that you have things about you that will inspire good and uplifting thoughts. Keep busy with things that are righteous.

Young people, you cannot afford to fill your mind with the unworthy hard music of our day. It is not harmless. It can welcome onto the stage of your mind unworthy thoughts and set the tempo to which they dance and to which you may act. You

degrade yourself when you identify with all of those things which seem now to surround such extremes in music: the shabbiness, the irreverence, the immorality, and the addictions. Such music as that is not worthy of you. You should have self-respect. You are a son or a daughter of Almighty God. He has inspired a world full of wonderful things to learn and to do, uplifting music of many kinds that you may enjoy.

The choir, I think, will sing in conclusion, that pioneer hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

I have a brother who became a brigadier general in the Air Force. During World War II he was a bomber pilot and took part in some of the most dangerous and desperate raids in Europe. He returned to an assignment in Washington, D.C., about the time I finished pilot training in the same B-24 bombers and was heading for the Pacific. We had a day or two together in Washington before I left for overseas.

We talked of courage and of fear. I asked how he had held himself together in the face of all that he had endured.

He said, "I have a favorite hymn 'Come, Come, Ye Saints,' and when it was desperate, when there was little hope that we would return, I would keep that on my mind and it was as though the engines of the aircraft would sing back to me:

'Come, come, ye saints,  
No toil nor labor fear;  
But with joy wend your way.  
Though hard to you  
This journey may appear,  
Grace shall be as your day.'  
Hymns, no. 13

From this he clung to faith, the one essential ingredient to courage.

There are many references in the scriptures, both ancient and modern, that attest to the influence of righteous music. The Lord, Himself, was prepared [or His greatest test through its influence,

for the scripture records: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." (Mark 14: 26.)

I bear witness that God is our Father, that we are His children, that He loves us and has provided great and glorious things in this life. I know this, and I thank Him for the uplifting influence of good music in my life and in the lives of my children. There are many things we can do together as a family; inspired music we can feel together. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## The Nourishing Power of Hymns

an address by Elder Jay E. Jensen, April 2007 General LDS Conference

This magnificent choir gives inspiring sermons. In fact, "some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns.[1] My testimony and conversion to the restored gospel were strongly influenced by singing the hymns of Zion as a young boy. I grew up in the small town of Mapleton, Utah, and attended meetings in what is known today as the "old white church." My 95-year-old mother still lives in Mapleton. When I visit her, I drive past the "old white church," and a flood of sweet memories fills my mind. Among them is the converting power of the hymns we sang in priesthood, Sunday School, and sacrament meetings. My experiences were similar to that of President Hinckley when, as a deacon, he attended a stake priesthood meeting with his father. They sang "Praise to the Man." [2] Later he would say, "I had an impression that has never left that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God." [3] I believe that many of our Saints experience this again and again. Hymns play an essential role in spirituality, revelation, and conversion.

### **Hymns Invite the Spirit**

Hymns are "an essential part of our church meetings. [They] invite the Spirit of the Lord." [4] They often do this quicker than anything else we may do. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. said, "We get nearer to the Lord through music than perhaps through any other thing except prayer." [5]

Two missionaries teaching an older couple in their home in Peru were interrupted by the arrival of the couple's son, his wife, and three children. The elders explained who they were and what they were doing. The son was suspicious of the missionaries, resulting in an awkward moment. The junior companion prayed silently, "Heavenly Father, what do we do?" The impression came to sing. They sang "I Am a Child of God." [6] The Spirit touched the hearts of this family of five. Instead of two converts, all seven became members, influenced initially by a hymn.

Music in Church meetings and classes should facilitate a spirit of worship, revelation, and testimony. For sacrament meetings, the bishopric or branch presidency is responsible to select or approve music. They ensure that the music, the words, and the musical instruments are sacred, dignified, and will promote worship and revelation. Music becomes a performance when it brings attention to itself. Years ago, I was responsible for the music in a meeting where a special musical number was a

performance. It was a disappointment. The spirit of worship was diminished.

### **Hymns Invite Revelation**

Hymns "create a feeling of reverence." [7] The words *reverence* and *revelation* are like twins who like each other's company. When the Seventy and Presiding Bishopric are invited to meetings with the First Presidency and the Twelve, we are reminded to arrive early and reverently listen to prelude music. Doing so invites revelation and prepares us for the meeting.

President Packer taught that a member who softly plays "prelude music from the hymnbook tempers our feelings and causes us to go over in our minds the lyrics which teach the peaceable things of the kingdom. If we will listen, they are teaching the gospel, for the hymns of the Restoration are, in fact, a course in doctrine!" [8] "

### **Hymns Invite Conversion**

The hymns of the Restoration carry with them the spirit of conversion. They came as a result of sacrifice. Hymns like "Praise to the Man,"[9] "Come, Come, Ye Saints,"[10] "Ye Elders of Israel,"[11] "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,"[12] "Redeemer of Israel,"[13] and many others reinforce the great truths of the Restoration—,such as the divinity of the Father and the Son, the plan of redemption, revelation, latter-day scriptures, the gathering of Israel, the holy priesthood, and ordinances and covenants. These nourishing hymns create an atmosphere that invites the Spirit, which leads us to conversion.

How incomplete and empty sacrament meetings would be without hymns of worship.[14] Sacred among all hymns are those that capture the sacrifice and the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ and His infinite Atonement.

My earliest memories of the healing power of the Savior are associated with sacrament hymns. This sentence is real to me: "I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me, confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me." [15]"

My understanding of the doctrines of the Atonement is connected to the hymns. This verse is illustrative:

*How great, how glorious, how complete,  
Redemption's grand design,*

*Where justice, love, and mercy meet  
In harmony divine!*[16]

### **Teaching Children Hymns Begins at Home**

Singing hymns and listening to appropriate music begin at home. The First Presidency has reminded us:

"Latter-day Saints should fill their homes with the sound of worthy music.

"... We hope the hymnbook will take a prominent place among the scriptures and other religious books in our homes. The hymns can bring families a spirit of beauty and peace and can inspire love and unity among family members.

"Teach your children to love the hymns. Sing them on the Sabbath, in [family] home evening, during scripture study, at prayer time. Sing as you work, as you play, and as you travel together. Sing hymns as lullabies to build faith and testimony in your young ones." [17]

### **Worship More Meaningfully through Hymns**

Important lessons I have learned and seek to apply about hymns are:

1. Strive to be more punctual to meetings, sit quietly and listen to the prelude music, and experience reverence and revelation.

2. Exit meetings more reverently, allowing the postlude music to extend the spirit of the meeting.

3. Sing the hymns. I see some who have access to hymnals but do not sing.

4. Choose hymns appropriate to the meeting and messages.

5. Use hymns to introduce or to emphasize scriptures and gospel truths in lessons and classes.

6. Listen to the hymns more frequently in our homes, inviting the Spirit to prevail.

I pray that we may eliminate any inappropriate music from our lives and follow the counsel of the First Presidency: "Brothers and sisters, let us use the hymns to invite the Spirit of the Lord into our congregations, our homes, and our personal lives. Let us memorize and ponder them, recite and sing them, and partake of their spiritual nourishment. Know that the song of the righteous is a prayer unto our Father in Heaven, 'and it shall be answered with a blessing upon [your] heads.' "[18]" Of these truths I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## NOTES

1. *Hymns*, ix.
2. *Hymns*, no. 27.
3. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 399.
4. *Hymns*, ix.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 111.
6. *Hymns*, no. 301.
7. *Hymns*, ix.
8. "Reverence Invites Revelation," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22.
9. *Hymns*, no. 27.
10. *Hymns*, no. 30.
11. *Hymns*, no. 319.
12. *Hymns*, no. 19.
13. *Hymns*, no. 6.
14. Just as hymns are essential to Sabbath and family worship, so are hymns and carols to Christmas (see *Hymns*, nos. 201–14).
15. "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, no. 193.
16. "How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *Hymns*, no. 195.
17. *Hymns*, x.
18. *Hymns*, x.

## Worship Through Music

an address by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1994 LDS General Conference

These instructions are unique to the LDS Church. It may give you a clue as to how and why we pick and choose the hymns we do.

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Our hearts have united with the Mormon Youth Chorus's spirited singing of Charles Wesley's inspired words, "Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!" (Hymns, 1985, no. 66.)

Last spring I made my first visit to Brasilia, Brazil. Over three thousand Saints gathered for a regional conference. The printed program listed the musical numbers, but the Portuguese words meant nothing to me. But when their beautiful choir began to sing, the music crossed all barriers of language and spoke to my soul:

The morning breaks, the shadows flee;  
Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled!...  
The dawning of a brighter day  
Majestic rises on the world.  
(Hymns, 1985, no. 1)

Through the miracle of sacred music, the Spirit of the Lord descended upon us, and we were made ready for gospel instruction and worship.

The First Presidency has said: "Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord. "Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end" (Hymns, 1985, p. ix).

The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to put ourselves in tune with the Spirit of the Lord. I wonder if we are making

enough use of this heaven-sent resource in our meetings, in our classes, and in our homes.

Last July I visited the Church's Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii. Before the evening show of dancing and music from various island cultures, I went backstage to thank the performers. I arrived during those frantic moments before the show began. Scores of performers were hurrying through the last-minute tasks required to coordinate their efforts in a fast-moving performance. I wondered how the director would bring this turmoil to order in preparation for my brief remarks.

It happened as if by miracle. On signal, one strong voice began, and the strains of "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" quickly swelled into a beautiful chorus as the uniquely talented young people brought their thoughts into harmony with the Lord.

We had a similar experience in our family. Last spring some of our children and fourteen of our grandchildren had a family outing in the mountains. One of our activities was a meeting to share experiences and testimonies. We gathered at the appointed time, but the little people were only gathered in body. The large spirits in those little bodies were clamoring for more of the exciting outdoor activities they had been enjoying. The cabin where we met was too small to contain them, and it seemed as if a dozen restless children and their outcries were ricocheting off the walls in every direction. Grandparents will appreciate the apprehension I felt at trying to sponsor something serious in that setting.

Suddenly the instinctive wisdom of young mothers rescued our efforts.

Two mothers began to sing a song familiar to the children. Others joined in, and within a few minutes the mood had changed and all spirits were subdued and receptive to spiritual things. I offered a silent prayer of thanks for hymns and for mothers who know how to use them!

The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to learn the doctrine of the restored gospel. Elder Stephen D. Nadauld captured this unique strength in some lines he wrote and shared in a General

Authority meeting:

If I would teach with power  
The doctrine and the plan,  
I'd wish for gentle music  
To prepare the soul of man.  
And then to press forever  
These truths upon his mind,  
We'd sing the hymns of Zion,  
With their messages sublime.

The scriptures contain many affirmations that hymn singing is a glorious way to worship. Before the Savior and his Apostles left the upper room where they had the sublime experience of the Last Supper, they sang a hymn. After their hymn, the Savior led them to the Mount of Olives (see Matt. 26:30).

The Apostle Paul advised the Colossians that they should be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16; see also Alma 26:8).

Modern revelation reaffirms the importance of sacred music. In one of the earliest revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord appointed Emma Smith "to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, to be had in my church.

"For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:11-12).

In a revelation given through another prophet a generation later, the Lord commanded his people to "praise the Lord with singing, [and] with music" (D&C 136:28).

This direction to praise the Lord with singing is not limited to large meetings. When the Lord's Apostles meet in modern times, the singing of hymns is still part of their meetings. The weekly meetings of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles in the Salt Lake Temple always begin with a hymn. Elder Russell M. Nelson plays the organ accompaniment.

The First Presidency, who conduct these meetings, rotate the privilege of selecting the opening song. Most of us record the date each hymn is sung.

According to my records, the opening song most frequently sung during the decade of my participation has been "I Need Thee Every Hour" (Hymns, 1985, no. 98). Picture the spiritual impact of a handful of the Lord's servants singing that song before praying for his guidance in fulfilling their mighty responsibilities.

The veil is very thin in the temples, especially when we join in worshipping through music. At temple dedications I have seen more tears of joy elicited by music than by the spoken word. I have read accounts of angelic choirs joining in these hymns of praise, and I think I have experienced this on several occasions. In dedicatory sessions featuring beautiful and well-trained choirs of about thirty voices, there are times when I have heard what seemed to be ten times thirty voices praising God with a quality and intensity of feeling that can be experienced but not explained. Some who are listening today will know what I mean.

Sacred music has a unique capacity to communicate our feelings of love for the Lord. This kind of communication is a wonderful aid to our worship.

Many have difficulty expressing worshipful feelings in words, but all can join in communicating such feelings through the inspired words of our hymns.

When a congregation worships through singing, all present should participate. Here I share another experience. I had finished a special assignment on a Sunday morning in Salt Lake City and desired to attend a sacrament meeting. I stopped at a convenient ward meetinghouse and slipped unnoticed into the overflow area just as the congregation was beginning to sing these sacred words of the sacrament song:

'Tis sweet to sing the matchless love

Of Him who left his home above  
And came to earth? oh, wondrous plan?  
To suffer, bleed, and die for man!  
(Hymns, 1985, no. 177)

My heart swelled as we sang this worshipful hymn and contemplated renewing our covenants by partaking of the sacrament. Our voices raised the concluding strains:

For Jesus died on Calvary, That all thru him might ransomed be.  
Then sing hosannas to his name; Let heav'n and earth his love  
proclaim.

As we sang these words, I glanced around at members of the congregation and was stunned to observe that about a third of them were not singing. How could this be? Were those who did not even mouth the words suggesting that for them it was not "sweet to sing the matchless love" or to "sing hosannas to his name"? What are we saying, what are we thinking, when we fail to join in singing in our worship services?

I believe some of us in North America are getting neglectful in our worship, including the singing of hymns. I have observed that the Saints elsewhere are more diligent in doing this. We in the center stakes of Zion should renew our fervent participation in the singing of our hymns.

There are a few conventions all of us should observe as we worship through music. As we sing we should think about the messages of the words.

Our hymns contain matchless doctrinal sermons, surpassed only by the scriptures in their truth and poetic impact.

We depend on our choristers and organists to lead us at the prescribed pace. Too slow or too fast can detract from a worshipful mood.

We should be careful what music we use in settings where we desire to contribute to worship. Many musical numbers good for

other wholesome settings are not appropriate for church meetings.

Our hymns have been chosen because they have been proven effective to invite the Spirit of the Lord. A daughter who plays the violin described that reality. "I love to play classical music" she said, "but when I play our hymns, I can just feel the Spirit of the Lord in my practice room.

Soloists should remember that music in our worship services is not for demonstration but for worship. Vocal or instrumental numbers should be chosen to facilitate worship, not to provide performance opportunity for artists, no matter how accomplished.

Our sacred music prepares us to be taught the truths of the gospel. This is why we are selective in the kinds of music and the kinds of instruments we use in our worship services. This is why we encourage our choirs to use the hymnbook as their basic resource. We can make selective use of other music that is in harmony with the spirit of our hymns, such as Charles Gounod's marvelous "O Divine Redeemer," sung at the funeral of President Ezra Taft Benson. But a hymnbook's hymn is often the most inspiring and appropriate musical selection for a choir, a vocalist, or an instrumentalist (see Michael F. Moody, *ENSIGN*, Aug. 1994, p. 79).

Sacred music can help us even where there is no formal performance. For example, when temptation comes, we can neutralize its effect by humming or repeating the words of a favorite hymn (see Boyd K. Packer, *ENSIGN*, Jan. 1974, pp. 25-28).

Our hymns can work their miraculous effect even when the chorus of voices is few and even when hardly a sound can be heard. I felt this a few months ago as I participated in a musical performance that was unique in my church experience. I had been invited to speak at the Great Basin LDS Deaf Conference, hosted by the Salt Lake Valley (Deaf) Ward of the Salt Lake Park Stake. Over three hundred deaf brothers and sisters were in attendance. The members of the stake presidency and I were almost the only adults in the congregation who could hear and who attempted to

sing audibly. The rest of that large assembly sang with their hands. Hardly a lip moved, and hardly a sound was heard except the organ and four faint voices from the stand. In the audience, all hands moved in unison with the leader as the audience signed "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning!" (Hymns, 1985, no. 2.) As we sang together, the Spirit of the Lord descended upon us, and we were made ready for prayer. Our sacred music is a powerful preparation for prayer and gospel teaching.

We need to make more use of our hymns to put us in tune with the Spirit of the Lord, to unify us, and to help us teach and learn our doctrine. We need to make better use of our hymns in missionary teaching, in gospel classes, in quorum meetings, in home evenings, and in home teaching visits.

Music is an effective way to worship our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. We should use hymns when we need spiritual strength and inspiration.

We who have "felt to sing the song of redeeming love" (Alma 5:26) need to keep singing that we may draw ever closer to him who has inspired sacred music and commanded that it be used to worship him. May we be diligent in doing so is my humble prayer, which I offer with a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of the divine calling of those we have sustained today. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Quotes from Musicians and Church Leaders

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, and life to everything." Plato

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"The music in my heart I bore  
Long after it was heard no more."  
William Wordsworth

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It is said that at the beginning of a sermon, the great Reformer Martin Luther held up a Bible and said: "This is the Gospel." And then in the other hand he held up a hymnal and continued: "And this is how we remember it."

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"The principle virtue of music is as a means of communication with God." Igor Stravinsky, Russian-born U.S. composer (conductor of the first "Fantasia" movie)

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John Wesley's Singing Rules:

*John Wesley was one of the founders of the Methodist Church, and he used these rules for congregational singing. I must note that he was writing in 1761, and some of his words may seem harsh to a 21st Century listener. When he speaks of the "songs of Satan" he is merely using a phrase contemporary to his time to refer to non-church music... Don't read any more into it than just that, because that is what he meant.*

1. Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.

2. Sing lustily, and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of it being heard, than when you sing the songs of Satan [*simply meaning non-church music*].

3. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, as to be heard above, or distinct from, the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

4. Sing in time. Whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before, nor stay behind it; but attend closely to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can. And take care you sing not

too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

5. Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

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There is no better viewpoint to study the development of the reactions of Christian belief than that offered by hymnody." unknown

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"Music is the art of the prophets; the only art that can calm the agitations of the soul. It is one of the most magnificent presents God has given us... I always loved music; whoso has skill in this art is of good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools. A schoolmaster ought to have skill in music, or I would not regard him, neither should we ordain young men as preachers, unless they have been well exercised in music." Martin Luther

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"A good hymn should be like a good prayer - simple, real, earnest, and reverent" William Walsham How, writer of "We Give Thee but Thine Own"

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"Our doctrine is memorized when we memorize our hymns." Elder Hugh Pinnock

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"Music is both in the voice and in the heart. Every true saint finds his heart full of songs of praise to his Maker. Those whose voices can sing forth the praises found in their hearts are twice blessed.: Elder Bruce R. McConkie

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"Hymns are the bookends that hold our worship services together, adding to and strengthening the messages given in the addresses and in the revelations we receive during the service." (paraphrase of Elder Jay Jensen at a recent local conference which this author attended)

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"Hymns have endured through centuries with timeless messages set to simple melodies that have a universal power to influence people... The

stability and appeal of the humble hymn is for us a source of strength in a world of crumbling traditions." ... "I know that the Lord can speak to us through the hymns, both to our minds and to our hearts to lead us to good works." (Michael Moody, "A Celebration of Latter-day Saint Hymns", Temple Square Concert Series, Sept 16, 2005. This concert marked Brother Moody's retirement as chairman of the LDS Church Music Committee)

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"We get nearer to the Lord through music than perhaps through any other thing except prayer." J. Reuben Clark, JR of the LDS First Presidency

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"Music conveys our emotions better than any spoken word." George Dyer, opera singer and LDS recording artist

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"Children retain 10% of what is told to them, 40% if there is a visual aid, 60% if there is a story, and 90% if they sing it." Elder Boyd K. Packer, LDS Apostle and lifelong Educator

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"Some of the greatest sermons that have ever been preached were preached by the singing of a song. There are many wonderful songs. Sing them through." (President Spencer W. Kimball, New Zealand Area Conference Report, 20-22 Feb. 1976, p. 27.)

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"Can anyone doubt that good music is godly or that there can be something of the essence of heaven in great art?" (Gordon B. Hinkley, LDS Church President)

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"Hymns have endured through centuries with timeless messages set to simple melodies that have a universal power to influence people... The stability and appeal of the humble hymn is for us a source of strength in a world of crumbling traditions." ... "I know that the Lord can speak to us through the hymns, both to our minds and to our hearts to lead us to good works." (Michael Moody, "A Celebration of Latter-day Saint Hymns", Temple Square Concert Series, Sept 16, 2005)

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"You can change by changing your environment. Let go of lower things, and reach for higher. Surround yourself with the best in books, music, art, and people" President Spencer W. Kimball

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"Through your music, you will be able to rise above the physical into the spiritual. You will be watched over and kept, and angels will attend you and be with you." (President James E. Faust's advise to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir as they were readying for a concert tour; October 1998 ENSIGN Magazine)

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"We are able to feel and learn very quickly through music some spiritual things that we would otherwise learn very slowly." Elder Boyd K. Packer

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"Good music, especially sacred music, makes spiritual things more understandable. It is edifying and conducive to understanding. It prepares emotions for response to promptings of the Holy Spirit." Elder Richard G. Scott

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"Music opens doors to other lands and cultures." Judith Wirthlin Parker

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"Music is a rich gift of God, and it is in the world to make the lives of His children happier and better." Clara Watkins McMaster, composer of many beloved LDS children's songs

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"Music has the beauty and power to heal and comfort." Deanna Edwards, LDS artist (February 1994 ENSIGN Magazine)

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"Our celebration of music is one way of expressing our testimony of God's love for us. Music is such a heavenly expression, a language that speaks directly to the heart, transcending cultural and social barriers. It is a pure means of sharing love of beauty." Roger Drinkall

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"Music has a very powerful and wonderful influence in establishing feelings and moods that can lift and elevate your thoughts and your actions. But because it is so powerful, it is cleverly used by the adversary to stimulate your thoughts, feelings, and moods, to pollute and poison your mind and cause you to do things you would not otherwise consider doing." Ardeth G. Kapp

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"Years ago I was singing Handel's Messiah with a group of people from different faiths. Even though our beliefs were different, we were all singing about the same Messiah, our own personal Savior. I had sung

this oratorio many times, but during one particular practice, the Spirit told me that I was not only singing notes, I was singing my testimony: "Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4). I knew with all my soul that He had done that for me. For a moment the 300 other voices became a whisper and I felt like I was all alone with the Lord. I felt His love and reassurance that He had carried the griefs and the sorrows of my teenage heart, and through my obedience, He would continue to walk with me for the rest of my life. To feel that blessing and comfort and complete love from the Lord is worth any price." ("Standing in Holy Places", Sister Sharon G. Larsen, April 2002 Young Women's Meeting)

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"While prayer, scripture study, and service in the Church helped me to learn the Father's plan and gain and develop an eternal perspective, I have an increased appreciation for the contribution that sacred hymns bring to conversion.

"During my childhood and youth and especially in Primary, the hymns of the Restoration, written by true servants of God, played a profound role in my conversion to the gospel and an understanding of His plan. President Packer has said, "If we will listen, they are teaching the gospel, for the hymns of the Restoration are, in fact, a course in doctrine!" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 29; or Ensign, Nov. 1991, 22).

"In the First Presidency preface of the current hymnal, we are reminded that "inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings... . Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end" (Hymns, ix).

"Many hymns reveal the doctrines of the great plan of redemption. Some hymns came as a result of great sacrifice, the ultimate being death, and they communicate a spirit of holiness and consecration to lead us to conversion to the Father and His plan.

"With the teacher improvement emphasis this year, parents, teachers, and missionaries will improve gospel teaching by ensuring they understand the plan themselves and sing the hymns that carry the same spirit. Sing them—hopefully not in a perfunctory way, rather with purpose—to begin and end meetings and as part of lessons or to introduce or summarize ideas in the lessons." (Keep an Eternal Perspective: Elder Jay E. Jensen, April 2000)

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"I must admit that my heart beat a little faster with spiritual emotion as the choir was singing... " ("Feed My Sheep", Elder David B. Haight, April 1979)

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"No matter where we are, no matter our circumstances, we all can be faithful Latter-day Saints. We can pray and worship the Lord in the privacy of our own closet. We can sing anthems of praise to the Almighty even when we are alone. We can study the scriptures. We can live the gospel. We can pay our tithes and offerings though the amount be ever so small. We can walk in faith. We can strive to live lives patterned after the life of our Master." (Welcome to Conference: President Gordon B. Hinckley, October 1998)

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"I have a final suggestion. With the single exception of those priests occupied breaking the bread, all who hold the Aaronic Priesthood should join in singing the sacrament hymn by which we worship and prepare to partake. No one needs that spiritual preparation more than the priesthood holders who will officiate in it. My young brethren, it is important that you sing the sacrament hymn. Please do so." (The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament: Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1998)

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"You have just listened to the strains of "Come, Come, Ye Saints. My first opportunity to really become acquainted with "Come, Come, Ye Saints" was in a little stone tabernacle in southern Idaho, where I grew up as a boy. Inside that little tabernacle built out of lava rock by the local members of the Church back in the late 1880s there was a stand, a podium similar to what we have here, and then a pipe organ in the back, like this beautiful pipe organ we have here, but smaller. This was before electricity and motors, and it had a pump system. The way to get air into the pipe organ is through a bellow system. Someone would sit on a stool and pump the lever at the back of the organ. It was always a great privilege to a young man to be selected to sit on that stool and pump the organ.

"In that little tabernacle, when we would sing "Come, Come, Ye Saints," I felt the spirit and power of the music would raise the roof. You could feel it because of the power, the faith, and the testimony of the members. In that little tabernacle we would have Aaronic Priesthood choruses where we'd learn to sing. It was there we would sing "A Mormon Boy." We don't hear that song much anymore. I wish we would. "A Mormon boy, A Mormon boy, I am a Mormon boy. I might be envied by

a king, for I am a Mormon boy" (Evan Stephens, in *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People*, comp. Jack M. Lyon and others [1996], 296).

"That made a great impression upon me. Just think of that for a moment. "I might be envied by a king." Here's a king with all the power, all the pomp, all the wealth the king would have. But I was beginning to learn that we held, as members of the Church, blessings, priesthood blessings, knowledge, information that the king wouldn't know about and didn't have. "I might be envied by a king, for I am a Mormon boy." (Hymn of the Obedient: "All Is Well": Elder David B. Haight, October 1997)

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"Perhaps you know people in the broad congregation of this conference, or in your local ward or stake—or in your own home—courageous people who are carrying heavy burdens and feeling private pain, who are walking through the dark valleys of this world's tribulation. Some may be desperately worried about a husband or a wife or a child, worried about their health or their happiness or their faithfulness in keeping the commandments. Some are living with physical pain, or emotional pain, or disabilities that come with age. Some are troubled as to how to make ends meet financially—and some ache with the private loneliness of an empty house or an empty room or simply empty arms.

"These beloved people seek the Lord and His word with particular urgency, often revealing their true emotions only when the scriptures are opened or when the hymns are sung or when the prayers are offered. Sometimes only then do the rest of us realize they feel near the end of their strength—they are tired in brain and body and heart, they wonder if they can get through another week or another day or sometimes just another hour. They are desperate for the Lord's help and they know that in such times of extremity nothing else will do." (The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, October 1996)

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"When Newel Knight informed his wife, Lydia, that the Saints would have to leave Nauvoo and move yet again, she responded with tenacious faith, saying, "Well, there's nothing to discuss. Our place is with the Kingdom of God. Let us at once set about making preparations to leave." Brother Knight had moved his family several times already as many of the Saints had moved from New York to Ohio to Missouri and to Illinois. Lydia Knight's devoted submission to what she knew was God's will typifies powerfully the faith of those heroic early Saints. With their faith in mind, the words of a familiar hymn take on added meaning:

Faith of our fathers, living still,  
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;  
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy  
Whene'er we hear that glorious word.  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to thee till death!

(Faith of Our Fathers: Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, April 1996)

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"The administration and passing of the sacrament is preceded by a hymn which all of us should sing. It doesn't matter what kind of musical voice we have. Sacramental hymns are more like prayers anyway—and everyone can give voice to a prayer!

We may not know, we cannot tell,  
What pains he had to bear,  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.  
(Hymns, 1985, no. 194)

"It is an important element of our worship to unite in such lyrical and moving expressions of gratitude." ("This Do in Remembrance of Me": Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, October 1995)

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"Much will be said, written, and recorded about President Hinckley during the time he presides over the Church. Much less will be recorded about his dear companion, Marjorie. For you who have not had the opportunity of meeting Sister Hinckley, I would like to tell you something about her. What an example she has been and will continue to be to the women of the Church and to all the world. She is such a loyal, supportive companion to our President.

"Sister Hinckley's roots sink deeply into rich pioneer soil, leaving an indelible imprint on her life and character. She wrote this about her great-grandfather:

"On a beautiful Sunday morning in the fall of 1841, my great-grandfather, William Minshall Evans, then sixteen years of age, was walking down the streets of Liverpool, England, on his way to church. Suddenly he heard singing that thrilled him beyond anything he had ever heard before. He followed the sound down an alley and up some rickety stairs into a room where a few people were holding a meeting. John Taylor, who later became president of the Church and who had a beautiful tenor

voice, was the singer. The song he sang was so beautiful that William remained to hear the sermon.

"Upon returning home, William was reprimanded by his elder brother, David, for being absent from his accustomed place in the choir. Asked to give an account of himself, William replied, 'I have been where you should have been, and I shall not be satisfied until you all hear the wonderful truth I have heard this morning.'

"... William and David were converted to the gospel, and then helped convert other members of their family...

"Sister Hinckley commented, "I never sing the hymns of the Church without remembering that it was the singing of a hymn that opened the door to the gospel for my family and made it possible for me to enjoy all the blessings that have followed" (p. 48). (An Elect Lady: Elder L. Tom Perry, April 1995)

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"Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord. "Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end" (Hymns, 1985, p. ix).

"The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to put ourselves in tune with the Spirit of the Lord. I wonder if we are making enough use of this heaven-sent resource in our meetings, in our classes, and in our homes...

"The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to learn the doctrine of the restored gospel...

"The Apostle Paul advised the Colossians that they should be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16; see also Alma 26:8).

"Modern revelation reaffirms the importance of sacred music. In one of the earliest revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord appointed Emma Smith "to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, to be had in my church.

"For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:11-12).

"In a revelation given through another prophet a generation later, the Lord commanded his people to "praise the Lord with singing, [and] with music" (D&C 136:28)...

"Many have difficulty expressing worshipful feelings in words, but all can join in communicating such feelings through the inspired words of our hymns."...

"I believe some of us in North America are getting neglectful in our worship, including the singing of hymns. I have observed that the Saints elsewhere are more diligent in doing this. We in the center stakes of Zion should renew our fervent participation in the singing of our hymns.

"There are a few conventions all of us should observe as we worship through music. As we sing we should think about the messages of the words.

"Our hymns contain matchless doctrinal sermons, surpassed only by the scriptures in their truth and poetic impact.

"We depend on our choristers and organists to lead us at the prescribed pace. Too slow or too fast can detract from a worshipful mood.

"We should be careful what music we use in settings where we desire to contribute to worship. Many musical numbers good for other wholesome settings are not appropriate for church meetings."...

"Our sacred music prepares us to be taught the truths of the gospel."

"We need to make more use of our hymns to put us in tune with the Spirit of the Lord, to unify us, and to help us teach and learn our doctrine. We need to make better use of our hymns in missionary teaching, in gospel classes, in quorum meetings, in home evenings, and in home teaching visits.

"Music is an effective way to worship our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. We should use hymns when we need spiritual strength and inspiration.

"We who have "felt to sing the song of redeeming love" (Alma 5:26) need to keep singing that we may draw ever closer to him who has inspired sacred music and commanded that it be used to worship him. May we be diligent in doing so is my humble prayer, which I offer with a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of the divine calling of those we have sustained today." (Worship Through Music, Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1994)

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"... I know also that we can keep this commandment if we will organize ourselves and prepare "every needful thing." I am grateful that my parents and grandparents provided such traditions of learning for our

family. My father wrote this account of how his parents taught their children: "The musical, cheerful voice [of my mother] called, 'Come, children, it is the singing and story hour.'... She seated herself in a well-used rocking chair, admonished us to listen carefully, to sing well, and to ask questions ...

"We learned the words of the song by rote, and the meaning or story of each song was made clear to us. 'Joseph Smith's First Prayer' brought to us the story of the restoration of the gospel and the story of his life was made most impressive. 'Come, Come, Ye Saints' opened the door to the richness of pioneer achievement, faith, and loyalty...

"A testimony of Joseph Smith's divine calling, of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, and above all, the reality of our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, were the blessings derived from the family song and story hour." My father further wrote: "My heart is filled with gratitude to my angel mother for... teaching me the doctrines of repentance, faith, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. She taught me the power and blessing of prayer, of the actual existence of the Father and the Son, and that Joseph Smith saw and talked to them when a boy fourteen years of age.

"We knew from her teaching that our Prophet saw other heavenly messengers... , and that through them the Church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth." (Spiritually Strong Homes And Families: Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, April 1993)

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"Our sacrament meetings should be worshipful and healing, restoring those who attend to spiritual soundness. Part of this healing process occurs as we worship through music and song. Singing our beautiful, worshipful hymns is food for our souls. We become of one heart and one mind when we sing praises to the Lord. Among other influences, worshiping in song has the effect of spiritually unifying the participants in an attitude of reverence." (Spiritual Healing: Elder James E. Faust, April 1992)

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"Music can set an atmosphere of worship which invites that spirit of revelation, of testimony. We are told in the handbook that "music and musical texts are to be sacred, dignified, and otherwise suitable for a Latter-day Saint meeting" (General Handbook of Instructions, 1989, p. 2-5) and that "organs and pianos are the standard instruments used in sacrament meetings..."

"An organist who has the sensitivity to quietly play prelude music from the hymnbook tempers our feelings and causes us to go over in our minds the lyrics which teach the peaceable things of the kingdom. If we will listen, they are teaching the gospel, for the hymns of the Restoration are, in fact, a course in doctrine!

"I have noticed that an increasing number of our leaders and members do not sing the congregational songs. Perhaps they do not know them or there are not enough hymnbooks. We should sing the songs of Zion—they are an essential part of our worship. We must not neglect the hymns nor the exalted anthems of the Restoration. Read the First Presidency's introduction in the hymnbook. The Lord said, "My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12). Do not let our sacred music slip away from us, nor allow secular music to replace it. (Reverence Invites Revelation: Elder Boyd K. Packer, October 1991)

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"Revitalize your weekly worship. When you sing the hymns, for instance, ponder the meaning of the words, enjoy the spirit of the music. Sing with enthusiasm without regard to your tones. You will have a good feeling, and your spirit will be enlivened; and as you join with the Saints in the songs of the heart, the Lord promises to answer this with blessings upon your head (see D&C 25:12). (The Voice Is Still Small: Elder Graham W. Doxey, October 1991)

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"... Sing enthusiastic praises to God. As we sing wholeheartedly, reaffirming our love for the Savior, we can feel the Spirit. I must admit that I'm the world's worst singer. In junior high school, my music teacher said to me, "Mack, do us a favor and just move your lips when you try to sing." But I still try, and I feel the Spirit when I sing. It's a blessing available to all of us." (Sunday Worship Service: Elder W. Mack Lawrence, April 1991)

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"Use music. Using recorded hymns or singing the songs of Zion with or to the Saints in their homes, as prompted, will always bring the Spirit of the Lord (see D&C 25:12, Matthew 26:30, Colossians 3:16, 1 Samuel 16:23). For example:

A priesthood leader said with a smile, "I could never sing, I have a terrible voice. But we were prompted to do so. My voice was as the voice of an angel." The less-active man wept and returned to the Church.

"A home teacher said, "I sang with his children. The crusty old fellow cried and humbled himself for the first time in years." (Inviting Others To "Come Unto Christ": Elder Gene R. Cook, October 1988)

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"As deacons and teachers we sat on the first row, prepared to pass the sacrament. I recall how shiny the bread trays appeared, and the individual glass cups for the water sparkled. Everything about the sacrament table, including the linen, was immaculate and ready on time.

"Everyone was expected to sing the special sacrament hymn. Everyone did sing. Children were trained not only to be reverent but to know some of the words of the most familiar sacrament songs. I can still see Sister Ella Jack, who led the music, standing in full view between the sacrament table and piano, as she would pause and look over the congregation to be sure everyone had a songbook and was ready to sing. She gave special attention to see that the Aaronic Priesthood boys had songbooks. We would all sing. We were learning in our youth that to feel of the Spirit we must experience a change in our hearts, and to be in harmony on this sacred occasion required our singing the sacrament hymns. As we personally sang the words, our souls were better prepared to understand this sacred ordinance. At the Last Supper the early Apostles joined with the Savior in singing. Matthew records, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." (Matt. 26:30.)

"And as we would sing in that sacrament meeting

In humility, our Savior,  
Grant thy Spirit here, we pray;  
As we bless the bread and water  
In thy name, this holy day.  
Let me not forget, O Savior,  
Thou didst bleed and die for me  
When thy heart was stilled and broken  
On the cross at Calvary.

Fill our hearts with sweet forgiving;  
Teach us tolerance and love;  
Let our prayers find access to thee  
In thy holy courts above.  
Then, when we have proven worthy  
Of thy sacrifice divine,  
Lord, let us regain thy presence;

Let thy glory round us shine.

(Hymns, no. 49.)

"These words would be impressed upon our hearts because we had actually sung them. There come to one's soul heavenly thoughts as he joins in heavenly expressions coupled with heavenly melody." (The Sacrament: Elder David B. Haight, April 1983)

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"Every sacrament meeting ought to be a spiritual feast. It ought to be a time for meditation and introspection, a time for singing songs of praise to the Lord, a time of renewing one's covenants with him and our Eternal Father, and a time for hearing the word of the Lord with reverence and appreciation.

"If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving." (D&C 136:28; italics added.) (The Priesthood Of Aaron: President Gordon B. Hinckley, October 1982)

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"It has been said that the poets stand next to the prophets in their ability to lift us up. I have never heard of Eliza R. Snow being sustained as a prophet, and yet she wrote "O My Father." Sometimes we merely read these great lyrics out of the hymnbook instead of memorizing them and loving them and frequently saying them over to ourselves. Just think what would happen in the world if each person made his own selection of those ninety great poems of faith that most thrill him." (The Poetry Of Success: Elder Sterling W. Sill, April 1978)

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"The hymns that we sing have an influence for good upon our lives. The music of the Tabernacle Choir has a faith-promoting and cultural influence upon the listeners. The spirit with which the Choir sings the words and melodies of our own hymns and of compositions by other inspired people creates a desire upon those who listen or participate to serve the Lord. The inspired hymns that we sing in our congregations are prayers and songs of rejoicing unto our Lord." (Being "Anxiously Engaged": Elder Joseph Anderson, April 1978)

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"When I was a boy, twelve years of age, my father took me to a meeting of the priesthood of the stake in which we lived. I sat on the back row while he, as president of the stake, sat on the stand. At the opening of that meeting, the first of its kind I had ever attended, three or four hundred men stood. They were men from varied backgrounds and many

vocations, but each had in his hand the same conviction, out of which together they sang these great words:

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!  
Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer.  
Blessed to open the last dispensation,  
Kings shall, extol him, and nations revere.  
(Hymns no. 147.)

"Something happened within me as I heard those men of faith sing. There came into my boyish heart a knowledge, placed there by the Holy Spirit, that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of the Almighty. In the many years that have since passed, years in which I have read much of his words and works, that knowledge has grown stronger and ever more certain. Mine has been the privilege of bearing witness across this nation from sea to shining sea, and on continents north and south, east and west, that he was and is a prophet of God, a mighty servant and testifier of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Great is his glory and endless his priesthood:  
Ever and ever the keys he will hold.  
Faithful and true, he will enter his kingdom,  
Crowned in the midst of the prophets of old.  
(Hymns, no. 147.)

"That testimony I reaffirm to you this day, as I also affirm that he who presides at this conference is the legal successor to him of whom I have spoken. I know that, and I leave my testimony in the name of him of whom Joseph Smith was a witness and of whom I also am a witness, even the Lord, Jesus Christ." (Joseph The Seer: Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, April 1977)

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"Some of the greatest sermons that have ever been preached were preached by the singing of a song. There are many wonderful songs. Sing them through." (President Spencer W. Kimball, New Zealand Area Conference Report, 20-22 Feb. 1976, p. 27.)

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"Inspiring music may fill the soul with heavenly thoughts, move one to righteous action, or speak peace to the soul. When Saul was troubled with an evil spirit, David played for him with his harp and Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed. (See 1 Sam. 16:23.) Elder Boyd K. Packer has wisely suggested memorizing some of the inspiring songs of

Zion and then, when the mind is afflicted with temptations, to sing aloud, to keep before your mind the inspiring words and thus crowd out the evil thoughts. This could also be done to crowd out debilitating, depressive thoughts." ( Do Not Despair: President Ezra Taft Benson, October 1974)

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"This is what I would teach you. Choose from among the sacred music of the Church a favorite hymn, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. Remember President Lee's counsel; perhaps I Am A Child of God" would do. Go over it in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you have had no musical training, you can think through a hymn.

"Now, use this hymn as the place for your thoughts to go. Make it your emergency channel. Whenever you find these shady actors have slipped from the sidelines of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, put on this record, as it were.

"As the music begins and as the words form in your thoughts, the unworthy ones will slip shamefully away. It will change the whole mood on the stage of your mind. Because it is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will disappear. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light." (Inspiring Music—worthy Thoughts: Elder Boyd K. Packer, October 1973)

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"My beloved brothers and sisters, I am so grateful to my Heavenly Father for the spirit of this day and especially that I have been preceded by these lovely Primary sisters. The Primary has meant so much to me in my responsibilities of the past few years, and their singing has given me the peace and feeling that I need at this moment." (Courts Of Love: Elder Robert L. Simpson, April 1972)

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"I was touched by the story of one highly successful business executive who recently responded graciously and humbly to a call to serve in his elders quorum presidency. Upon being asked the direct question: "What brought you back?" he responded, "Well, I have never told anyone before, but this is what happened:

"One morning while shaving, I overheard my six-year-old son singing from the next room. He was singing a little song I had heard him sing dozens of times before, 'I Am a Child of God'; but somehow that morning when he came to the part that says, 'Lead me, guide me, walk beside me, Help me find the way,' I had the feeling that he was singing directly

to me. I just stood there and listened. Within seconds, my whole life seemed to pass in review; and it really came home with full force that some changes had to be made, especially when he came to the part, "Teach me all that I must do. To live with him some day."

"This good man confesses today that these simple words from the lips of his own child reached his heart as a personal plea. The plea was from a child of God who had been placed in his custody to be delivered back some day into Heavenly Father's presence. He concluded his answer to this question by stating that he decided then and there that he had something important to do, something more important than anything else in the world for a little fellow who still loved his daddy in spite of many personal failings...

"While on the subject of church songs, let me tell you briefly about a man who was attending a patio party one Sunday afternoon at the home of a business associate who happened to live next door to an LDS meetinghouse. As the sacrament meeting got underway, the strains of the organ could be clearly heard over the back fence and seemed to be somewhat incongruous to the tinkle of ice being placed in the cocktail glasses. There were some uncomplimentary jokes and the usual snide remarks about religious fanatics, when all of a sudden the strains of the opening song broke the warm summer afternoon air. It was "Come, Come Ye Saints." The party tempo was warming up, and by now, the church music was all but unnoticed—unnoticed by all but one, a man whose grandmother had walked across the plains pulling a handcart. His mind withdrew from the party. For the first time in many years, he spent some minutes in sincere reflection concerning his birthright.

"About ten minutes later, the sacrament song came drifting across the back fence. Unknowingly, a chorister, inspired in her calling, I am sure, had selected, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." And way down deep, he knew it, too, but it had been a long, long time. From that moment on, he was attending a patio party in body, but mentally and spiritually he was far above and beyond his environment of the moment.

"It was almost an hour later, just about the time that he had lapsed back into the party mood, when the closing song, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet," reached his ear and mellowed his heart to the point of submission. Isn't it odd that a man should start his way back while attending a cocktail party? "The Lord moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." Incidentally, that man is probably here in this meeting today, a fine leader in the church, doing what the Lord would have him do." (Bishop Robert L. Simpson, October 1969)

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"The other day while walking down the street I met a good friend of mine. We shook hands and engaged in a little pleasant small talk. We laughed, visited, joked, and had a pleasant few minutes together. Then as I went on my way I thought how much better I felt than I had previously done. One of the best ways to feel the faith and enjoy the friendliness of our fellow human beings is in church. In church the talk is very important, and we can shake hands, feel the Spirit of God, and be uplifted by each other as we listen, pray, and sing together out of the depths of worshiping hearts." (Elder Sterling W. Sill, October 1969)

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"I would like to say right here that it delights my heart to see our people everywhere improving their talents as good singers. Everywhere we go among our people we find sweet voices and talent for music. I believe that this is a manifestation to us of the purpose of the Lord in this direction toward our people, that they will excel in these things, as they should excel in every other good thing. I can remember, when I was a young boy, hearing my father sing. I do not know how much of a singer he was, for at that time I was not capable of judging as to the quality of his singing, but the hymns he sang became familiar to me in the days of my childhood.

"When we listen to this choir, we listen to music, and music is truth. Good music is gracious praise of the Lord. It is delightful to the ear, and it is one of our most acceptable methods of worshiping. And those who sing in the choir and in all the choirs of the Saints should sing with the Spirit and with understanding. They should not sing merely because it is a profession, or because they have a good voice; but they should sing also because they have the spirit of it, and can enter into the spirit of prayer and praise the Lord who gave them their sweet voices. My soul is always lifted up, and my spirit cheered and comforted, when I hear good music. I rejoice in it very much indeed." ( President Joseph Fielding Smith, October 1969)

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"My dear brethren and sisters, I made a few notes and thought I would present them here on this occasion, but I have changed my mind after what we have heard, and I hope the Lord will help me.

"The singing of the choir has called my attention to the fact that there is a divine Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ... " (President Joseph Fielding Smith, October 1967)

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"A few days ago the Deseret News carried an article about Mr. J. C. Penney. In part it said: "One night, for example, at age 56, I [Mr. Penney] was broke, discouraged, ill in a sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan. I felt that I would never see the dawn of another day," said Mr. Penney. "I got up and wrote farewell letters to my wife and to my oldest son. I sealed the letters. If I did sleep, it was not a sound sleep. I rose early, went down to the mezzanine floor, and found the dining room was not open.

"Suddenly, over in one corner of the mezzanine, I heard the singing of gospel hymns. The song was the old favorite, 'God Will Take Care of You.' You can imagine how heavy my heart was when I went in. Yet, I came out of that room that morning a changed man. Within just a few moments my life was transformed. It was almost as if I had had a new birth. God did take care of me... And ever since, I have been trying to fill that obligation.

"When I finally got back on firm ground, I had much less in a material sense than I enjoyed before. But I had gained immeasurably in spiritual wealth, for I had learned to turn to God for guidance in all the acts and decisions of my life." (Bishop John H. Vandenberg, October 1965)

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"My brethren and sisters, I have been deeply impressed by the stirring and sublime messages which have come to us during this conference, also by the singing of the choirs—for singing, after all, is surely a part of divine worship." (Elder Alma Sonne, April 1958)

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"Brethren and sisters, I want to join with President McKay in expressing appreciation for the very fine singing to which we have listened today. I have often thought that we take for granted the singing and the uplift which come to us from our choirs, and yet we know that singing is an essential part of worship and that we can get nearer to God when we hear these songs of Zion than we can in any other way." (Elder Alma Sonne, October 1953)

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"My brothers and sisters, I should like to say just a word in appreciation of this magnificent music that we have heard, yesterday the Singing Mothers, today the singing German Saints, and tomorrow we shall have the great Tabernacle Choir. We are a singing people, and I am sure that the Lord loves a singing people. God bless our singers, sweeten their voices even more sweet than they are now, that they may sing his praises." (President J. Reuben Clark, Jr, October 1952)

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"Yours is a singing religion and I believe that words of religion dissolved in music soak into the human soul better than any other way. A good hymn is a good spiritual tonic to a sick or frightened soul. What singing I have seen here among the Mormons, you seem to need no books. It is as if when you open your mouths to sing the spirit entered in." (Mr. E. Kent Kane, great-grandson of General Thomas Kane, October 1947)

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"Brother LeGrand Richards has spoken for the Southern States Mission. Many years ago, two humble Elders laboring in that mission were walking through the woods and finally came out into a clearing where nestled a humble cottage, the home of friends. Overlooking this clearing was a hill covered by large trees. It had been a warm day. When the Elders arrived, instead of sitting in the house they took their chairs out on the shady porch to visit with the family. They didn't know that they were being watched or that danger threatened. They were there as servants of the Lord. They had come through a section of the country that was unfriendly and having found a home where the family was friendly they were grateful to the Lord for it.

"They were asked to sing and they selected one of our hymns, "Do What is Right." You know the hymn. And as they sang it, even as they started to sing it, there arrived on the brow of the hill above them a mob of twenty horsemen. They had come there with the determination to drive those missionaries out. As they came to the top of the hill they heard those missionaries singing. The leader of the mob got off his horse. He looked down among those trees and saw the roof of the house. He could not see the Elders. They continued to sing. One by one the men got off their horses. Gradually they removed their hats, and when the last note had died away and the Elders had finished their singing the men mounted their horses and rode away, and the leader said to his companions, "Men who sing like that are not the kind of men we have been told they are." (Elder George Albert Smith, April 1935)

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"I missed this morning, speaking personally, the broadcast of the choir. It has seemed to me, in the times that I have been here, that nothing has given us more of the Spirit with which to begin a session than their beautiful singing." (President J. Reuben Clark, Jr, October 1934)

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"Having been handicapped somewhat in this Conference in the earlier sessions—as I recently had my tonsils removed, in fact a little over a week ago—I was unable to participate with the audience in singing the hymns. I love to take part in singing the Latter-day Saint sacred hymns. They surely contain Gospel sermons and I love the beautiful harmony in them. As I stood listening to those hymns my faith and my testimony were increased and I felt well repaid for having attended these services. I rejoice in having this opportunity of meeting here with you people in a General Conference. It has been some time since this has been my privilege." (Elder Leonidas Devon Mecham, April 1932)

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"One day my father-in-law said to me: "Heber, for twenty long years I have listened in vain for our choirs to sing the fourth verse of 'Come, come ye Saints.' I believe the rising generation know nothing whatever of the comfort and cheer which we received, while crossing the plains, from singing that pioneer hymn or they never would be guilty of leaving off the fourth verse, which we looked upon as a prayer." In one of the revelations to our Church we are told by the Lord: "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart, yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads." My father-in-law said that hymn was a blessing to every one who sang it, and particularly the last verse, which they sang, and meant every word of it:

And should we die before our journey's through,  
Happy day! all is well!  
We then are free from toil and sorrow too;  
With the just we shall dwell.

(President Heber J. Grant, April 1921)

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"Let me say, in conclusion, and I think very likely I am voicing the feeling of the entire congregation, when I say it, that I appreciate fully the effort put forth here by the Ogden tabernacle choir, led by Brother Joseph Ballantyne. They have done most excellent service today, and have helped to make this meeting a splendid success. Of course, our meetings are always successful when they are conducted under the direction of the Spirit of God, but we could not get along without the singing. We must have good singing. We must have singing that is tuneful, we must have singing that breathes forth the Spirit of God; we must have singing that is in harmony. And in the singing today we have had perfect

harmony. The Lord bless the Ogden tabernacle choir, and may he bless us all, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ." (President Rudger Clawson, April 1920)

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"Now just one minute more. I would like to encourage the idea in our wards and stakes of this Church, and also outside of the Church, of that which is being encouraged in the east very extensively, and that is community singing, congregational singing. I do not object to solos. We had some here this morning—never any better anywhere in the world. They were very fine. I love to hear them. But solos may be overdone. As a rule people love to sing. There is something in the spirit of song when you can get the people to join in it, even though some of us can't sing so well, that gives forth an inspiration which cannot be otherwise found. When we all sing together there is a spirit, an influence and a power—an inspirational power—that goes with it, that fires the soul in a way that it can't otherwise be touched or fired. So this spirit of comradeship, which the war is very largely responsible for in the east, has taken hold of the people, and they are getting together all classes of nationalities, blending together their voices and singing patriotic songs and other songs.

"Especially in our congregations of the Saints, we should have more of congregational singing. We should bring our hymn books to meeting with us and then sing, have everybody sing, and everybody will feel the better for it. And let me advise our leaders of choirs—if I may presume that much—to try when they do have selections in "Mormon" meetings, that they choose such selections as fit the occasion. A number of the leading brethren attended a meeting some time ago, at which meeting I was present, and the brother who was presiding had a slip of paper in his hand. I happened to sit next to him. There were these prominent brethren of the Church at a Latter-day Saint meeting, although there were quite a number present who were not Latter-day Saints, but it was a "Mormon" meeting for "Mormon" purposes. I looked over his list of songs on the paper that he held in his hand, which had been handed to him by the choir leader, and not one of them had the least reference to "Mormon" thought, "Mormon" ideas, or "Mormon" anything about it. Well, I don't believe that is just right.

"I have seen, too, some of our brethren, leaders of choirs, select a soloist who will come forward—someone with a good voice, who is capable of good singing—who will get up in a "Mormon" meeting and commence to sing "My Rosary." Well now, "My Rosary" is fine music and a good song for a Catholic meeting, but it is entirely out of place in a

"Mormon" meeting. That song recites how "I count my beads and kiss my cross," and all that sort of thing. Well, I don't do either, I don't believe in doing either, and you don't believe in it. So a song like that is entirely out of place in a "Mormon" meeting, as much so, I think, as it would be to sing "We thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet, to guide us in these Latter days," in a Catholic meeting.

"Then I have heard a soloist brought in who would sing a song entirely at variance from our religious thought. Perhaps it would be the song "Without One Stain," the idea being that "Jesus has done everything; he has cleansed me; I haven't done anything myself, but I am going right up without one stain." I have thought: Yes, you will! Not if He knows it, you won't. There are too many stains on people who have not by sincere and heartfelt repentance cleansed themselves from stains. Such a song, therefore, is entirely out of place in a "Mormon" meeting. And you will hear, as one of the brethren suggests, the song about "The Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." Well, yes, that is in line with the same thought. They do not belong and should not have place in our meetings.

"Now, my brethren and sisters, my time is up, I see, and this is my third sermon. Let us have more of community singing, congregational singing. Let us sing songs of Zion. They carry with them a spirit and an influence, not only in "Mormon" meetings, but in others, that cannot be found anywhere else, and they thrill the soul as nothing else will touch it and thrill it. Invite our neighbors to our meetings that they also may enjoy the spirit of song with us. God bless you. Amen." (Bishop Charles W. Nibley, October 1917)

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"It is wonderful to stand in the presence of this great gathering of Latter-day Saints. It is wonderful to hear the united voice of the congregation in the songs of Zion, singing as they do with such spirit and power." (Elder Rudger Clawson; April 1917)

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"How can we make our meetings attractive? Why, by going there and filling up the meetinghouse. Let there be no empty benches, for they are very discouraging to the speaker. Let us feel that every one of us owes it to his fellow worshipers to go to the house of prayer and occupy his seat there, thus helping to make a large meeting, and by doing so giving more support to him who shall address us. Again, we open our meetings by singing, and singing is elevating and refining, it encourages us to faithfulness, especially when the music is accompanied by words of godliness, such as are contained in our hymns. We want to encourage good

singing in our meetings. We have a great many excellent choirs throughout Zion, and I wish to say to the bishops, encourage good choirs; have men that can lead them, and get some of your good singers together in the choir, thus giving joy to the Saints, and at the same time making the meetings more attractive. In the larger settlements it is not so difficult to have a choir, but in smaller settlements it is, perhaps, not so easy to get together brethren and sisters who can sing, or to get a competent leader; yet the bishops ought to do what they can along this line. If you haven't a chorister, try to induce such a one to move into your ward, even if you have to give him, some advantages. It may be that you have a school teacher who can teach music and thus help you to make a choir; but, by all means, try to have good singing in your meetings." (President Anthon H. Lund, October 1916)

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"I could not help but think of this part of the revelation in listening to the beautiful hymns that have been sung during this conference. I believe that we can worship in song as acceptably to Him as in any other way. In reading the history of the world we find that music has been conspicuous, in all ages and among all nations. There are but few religious denominations that do not avail themselves of the sweet influence of music. It is not only a custom to worship God by singing His praises in song, but we find the power of music manifest in almost all the great affairs in life. It is made use of to encourage and inspire men in battle. It is depended upon on occasions when there is necessity for inspiring in the hearts of men enthusiasm or loyalty. The history of nations is, in part, told in song. I know of no people on earth who have written into their songs the principles of the gospel they believe in more than have the Latter-day Saints. It is true there are many beautiful hymns written by men that all Christians love to sing, and we sing them in devotion to our Maker. We often sing the hymn composed by Charles Wesley entitled, "Jesus Lover of My Soul." It is said that Charles Wesley was inspired to write this greatest of his hymns by a bird, frightened by a thunder storm, flying into his room, preferring to risk its life indoors with him than outside where the elements were disturbed. As it sat quivering on his mantel, frightened nearly to death, Wesley was inspired to write that hymn. Henry Ward Beecher, speaking at his father's funeral, referred to the hymn that had been composed by Charles Wesley, "Jesus Lover of My Soul," and made the statement that he would rather have been the author of that song than to have the wealth of the greatest millionaire, for in it was inspiration, in it was power. While wealth would perish and its

possessor be forgotten, the memory of Wesley would live for ages to come, because the words of the song would be perpetuated." (Elder Reed Smoot, October 1912)

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"Just a word of criticism in relation to singing, although I do not pose as a musician or a singer. In my traveling among the Saints, I have observed in some quarters that there is a disposition to displace the Latter-day Saint hymns with sectarian songs, which have been composed by those who know not the gospel, and not, in every instance, are the sentiments expressed in those songs in harmony with the truth. It is a matter of embarrassment to call our peoples' attention on such occasions to the necessity for culling out those hymns which do not express the truth, in which we can pour out our souls and sing with meaning and heart to the Lord, such as will meet with His approval and call down a blessing upon us. I suppose that some of our brethren, choir leaders, would say that these hymns are old, that we want something new, something full of life and vim. I want to call attention to the fact that that which is dearer to us than all else, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not new. There is nothing with which we have to do that is older than the gospel; there is nothing dearer. Do we love our fathers and our mothers less because of their age, because they are getting old? No; and I tell you that these hymns, which have been selected by inspiration from the Lord, they are never tiring to the Latter-day Saints. They contain valuable sermons, and the people like to hear them, and we ought not to tire in singing them. Even in vocal solos there are some in our hymn books, such as "O, my Father," "The Seer," "Come, come ye Saints," and others that cannot be outdone or improved upon. I think it would be nice for our singers to try and arrange beautiful music to these beautiful words of praise and prayer to God. I know it would be edifying and appreciated by the Latter-day Saints, especially since we are adopting as a practice in the Church, more universally, congregational singing.

"I desire to call attention of the bishops of the wards, and the choir leaders, to the fact that there is much talent among the Latter-day Saints which is dormant, which ought to be developing, and which should be encouraged among the young people. That is the time, while people are young, to develop the talent, and to utilize the abilities of those who are specially gifted. They should be encouraged to use, to a greater degree, the talent which God has given to them. I recognize that all talents are God-given. This would enable the Saints more universally to join in congregational singing. Unto the people I would say, when you are solicited

to join with the choirs of the Church to sing these hymns, you ought to feel that it is a mission, and feel that you are honored, to be called to sing in the congregations of the Saints the hymns inspired of the Lord. This is a very important feature of the worship of the Latter-day Saints." (Elder George F. Richards, October 1911)

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"I want to say to you that I believe we are most profoundly influenced by the songs which we sing. Some writer has said, in substance, that if you will show me the songs which a people or a community sing, then I will tell you the character of that community. There is much truth in this statement." (Elder Rudger Clawson, April 1907)

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"I will tell you how I have done in Cache Stake. For the past year we have not had one High Council trial. We have selected brethren and sent them to parties having difficulty and trouble, and I have said to the brethren, Go and sing the songs of Zion to them. "Well, how many times shall we sing?" "Well, sing once, and then pray; sing again, and continue to sing until the Spirit of the Lord is there, and you can feel that there is a softening." I tell you, it has had excellent results. The difficulties have been settled by the parties themselves. Their hearts have been softened, and they have concluded to arrange their own troubles...

"While it is proper for the Presidency and High Council to meet, and to sing and pray together, the same rule will apply to the Bishopric of every ward. Have these meetings weekly; and do not let some trilling thing keep you from them. One Bishopric said to me that not one of them could sing. I suggested that they call in somebody who could sing; and if they could not get anybody let them sing the best they could themselves. Do the best you can, and the Lord will accept it. Sing and pray, and talk over the affairs of the ward. Just as sure as you will adopt this policy and carry it out, you will be benefactors to the ward and a blessing to the people. Your minds will be led out in the interest of the people; and when they see you have their welfare at heart they will be willing to come to you for counsel." (Elder Marriner W. Merrill, April 1901)

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"I thank the Lord with all my soul, and bless my teachers, that I was taught these gospel songs in my youth. All through the years they have been flowing through my mind. I have hummed and sung them as I have ridden over interminable miles... By their messages I have been inspired to reach heavenward." Elder Marion G. Romney (FRIEND Magazine, September 1971)

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"We sing, "Let us oft speak kind words to each other at home or where'er we may be". Hymns teach many gospel sermons and invite the Holy Ghost to bear witness of the doctrines and truths being taught, as well as bring comfort and cheer. We can use them in the home to teach our children and to reinforce lessons taught by other means. Music is so powerful an influence that songs learned in childhood stay in the mind and heart for a lifetime; as individuals or as a family, we may find it worthwhile at times to ponder the words of some of the hymns and Primary songs." (Ronald L. Knighton, Sept 1999 ENSIGN Magazine)

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# Part 3

## Appendix

## Mastering 'King James English' in Hymns and Prayers

Latter-day Saints have been instructed to model their language used in prayer and in hymns which address God after the language of the Bible version the Church uses in their particular language - for English-speaking members, that means the King James Version. We've been encouraged to become familiar with this language and to use it when addressing Deity. Why should we do this?

As a child I learned that all adults were called Mister or Missus or Miss. At church everyone was Brother or Sister. I learned the Lord had appointed a priesthood holder to serve over the ward, and we addressed him as 'Bishop' to show respect to his holy calling *and* his efforts to fulfill it. Likewise I learned to call a missionary 'Elder' or 'Sister' as a sign of respect and to honor their duty and calling.

As I grew older I learned there were others whose positions garnered the respect a title gives: Mayor, Officer, Chief, Doctor, and Nurse were all terms of respect and often affection. Later I added 'Your Honor', 'Senator', and even 'Mr. President' and even 'Your Majesty'. For twenty years there were those I addressed by their military rank or as 'Sir' or 'Ma'am', respecting at least their position and responsibility.

Again – why do we do this? Consider the words of one modern Apostle:

*“The use of titles signifies respect for office and authority... The words we use in speaking to someone can identify the nature of our relationship to that person. They can also remind speaker and listener of the responsibilities they owe one another in that relationship. The form of address can also serve as a mark of respect or affection.*

*“So it is with the language of prayer. The Church... teaches its members to use special language in addressing prayers to our Father in Heaven.*

*“When we go to worship in a temple or a church, we put aside our working clothes and dress ourselves in something better. This change of clothing is a mark of respect. Similarly, when we address our Heavenly Father, we should put aside our working words and clothe our prayers*

*in special language of reverence and respect. In offering prayers in the English language, members of our church do not address our Heavenly Father with the same words we use in speaking to a fellow worker, to an employee or employer, or to a merchant in the marketplace. We use special words that have been sanctified by use in inspired communications, words that have been recommended to us and modeled for us by those we sustain as prophets and inspired teachers...*

*“Modern English has no special verbs or pronouns that are intimate, familiar, or honorific. When we address prayers to our Heavenly Father in English, our only available alternatives are the common words of speech like you and your or the dignified but uncommon words like thee, thou, and thy that were used in the King James version of the Bible almost five hundred years ago. Latter-day Saints, of course, prefer the latter. In our prayers we use language that is dignified and different, even archaic.”* (‘The Language of Prayer’, Elder Dallin H. Oaks, April 1993 General Conference; quoted here from the LDS Gospel Resource CD, copyright 2000 Intellectual Reserve INC)

The question has often been asked: does the Lord hear and accept prayers spoken in English but not in King James English?

*“Literary excellence is not our desire. We do not advocate flowery and wordy prayers... Our prayers should be simple, direct, and sincere... Heavenly Father... hears and answers all prayers, however phrased. If he is offended in connection with prayers, it is likely to be by their absence, not their phraseology.”* (Ibid)

### **— PRONOUNS – the Biggest Part of our Prayer Language Battle**

Several general authorities have said that if we only used *Thee* and *Thy* correctly we’d have the majority of our prayer language mastered, so let’s start with these and other pronouns. Pronouns, as we learned in school, are words used in place of nouns. There are the three basic types of pronouns:

**First-Person pronouns:** used when referring to our self / ourselves

**Second-Person pronouns:** used when referring to the person or persons to whom we are speaking.

**Third-Person pronouns:** used when referring to a person or persons other than ourselves and those with whom we are speaking — **"THOU" – The Subject**

*Thou* is used in the place of *you* when Deity is the subject of the sentence or phrase. Consider this passage from the Book of Psalms:

"What is man, that *Thou* art mindful of him?  
and the son of man, that *Thou* visitest him?  
For *Thou* hast made him a little lower than the angels,  
and hast crowned him with glory and honour.  
*Thou* madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;  
*Thou* hast put all things under his feet... "  
(Psalms 8:4-6)

In prayer we might say such things as: "*Thou* art a loving father"; "*Thou* hast been kind to Thy children"; "We thank Thee that *Thou* hast restored the Gospel."

— **"THEE" - The Object**

*Thee* is used in the place of *you* when Deity is the object of the sentence. For instance - "We thank *Thee*"; "We ask *Thee*"; "We listen to *Thee*"; "We worship *Thee*". In all these examples, *we* is the subject, while *Thee* is the object *we* are thanking, asking, listening to, and worshipping.

— **Thy & Thine; My & Mine – The Possessives**

*Thy* and *Thine* are used instead of *your* and *yours* when used as a singular – when speaking to a single person: "*Thy* kingdom come; *Thy* will be done... "; "*Thine* is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever... ". *My* and *Mine* are the possessive form when speaking of ones self.

But when do we use *thy* and *my*, and when do we use *thine* and *mine*? In English we have two articles – 'a' and 'an' - that precede many nouns: *a* horse; *a* cow; *an* envelope; *an* airplane. We use 'an' when the very next word starts with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) or an 'h' sound (with exceptions). We use 'a' when the very next word starts with a consonant. In King James English, we use *mine* and *thine* when the following word starts with a vowel or an 'h' sound (with exceptions), and we use *thy* and *my* when the following word starts with a consonant. Here are some examples from the scriptures: *Thy* Son; *Thine* Only Begotten Son; "one born in my house is *Mine* heir"; "For *Mine* eyes have seen thy salvation". And, from the Hymnal we sing: "*Mine* eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord". An English teacher once explained this usage: our brain and

tongue can naturally handle a vowel-consonant-vowel-consonant change in creating and processing sounds, but they don't easily handle two vowel sounds one after the other. By changing 'a' to 'an', 'thy' to 'thine', and 'my' to 'mine', we give the tongue and brain that natural, comfortable vowel-consonant-vowel transition.

— **YE - the Plural of THOU**

On the night of Christ's birth a multitude of angels appeared to the shepherds and proclaimed the birth of the Good Shepherd. If one of the shepherds had been brave enough to speak, he would have addressed the single angel who might have acted as mouthpiece by saying: "*Thou art an angel!*", because *thou* is the proper singular form of *you*. If he'd addressed the entire choir of angels, however, he might have said: "*Ye are angels!*", because *ye* is the plural form of *you*. Because Latter-Day Saints only address Heavenly Father in prayer, we won't use *ye* in prayer – but we do use it in our hymns, so we still need to know how to use it properly.

— **How to Use Verbs**

If you're using King James pronouns correctly, you've nearly mastered this beautiful form of speech. But, there are still all those verbs to master!

— **'Art' Replaces 'Are'**

*Art* is the second-person singular ... 'Thou art' in the place of 'You are'.

*"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."* (Revelation 3:15-16)

*"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"* (Genesis 3:9)

In an electronic search of the scriptures I found over 800 uses of *art* and over 6,000 uses of *are*. *Art* is used when Deity is speaking or being spoken to; *are* is used all other times. Following this example, *art* would be proper when addressing Heavenly Father.

— **-EST and -ETH**

The suffix '-eth' is added to verbs attached mainly to third-person singular pronouns (he / she), but it is also used with first-person possessive pronouns (my, mine). The suffix 'est' is added to verbs attached to second person (thou). I cannot think of a single passage of King James English that shows the use of these two suffixes any better than Psalm 23 – notice the use of second- and third-person pronouns with these

suffixes:

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He *maketh* me to lie down in green pastures:  
He *leadeth* me beside the still waters.  
He *restoreth* my soul:  
He *leadeth* me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil: For thou art with me;  
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou *preparest* a table before me  
in the presence of mine enemies:  
Thou *anointest* my head with oil;  
My cup *runneth* over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

#### — Perfect Tenses

Perfect tenses are the verbs given a past, present, or future tense by using words such as could, would, should, will, was, and can before them. And here's the basic rule: add ‘-est’ to the end of them - could becomes couldst; would becomes wouldest, etc. These are all simply second-person singular; they are used whenever "art" would be used. It does not have to do with Deity speaking or using honorifics... it is anybody using second person singular pronouns.

#### — How Can I Master All of This?

*“Men and women who wish to show respect will take the time to learn the special language of prayer. Persons spend many hours mastering communication skills in other mediums, such as poetry or prose, vocal or instrumental music, and even the language of access to computers. My brothers and sisters, the manner of addressing our Heavenly Father in prayer is at least as important as these...”*

*“Modern revelation commands parents to “teach their children to pray.” (D&C 68:28.) This requires parents to learn and pray with the special language of prayer. We learn our native language simply by listening to those who speak it. This is also true of the language with which we address our Heavenly Father. The language of prayer is easier and sweeter to learn than any other tongue. We should give our children the privilege of learning this language by listening to their parents use it in the*

*various prayers offered daily in our homes.*" ('The Language of Prayer', Elder Dallin H. Oaks)

One way to make King James English a part of your language is through your scripture study. Read your Bible *aloud* so your mind and tongue can get both the feel of the usage and the beauty of the language. Listen to and recite hymns which address Deity. Listen to prayers offered in meetings such as General Conference, where those voicing the prayers are versed in this form of language. Listen to those in your local congregations who have mastered King James English as they pray and note how they use the language.

As we understand and use King James English in prayer we will not only be blessed for obeying the prophets in this regard but we will also learn to appreciate and savor the spirit it brings into our prayers. As we teach our children at home and at church to use this language, we will bless their lives with a deeper love and appreciation for the power and majesty of prayer.

### From the same author on Facebooks

Grandpa Bruce's Poetry and Hymns, Volume One (2010)

A collection of poems and hymn texts; many written for children; just as many written on everyday topics and events. It is best viewed on an e-reader. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

Faerie Prince of Temple Square (2010)

When you visit Salt Lake City's historical Temple Square at Christmastime and see millions of lights in the trees and bushes, have you ever asked yourself: Are they lights or are they – Faeries? If I find typo's, the corrected verions will be in my "Grandpa Bruce's Gem Mine of Short Stories". If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

Night Bird Canyon - a Story of Friends and Fiends (2010)

CORRECTIONS MADE April 2012 ... Subtitled 'A Vampire Among the Mormons', this classical Gothic horror story takes place in Northern Utah's Cache Valley in the early years of the Depression. It's not about Mormons or Mormonism; that's just the setting for this classical Good versus Evil tale. I apologize for the twist at the end in the introduction of a well-known character, but I just couldn't help myself. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

Pilgrim's Progress: Latter-day Sequels (2010)

April 2011: Short Story Added ... One book and several short stories inspired by Bunyan's classic volume. The book is the story of four of Christian and Chrstiana's grandsons on their pilgrimage, looking through the field glasses of the Latter-day Saint branch of Christianity. Those who believe Latter-day Saints are heretics and Satan-worshippers, I ask that you read with an open heart and allow yourself to be amazed at how much Christianity you're going to find. Also includes short stories about attractions at Vanity Fair as well as a brand new INDEX & CONCORDANCE for all the works in this book. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*DAY TRIPS to NARNIA (2010)*

Story added September 2011 ... A collection of 'fan fiction' short stories based on C. S. Lewis' world of Narnia. Although written for fun, most are moralistic in nature - but I think you will enjoy them anyway. Obviously, Narnia and anything to do with it is owned and copyrighted; hence this is merely 'fan fiction' and not copyrighted. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Men and Depression: One Man's Journey (2010)*

Having lived a lifetime of chronic and suicidal depression, I've compiled things I've written on the topic to be a guidebook and inspiration to those following me along the path. This is in no way a professional medical or mental health text; it is simply one's man's experiences and what he has learned. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Faith, Grace, & Works: a Chord in the Hymn of Salvation (2010)*

Christians have debated for centuries whether they are saved by Faith, by Grace, or by Works. This author believes each of these principles plays a role and seeks to show the role each plays in a Christian's progress towards salvation. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Pilgrim's Progress: People & Place Concordance (2010)*

Updated Sept. 2010 ... In all my years of reading this classic John Bunyan book, I've never yet found a people & place concordance ... so, here's my first draft of one. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Percy Jackson - All Grown Up (2010)*

Three short "fan fiction" stories written after "The Last Olympian" and before the "Heroes of Olympus" series was even announced.

They are my take on what happened to our Hero after the books and are based on the Percy Jackson books and NOT the movie. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Harry Potter - Three Short Stories (2010)*

Three short "fan fiction" stories that take place before, during, and at the end of the books we've all read how-many times. First a story about Professor McGonagall, then one about Charley Weasley and dragons, and the last is my own 'final chapter' to the last book (she didn't even give us a memorial service for our friends!) If you enjoy, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Grandpa Bruce's Short Stories (2010)*

Like a gem mine, you find rocks and you find gems. Hopefully you find more gems in this book than rocks. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*From Boy to Man and Back Again (2010)*

BOOK 1 of my Narnia "fan fiction" novels; takes place in the months leading up to the beginning of the Hundred-Year Winter. It tells how and why the Tree of Protection died and how the witch Jadis came to power. It also lets you know something else that was made from the wood of that tree from which the Wardrobe had been built. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Camilla: Warrior of Narnia (2010)*

BOOK 3 of my Narnia 'fan fiction' novels. Taking place in the time of Princess SwanWhite, a 10-year-old girl facing surgery for major burns is taken to Narnia to learn real heroism. She and Princess SwanWhite both learn why, as Father Christmas stated to Queens Susan and Lucy, war is so very terrible when women must fight. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Second Chance (2010)*

BOOK 4 of my Narnia 'fan-fiction' novels, this is dedicated with deepest respect to my fellow brothers and sisters in the Armed Forces of whatever country they serve. PARENTAL NOTE: This story is about a grown-up going to Narnia and deals with themes that affect grown-ups as well as children: healing from suicide, child abuse, illegitimate birth, and the physical and mental scars soldiers carry from their wartime experiences. These themes are dealt with in a very straight-forward but tactful and respectful manner. Parents may want to read this story first. I promise you it all turns out good in the end - all the correct decisions are made by my characters in regards to these topics - Aslan makes sure of this. If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*LDS Lists & Figures (2010)*

UPDATED APRIL 2012 - I created this file of information on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) simply to have the material on hand in my own e-reader and am sharing it with you: membership statistics; presidents of the Church; temples; official proclamations; a few missionary tracts; statements concerning the LDS Church and the U.S. Constitution. I will update as needed, usually with each General Conference.

*"Ye Who Are Weary – Come Home": a 'Mormon' Werewolf (2010)*

THIS IS NOT A CHILDREN'S STORY. Although the wording is tactful, there are startling images.

There are two paths to take with a werewolf story – the first path is spilled over with blood and carnage, while the second path carries the themes of being Forsaken and then Redeemed. I'm a Sunday School teacher – I'm taking the second route as I think Redemption and Deliverance are far more important than all the exciting violence and blood and gore such a story could contain ... Aren't they?

My proofreaders tell me that you deserve to be warned that Edgar Rice Burroughs and H. G. Wells are two of my favorite authors,

and since this takes place in much the same time period in which they were writing, I have tried to emulate the language of that time, which means it's pretty long-winded for today's readers. It is also stuffed full of religion – the 'Mormon' culture to be exact. Some things that are talked about are very sacred to we Latter-day Saints, and I think I have carefully balanced the attempt of keeping the sacred while writing a good story. If you think some of the sacred is silly I only hope you can show it the respect you would wish we would show to your sacred things.

*The Whole Armor of God – A Latter-day Saint View (2010)*

There are many Christians in the world today who object to the 'warrior view' of the Gospel of Christ. They won't let their children read the military campaigns in the scriptures or even sing the 'battle' hymns. Like it or not, we are in the midst of a war; a battle begun before the earth was even created, and turning our eyes away from it and pretending it doesn't exist is exactly what the Enemy wants. This book is meant to be a 'field guide', describing the battle at hand and those armor pieces the Lord has provided for us to use in the battle. Please come and discuss at: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

*Pilgrim's Progress: Annotated (2010)*

UPDATED Jan 22, 2011 - This is my personal working copy of this classic John Bunyan book - hard words and old phrases & expressions defined. I've never liked "modern language" versions of this book; I would rather lift myself up to its language than to dummy it down to mine. Enough of my friends have asked me to share that, well, here you go. I have included Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1846 'The Celestial Railroad' as every reader of Pilgrim's Progress ought to read it, too.

*Horse Boy of Narnia (2011)*

BOOK 2 of my Narnia Fan Fiction Novels and a conclusion to Book One, this takes place during the 14-year reign of the High Kings and Queens and tells the story of Charlie, a boy Aslan brings to Narnia to learn Courage, Sacrifice, and a bit of Wisdom. Charlie is sure that if he were a centaur he could learn these things - be careful of what you wish for because you might get it! If you enjoy this, please come and discuss at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/group.php?gid=120610104646392>

DRACULA: Jonathon Harker's Rebuttal (2012)

April 13, 2012: MASSIVE CORRECTIONS DONE! ... THIS IS NOT A CHILDREN'S BOOK! Written in the Gothic tradition and with the most delicate of language, there are still startling visual scenes you don't want to explain to your children ... On the 125th anniversary of his twenty-ninth birthday, my very old friend Jonathon Harker agreed to break his silence and tell the full story of his encounter with Count Dracula - things he was unwilling or too ashamed to write at the time; things that can be told in today's changed moral atmosphere that might not have been printable in his day. He is also disgusted with how Brom Stoker, once he got hold of a stolen copy of their combined journals, rewrote parts and made him and his beloved Mina out to be wimps: "We were much stronger than he gave us credit," he insists. Also, he is sick over the idea that Society has reached the point of madness wherein vampires and other demons are being lauded as heroes, love interests, and sex objects – he assures me they are anything but, and this interview was given to explain why.



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