

# My Heart Sings

We have been blessed in recent years as the music in our Zion has developed and grown. Our hymnal has over 600 songs. It seems we can find a song for nearly every feeling and emotion we have, for the many different phases in our lives. Many CDs have been produced for our comfort and enjoyment. Sometimes when it feels that we don't even know what to pray for, these songs seem to rise as prayers to our Heavenly Father.

God's Word instructs: "Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Singing draws God's children together to focus on living faith and the joy of believing. It puts temporal cares and worries aside. Precious memories remain when, during a home visit with believing friends, time is set aside to sing.

## **"How Well We Sing Doesn't Matter"**

Believers from every walk of life and every age are able to enjoy the music we have been blessed with in God's kingdom. The littlest children who may not know how to speak sing in their own language, often holding the songbook upside down, singing from their hearts. The songs learned as a small child often are remembered for a lifetime, even with some who suffer from dementia late in life.

Those who may not have special musical talents or perhaps can't even really carry a tune can still enjoy and appreciate music. Of this, Ross Fredrickson (Big Lake, Minn.) shares: "How well we sing doesn't matter. I've often thought how good it is when timidity is put aside and people sing from their hearts. There are few moments more precious than those of large services when as we sing and listen, we can hear the weaker voices of the elders, the young new voices, and all in between with their various tones joined together in song. Adding all the imperfect voices together we hear the beautiful songs of angels and heavenly escorts awaiting the day we receive our new voices and can praise God perfectly." Those who aren't able to sing can listen or maybe quietly hum along. The words and music can comfort them the same.

## **Reminders of Our Common Goal**

We can enjoy this gift of music every day in our homes. Music can set the tone of a believing home and draw the family together. Often I find when I sit down to play songs on the piano the children come to pick up a songbook and sing along.

Denise Hillukka (Monticello, Minn.) says, "We play Christian songs from CDs every day. They are sermons and reminders of the joy of believing. When life feels busy and stressful they remind me what's most important. On days when doubts are high and sin presses, I've received much encouragement to trust in God's plan for us and reminded to keep praying and believing in Him. In life's joys it's nice to sing hymns of praise as a reminder who ultimately provides those as well. No matter what our lot in life is, these songs can aid us on our journey. I've felt so thankful and reassured many times to have these songs to remind me of the common goal we all have."

Steve and Nancy Huhta (Sebeka, Minn.) also relate: "Playing songs and hymns of Zion is very important to our family. We play CDs, both English and Finnish, on a daily basis. They are a source of comfort and enjoyment. The words in the songs have much meaning in various stages of our lives; the melodies are beautiful to listen to and can be enjoyed through different instruments. If we provide appropriate music selections, our children will have a foundation for good music that will benefit them in faith and life. Singing and playing Christian music has encouraged our kids to participate in music camps, allowing them to meet new friends and form stronger relationships with believing youth."

“When I reflect on my years growing up,” Ross Fredrickson says, “I remember how we sang often as a family—when company was over, at holiday times, or during family nights in the home. This has left a strong imprint on me. As a young father, I’ve wished to try to do the same, to sing of the way and the journey.”

Larry Martin (Snohomish, Wash.) loves to sing the songs of Zion. He especially likes to sing with the young kids at haps. He has many favorite songs and when asked about them, he can start to list them. He often comments about a song, “Oh, I just love that one!”

### **Each Song Is a Sermon**

For those of us fortunate to be able to attend services regularly, we know that music is a big part of our services. It wouldn’t feel right if it were left out. Tenelle Honga (Corcoran, Minn.) says, “Lately, while sitting in church and singing with the whole congregation, I’ve thought, ‘It feels so good to be here, and I couldn’t imagine being anywhere else.’ Singing has brought such warm feelings. I feel God is present and helping me to remain a believer during times of difficulty and doubt.”

Bonnie Bercier is one of four members of the small Rolla congregation in North Dakota. They gather at her home on Sundays and listen to a sermon via the Internet. LLC’s CDs are valuable to them as they use them to sing along with at their services.

“‘Be Not Dismayed, O Little Flock’ (SHZ 187) can be heard echoing through the room as our small flock gathers for services,” Bonnie writes. “While singing, we look at each other and it brings smiles to our faces as we feel that maybe this song was especially written for us. The song has provided much strength and comfort on our journey of faith. It assures us that even though we’re small and alone, often tempted and tried, our Lord and Savior has paid a great price for our souls. With Jesus guiding our ship on the sea of life, it will never overturn regardless of what storms we pass through. Singing songs of Zion plays a very important part in our lives. Each song is a sermon in itself and gives us a sweet taste of heaven and what awaits us there.”

Larry Warwaruk (Outlook, Sask.) has in these last years been given the grace to believe, as his wife Mavis also believes. About Christian music, he shares: “Mavis and I have both last year’s Summer and Winter Services’ CDs. While driving in our car, she will often calmly sing with her childhood memory, and I will hum along in a joyous peace.” He too now experiences the peace that only comes as God’s gift to His children.

### **Speak of God’s Protection**

It’s special when believers share of their favorite song or one that has special meaning. One such occasion that especially spoke to me was when Miriam (Mim) Jurmu (St. Michael, Minn.) related of a song that is dear to her and her husband Bob: “Many of our beautiful songs have a special place in my heart, but there is one that has been most refreshing. In 1973, the time of the last heresy, a beloved, believing sister, Anna Tulkki, translated a song from Finnish: ‘Risen Is Our Sun in Vict’ry’ (SHZ 119). Each time we sing this, it brings to mind the wonderful care that God shone on us in protecting us through those very difficult days. We pray that He will continue to carry us in this very blessed kingdom until we can lay down this cross for a crown.”

Jurmu’s thoughts were powerful for this writer. I had sung this song many times before and had always enjoyed it, but had always thought of the storms and winds of nature. When Mim related of the storms and winds of the heresy, it brought a whole new meaning to the song. I don’t think I’ll ever sing it without thinking of how God protected His own

and carried them through the dark days of spiritual storms.

### **A Comfort in Trial**

“Throughout my life I’ve enjoyed listening to music as much as singing,” Jennifer Huhta (Big Lake, Minn.) relates. “The words of songwriters uplift and bring comfort simultaneously. A song may speak of experiences in a believer’s life as they journey towards the heavenly home, or they sing of the promise that awaits those who believe. When our Katie was in her final stages of illness we received an SRK CD titled, *Kohti kotia* [Homeward] as a gift. It became a special CD. Not only did Katie enjoy it, but many of the songs spoke directly to me. ‘We are trav’ling on a journey; toward our homeland we are bound. Though the trials here are many, Jesus is a refuge sound’ (SHZ 547:1). I remember those words washing over me, uplifting and healing my weary spirit. Not only does that CD speak the same to me today, but it also creates bittersweet memories of a daughter who has reached her heavenly home.”

### **Ruthanne Anderson**

#### **Discussion Points:**

1. Sing song of Zion #119 as a family, or with believing friends. This song was precious to a believing mother at a time of spiritual storms. Share thoughts on why these words may have especially spoken to her at that time. What do these words speak to you?
2. What is your favorite song, and why? What does this song say to you?
3. Can songs of Zion also rebuke and instruct? Share thoughts on this. Give examples.
4. Many say songs are like sermons. Discuss how this is so.