

## Congregational Singing

By Ralph A. Casey (deceased)

Congregational singing is unique music. The singing of a congregation of Christians is the singing of the young and the old, the much talented and the not so talented, the musically experienced and the inexperienced, some who can sing beautifully and many who cannot. It is not a vocal performance by auditioned, rehearsed professionals. It is the music of heartstrings rather than vocal chords.

The primary design of congregational singing, then, is not to demonstrate how accurately these singers can sing the musical notes in a church hymnal, nor how beautifully they articulate the words of their songs. Its objective, rather, is the congregation's participation in a collective spiritual experience, "teaching and admonishing one another and singing with the grace and melody in their hearts to the Lord" ([Ephesians 5:19](#), [Colossians 3:16](#)), and speaking words of worship, praise, and thanksgiving to their heavenly Father. Their prayer songs become living prayers just as their praise hymns become living praises. Their songs become living vehicles of spiritual expression! "... in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" ([Hebrews 2:12](#)).

Unlike the fictional songs sung by the world, these worshipers sing about eternal realities: The only true and living God, His resurrected and returning Son, Jesus Christ, and, of heaven, their eventual eternal home. The songs they sing to one another teach, admonish, exhort, and encourage. They revive memories recalling "exceeding great and precious promises...." ([II Peter 1:4](#)). They build faith, strengthen hope and express love for one another. The hearts of these singers are musical instruments, provided by their heavenly Father and on these hearts they strum spiritual messages and emotions of this present life and the life to come. These worshipers don't just sing songs; they make their songs sing!

Genuine, sincere, intentional worshipers seize each opportunity to pour out the thoughts of their hearts in song, "singing with the spirit and the understanding" ([I Corinthians 14:15b](#)) with a desire to offer their songs as "sacrifices of praise, the fruit of lips...for with such sacrifice God is well pleased" ([Hebrews 12:15-16](#)). In the midst of the assembly of the saints of God, let every heart rejoice and sing! "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing." ([Psalm 100:2](#)).

- Highway 5 North Church of Christ, Mountain View, AR -

*Love is the song of the soul singing to God.*

### News & Notes

**SYMPATHY:** To **Noni Scadden** at the passing of her sister, Addie Seese in Texas. Also, sympathy to **Glenna Logston Harrison** at the passing of her husband, Wes. Glenna's parents were members here a few years ago, and her dad, Glenn Logston, served as one of our Elders.

**PICTURES FOR OUR UPDATED DIRECTORY:** If you did not have your picture taken last weekend for our "new" directory, please submit a recent 5x7 or 8x10 photo to Rico by **Dec. 17th**.

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY:** Each Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST:** Next Saturday, Dec. 3rd, 8:00 a.m. at EJ's.

**COVERED DISH DINNER:** Next Sunday, Dec. 4th, about Noon at the Fellowship Building. This will be followed by our **early afternoon service at 2:00 p.m.** at the church building.

**PANTRY:** Yams or sweet potatoes.

**REQUEST FOR PRAYERS:** Larry Lamb (Chris' husband). Larry recently failed a stress test. Herman McHan (Columbiana congregation).

**SICK & SHUT-IN: At Home:** Margie Martin (covid), Nikki Beagle (covid), Carolyn Pallard, Jim Hadley, Linda Parkes, Mike West, Barbara DeLong, Claudette Miller, Cheryl Renfro Walker. **Fox, Pepperberry Suites, Chester:** David McCoy. **Weston, WV:** Rick Beck.

### HOLD MY MULE

The old man could not carry a tune in a syrup bucket, but he loved to sing loudly, even if he was badly off-key. Besides this, he was bad about "amening" the preacher which embarrassed some of the brethren in the assembly. Services had degenerated into an undignified assembly because of this old farmer. He simply got too involved in the goings on and forgot himself.

Four or five of the well-to-do members decided that this old man was too crude for the congregation. They appointed themselves as the ones to go out to the old brother's farm and talk to him.

When they arrived at his old farm house, he was out in the field plowing with his old mule. Though it was a bit beneath their dignity, they finally walked out through the dusty plowed ground (soiling their clothes) to talk to him. "Brother Jones" they began, "We want to talk to you about your singing. We don't mean any harm or offense, but you just can't sing. We wish you would try not to sing so loud because it ruins our services."

"I'm sorry," he replied. "Its just that when I look at these old clothes that I wear and then I think of the robes that God has for me, I can't help singing. When I see that old shack I live in and realize that it might fall down any time and then think about the beautiful palace that God has prepared for me, I just have to yell the wonderful name of Jesus at the top of my lungs."

"As a matter of fact," he said, "would one of you hold my mule? I feel like singing right now." Just then he burst out into chorus of "Count Your Many Blessings."

As the men walked away and left the old man singing "...count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done," they began to see him a little differently than they had before. They started to understand his deep appreciation for spiritual things.

One said to the rest, "You know, his singing isn't really all that bad." Another joined in, "I never realized how sweet his voice really is!"

- Author Unknown