

Garden Hymn

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April 5, 2015



Members of the Unification community will be familiar with the repertoire of Holy Songs that we tend to regularly sing. As far as I can remember, in the English language we have always used a small white-covered hymnal called 'Holy Songs' which contained the 40 canonical songs of our community. During our worship services or on our workshops we could sing many other songs besides this anthology, but these 40 songs were special – they were the *holy songs*. Other songs don't cut it compared to these, or at least that's how I've been raised to feel about them. We might sing other religious songs, perhaps even Christian hymns, but they aren't as holy as these holy songs, oh no. The ironic thing is that actually many of the songs are indeed traditional Christian hymns. The words and music of each song are worth reflecting on, and I'd like to post a blog on each one individually, but I want to start by examining a hymn which is one of the standard songs that most Unificationists should know off by heart: *Song of the Garden*.

While the origin of *Holy Songs'* constituents is largely Korean or Japanese, *Song of the Garden* (jump to the end to see the 3 verses of the song) is certainly English, if not in nationality then certainly in language. The lyrics have been assumed to have been written by that most prolific of writers, An Onymous, but this source suggests that they were written by John Campbell in 'Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Use of Christians' (published in 1803). There is also a nice audio recording on the aforementioned webpage of a British chap playing the fiddle and singing along to this song, with the notable difference in that Jesus' name is used instead of 'Father' at the appropriate locations in the verses.

A few years ago, before I was the pastor of the Bromley FFWPU Community, the previous pastor, Dr David Hanna, introduced some new verses in addition to the 3 verses which everyone already knew. I'll admit that this came as something of a surprise to me. That the song I knew and loved could have had its origin outside of Korea was a startling revelation; that it had more verses was an exciting discovery! In the Bromley community, we regularly employ the 5-verse format of the song, including 2 additional verses that I feel are quite poetic and fit with the eschatological theme of the hymn:

The glorious time is rolling on,
The gracious work is now begun;
My soul a witness is,
I taste and see the pardon free,
For all mankind, as well as me,
Who comes to Christ may live.

Amen! amen! my soul replies,
I'm bound to meet you in the skies,
And claim my mansions sure.
Now here's my heart, and here's my hand,
To meet you in the heavenly land,
Where we shall part no more.

Alas, there are even more verses than these! This 1820 publication contains a version with 4 verses, and this 1836 publication has 9 verses in total! On this webpage it is easier to read the 9 verses. Interestingly, on the last webpage it is noticeable that other musical arrangements have been made to these words. In other words, the song can be sung with different melodies and harmonies to the one sung by Unificationists around the world regardless of the language. I'm rather fond of the melody we use – I feel like it reverberates across the spirit world quite profoundly whenever I sing it, even when alone. Nevertheless it's interesting to think that, like many other hymns historically, the same lyrics have been sung to different music by different congregations.



Isaac Watts

My limited search-engine research also discovered this interesting blog by an Oxford academic. I infer from what she's posted that *Song of the Garden* can find its roots in the words of a nonconformist hymn writer called Isaac Watts, who lived between 1674 and 1748. Before Watts, Protestant Christianity sang songs based on translations of Biblical text. (Catholics sang a standard liturgy in Greek and Latin.) Watts, however, began writing original extra-Biblical poetry and he basically started the tradition of writing hymns, a tradition that was followed by Protestants, and eventually Catholics, after him.

So it appears as if *Song of the Garden* originated in Britain. I'm ready to admit, however, that the music by which I know the song probably has its origin in the USA. (The Oxford academic has embedded a youtube video of an American musician playing the fiddle to accompany himself as he sings the song.) I feel patriotic and proud to think that the tradition of writing original congregational songs started with a Brit, and that his hymn is one of the 40 holy songs in our songbook.

I wish we could revive the tradition of writing new music. Too often I feel like we sing the same songs over and over again. I dearly love many of them, but I'm aware that their language and style are not always so contemporary. Even the 20th century songs that we regularly sing – especially the popular music from the 1960s – feel outdated. I would dearly love to find an opportunity to write some of my own new songs, and I would encourage anyone else with even a small gift for words and music to connect to God in a mystical experience and begin creating new songs that could fill a new songbook fit for the 21st century and beyond.

I'll end this post with a link to a nostalgic video of True Father singing the Garden Hymn , with the lyrics posted beneath:

The Lord into His garden comes;
The spices yield a rich perfume;
The lilies grow and thrive, the lilies grow and thrive.
Refreshing showers of grace divine,
From the Father flow to every vine,
And make the dead revive, and make the dead revive.

Oh that this dry and barren ground
In springs of water may abound;
A fruitful soil become, a fruitful soil become.
The desert blossoms as the rose,
When the Saviour conquers all his foes,
And makes His people one, and makes His people one.

Come brethren you that love the Lord,
And taste the sweetness of His word;
In Father's ways go on, in Father's ways go on,
Our trouble and our trials here,
Will only make us richer there,
When we arrive at home, when we arrive at home.

Image Credits

<http://www.perfectpiaffe.co.uk/2-quavers-4607-p.asp>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Watts