

## Episode 23

### History of Hymns

#### LORD, I WOULD FOLLOW THEE

NARRATOR: The views and opinions expressed here are those of the guests and are not the official position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Merrill Jenson's setting of "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" underscores our story.

(Music)

NARRATOR: Brigham Young said, "Key to the plan of happiness is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our endeavor is to learn His ways, to become like Him." When the 1985 LDS hymnal was in preparation, a hymn dealing with this sacred subject was requested of Susan McCloud.

(Music)

SUSAN MCCLOUD: The hymnbook had been in the planning stages for several years. Every time I met Michael Moody at the Church Office Building while working on another project, he would urge me to send him some lyrics. I would be excited. Of course, I wanted a hymn in the new hymnbook. I would go home and set to work but nothing would come. And what is more extraordinary, I would forget.

(Music)

SUSAN MCCLOUD: I didn't even think to contact any of the excellent composers I had worked with in the past nor did any of them contact me saying, let's work on a hymn for the new hymnal and see what we can do. The whole idea would go from my mind until months or even a year later when I would run into Brother Moody again and he would urge me and the same process would repeat itself. I didn't recognize this pattern until long afterwards nor understand the significance of it.

(Music)

SUSAN MCCLOUD: Late one Friday afternoon, Michael Moody phoned. "The hymnbook is nearly completed," he said. My heart went down to my toes. Tears came into my eyes. What have I done denying myself this remarkable opportunity? "But," Michael continued, "there are holes. There are some things we want that we still don't have." The Music Committee had received 6,000 hymn submissions for possible inclusion. How could this be? Brother Moody then asked me if I would attempt a song which he wanted very much—a hymn about the Savior, loving Him and trying to be like Him. He did not give me much more than that and he needed the lyrics for a Monday morning meeting. It was

the weekend I had stake conference and one of my children's birthdays. I couldn't go off and sequester myself. I had to do this right now.

(Music)

SUSAN MCCLOUD: I spent a lot of time on my knees and worked far into the night but by and large, the lyrics came quickly to me. I worked on them a little more Sunday evening, and then phoned Brother Moody as he had requested and read them to him. Brother Moody is a gentle, guileless man. He sat still a moment, and then answered in his soft, kindly voice, "I knew you were the one."

(Music)

SUSAN MCCLOUD: I knew you were the one. Those words were very humbling to hear. They've served since that day both as a spiritual challenge to be worthy and as a testimony to me of Heavenly Father's gracious, bountiful love for His children.

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Michael Dowdle's arrangement of "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" continues our underscoring.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

(Music: Michael Dowdle: Lord, I Would Follow Thee)

NARRATOR: Much the same process took place with Newell Dayley as with Sister McCloud. Brother Moody asked him to set the lyrics to music but did not tell him who the author of the text was, even though the two had worked together on songs before. Time was of the essence. Composition of the music had to be complete within a few days in order to meet a firm deadline. Brother Dayley reports:

NEWELL DAYLEY: "I had an assignment to speak at a Sunday evening youth fireside in Monticello, Utah—the first event of a three-day assignment as an Education Week presenter in that area. While traveling to that assignment, a draft of the lyric was placed on the passenger seat to enable thoughtful contemplation. Ideas for the music did not come as they sometimes do. Even the following Monday, while traveling between Monticello and Blanding, musical ideas would not flow while contemplating the lyric. That evening, after an enjoyable meal with the family of the high school music teacher in Blanding, I hesitantly asked if I could use the music classroom at the high school just for a couple of hours. My request was granted and a very short amount of time provided to accomplish what seemed impossible. Surprisingly, three keys to setting the lyric emerged rather quickly. The first was an idea that the first line of the lyric ought to be repeated. The first time it would express a desire or aspiration and the second time an intent or a commitment. The second key was to change "Lord, I will follow thee," that is, "Lord I WILL follow thee," to "Lord, I WOULD follow thee" in order to reflect the struggle inherent in trying to achieve a change of heart. A third key was a realization that the music must be straightforward and rather uncomplicated in order to allow the words to shine through

and that the structure of the music needed to emerge in a natural way. Following those keys, melodic ideas began to flow.

[END MUSIC]

NEWELL DAYLEY: The first was an upward-reaching statement of the first line of the lyric

(the first eight notes are being played on a piano)

that descended through the second line.

(the next seven notes are being played on a piano)

The melody of the third and fourth lines needed to gradually ascend

(the next 15 notes are being played on a piano)

in order to express real intent and to reach a level that would enable the fifth line— which would be a restatement of the first—

(the next eight notes are being played on a piano)

and the sixth line

(the last six notes are being played on a piano)

to express a firm and informed commitment to humbly follow the Lord. What emerged was a twelve-measure hymn unlike any other hymn in form or substance. The singer or listener will notice that the melody of the first two measures

(the first eight notes are being played on a piano)

is simply reversed

(the eight notes from the fifth line are being played on a piano)

in order to create the melody for measures nine and ten, the restatement of the opening idea. This enables an expression of desire in the first instance to become a commitment as it is repeated. The harmony supports the melody in a simple and uncluttered manner.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

(an entire verse—all parts—is being played on a piano)

[END MUSIC]

[BEGIN MUSIC]

NEWELL DAYLEY: Refinement of the music was accomplished a couple of days later and submitted before the deadline. The only question remaining was “Who wrote that inspirational lyric?” When the answer finally came, I was delighted, but not surprised. Susan’s lyrics had been similarly inspirational for other projects we had shared.

SUSAN MCCLOUD: So I came to understand that this hymn was the one the Lord wanted from us. Otherwise what seemed like a veil of forgetfulness would not have been drawn across our spiritual eyes and we might have, of our own desires, worked on something else that was not needed or right for the moment. Heavenly Father graciously allowed us to participate in the theme which President Benson was soon to hold forth—a hand of love to inactive members, to those married to nonmembers, extending temple blessings to many who wanted that strength and light, calling back those who needed to feel the Savior’s love in their lives.

[END MUSIC]

[BEGIN MUSIC]

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir sings, “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.”

(Music: Mormon Tabernacle Choir: “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.”)

[END MUSIC]

NARRATOR: There is a spiritual source for all things, and Heavenly Father feeds that source within us when He is preparing us to do His work and serve His children in any way. Sister McCloud expresses some of the background from which the feelings and understandings of this song were drawn.

SUSAN MCCLOUD: “As a child growing up in the Salt Lake City of the 1940s and 50s, I lived an idyllic, protected life. Then suddenly my parents were divorced and we found ourselves living with an excommunicated stepfather in Illinois where my mother had been raised. The challenges of those difficult years created sympathies and strengths within me which I might not have otherwise had. My sisters and I struggled to live the gospel without much help. I learned patience and forgiveness, prayer and faith in the Lord; the songs of Zion were one of the influences that helped to see me through. Later, married and living in Salt Lake with my three children, I had opportunity to write songs for the seminary program for the youth of the Church. This was a delight for me and I looked upon it as a sacred responsibility. Not too long before the new hymnbook was created, my little sister gave birth to a Down-Syndrome baby. Sarah was beautiful, dark-haired with lovely features, but she had a heart condition that would require surgery if she was to live. The trick was that she had to get old enough and strong enough to survive the operation, yet if she did not, her chances of living were slight. Sarah died in her mother’s arms when she was three months old. It was very painful. I longed to be able to run ahead and say to the sales clerks, “I know, we just look like two young women out shopping, but her baby died yesterday. Please be kind to her.” Of course, some were nice and some weren’t, but the experiences of that day had a great impact on me. For months, probably as long as a year or two later, I watched people and found myself feeling a great compassion for those who acted annoyed, impatient in lines or even rude. I would look into their faces and think, “How do I know what they’re going through? Maybe they just lost their job or found out they have cancer. Maybe someone they love just died. Their faces did not show what they were suffering, just as my sister’s had not.

(Music)

NARRATOR: Love heals and we cannot love and judge at the same time. It is our challenge in striving to follow the Savior to think of others as we do ourselves, to serve and accept all people, to give without question, to learn that only perfect love casts out fear.

(Music)

NARRATOR: Newell Dayley and his wife Diane are the parents of eight children. Newell is one of the most loved of our present-day composers and hymn writers for he is a sincere servant of God and a guileless man. Among many other things, Brother Dayley was the first director of the BYU jazz ensemble Synthesis, performed on the trumpet with the Utah Symphony and as a soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. He was on the BYU faculty for 39 years, serving as Chair of the Music Department, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communications and Associate Academic Vice President. His contribution to the field of music is rich as well as his influence on the hearts and testimonies of countless students placed under his tutelage and care.

(Music)

NARRATOR: Susan McCloud and her husband James are the parents of six children. Susan has written many programs for the Church, especially the youth seminary, as well as screenplays for several BYU films including John Baker's Last Race. She has published over 40 books which include biography, historical fiction, mystery and poetry, was a teacher of English and creative writing in a private school and her own byline in an Illinois newspaper. She also served over 35 years as a docent at Brigham Young's Beehive House.

(Music)

NARRATOR: Qualifications are well and good and experience necessary, but as Sister McCloud expresses it,

SUSAN MCLOUD: "It is the Spirit that truly qualifies when we are working for the kingdom and striving to serve Heavenly Father's children. Newell and I both strongly feel that "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" came through us, that it is the Lord's song. For myself, every time of the hundreds of times I have heard it sung, I feel nothing but a strong and humble desire to live what the song teaches, to be worthy to truly love."

(Music)

NARRATOR: As recorded in 1 John, Chapter 2, the Savior said, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light." When we struggle to rise, when we give out of weakness and pain, we truly give. We cherish the sweet wisdom of Neal Maxwell when he said, "To help others in the midst of our own pain is like the generosity of Jesus on the cross. Empathy during agony is a portion of divinity." Savior, may I love my brother as I know thou lovest me. Find in thee my strength, my beacon, for thy servant I would be. Savior, may I love my brother— Lord, I would follow thee."

NARRATOR: Christina England gives her interpretation of "Lord, I Would Follow Thee."

(Music: Christina England, "Lord, I Would Follow Thee.")

[END MUSIC]

[BEGIN MUSIC]

NARRATOR: Octappella sings an a-cappella version of “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.”

(Music: Octappella, “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.”)

[END MUSIC]