

Sing a New Song

As an 18-year-old, Isaac was tired of the music they sang at his church. He was so troubled by his predicament, he approached his father and voiced his complaint.

The stern deacon scolded his son and said, “Those hymns were good enough for your grandfather and your father, so they will have to be good enough for you!”

The young man boldly replied, “They will never do for me, regardless of what you and your father thought of them.”

Angrily, Isaac’s father shouted, “If you don’t like the hymns we sing, then write better ones!”

Isaac calmly answered, “I have written better ones, and if you will relax and listen, I will read one for you.”

The father took the piece from his son and was amazed by what he saw. He was impressed enough to take the new hymn to church the following Sunday.



The congregation sang the new song with delight and requested that Isaac prepare another hymn for the next Sunday. He obliged, and this pattern continued for 222 consecutive Sundays.

In doing so, Isaac Watts singlehandedly revolutionized congregational singing 300 years ago. Before the United States was born, he wrote great hymns like *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, *O God Our Help in Ages Past* and *Joy to the World*.

When assessing the issues of church music today, it is wise to think about Isaac Watts and what happened 300 years ago.

Here is one of the groundbreaking songs Watts penned:

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

(more)

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Isaac Watts used the gifts God had endowed within to bless millions of people in generations to follow.

And He has a purpose for you and for me – and equipped us to accomplish His will. Let's be about His business.

Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples! (Psalm 96:1-3 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter