

WORSHIP THE LORD BY Singing Hymns

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Hymns have power to strengthen and inspire us, lifting us to higher spiritual ground.

In 1984 about 30 brethren waiting to be interviewed sat in a small chapel room in Leipzig, Germany. They had come from all over East Germany to meet with President Thomas S. Monson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as he organized the Leipzig Germany Stake.

President Monson had not been conducting interviews long when he heard a chorus of men begin singing hymns in the next room. He turned to his companion and asked, “Do these brethren represent a priesthood choir for the meeting?” His companion replied, “Oh no, they’re the brethren we’re going to interview this afternoon. They would prefer singing to chatting.”¹

President Monson later recalled that they sang for four hours. He said that as he would interview some of the tenor section, the tenors became a little weak, and then they would return and the basses would come in for the interviews. And so it went throughout the day until the last interview had been completed.²

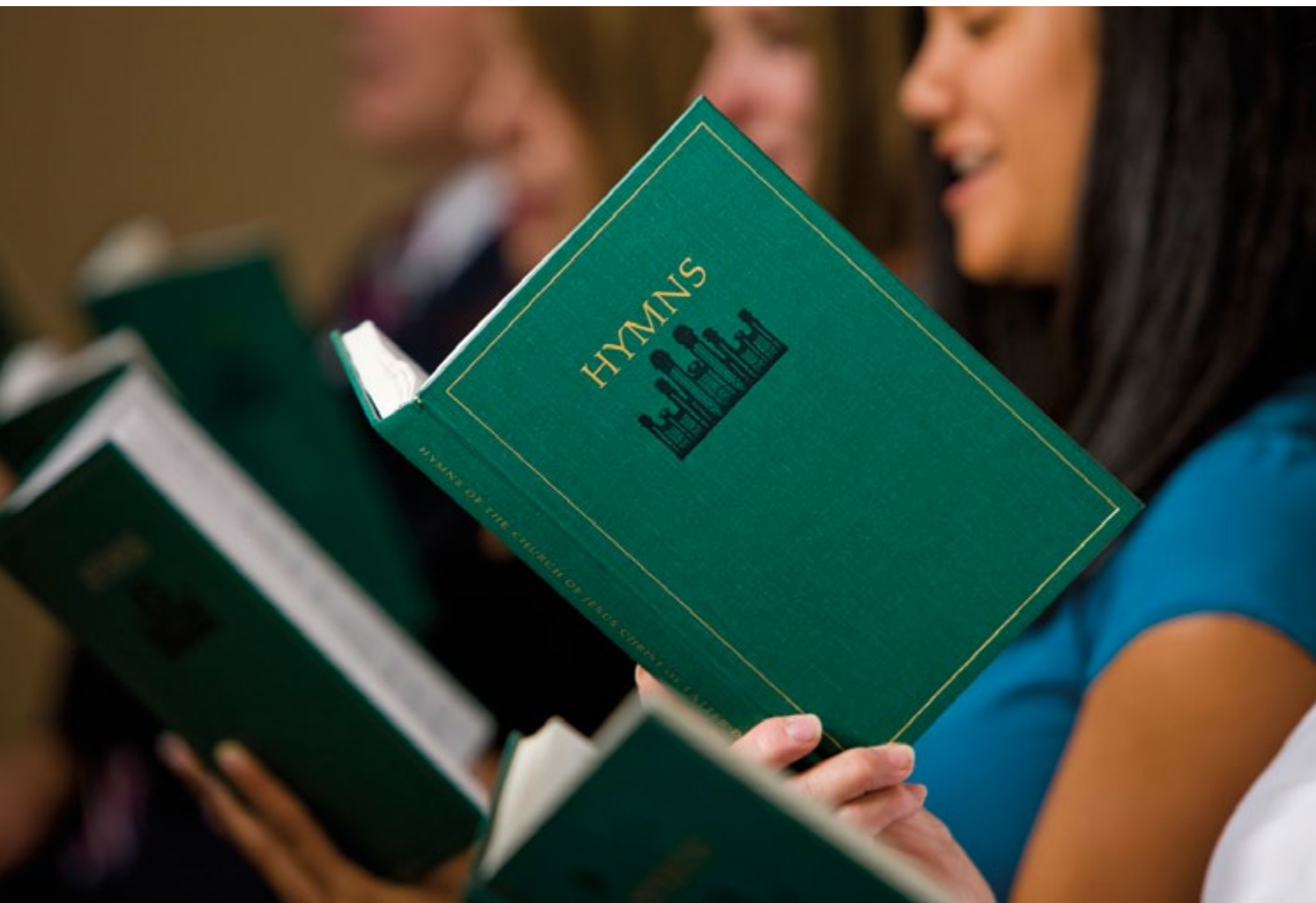
These brethren, who were gathered as Latter-day Saints from the far reaches of a

divided country, did the unexpected. Rather than talking about the weather, discussing sports, or simply enjoying each other’s friendship, they sang.

The lesson that President Monson drew from that experience was, “If you love the Lord, if you love his doctrine, you’ll love the hymns. And when you love them, you sing them.”³

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to learn the doctrine of the restored gospel” and “is a glorious way to worship.”⁴

Because singing the hymns invites the companionship of the Holy Ghost, we become more receptive to gospel truths as we participate. Both the messages and the music of the hymns invite us to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). As we sing, the Spirit testifies of the Savior’s divinity and other eternal principles. And no matter how well they are sung or by whom, the hymns have power to strengthen and inspire us as we use them, lifting us to higher spiritual ground.



The hymns also help us live the gospel by inspiring righteous actions. In the preface to the hymnbook, the First Presidency wrote that the hymns “can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace.” In addition, they wrote that “hymns can also help us withstand the temptations of the adversary.”⁵

If our minds are filled with the tunes and words of hymns, less room remains for Satan’s influence. Singing hymns dismisses unworthy thoughts, deepens spiritual sensitivity, and quiets and lifts our spirits. When counseling Church members to memorize hymns as a way to keep out evil thoughts, President Boyd K. Packer said, “Because the music is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will slip shamefully away.”⁶ As we sing the hymns and fill our hearts and minds with their heavenly influence, we will find ourselves drawing closer to the Lord and striving to keep His commandments.

The First Presidency has counseled members of the Church to sing the hymns of Zion.⁷ Following that counsel will help us learn and teach the gospel through our sacred hymns and “bring out the spirit of music in the heart and soul of every boy, every girl, every man, and every woman.”⁸ In doing so we will find greater love for the Lord’s doctrine, increased strength to withstand temptation, and a deepened testimony of the Savior and His love for each of us. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, quoted in “Celebrating the New Hymnbook,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 105.
2. Hymnbook Celebration, Salt Lake City, Utah, September 3, 1985, audiotape, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “New Hymnbook,” 105.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “Worship through Music,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 10.
5. *Hymns*, x.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2008, 35; *New Era*, Apr. 2008, 11.
7. *Hymns*, ix.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “New Hymnbook,” 105.