

A group from our congregation sang recently at the local rest home during our monthly Sunday time slot. One of the group, who had only been with us a time or two before, commented to me later about my own participation. I told them that I really was supporting my friend Tom in this ministry, and that we had been singing together for a very long time.

My first memory of Tom is when he led me to my VBS class at the East Fort St church; we were probably five and six years old, respectively. When I thought about it, I realized that we probably sang together for the first time there: the “Booster, Booster, Be a Booster” song was the likely selection.

Later, in high school, we were both in a male chorus that was organized – I think that we even performed at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). I remember the trip, but not much about the singing. At this time of my life, my voice was not very clear (I believe that the word used to describe it was “fuzzy”). Tom went on to bigger things – selected ‘All State’ in Music, then he became a member of the A Capella Chorus at David Lipscomb College. We ended up rooming together for my senior year at this school.

Tom’s mother was a little worried about that, but we did very well together. When we would sometimes share a ride from Manchester to Nashville and back, we would sing two-part harmony on songs such as ‘Swing Low, Sweet Chariot’ and “This World is Not My Home.” We did a lot of ad-libbing, as I remember, which gave the music a certain unique (but not necessarily good) character.

We both came back home after college, and we worshiped together in the same congregations. He became our worship leader when we both moved to the Forest Mill church. Eventually, a very nice sound system was installed, and he asked me to help with vocal backups by using one of the microphones used to boost the various parts of the harmony.

We also sang at the rest home once a month, as I mentioned in the beginning, and occasionally a small group of us (under Tom’s direction) were asked to sing hymns at someone’s funeral. Tom would give his leadership to that, even arranging the positions of the four or five of us by parts so we could become one voice.

I don’t have a “solo” voice, so I try to blend in with the group (though I tend to be very loud). I sing bass, but Tommy can sing as low as I can, and much higher (and with a much prettier voice). I realize that I am more of a “B” level singer (and remind myself that this scale is logarithmic). But I really enjoy singing as a part of the group.

When I think of ourselves getting older (he is one year younger than me), I wonder which of us will become part of the heavenly choir first. My first thought along this line was that whichever one goes first can save a place beside him for the other. Then I realized that things will be so different in heaven, that in the New Kingdom we will all be right next to each other. And the harmony will really be out of this world!