

## Catching the Smile of God

Worshipping God in our congregation is always an uplifting experience. As our director, Tommy works so hard to prepare for it, organize it, and lead it so that the entire building is filled with sound. He has a great voice, of course, and he uses his arms and hands dramatically to guide us in tempo, volume, and feeling. Like a windmill pumping water out of the earth, he works to draw true worship<sup>1</sup> from the depths of all of us. And like a mechanic moving a large object with a block and tackle, he uses every bit of leverage he has to raise the entire heart of the congregation. Without him there is no harmony, there is no synchronization, and as a result, we are not able to accomplish our purpose of worship. Without him, there is no meaning, no communication<sup>2</sup>.

An amazing thing occurs sometimes during this part of our worship. Tommy is so caught up in the beauty of the moment that he begins to smile. It makes me feel that we as singers must be doing something right, but more likely it means that we have crossed some invisible threshold into a higher region of worship. He can feel it, and I especially hope that God can as well. And I find myself wondering if this is how the face of God looks as we worship.

I would love to think that God is smiling as He looks down and directs us in following Him. I can imagine Him as His arms sway to and fro with the heartbeat of the universe, His creation, His Kingdom. And as He receives our adoration, He makes His face to shine upon us<sup>3</sup>. Amazing Grace – He loves us so!

He pays such attention to us, even though the morning stars sing together and the angels shout for joy in His presence<sup>4</sup>. We have a lot of competition. But He rejoices over us with His own singing<sup>5</sup>. It is so interesting to think of God singing over us; we usually think only about our singing to him. We must listen very carefully to hear the rhythms of God. The goal of worship is to make our heartbeat (or “soulbeat”) match that rhythm<sup>6</sup>.

It is not about the notes and the sounds, as we all know. Sometimes when the congregation sings, there is someone near me that sings so off-key that I can’t tell if I am singing the right notes. But Tommy smiles anyway. And I know that God is smiling, too.

1. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth. John 4:24
2. Teaching in the evangelical community is becoming a cacophony of sound. It’s like an orchestra without a leader; each musician plays his own tune because the conductor is out of the room. There is no harmony, there no orchestration, and, as a result, the musicians are unable to accomplish what they are about to do. They are not free to be musicians; they are unable to learn new arrangements. They can’t do what they are meant to do. Living under the Smile of God, Roger C. Palms, p. 65
3. ... the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you, Numbers 6:25
4. ... the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy... Job 38:2-7
5. The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17
6. Two hearts beating as one, or a least in similar rhythm; one filling in where the other is not in a complementary way; both synched to the pulse of God; different drummer quote? You must listen very carefully to hear the rhythms of God and your true love; The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature. Joseph Campbell