

The Story Behind "Tell Them"

Composer's Notes

According to my handwritten manuscript notes, God inspired me with the tune and lyrics for "Tell Them" on December 6, 1990. As background, I had attended an Emmaus Walk weekend earlier in March 1990 sponsored by United Methodist churches in the state of Maryland. The wonderful Emmaus Walk experience kick-started my inspiration by the Holy Spirit to compose worship music in 1990 and in the years that followed.

My usual habit at that time (and still is) was to do Bible reading and prayer early in the morning. On December 6, 1990 I was reading Psalm 77. I felt that God was about to inspire me with a new song, but I did not see anything in Psalm 77 to put to music at that moment. God (the inner quiet voice) said to me, "Look at Psalm 78 verse 3." There and in the verses that follow, I saw God exhorting parents to tell their children about Him. At that moment I was inspired with the tune and the words for "Tell Them."

I wrote down the tune for "Tell Them" by hand in my manuscript book (this was before I used notation software). I wrote down the verses in couplet form on one sheet of paper. The verses comprised three stanzas. The first line of each verse is the same today as when God inspired me on December 6, 1990. Verse 1 starts with "Tell them what you've heard and known." Verse 2 starts with "Tell them of the Savior's love." Verse 3 starts with "Help them trust in God today." Most of the couplets in the verses remain today as originally inspired although I have made some minor revisions to the text since then.

Fifteen months later, on March 8, 1992, I added the refrain. The refrain begins with "Tell them now, tell them now, while they're here, tell them now."

When I wrote this song in 1990, my children were young, ranging from age 6 to 13. At the time, my wife, I, and our children actively attended Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA.

"Tell Them" was first sung in worship at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church. The Praise Team, comprising 21 adult singers, sang this song for the Offertory on February 23, 2014. I was the Director and Accompanist for the Praise Team from 2000 to my retirement in 2014.

The Youtube link for the "Tell Them – Telling Children about God" music video is:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVRVJyarHSM>.

Musicians can download the "Tell Them" sheet music for free from my website,
www.whitneytunes.com.

Now that I am a grandparent, my hope for this song still is the same as it was when first inspired – that "Tell Them" will be a blessing to many, and will encourage parents and grandparents to tell children about God while the children "are here and near." When we believe in and trust in God, God indeed does "see us through" during our lifetime.

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