

2. **Gathering Song** ~ In the mid-‘60s Terry Cooper was the pastor of the Temple United Methodist Church in the multi-cultural Pico-Union neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles. Jim had the privilege to serve with him as music director. This was an extremely formative time for Jim. Coming from suburban white culture, he had not seen the poverty, the racial injustice, and the courage needed for daily survival that his neighbors experienced there. His job was to gather neighborhood musicians to integrate music from Latin America and the Black Church with traditional hymnody and the emerging ‘60s folk music movement. It was here that he began to write his “folk hymns” in response to Terry’s sermons.

“Gathering Song” was written for the wedding of Terry Cooper and Megan Gordon, honoring their commitment to each other and their ministry of compassion and justice to our diverse neighborhood. The song speaks of hope and healing for our common struggle to flourish, create wellbeing and find joy.

4. **Fierce Love** ~ When Jim was in his early teens, he was seriously ill with a combination of mumps and the current pandemic of the Asian flu. One night his temp was 106 degrees. There was no room for him in the hospital. The family doctor came to the Strathdees’ to attend to Jim and left saying, “If he makes it through the night he’ll be all right. It’s in God’s hands.” All night long his father Fred sat beside him telling him his favorite childhood bedtime stories. At one moment Jim experienced himself floating above his body. He moved up through the roof into the dark night. He was drawn to a distant light through a tunnel of the night sky. He heard sound of many excited voices and the sound of a symphony orchestra “tuning up” before the beginning of a concert. He knew if he waited for the “down beat,” the beginning note of the music, he would be gone forever. He looked down and saw his father dutifully telling him his favorite “Farmer Huttenbrutten” story (a Strathdee improvised generational tale of Farmer, his wife Miranda, and their mule named “Mule”). Jim thought, “Boy, is he going to be ‘pissed off’ if I leave.” BOOM, he was back in his bed, looking at the ceiling. Verse 1 of the song tells this story. Verse 2 tells of a time when his dad showed a similar determined strength of caring for a neighbor, thus, leaving Jim with a vision of how we are to treat our neighbors nearby and far away.

7. **Don’t Fear the Wilderness** ~ a song about finding our pathway through an unknown future, a terrain filled with dangerous obstacles and flourishing possibilities. Where do we find our compass and the light to lead us home? Verse 1 comes from the conversations and life experience of a dear friend and neighbor in Ridgecrest, CA. Verse 2 comes from the privilege we had to work with Ray Bradbury, the science fiction author and futurist. The event was for youth and young adults concerned about their future. Written nearly 50 years ago, this song is still a dependable road map for the uncertain future we are all experiencing.

10. **Jodie's Song** ~ Jodie Howarth was a talented singer and songwriter from Southern California. In her song, "Where is the Lord of Creation?" she expressed her experience that the Holy One is alive in all of us, no matter what our condition or circumstance. This song is found in the *New Wine 1* songbook and recording. Because of her battle with cancer, Jodie was in her last days when she showed up to sing a new song at the preview concert for the *New Wine 2* project. She died shortly afterward. Here, Jeanie sings "Jodie's Song", a simple and beautiful testament of a life of faith, hope and love. RIP dear Jodie...

11. **O, I Will Sing** ~ This song celebrates the healing power of the interconnected natural world in our daily walk – the rain on the mountains, the song of wild birds, the courage of desert flowers in bloom. We are encouraged to drink deeply of living waters, hold hands, and sing!

13. **Sanctus** ~ Part of traditional Christian communion liturgy, here is a congregational setting of the Holy, Holy, Holy. It is part of a Mass written for the youth of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. It was first sung at a General Convention of the Episcopalian Church at the Anaheim Convention Center in 1985.

14. **We Are Called to Follow Jesus** ~ Our California-Pacific Conference of the UMC owned a group of residential retirement facilities called Pacific Homes. There was a group lawsuit brought against the conference by the residents of the homes. They were promised lifetime care for what they were able to pay when then signed up. Two things happened: 1) the elders were living longer and their care became more expensive than anticipated, so after several years Pacific Homes asked them to make additional payments in violation of the promises made to them when they moved in, hence the suit; 2) the finances of the homes were dreadfully mishandled over the years which added to the problem.

When all of this finally surfaced, it came as a huge shock. When all was said and done, our conference had to raise many millions of dollars to settle the lawsuit. We were asked to be the music leaders for the Conference meeting when all of this "hit the fan". Jim wrote "Called to Follow Jesus" as a theme song for that meeting. Our churches had to sell property, cut vital ministries (campus ministries, camping programs and many others). The challenge, of course, was to overcome the paralyzing despair we all felt, and to hang on to our vision of what had brought us all together in the first place – to be the church, to be open to the Spirit, let God's justice and healing flow through us, to be hopeful and embrace our part in God's future.

15. **War Orphan's Lullaby** ~ The fall of Saigon in April of 1975 marked the end of the US-Vietnam war. President Gerald Ford ordered the evacuation of over 3,000 orphaned children to the US. This was called "Operation Baby Lift." I (Jim speaking) was an active opponent of this unnecessary war. Many of us had lost friends and family members in the conflict. Our troops napalmed Vietnamese villages, farms and

their beautiful countryside. Many families were burned alive, and now, here we were stealing their children! I do understand the humanitarian intent behind this action, and the resultant clamoring of families throughout our country to adopt these kids, many of which families I'm sure were not able to have children of their own. But I was very bitter. I was put off by the advertising campaign to find homes for these children. It reminded me of our end-of-year bargain basement deals. I decided to write a song about this which included this totally racist and cynical phrase, "Hurry up while the supply lasts. Last chance to get your slant-eyed toy!" Jeanie, the mother of all wisdom, said, "Jim, you **may not** put that phrase in your song!"

I took a deep breath, settled down, and realized that this song needed to be from the children's perspective. When I thought of what they were going through, the song wrote itself. At that time I could not sing it without a tear or two, which is usually the sign that I "got it right."

19. Walls That Divide ~ "This broken world seeks lasting health and vital unity." These words and music by Canadians Walter Farquharson and Ron Klusmeier make a strong proclamation to break down the dividing walls of hatred and fear that keep us apart. The song encourages us all to experience our common humanity and create peace, justice and well-being for all.

20. Our Father ~ This reflective and very singable call and response setting of The Lord's Prayer has been widely used in contemporary Christian worship. We've tried, but have not been able to find the composer. The only hint we have is that this setting was written by "a Catholic Sister from Washington State." It is offered here as we learned it, with the addition of our piano accompaniment.

22. Now Is the Time for Hearts to Sing ~ This three-part anthem for the Easter season speaks of the power of Jesus' sacrificial love that can lead us to a life of fulfillment and joy. It was written for, and recorded by, our choir at the United Methodist Church, Ridgecrest, CA. This was our first published anthem.

26. How Can You Call Me Lord, and Not Do What I Say? ~ Canadian pastor Gordon Jardine asks this compelling question to all of us who seek to follow Jesus. What does Jesus ask of us?—to bring hope to the hopeless, the destitute, the crushed and oppressed, compassion for those who mourn, justice and liberation for the chained and enslaved. How does this happen? It's all about love, a redemptive love that connects all of us to each other and to God's dream of a flourishing, beloved community and creation. This is a three-part choral anthem we have set to Gordon's words.