

Song Story #10 – Oh Redeeming One

Minnesota has the second largest population of Hmong people in the world outside of Southeast Asia. The Hmong people fought for the US in the Vietnam war and helped rescue US soldiers from behind enemy lines. Because of that, many Hmong people were allowed to immigrate to the US after the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. In the 1950's before the war, Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries were the first to bring the Gospel to the Hmong people at a time when they had no written language. Many of them received the Gospel and became followers of Christ. There are now quite a few Hmong churches in the Twin Cities and in other areas of the US. But this ethnic people group has only ever heard the Gospel in the last 50 or 60 years. So it's an awesome thing to see many of these great people continuing to follow Christ and spread the Gospel to further generations!

Since we began Heart of the City Ministries in 1996, we've always had at least one Hmong singer in our group. First it was Pao Yang, then Sara Xiong, then brother and sister, Kangza and Levee Kong and now, we still have Levee and now Jake Thao has sung with us for quite a few years as well.

When I began writing Oh Redeeming One, I was thinking of our Hmong singers and the Hmong people in general. Somehow, somewhere along the way, I had gotten on an email list of Hmong people that routinely sent out notices about the suffering of the Hmong people that are still in Southeast Asia and are still being persecuted by the North Vietnamese for their role in the Vietnam war. I read stories of these people still having to hide and live in mountainous areas where there is little food and harsh conditions and where they are still being hunted down, imprisoned and tortured or live in severe poverty. When I heard their stories, I couldn't help but put a face on them like Pao's, Sara's, Kangza's, Levee's and Jake's. I thought of how the Gospel is the only hope for many of these people in these terrible situations. I thought of these people as I wrote these lyrics:

“Jesus, You are Light in the darkest place. In a world of sorrow, You're my song of praise...”

and the words

“Jesus, You are hope in a hopeless land. You're my solid rock when there's sinking sand. You're the shelter from every troubled storm. In the coldest night, Your love keeps me warm.”

These words were specific to the Hmong people as I wrote them, but they are also universal in their truth to all of us. The other lyrics of the song just poured out of my own soul's gratitude and marvel for God's love for me in spite of His complete knowledge of me. If we work hard or have talent or accomplish

something good, sometimes we can impress people. But there's nothing hidden from God – and I don't think that any of us are too impressive to Him. And in fact, he sees the extreme depravity of our souls and our constant self-seeking. Yet His love is so great that He justifies sinners and purchases us out of slavery to sin by being our very Redeemer. Jake Thao explains in concert that the Hmong word for Redeemer means “one who stands in harms way for another”. How beautiful and true and profound that is. Praise God that we have a Redeeming One who knows us intimately and yet loves us so much!

I wrote this song in a hymn style format and worked to include some “Asian” melodic intervals to bring it that feel. The style ended up with sort of a combination Celtic and Asian feel. The Hmong solo on the recording is by Kangza Kong, who later got married and moved to the Milwaukee area. Jake Thao now sings it live. The English solo is beautifully sung by my bride, Sandy.

We recorded this song on the Heart of the City Worship Band CD entitled “With One Voice”. You can hear clips from that CD and order it from our website at www.heartofthecity.org and it's also available on most mp3 sites. To watch a Youtube slide show of this song, click here - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQYavExU4Ac>

O Redeeming One

Words and Music by Dan Adler

1. Jesus, You are Light in the darkest place
In a world of sorrow, You're my song of praise
You're the sacrifice that has saved my soul
You're the healing balm that has made me whole

Chorus: O Redeeming One, You have set me free
For you know me well, yet you still love me
I will sing your praise 'til Your face I see
Then I'll be with You and You'll be with me

2. Jesus, You are Hope in a hopeless land
You're my Solid Rock when there's sinking sand
You're my shelter from every troubled storm
In the coldest night, your love keeps me warm

Chorus: O Redeeming One, You have set me free
For you know me well, yet you still love me
I will sing your praise 'til Your face I see
Then I'll be with You and You'll be with me

3. Jesus, You are Truth in a world turned gray
You're the lamp that guides all along the way
Though I fall in sin, still You pick me up

When I thirst for You, You will fill my cup
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