

HOW SHALL I CALL YOU

(also in 'Let's Sing it again' CD & Book)

1977. When the supplement to the Lutheran Hymnal was being prepared in the mid-80s, I was asked to give names to the tunes, to fit with hymn tradition. Dorothy and I enjoyed the opportunity, dedicating some songs to people who'd been influential or who had a hand in helping the song come about. This one got the name of Leigh Creek, a coal mining town, about 550 km north of Adelaide. Not because it was written there, but our band first played it at the opening service of the town's new ecumenical church centre. They sang it well. The names we call God, and the images we have, shape our faith and the style of life that flows out of our beliefs. This has been highlighted in debate about the gender bias of traditional names like 'Master', 'Lord', 'King', and also 'Father'. We need to return again and again to the Scriptures, and experience fresh understandings of God who is much bigger than any one image or name. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we know just a little of who you are. As we grow older, keep alive in us a childlike sense of wonder and a childish sense of fun, a young person's daring and an older person's patience.

1. How shall I call you? Maker of heaven,
poet of sunset and painter of sky,
Father almighty, who's running to find us,
giving his Son who must suffer and die:

Glory to the Father, the Son and the Spirit,
let's sing it again and again.
Glory to the Father, the Son and the Spirit,
forever and ever. Amen.

2. How shall I call you? Lover of children,
shepherd and teacher and brother and friend,
healer of blind man and healer of leper;
you are beginning and middle and end:

3. How shall
I call you? Spirit of comfort,
cloud in the daytime and fire in the night,
guide as we wander, protector in danger,
listener and helper and giver of sight.

4. How shall I call you? Master and servant,
lord of the seasons and lord of the years;
faithful and constant in loving and mercy,
giver of laughter and taker of tears: