

WE ARE SORRY

This is one of the many songs written specifically for the long-running monthly Student Service at St Stephen's (1970-99). Written for a clown service in '92, the song was the confession and absolution for that night. The song is one of many of mine that received a lot of help from my wife, Dorothy (= Gift of God). With her help, the tune is a lot better than when I first wrote it. In that service, the worship leader 'spoke' only with actions, so it was often left to the songs to carry the detailed message. I attempted to incorporate the confession, absolution and prayer of consecration in the one song. Confession of sin, especially in song, is not exactly a popular thing to do in our current church culture— nor in the wider scene. If people don't come up to scratch in performance or morals or achievement there's always an excuse to be found. The doctrine of original sin is not a popular explanation early in the 21st century. (7.6.03) 'We are sorry' talks plain, straightforward language. It doesn't talk 'holy' language. Many, probably the majority of people, think that God-stuff has to be about religious, holy things. I understand it differently and I think Paul did too, copying Jesus, and Martin did as well, copying both of them. The really radical change in thinking about God-stuff comes from Jesus — the God who became human. Not just pretend-human or part-human or holy-human but completely-human while also being completely-God. So we can talk normally to God, just as Jesus did to his Father. We can talk about our fallibility in normal words and expressions: 'We are sorry for the foolish things we do' 'Jesus, help me to be all that I can be' Us humans find it very hard to rid ourselves of the notion that we have to lift ourselves up to God. We think we have to do that with 'holy' words, 'holy' actions, 'holy' thinking. Meanwhile God says 'forget all that'. God becomes one of us, tells us that we don't have to go anywhere, be anything, act a certain way.

1. We are sorry for the foolish things
we do,
for the stupid, hurtful words we keep
on saying,
for the thoughts that never show
how much hate and greed we know —
we are sorry, we are sorry.

2. Please forgive me for the careless
way I live,
for the empty goals I find myself
pursuing,
for the wasted hours of time,
treating what is yours as mine —
please forgive me, please forgive me.

Jesus says your sins have been
forgiven;
Jesus says you're free to start again.
Freedom for the captive,
healing for the blind and lame.
Come and drink the water if you're
thirsty;
if you're hungry, come and eat the
bread.
Everything is ready – step out on the
road ahead.

3. Set me free from every sin that
scars my life.
Fill me with your power, loving Holy
Spirit.
May my ego die each day,
may your life be on display —
Jesus, help me, Jesus, help me.

4. Jesus, help me to be all that I can
be,
and to see the signs you give me for
direction.
Help me get to know you more,
trusting you for what's in store —
Jesus, help me, Jesus, help me.

Robin Mann © 1992