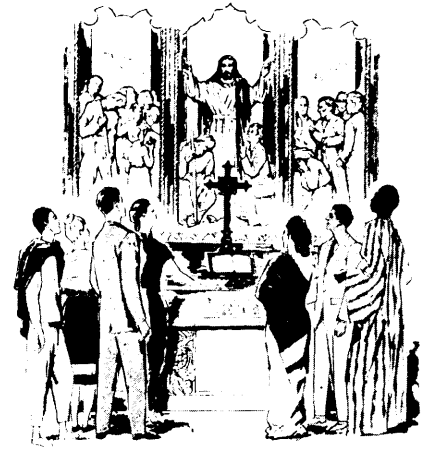


## WE GATHER TOGETHER

Imagine an immense table—of such great length and width that all the adults and children of the world could gather around to “ask the Lord’s blessing.”

The sights and sounds of such an occasion would be unusual. Each would be wearing the different fabrics and styles and colors popular in his part of the world—and each would be speaking and singing in the language of his country!



To the host—our Lord—there would be no confusion, however, for God knows each one as “. . . his own.” And each, in turn, would be able to sing to God some of the folk hymns and tunes that have come from the hearts of worshipers in his country. Look through the indices of your hymnal to find hymns from these countries:

France: \_\_\_\_\_ Wales: \_\_\_\_\_

Germany: \_\_\_\_\_ England: \_\_\_\_\_

Ireland: \_\_\_\_\_ Italy: \_\_\_\_\_

“We Gather Together” might be a good hymn for all to sing together since it was sung by the Dutch and Germans long before an English translation was made.

The words first appeared in 1625 written in the Dutch language by an unknown author to celebrate Dutch freedom from Spanish sovereignty. Two hundred years later, the words became more popular when included in Edward Kremser’s collection with a tune he arranged based on a **Netherlands Folk Song**, although Kremser himself was a choirmaster and composer from Vienna. A German translation by Carl Bieber and an English translation by Theodore Baker helped the hymn around the world to become known to congregations everywhere—even around our imaginary table!

Look more closely at the Kremser tune to find some of the reasons large congregations can sing it well.

(1) Mark the long phrases which carry the text easily for the singers. (2) Mark the rhythm pattern that happens over and over. (3) Number the scale steps of the melody. Put a line under each melody note which falls on the strong tonic chord steps (1-3-5) of the D Major scale.

Though the words of “We Gather Together” were written to celebrate a national victory, the people gathered around our worldwide table sing with the hope of moving toward a spiritual victory in which God’s kingdom of love toward one another will become a reality!

*“Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,  
Ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine;  
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;  
Thou, Lord, wast at our side, all glory be Thine!”*