

WERE YOU THERE?



Part of the richness of God's Plan for Creation is that all living things have SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES!

One SIMILARITY among human personalities is the ability to experience an event — its sights and sounds and feelings — and to store that event as a memory for future recall.

Try an experiment after your choir has attended an unusual event or participated in a special service. Have each person recall the SIMILAR experience from their stored memory of it. Then compare recollections to discover how the same event causes DIFFERENT memories in DIFFERENT persons.



Another amazing kind of memory — with SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES — is from events we experience not as actual participants but through its meaning to others as expressed in their words, their paintings, their music. Most of the events in the life of Christ have become known to us as stored in our memories in this way.

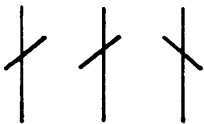


What event in the life of Christ does "Were You There?" call into our minds? What particular things were remembered about the event? How do feelings in the present moment combine with the meaning of the past event on the words:

"Sometimes it causes me to tremble . . ."



MUSIC is full of many SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES! In what way is "Were You There?" similar to other hymns you know? How is it different? Can you find similarities and differences within the tune itself between its melodic patterns, its intervals, its phrases, its rhythms? Shut your eyes and listen to the first three notes. Does it bring other melodies into your memory? Are any of these melodies spirituals, like "Were You There?"?



SPIRITUALS are a way that God has worked through the SIMILAR NEEDS of all men to express their deepest feelings through music and the arts — and yet, to do so through the DIFFERENT rhythms and patterns and harmonies that are characteristic of their nationality or race or environment.

The most recent hymn books recognize the richness of this diversity by including spirituals and hymns from many DIFFERENT nations and backgrounds. Select from your hymnal DIFFERENT types of music which describe SIMILAR events in the life and teaching of Jesus. Think how monotonous a hymnal would be that included only one type of musical expression!



The greatest SIMILARITY shared by all human beings is our relationship to God as our Father. But our memories and interpretation of events in that relationship will cause us to seek DIFFERENT ways of responding to Him — as individuals and as members of groups.



As individuals, we may call God by DIFFERENT names or recognize His Presence by DIFFERENT signs and symbols. We may express our devotion in the words of a complex chorale or through the simplicity of a spiritual or folk hymn.

As members of groups, we may gather to worship in churches with DIFFERENT denominational names or separated because of our skin color or language. We may use DIFFERENT orders of service or vestments in DIFFERENT designs.



And from the richness of our DIFFERENCES, God's creation is lifted out of the ordinary into a constantly changing, evolving plan in which each of us have a part. To the question, "Were You There?," we answer, "We Are There!" — remembering and entering into the meaning of the Crucifixion Event in our own times and in our own ways!

(In each row of figures, can you find the DIFFERENT figure?)