

About...

Father, Spirit, Son

...how and why it was written

This song was written quite deliberately with a desire to see more new Trinitarian songs come through. Sometimes I think if you looked at some church worship you could be led to believe that we are singing about one in one, or perhaps two in one, rather than three in one.

There has been some considerable discussion of this in various writings on worship, and in discussion seminars at events such as Holy Trinity Brompton's, Worship Central. So this is nothing new. But sometimes, in our right central adoration of Christ, we have been guilty of neglecting the Spirit, and particularly the Father.

There are many ways to counterbalance this – such as writing songs addressed to different parts of the trinity, and/or considering different events or concepts from the differing perspectives of Father, Spirit and Son – e.g. what was the Father's agony like at the cross? this type of song – with a verse for each member of the Trinity – is a more deliberate, conscious type of song, designed to help us focus on the concept of the trinity.

Like my invocation song, *Fill me*, this song has a strongly Celtic influence in the melody and harmonic structure, as well as a Trinitarian focus. I think this is because I have a strong connection with Celtic prayers such as St Patrick's breastplate in which 'I bind unto myself today the power of the mighty three' appears. The trinity is obviously not a unique theology of the Celtic church, but they seem to have had unique understanding of – or at least focus on – it.

...how, where and when it could be used

This is a congregational worship song, and works well in a praise/declaration block. However, some people find the number of words and concepts, and the pace at which they span the 6/8 lilt a little tricky to pick up.

...its place on the journey to where world and worship meet

I don't think this song necessarily has a specific place on this journey. I think it is more about a different – though closely related – journey. We are called to worship in spirit and truth; this means I think many things, but one of its most important resonances for me is balancing the leading of the spirit, and the prophetic emphasis of what God is stressing in his church at any one time, with diligent adherence to the word, and the orthodox thoroughness of his complete message to the whole church through the ages.

I.e. our songs must of course express the zeitgeist of what the church is experiencing, learning or stressing now. But they must not do this at the cost of losing a balanced, holistic theology. People remember what they sing. Sometimes more than sermons, melodies and song-words shape our theology. So if we have large gaps with significant doctrines missing and/or overemphasis on some aspects in our worship library, our theology is likely to

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become skewed. Though our creeds and statements of belief may remain thorough and orthodox, the beliefs that are shaping our day-to-day faith and actions, will inevitably shift in response to the words we sing.

Applied to the trinity specifically, parts of the modern church have tended to overemphasise the focus on Jesus in their worship, and sometimes even narrowed this further to just focus on a few particular aspects of his character and life. So much so that it has started to narrow the view, or understanding, we have of a Trinitarian God within those areas of the church. The more we focus on the fullness of the God-head, and the incredible breadth and depth of God's character – the more we will come to know him, and be truly like him.

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