bits from bob….

Reflecting on Ministry

August 24, 2026

***"For the Son of man did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (Mk. 10:45)**

I am reflecting on service, servanthood, ministry. Servant and minister, service and ministry, are often translated from a single Greek word. A transliteration of the word gives us our word deacon.

So simple, so profound. I am somewhere near the end of 60 years of ministry, beginning in the fall of 1966. Threescore (a future WOW)! I like to call it seven decades – 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 00s, 10s, 20s. At one time, I dreamed of eight decades—adding the 30s. I see that as more doubtful now that Jan and I can see our 80th birthdays on the near horizon.

Have I been a faithful minister? In my heart of hearts, I must honestly answer, sometimes yes—sometimes no. Sometimes more, sometimes less. I look back at inconsistency; don't we all. I also look at threescore years and see direction, purpose, commitment, dedication, growth.

Servanthood is not temporary. Servanthood is never over. The need exists, the lost hunger and thirst for the gospel, the servant must respond. We are doing only what is our duty to do (Luke 17).

In this week's WOW, I will mention a song that recently caught the attention of Jan and me. I have already prepared that WOW, but you have to wait for "the rest of the story" until Wednesday.

As I wrote the article, I discovered lots of information, various versions of the song, additional verses that were unknown to us. What I found does not fit nicely into a 5-minute WOW, or even into a slightly longer "bits."

I summarize, and point you to the written notes if you want to work through more details.

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Tim Jennings on **Hymn Studies Blog** (Servant Song | hymnstudiesblog) gives a history of the popular song, *Make Me A Servant.* For those with interest, Jennings gives an extensive history. I summarize.

A song which asks the Lord to help us to be like Him in ministering to others is "Servant Song" or "Servant's Song." The original text was written and the original tune composed by Jimmy Owens (b. 1930) and Carol Owens (b. 1931), a husband and wife songwriting and author team who were pioneers of Contemporary Christian Music. (Their children were Jamie Owens Collins, a recording artist, songwriter, and speaker, and Buddy Owens, an author and a teacher at Saddleback Church in California.)The Owenses' original song, copyrighted in 1978 by Communique Music was titled either "Make Me a Servant" or "Make Me Like You" and appears to have been a single stanza:

Lord, make me like You , Please make me like You.
You are a servant, Make me one too.
O Lord, I am willing, Do what You must do
To make me like You, Lord, Just make me like You, Whatever You do.

This was altered later to a three stanza version. (For Jan and me, this is our favorite version.)

1. **Make me a servant, Lord, make me like You, For You are a servant, make me one, too.**
Make me a servant, do what You must do, To make me a servant, make me like You.
2. **To love my brother, to serve like You do. I humble my spirit, I bow before You.**
And through my service, I'll be just like You. So make me a servant, make me like You.
3. **Open my hands, Lord, and teach me to share; Open my heart, Lord, and teach me to care.**
For service to others is service to You. Make me a servant, make me like You.

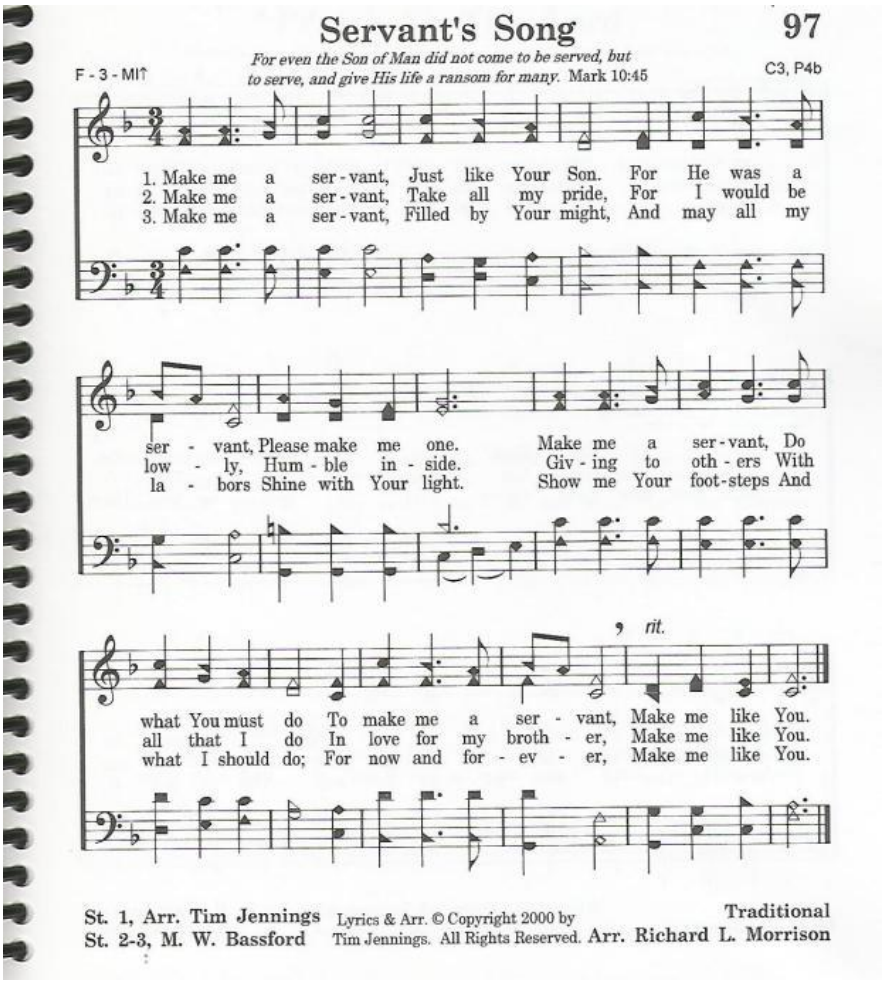
Around 2000, Tim Jennings reworked the Owenses' lyrics, unaware of their origin. An elder in the church arranged the music and a preacher friend provided two additional stanzas. This version of the song appeared in the 2007 *Hymns for Worship Supplement* edited by R. J. Stevens et. al., where the tune is listed as "Traditional"; and the 2007 *Sumphonia Hymnal Supplement* and the 2012 *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* both edited by Steve Wolfgang et. al. (This version is included below.)

Other versions of the song have appeared, one having the Owenses' single first stanza labeled "Traditional" with music arranged in 1995 by Darrell Bledsoe in the 2010 *Praise Hymnal*.

Another version had that stanza with two additional stanzas written by Jack Boyd in the 2010 *Songs for Worship and Praise*, edited by Robert J. Taylor. The additional stanzas by Jack Boyd are as follows:

Take me and mold me, and make me like You; For You are a servant, make me one too.
Light me the pathway that leads on to You. Please make me a servant; make me like You.

Watch me and guide me, and make me like You; For You are a servant, make me one too.
This is the prayer that I send up to You: Please make me a servant; make me like You.

Here is the version by Tim Jennings, described above.

Stanza 1 tells who our example of being a servant is --

Make me a servant, just like Your Son.

For He was a servant, Please make me one.

Make me a servant, do what You must do

To make me a servant, Make me like You.

Stanza 2 tells us how to become a servant --

Make me a servant, take all my pride,

For I would be lowly, humble inside.

Giving to others with all that I do

In love for my brother, Make me like You.

Stanza 3 tells us the results of being a servant --

Make me a servant, filled by Your might,

And may all my labors shine with Your light.

Show me Your footsteps and what I should do;

For now and forever, Make me like You.