

**We have added a
new Office in
Lake Stevens!**



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The Connection

**A PUBLICATION OF ERIK BOHLIN, M.A., P.S.
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SINGING IN THE CHOIR TAUGHT ME HOW TO LIVE

BY ERIK BOHLIN, M.A.

God communicates with us in many different ways. We go about our life, oftentimes so noisily that we can not hear Him and what He is trying to say. One cold fall evening, I walked into church and saw that the choir had very few people. So minimal in fact that the Choir director, Laurie, motioned me to come over and help. She looked desperate. “Well if they needed me that badly, what would I have to lose,” I thought to myself. Not having seen the music before, I just began to sing, looking at the notes and following the guys next to me. Wanting to blend in of course I didn’t sing too loud.

Soon, I forgot, my nervousness, my ‘self’ and let the music carry me. I began to sing the notes more accurately just by trusting that it would work. After that evening, I began to sing more regularly with the choir. I had been in choirs in the past, but had never trusted that I could “sight sing.” That is, looking at the notes and singing them. You know, like “read music.” I had always admired people who could do this.

A strange thing happened. The more I sang with the choir the more I felt like I was in fact beginning to sing the notes that I saw. How? I am not sure. God began to speak through the music, through this experience to my heart. This is what I learned. Just as I am learning to sing in choir—to actually sight sing, God was

OPEN HOUSE SEE THE NEW OFFICE

**DATE: FRIDAY MAY 18TH
& SATURDAY 19TH**
TIME: 11AM-4PM
**LOCATION: 43091ST AVE NE
SUITE 8, EVERETT**

(ACROSS FROM DAIRY QUEEN NEAR FRONTIER VILLAGE)

WE HAVE ADDED A NEW OFFICE!

I have added a new office in Lake Stevens/Frontier Village to serve you. This larger new office will allow me to do groups, seminars and workshops quite easily. It is centrally located farther north to serve our clients in Everett, Marysville, Arlington, Monroe and Snohomish.

I will still be seeing clients in Lynnwood! Do not panic. Those clients from Seattle, the Eastside and who live near Lynnwood will still be able to see me. I am there two days a week.

For more information call Erik:

Lynnwood office 425-670-2415

Everett office 425-334-8916

24 hour toll free paging 1-800-487-5198

LIFEWORKS CLASS

“FORGETTING WHAT LIES BEHIND”

This class that will look at how we were influenced by our growing up years. This class will come from a “wellness” model to help you gain freedom from five core dysfunctional patterns.

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Call Erik for more information 425-334-8916.



notes we missed. Yes, we can learn from the missed notes, but it is wise to aim for the note we want to sing, rather than trying not to sing the wrong note.

Truth #5 We all need guidance.

While the notes guide me at one level, the choir director, Laurie, guides me at a different level. I would not even be standing here singing without her encouragement. She tells me when to start, to stop, what to sing, and if we are hitting the right notes or not. She gives us comfort, seeing her smiling face—singing with her heart. While she is singing with us, she is leading us by example. She is so encouraging to me. Continually, making me feel at home and wanting me to join the choir. Her gestures of including me are very significant. This director represents the spiritual father, the one who takes a great interest in our lives. Wanting us to turn out okay, to make and finish the race. Encouraging us to get in the race. Speeding us up to the tempo and slowing us down when we need it. Helping us find the rhythm of the true spiritual life. Helping us know what to sing. Challenging us to hit the notes more accurately—to not miss the mark.

When we hit a wrong note, she doesn't stop the song, chastise me and embarrass me in front of the group, but rather continues the song. She motions for us where the right note is, focusing on the right note, instead of the wrong one.

So it is with our fight against sin. To conquer this successfully, we need to focus on the right notes. To learn the true tune and words of Christ. To make it the song of our hearts. To live this song and have it repeat itself in my life allowing the Great Director to have it grow.

Many Christians have gone before us and have sung this song successfully. These departed saints certainly know the true words to touch the heart of our Heavenly Father. Certainly they would know how to pray in order to save us. Could it be that we are in fact surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses that are singing with us. Singing in our behalf, singing in such celestial tones, that the Christians of this earth may have heard only faintly. As we silence ourselves from our own thoughts and from the noise of this world, we may be able to hear the song! The song of Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. . . .

showing me the spiritual truths similar to this process. I don't know how it was happening, but I just somehow kept on singing, trusting that I would be able to see the notes, move with them and catch the words. Words and notes and melodies I had never seen before. In a choir, one does not sing alone. I sang with people on each side of me, being guided by them as they look at the notes and sing the words. It was comforting to have them surrounding me. I was embedded in love—embedded in the music. Eventually, the music, the melody, the chant carried me and I just flowed into trusting that it would work.

Having sung these words and tones throughout the service, I begin to have these words and tunes “minister” to me throughout the day—to remind me to do what is right and pleasing to the Lord. To keep me from sinning. To hide the word of God in my heart.

A Christian saint from the 4th century, John Chrysostom, says that a thief will not enter the house and take anything if there is a party going on inside the house. So it is with our minds and hearts, if we continue to pray without ceasing. Satan may be outside the house, but he will not enter. If we are left with our own thoughts, how vulnerable and open we are to the attacks of the enemy. But if our thoughts are joined and comforted with the words of Christ and the prayers of the saints, the thief will make his leave not taking anything.

I began to see that there were certain truths that not only helped me learn my music, but more importantly helped me in my walk with Christ.

Truth #1 If I *only* follow my fellow choir me



looking at the music, I will be lost. We must look to God for direction. Because every person's soul has been darkened by sin, we can not look to man, but to God for our recovery.

*For there is no one who acknowledges me;
Refuge has failed me;
No one cares for my soul.*

*I cried out to You, O Lord: I said, "you are my refuge"
My portion in the land of the living.*

Psalm 142: 4-5

Do not look to man, look to God.

If I try too hard to sing, it will not work. Trying too hard means trying by myself without God's grace, the Holy Spirit. It is only when I trust God that I will be able to sing something I haven't seen before with ease. It is only by trusting in Him, can I live this life I haven't seen before.

Truth #2 We must listen.

We have all been tone deaf. Our ears have become dull of hearing by sin. Sin is missing the mark—missing the note. We often think that we are hitting the right note, when in fact we are not. We blend in with the song of this world, which has no real melody, no true harmony, no peaceful rhythm. Yes, the world is singing us a song, hoping that we will join in. There are no choirs in the world. Everyone sings their own song, making up their own words. How many times have I heard the song, "I did it my way" at funerals. How tragic it is to have not found the true melody, to sing one's *own* song and be isolated from the rest of humanity.

There is a false harmony in this world. It appears as harmony, but rather it is dissonant tones stressing both our hearts and minds. First, because we don't know what the real melody and the real words are. Second, because we believe that it doesn't matter what you believe or how you live your life, as long as you have "love" in your heart and are "sincere", that this is good enough. The truth is that we can only harmonize if we know what the true melody is—the melody of our Creator. We can only harmonize if we live our lives in congruence with right and true belief in God. Otherwise, our very lives, are a dissonant tone, creating a vibration that shakes us senseless. **Yes**, we cannot see or hear clearly. We are without clear senses. I am writing this from personal experience. This leads us to another truth.

Truth #3 We must surrender our own own song.

For a choir to exist, one must give up his or her own melody and do what the notes say. We must say good bye to our own tune, our own words for the sake of greater beauty. For one to find one's life, one must lose it first.

Because we cannot hear the true song amidst the noise of this world, we must silence ourselves to hear His voice. We need to listen. We need to obey Him. When we hear the true song of the Gospel, something rings true in our hearts. God is speaking to us.

The notes are the truths of Christ. We want to hit each note right on the mark—not missing the mark, but hitting it on the mark. This will take practice. Follow these notes in faith. Just sing them. Don't analyze them, think about them, talk about them, wonder if there is a better note or not, or try to harmonize—but sing what is written.

Lord, give us true eyes and ears and hearts to know what You desire from us.

As I allow the Grace of God to work in my life so that my actions will match God's will, there will be harmony.

Truth #4 We can only sing *one* note at a time.

Unless we are Tuvan throat singers from southern Siberia, who are gifted with the ability to sing chords, we can only sing one note at a time. So we need to take one step at a time, trusting God for each step, for each movement toward Him, for each deliverance from each temptation. We can not win this battle or sing this song by looking at the notes too far ahead or re-singing the notes we should have sung. We can only sing the notes that we are to sing now. We won't be able to sing the right notes if we focus



**We can only
harmonize if
we live our
lives in
congruence
with right
and true
belief in God.**