

# A Life of Praise

by Teresa Emery

**“Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful. Let Israel be glad in its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre.” Psalm 149:1-3**

Several years ago my husband and I traveled to South Africa to meet with our brothers and sisters in our companion synod. While among the people – nearly all of whom were black – we were struck the most by the attitude of praise which emanated from them.

These were poor, simple folk – they had to walk up to 3 miles for drinking water, and lived in one or two room dwellings. Nevertheless, worship was central to their lives, and they lived their faith. They practiced what Jesus taught in Matthew 22:37-39, what we know as the Great Commandment. They were kind and generous, offering us – fellow Christians and visitors – the best that they had.

Song and prayer were constantly on the lips of many. It was simply their habit, and they were totally unselfconscious. The joy they shared was almost tangible. The comfort of being constantly in contact with God overcame the poverty and circumstances of being blacks in a barely-post-apartheid time. They gave us far more than we gave to them.

As I write these words and think about the people we met, some words from a contemporary praise song by Darlene Zschech come to mind. (The song is called, *All Things Are Possible!*)

Your praise is always on my lips  
my heart  
And I will praise You with a new song.  
You fill my life with greater joy  
You  
And I will praise You with a new song.

Your word is living in  
My soul will bless You Lord  
Yes I delight myself in  
My soul will bless You Lord

Now that's how I want to live!

***Lord, thank You for the gift of song, and for the joy that comes from singing Your songs. Help us to know You better and to share Your joy with others. In Jesus' name, AMEN.***