

## **Song Story # 6 - "Great Creator"**

I grew up in northern Wisconsin, 15 miles from any town on 320 acres of woods and ponds. My parents had a fish hatchery and we sold minnows to bait shops for a living. It was a hard living with lots of difficult work in difficult weather. But I was so blessed to be raised in the midst of the riches of nature. My godly parents cultivated that appreciation in my older brother and I and I spent many, many hours alone, walking in the woods or with my dogs and with my family. My friends who know me well now sometimes mockingly call me "Terrain Man" because I can spot anything that grows in the woods that's edible - or not. I am very grateful for my heritage because God met me there and I still never find a situation where I more instinctively want to pray than when I'm in the woods again. I've written quite a few songs over the years reflecting my appreciation of God's creation, but I wanted to write a song that specifically referenced food. God has blessed us with such diverse kinds of food that grow in the earth and yet I haven't heard any praise songs that I can think of that really acknowledge the blessing and wonder of that (except perhaps the old hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth"). And all I could think of as a format for such a song would be a children's song. So I had that idea brewing in my mind. I also had an interesting little melodic line get stuck in my head that I just sort of kept on hold. Well, a few years after we started Heart of the City, a Native American singer named Evangeline Jackson joined our group. She and her husband, Randy, had their own Native American music ministry as well. But we didn't have any music that reflected a Native American approach. So I began to think about how almost all of Native American music acknowledges the "Great Spirit" or "Great Creator" and also how they reference food and creation so much. As I was thinking of that, that little melody that stuck in my head came to mind and I thought that that actually had a unique sound to it that could fit in a Native American style song. So suddenly I had a convergence of music and lyrical ideas and style direction that looked like it would be a fit. I wanted the lyrics to reflect a Native American perspective but to also clearly acknowledge the truth that Jesus is that very Great Creator. So I worked to bring references to the sky and eagles and the earth and then I also drew from Psalm 95: 4,5 which speaks of the deepest valleys being in God's hands and the mountains belonging to him and the seas stretched before Him. In the second verse and the second chorus of the song, I was then able to express my gratitude for "fruit of earth, each taste and color" and to express in the chorus "Hear our song for gratitude....for You filled the earth with food". Evangeline Jackson recorded the lead vocal on this song but then she and Randy moved to Nevada a few years later and now, Karen Austin, who we recently sent out our "Band Member Story" about, sings the lead on this song at Heart of the City events.

After writing this song, I thought that it could sound great with a Native American flute. Sandy had been a clarinet player in high school but hadn't done anything with her abilities since then. But after our second Heart of the City CD, she began to pick up the penny whistle and recorder and play on our song "O Redeeming One". So I thought it would be great to get her a Native American

Flute and have her play on this song. I knew nothing about these flutes except that they play a pentatonic scale so that you can only play in one key. I didn't know where to buy one either. So it was just days before Sandy's birthday in 2005 and I decided to call down to the Indian Center in South Minneapolis to see if they sold Native American flutes. They said that they didn't but that there happened to be a traveling Native American Flute salesman that was there that afternoon who would be leaving in about an hour. So I grabbed my guitar, since I knew I had to find a flute that fit the key of G minor and quickly drove down there. The guy had some beautiful flutes, but they weren't cheap and I couldn't compare with Walmart to see if I was getting a deal or not. So I went ahead and chose one in the right key and gave to Sandy for her birthday. It turned out to be a great choice and was the beginning of us getting several others and writing a whole CD's worth of music for use on our instrumental CD, "Wind of the Spirit".

In writing different styles of music, it's a real challenge to try to write them in an effective way that allows the message to come through clearly but that is also authentic and doesn't end up being a caricature of the style you're seeking to write in. I had never attempted to write in the realm of Native American styles of music before this song and I really was concerned that it wouldn't end up being a joke or being offensive. But I was very pleased and thankful when our Native American board member, Charlie Bench, told me that I had captured the soul of the Native American people in this song and that Evangeline and Karen responded positively as well. Of all the songs that we've done, this is probably the one that has gotten more positive response than any other. I think part of that big response is because you just don't hear anything that sounds like this in Christian music or worship and it's very moving and refreshing. But I also think that God wants to do a great work of restoration amongst Native Americans and that He is touching our hearts about them in a new way. I hope this song and our ministry are a part of that restoration.

You can click on this link to hear this song and see a beautiful nature slideshow of it on Youtube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JUfHHHfQHU> This song is recorded on our Heart of the City "It All Belongs to You" CD and an instrumental version featuring Native American Flute is also on our "Wind of the Spirit" CD. If you don't have these CD's already, you can order them from us by emailing us at [dadler@heartofthecity.org](mailto:dadler@heartofthecity.org) or you can download just this song on Itunes, CDBaby.com and many other mp3 sites.

## **Great Creator**

**by Dan Adler**

1. Endless sky gives testimony  
And the eagles as they fly  
With the earth that's spread below them  
To their Maker testify

In His Hand are deepest valleys  
and the mountains are His own  
All the seas He stretched before us  
That His glory would be known

**Chorus 1:** Hallelujah to our Maker  
Who created everything  
Hallelujah Great Creator  
All our praise to You we bring

2. Every seed His winds will scatter  
Through His sun and rain they grow  
So He feeds all His creation  
So His glory they will know  
Fruit of earth each taste and color  
And each flower's scent and hue  
Are the works of our Creator  
Formed in love for me and you

**Chorus 2:** Hallelujah to our Maker  
hear our song of gratitude  
Hallelujah Great Creator  
for You filled the earth with food  
Hallelujah to our Maker,  
Word of God, Jesus the King  
Hallelujah Great Creator  
All our praise to You we bring  
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The tribes of every nation, will sing of Your Creation  
You spoke them into being, the wonders that we're seeing  
To Father, Spirit, Son, our God, the Holy One  
All our praise to You we bring

All Your works with joy surround You  
Earth and Heaven join to sing  
Hallelujah, Great Creator  
All of our praise to You we bring