

This choral setting commemorates the 250th anniversary of John Newton's writing of "Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound."

John Newton was born in London on July 24, 1725 to Christian parents. His mother taught him Bible truths at an early age, but she died when John was only 7. By age 11, John joined his father, a sea captain, for a life at sea. Navigating his teenage years, John took on the wayward, reckless sailing life. He later joined the Royal Navy from which he attempted to desert, only to be caught. He was discharged and put into hard labor for a slave trader in West Africa. One stabilizing factor for him during these tumultuous years, however, was his faithful love for his future wife, Mary Catlett, which began when he was 17 and she was only 14.

A "random reading" of Thomas a Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*, sowed a gospel seed for John's conversion. One night while commanding a slave ship, a violent storm raged, and his boat began to take on water. Young Newton, still only age 23, thought he would surely die, and cried out to God for deliverance and mercy. Newton recognized this event as his conversion, yet continued in the slave shipping business another six years.

Newton eventually left the sea for an office job, and held Bible studies in his Liverpool home. Through the influence of evangelists Whitefield and Wesley, Newton began to prepare for ministry. He was ordained in the Church of England in 1764 at age 39, and served a church in Olney, where he gained notoriety as a preacher and writer of hymns.

"Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound" was written in the weeks preceding his 1773 New Year's Day sermon at St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Olney, England. His sermon was based on King David's humble prayer in 1 Chronicles 17:16-27.

John Newton continued in ministry and writing into his eighties and became a strong supporter of William Wilberforce and his campaign to end slavery. Near the end of his life, John Newton was known to have said, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior."

Amazing Grace

3

Words by
John Newton (sts. 1-3)
Anonymous (st. 4)

For SATB Voices, Accompanied
with opt. Congregation*

NEW BRITAIN
From *Columbian Harmony*, 1829
Arranged by Mark Edwards

With reflection (♩ = ca. 84-92)

rit. TB unis. mp **5** *a tempo legato*

A - maz - ing -

mp legato *rit.* *a tempo*

6

grace! how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like

11 *mf* **13**

me! I once was lost, but now am

mf

*Part for Congregation is available as a free download at www.celebrating-grace.com.

Also available: Score and parts for Flute, Oboe, B♭ Clarinet, Bassoon, B♭ Trumpets 1 & 2, Horn in F, Trombones 1 & 2, Tuba, Harp, Bells/Chimes, Timpani, Percussion, Violins 1 & 2, Viola, Cello, Bass, and Keyboard/Rhythm - 820076

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16

found, was blind, but now I see.

mp

mp

21

*rit.**SA unis. mp*

23

a tempo

'Twas grace that taught my

rit.

a tempo

25

heart to fear, and grace my fears re -

29

mf

31

lieved; how pre - cious did that

mf

33

mp

grace — ap - pear the hour I — first be - lieved! —

mp

38

rit.

rit.

43

Meno mosso

SA mp 45 *mysteriously*

Through man - y dan - gers, toils, — and —

TB mp

Meno mosso

45

a tempo

snares, I have al - read - y come; 'tis

grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will

rit.
home.

Tempo I (♩ = ca. 84-92)

lead me home, lead me home.

home.

Tempo I (♩ = ca. 84-92)

rit.

63

cresc. *rit.*

(+opt. Congregation) *Victoriously* (♩ = ca. 76)

68

SA unis. f **69**

When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright -

TB unis. f

Victoriously (♩ = ca. 76)

69

f

73

shin - ing as the sun, we've no less -

78

days — to — sing — God's — praise than when we — first — be -

Choir only
building to the end

83

gun, — than when — we first be - gun. —

fff

fff

fff

building to the end

