
Singing in the Kitchen

A Childhood Memory

My Grandmother, **Julia (Mackey) Todd**, came from a large East Texas family in a time and place where gospel singing was a family, church, and community tradition. The command in scripture to, "Sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord..." (Ephesians 5:19) was embraced as a way of life.

One of the earliest recollections I have of Grandmother is her singing in her kitchen while she worked; I was about eight, I think. However, what got my attention was the way *she was singing*. At first I didn't recognize it as singing at all, and thought it was funny:

"De-de de-de de de de de—de-de de-de de de-de de..."

I giggled behind her back and shared my mirth with my younger sister, Barbara, dragging her to the door of the kitchen to listen.

Mother noticed our whispered laughter and asked me what we were doing. I replied, "Mother, what is Grandmother

saying?" Mother said, "She's *singing*, Ray Mack. She is just carrying the tune without using the words." "Well, why is she singing like that *in the kitchen?*" I wondered.

"Well, why don't go and ask her—go ask her why she is singing in the kitchen," mother suggested.

So, Barbara and I went hand-in-hand to the kitchen, grinning with our question, but I couldn't get it out at first. Seeing our grins Grandmother asked, "What do you two want?" I suppose she thought we were going to ask for a piece of pie. I then blurted out,

"Grandmother, *why* are you singing in the kitchen?"

Grandmother paused very briefly from her work, turned to look at us with a smile and said, "*Because I am going to heaven Ray Mack—because I am going to heaven!*"

"De-de de-de de de de de—de-de de-de de de-de de..."

"*Farther along we'll know all about it—farther along we'll understand why...*"

