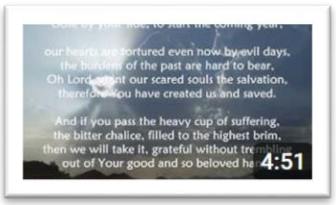
„By gentle Powers“ – Melody-Project Dec. 2024

The melodies are arranged according to the composer, the sheet music in a separate section. In the English-speaking world, tunes from other hymns are linked to this text. These are the most important ones. By clicking on the images you can easily select and open the corresponding video on YouTube:

Here is used our new complete translation of all 7 stanzas – lyrics and information below …

Otto Abel, 1959 – (Evangelical Hymnal No. 65)

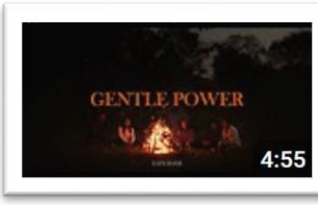
Composed to make stanza 7 singable for prayer meetings of the Protestant Youth in Eastern Berlin



Siegfried Fietz, 1972

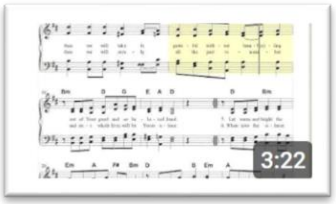
^adapted tunes^

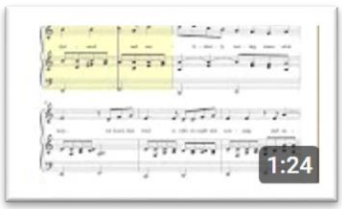
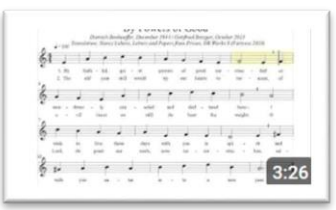
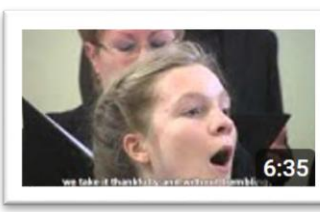
Some special Interpretations: from Peru (EN) / Hong Kong (CHIN) / India (EN) / Spanish v, Chinese ^



Kurt Grahl, 1976 – (Catholic Hymnal „Gotteslob“ No. 430)

^ Catalan

Best known of the serious melodies, in “Gotteslob” and other German-language hymn books

J.Gelineau, 1972 / G. Brezger, 2013 / M.Schlenker, 1989 / M.Nagel, 2002

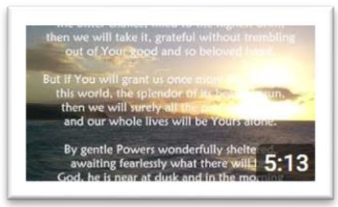
For the first English Text / Official Translation / Part of a Motette / … Oratorium: Sorry, sound



Melodies and Hymn versions from the Netherlands and from Scandinavia

Adriaan C. Schuurman (NL) / Erik Sommer (DK/S) / Erkki Melartin (FIN) / Anders Kronlund (FIN/S)

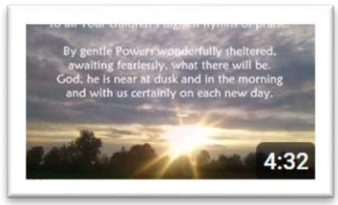
Eckhard Becker, 2024 (other languages available too in this playlist …)

My journey with this hymn began with chorus tune – ended up in this project and „Praise the Lord“

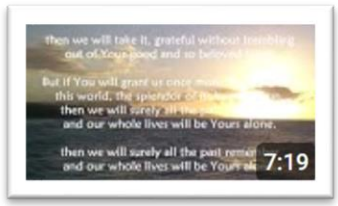


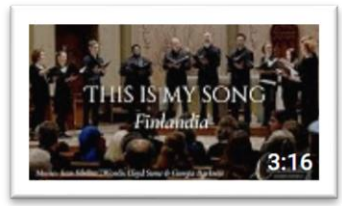
„Intercessor“ – Charles H. H. Parry, 1904 / Cyber Hymnal: 12 Samples

The tune, chosen for the first English version / Original hymn / Cyber Hymnal / 12 Samples

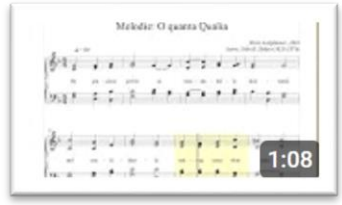


„Finlandia“ - Jean Sibelius, 1899 (belongs to other hymns of that time too)

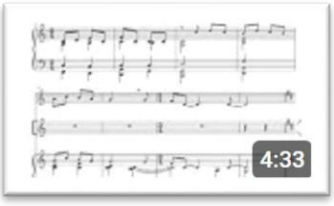
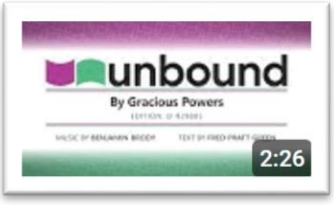




Other tunes sometimes assigned to this hymn in English speaking countries

„Donne Secours“, 1551 **„Highwood“, Terry** **„O Quanta Qualia”,1681** **Robert Buckley Farlee**

Other Tunes found on YouTube

“As Powers of Good” in Canada, (Alan Gaunt)

Russell Schulz-Widmar / Benjamin Brody / Herbert G. Hobbs / Melody from Taiwan



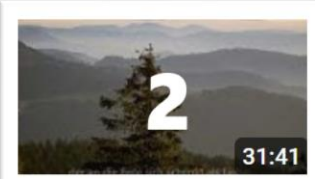
Miscellaneous

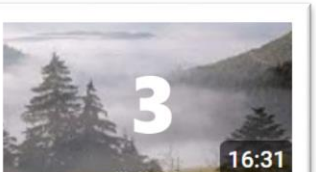
2 x Covid time Memories / 14 Angels: Song mentioned in the letter 1944 / Tandberg: Stjernesangen

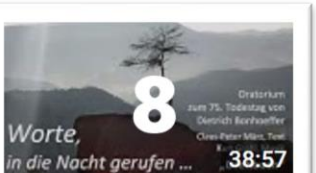
More Samples: playlists "Bonhoeffer – International" and "Bonhoeffer – German only" on YouTube

Kurt Grahl – further compositions to the subject of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Compositions concerning his life and thoughts, original recordings / Oratorium: Script (German)







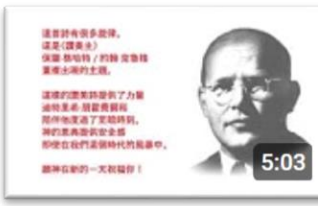
1 Elegy and short Fugue / 2 With words of sand and earth / 3 Who am I ? / 4 God, I call to you / 5 In a different light
6 By gentle Powers – Cantata / 7 Blessed (each with German Subtitles) / 8 Words, called into the night – Oratorio (German script)

Other Languages – Complete serious Translations, mostly with Fietz Tune

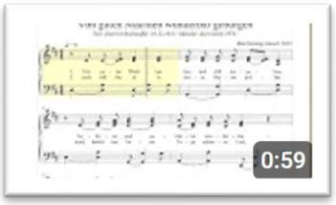
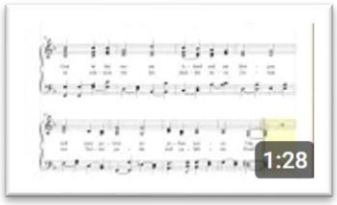
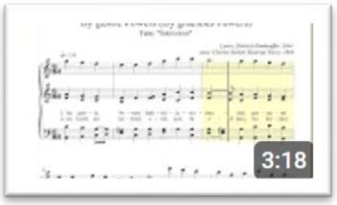
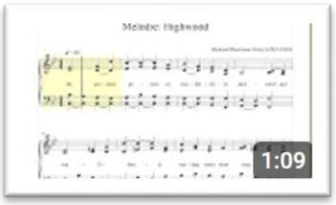
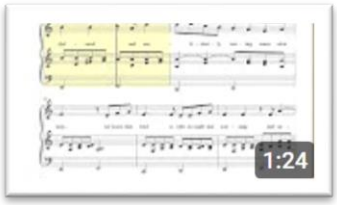
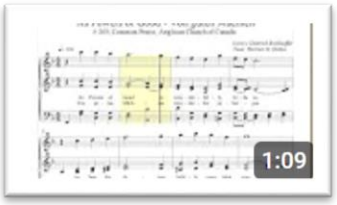
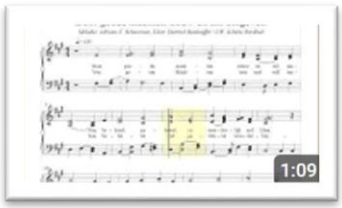
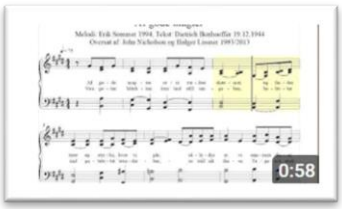
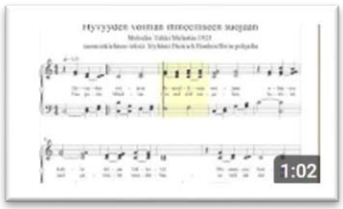
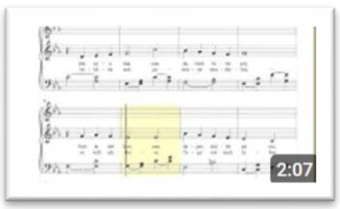
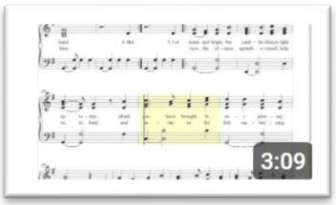
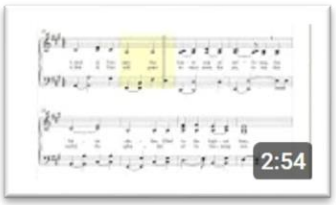
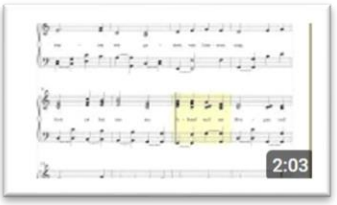
Spanish, Pedro Capa **with first Becker tune** **Catalan: Jordi Serra i Macià** **with Becker tune**

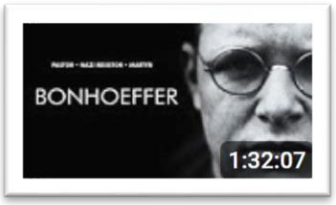
Chinese: **with Grahl tune** **with 2nd Becker tune** **Finnish:**

7 Stanzas, 7 Tunes **Chinese:** **French:** **Swedish:**

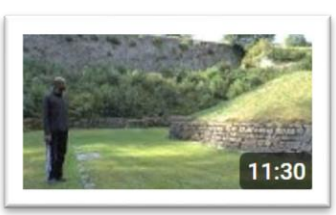


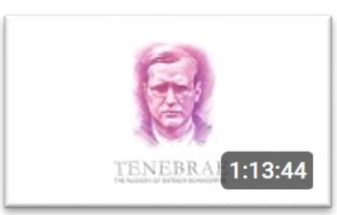
Sounding Sheet Music: mostly also to order for free via e-mail

K. Grahl (choir see above) **arr. E. Becker** **O. Abel: arr. E. Becker** **„Intercessor“, Parry**

„Finlandia“, Sibelius **„Highwood“, R.R. Terry** **Russell Schulz-Widmar** **Herbert G. Hobbs**

Adriaan C. Schuurman **Erik Sommer** **Erkki Melartin** **Anders Kronlund**

E. Becker: with Chorus / A-major „Praise the Lord“ / 7/7 (String accomp.) / “Sheltered” new setting

Movies and Documentations about Life and Thoughts – found on YouTube



Interview Reggie Williams - Harlem Renaissance **About: Tenebrae – A Music Drama in 12 Scenes**





Interviews Karl Barth about the Resistance (German with English subtitles) / Italian

Old, but interesting – Tapes: Interview Emmi Bonhoeffer (widow of brother Klaus) Part 1 – 4

Elie Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor, about the Resistance in Germany (1 – 3) **Picking up our Crosses**

Found on the Internet: Interesting Resources, sometimes downloadable

Christmas Letter from December 19, 1944 – Complete, Präsenz-Verlag

„Von guten Mächten" – Copy by Maria von Wedemeyer, Wikipedia

New Year's post 2020 with the translated Lyrics of the Poem, James Laurence

About the Life of Emmi Bonhoeffer, born: Emmi Delbrück, Frank-Peter Kirsch

A Song for the Year: Article about a new translation for China, Peter Bryant

Bonhoeffer's Last Advent, Article in "First Things", Timothy George

A Dietrich Bonhoeffer Hymn for New Year's, posted by Victoria Emily Jones

About the Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Norwegian), in "Stille Stunder", 3-15

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Poems (German), from homepage Jutta Koslowski

The Popular Bonhoeffer Quote That Isn't in his Works, Warren Throckmorton

TENEBRAE – The Passion of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Hugh McElyea, Website

The exciting June 16, 2018 Performance of TENEBRAE you find above in the Movies section …

80 Years: By gentle Powers – A Journey of Discovery – „Musical Reading Book“

Our new Translation:

WHY?

To fully “transport” the deep emotions of this poem a complete translation was necessary. This impressive teaching close to death is an everlasting testimony of the strong faith even in the darkest night. The legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a blessing to so many people round the world with its timeless message of hope and confidence.

There was no complete translation for us available – close to the German lyrics and with the best expressions, to bring to life the thoughts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer more clearly. Like it is in English the German words too sometimes have different meanings. You should have a sense to both languages to compare those expressions and finally to make the best decision …

Now (several months after we had done our translation), I got to know the official translation of this poem by Nancy Lukens from the complete works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Volume 8: "Letters and Papers from Prison" (Fortress 2010). This qualified translation is a benchmark for all other translations and transfers.

PLEASE THINK TWICE

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote this poem just few months before he was executed by the Nazis after two years in prison. His powerful testimony about confidence in dark uncertain times is a journey with several important stops and different topics. If you only need special verses for an occasion, don't forget the other steps leading to the final goal. Sometimes the final stanza is misused as refrain. It interrupts the journey too often with its important message. Therefore serious melodies are without.

On my YouTube channel I’m introducing the important melodies to this hymn. There are special playlists presenting those tunes and their variations, and some interpretations round the world, which are important to me. You’ll find additional information there about life and thoughts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer too.

German: *https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4G_TfKePYgI6qX5gRIAuH5mINzgMqqBM*

International: *https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4G_TfKePYgLUkq5_0YjJkDTBCTeFqZNF*

The lyrics are free to praise the Lord and to spread the gospel (CC BY-NC 4.0). Always include the ENTIRE English AND (if possible) German text in the video description – and refer to this channel as the source! Thanks.

IMPORTANT: Public use of this translation – performance or playback (e.g. on YouTube) NOT together with the tune by Siegfried Fietz.

© Eckhard & Sabine Becker, Achern, Germany – e-mail: eckhard.becker@gmx.net

Von guten Mächten

1.
Von guten Mächten treu und still umgeben,
behütet und getröstet wunderbar, -
so will ich diese Tage mit euch leben
und mit euch gehen in ein neues Jahr;

2.
noch will das alte unsre Herzen quälen,
noch drückt uns böser Tage schwere Last,
Ach Herr, gib unsern aufgeschreckten Seelen
das Heil, für das Du uns geschaffen hast.

3.
Und reichst Du uns den schweren Kelch, den bittern,
des Leids, gefüllt bis an den höchsten Rand,
so nehmen wir ihn dankbar ohne Zittern
aus Deiner guten und geliebten Hand.

4.
Doch willst Du uns noch einmal Freude schenken
an dieser Welt und ihrer Sonne Glanz,
dann woll'n wir des Vergangenen gedenken,
und dann gehört Dir unser Leben ganz.

5.
Lass warm und hell die Kerzen heute flammen,
die Du in unsre Dunkelheit gebracht,
führ, wenn es sein kann, wieder uns zusammen!
Wir wissen es, Dein Licht scheint in der Nacht.

6.
Wenn sich die Stille nun tief um uns breitet,
so lass uns hören jenen vollen Klang
der Welt, die unsichtbar sich um uns weitet,
all Deiner Kinder hohen Lobgesang.

7.
Von guten Mächten wunderbar geborgen
erwarten wir getrost, was kommen mag.
Gott ist bei uns am Abend und am Morgen,
und ganz gewiss an jedem neuen Tag.

Written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in prison on Dec 19, 1944 in a letter to his fiancée and family

By gentle Powers

1.
By gentle Powers faithfully surrounded,
protected wondrously, consoled by grace, -
that's how I long to live these days together,
close by your side, to start the coming year;

2.
our hearts are tortured even now by evil days,
the burdens of the past are hard to bear,
Oh Lord, grant our scared souls the salvation,
therefore You have created us and saved.

3.
And if You pass the heavy cup of suffering,
the bitter chalice, filled to the highest brim,
then we will take it, grateful without trembling
out of Your good and so beloved hand.

4.
But if You will grant us once more the joy to see
this world, the splendor of its beaming sun,
then we will surely all the past remember
and our whole lives will be Yours alone.

5.
Let warm and bright the candles' flames light up today,
which You have brought in our gloomy times,
lead us together back again if that can be!
We know for sure, Your light shines through the night.

6.
When now the silence spreads around, help us to hear
and listen to the full embracing sound
of this world, which unseen around is widening
to all Your children's highest hymns of praise.

7.
By gentle Powers wonderfully sheltered,
awaiting fearlessly what there will be.
God, he is near at dusk and in the morning,
and with us certainly on each new day.

February 9, 2024

Thanks to Kurt Grahl for the lively exchange of thoughts – and to my wife for her patience …

Dedicated to all those who value the hymn "By gentle Powers" and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's message for our world.

Achern, December 2024

Eckhard Becker

Eckhard & Sabine Becker, Hanauer Str. 9, 77855 Achern – Tel: 07843 994151 – eckhard.becker@gmx.net