

SOUL INTIMACY WITH JESUS AS A MOTOR OF SOCIAL CHANGE

ELLIOTT THINKSHEETS 2997
309 L.Eliz.Dr., Craigville, MA 02636
Phone/Fax 508.775.8008 2.16.00
Noncommercial reproduction permitted

Personal grief / people grief: Tommy Dorsey (no, not the white one) wrote this gospel blues song (he'd married gospel & blues, it's what we remember him for) soon after the deaths of his wife & child (she in childbirth, their son the next day [1932]). He says he "fumbled" at a school piano (& here I quote from p228 of Michael W. Harris' publication of his Harvard PhD dissertation on T.D., THE RISE OF GOSPEL BLUES: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church [Ox.UP/92]) & "clearly was seeking out the soothing effect of religious song, in this instance traditional Anglo-Protestant hymnody." His "meandering" fingers came upon the English Congregational hymn "Must Jesus bear the cross alone, / And all the world go free? / No: There's a cross for every one, / And there's a cross for me." To this tune, which he rewrote to blues, he wrote his own "Take my hand, precious Lord."

Take My Hand, Precious Lord (original)

♩ = c. 58

mm. 5-6

Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me

mm. 7-9

on, let me stand — I am tired, — I am

mm. 10-12

weak, I am worn. — Through the

mm. 13-15

storm, through the night, lead me on, to — the

mm. 16-18

light, — Take my hand — Pre - cious Lord, — lead me

mm. 19-20

home. — *Fine*

mm. 20-22

When my way grows — drear, Pre - cious

mm. 23-25

Lord, lin - ger near, — When my life — is —

mm. 26-28

al - most — gone, — Hear my

mm. 29-31

cry, hear my — call, — Hold — my hand lest I

mm. 32-34

fall, — Take my hand, — Pre - cious Lord, — lead me

mm. 35-36

home. — *D. C. al Fine*

This Thinksheet's title promises to show how God's business in the soul can motor God's business in the world, specifically in world-change toward God's will "done on earth as it is in heaven," as the Lord's Prayer has it. To make the connection, I'll quote from T. D.'s N.Y. TIMES obit (1.25.93):

"Moments before the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, he asked to have Mr. Dorsey's best-known gospel song, 'Take My Hand, Precious Lord,' performed...in the following days," an authority on gospel music wrote in THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, "it nearly replaced 'Amazing Grace' as an anthem of black America."