

Comparison of Singing in Churches of Christ and Sacred Harp Singing

by Diana Nelson Haase

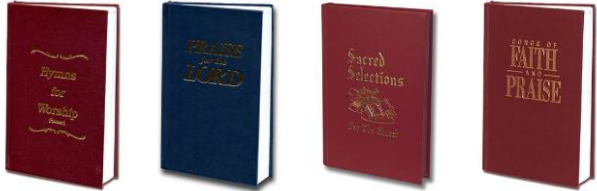
This informal document lists some similarities -- and differences -- between typical congregational singing within the churches of Christ and singing at a Sacred Harp event.

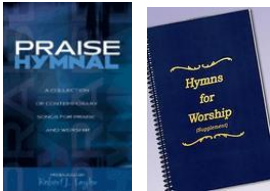
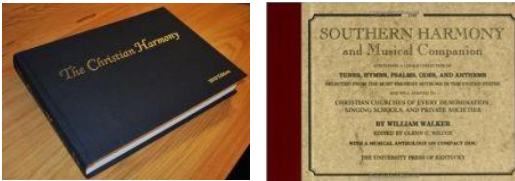
Note that these are just general observations. Note that since each congregation within the church is autonomous, regional and congregational customs may vary in matters not specified by Scripture. The following table, therefore, should be considered descriptive (in wide, general terms), not prescriptive.

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
A cappella (see Eph 5:19 & Col 3:16) Note: Some more "progressive" groups have started to include the instrument in worship. It is beyond the scope of this document to discuss that phenomenon. Suffice it to say here that historically, the churches of Christ have followed the New Testament pattern of a cappella singing.	A cappella (" <i>The term "sacred harp" refers to the human voice — that is, the musical instrument you were given at birth.</i> " Quote from fasola.org .)
Singing is an integral part of worship.	Nowadays, Sacred Harp singing is considered by most people to be folk music, not worship. Singers have many divergent backgrounds and beliefs, even though the vast majority of the songs have a distinct Christian heritage. It should be noted, though, that some singers <u>do</u> approach Sacred Harp singing as worship.
Spontaneous singing may occur occasionally -- even in a regular worship service. (It is more likely to occur in informal settings.) If spontaneous singing happens, sometimes a song leader proceeds to beat time; other times, the singers just "ad lib."	I've never experienced spontaneous Sacred Harp singing. I suppose it's possible, but it seems rather unlikely.
Some singers sing from memory; however, most refer to the printed music.	Ditto. Some singers sing from memory; however, most refer to the printed music.
Seating arrangements vary widely, depending on the situation. In a church building, typically people sit in pews (looking at the back of each others' heads, with the song leader at the front). In more informal settings, singers may be seated in circles or other configurations.	Singers are seated in a "hollow square," with one part seated on each side of the square -- so they can 'sing to each other.' The song leader stands in the middle of the square, sometimes only facing the tenors, but sometimes turning around during the song to include everyone (depending on the song leader).

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>In regular worship situations, typically, parts are interspersed. A soprano may sit next to a bass, who is next to an alto, etc. Exception: In learning environments (and in other informal situations) or when intentional recordings are being made, singers may be grouped by parts being sung.</p>	<p>Singers are grouped by parts around the "hollow square." Typically the tenor section is set up closest to the door, since it will usually be the largest section (and it can more easily accommodate late-comers). Across from the tenors are the altos. To the tenors' right are the trebles; to the tenors' left are the basses.</p> <div data-bbox="987 491 1333 856" data-label="Diagram"> </div>
<p>Often in church buildings, singers are reluctant to sit up front (even though the singing is best there). In informal singings and learning sessions, more singers gravitate to the front.</p>	<p>In larger singings, typically the more experienced singers sit up front; the front row of tenors is typically reserved for those who are able to pitch a tune correctly</p>
<p>While singing, the singers can be sitting or standing. Often congregations have their own customs, such as standing for the song immediately after the opening prayer; in most, singers stand for the invitation song. In both regular worship services and less formal settings, singers typically just follow the recommendations of the song leader and/or the congregational customs.</p> <p>Note: Sometimes individual singers are unable to stand when others are standing -- for example, due to physical limitations or other circumstances (like holding a sleeping baby).</p>	<p>While singing, the singers are seated.</p>
<p>While leading in a regular service, the song leader typically stands. In less formal settings, the song leader either stands or sits.</p>	<p>While leading, technically, the song leader is supposed to stand in the middle of the hollow square, facing the tenors.</p> <p>However, in some informal settings (and/or if there are physical limitations, etc), the song leader may be seated.</p>

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<p>In a church building, during a regular worship service, usually the song leader has a podium or other stand on which the songbook can be placed, if desired. Some song leaders opt to use the podium/stand; others do not. In less formal settings, the song leader may hold the songbook, set it on something, and/or even lead from memory. (The latter is uncommon, but not unheard of!)</p>	<p>Typically, the song leader holds the songbook with one hand and beats time with the other.</p>
<p>Typically the song leader's voice is amplified by some method.</p>	<p>The song leader's voice is not amplified.</p>
<p>Typically the song leader is the only person standing up front while singing (during a regular worship service.)</p>	<p>Newcomers are often invited to stand (for a song or two) in the middle of the hollow square with the song leader, to experience the fullness of sound there.</p>
<p>Singing is participatory. All are encouraged to sing, regardless of singing ability. (Make a joyful noise!)</p>	<p>Ditto. There is no 'audience,' though visitors are welcome to sit within a section and just listen if they do not feel comfortable singing.</p> <p>If a newcomer does not feel comfortable with the shapes (see discussion later), they are encouraged to just sing Fa Fa Fa (or La La La) during the shape-singing parts of the song.</p>
<p>There is no applause after a song.</p>	<p>There is no applause after a song.</p>
<p>Historically, in a worship environment, clapping and other rhythm-making sounds have been discouraged.</p> <p>Note: Among some groups (and in some settings), clapping has become acceptable. It is beyond the scope of this document to discuss this phenomenon.</p>	<p>Clapping and other rhythm-making sounds are discouraged.</p>



Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>A variety of hymn books, supplements, etc, may be used.</p>	<p>For 'traditional' Sacred Harp singing, only the Sacred Harp (Denson edition) song book is used.</p> <p>Note, though, that there are several other song books in the same genre -- such as Sacred Harp (Cooper), Christian Harmony, Missouri Harmony, Old Harp, Southern Harmony, Shenandoah Harmony, etc. All are oblong-shaped books; however, some of these oblong books may follow slightly different traditions (such as using seven shapes, using different typesetting styles, etc). Also note that there are several different seven-shape notation systems that may be used -- not just the familiar Aiken system. See Appendix A.</p>
<p>Various hymnals:</p> 	<p><i>The Sacred Harp</i>, 1991 Edition (Denson):</p> 
<p>Most singers do not have an exclusive preference for one songbook and/or supplement. In other words, even though there may be personal preferences, most singers are willing to sing from any available songbook or supplement.</p> <p>Caveat: Some current songbooks are starting to leave the shaped note tradition; some are now published with "round notes". This practice can make it difficult for some singers, if they do not have secular experience with round notes.</p>	<p>Some singers do not have an exclusive preference for one oblong songbook over another. They readily switch from one to another, from four-shape notation to seven-shape notation, from three-part harmony (such as Southern Harmony) to four-part harmony. Others have a very distinct preference, and avoid singings that do not use their songbook or notation of choice.</p>
<p>Multiple songbooks and/or supplements may be used during the same event. For example, during a regular worship service, singers may use both a hymn book and a supplement and/or PowerPoint slides. Occasionally newer songs may be distributed on individual sheets of paper. Typically no more than two separate books are used, to make it easier to switch back and forth; however, this is not a hard-and-fast rule.</p>	<p>While some groups exclusively sing from one oblong book, others may encourage multiple books (almost always of the oblong variety). For example, an all-day singing may use Sacred Harp in the morning, and Christian Harmony in the afternoon., or a two-day singing may use different books on each day. They may also include newer songs distributed on individual sheets of paper.</p>



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<p>Some supplements:</p> 	<p>Some other oblong books:</p> 
<p>Note: Some songbooks may be direct reprints of an earlier edition; however, often the editors assemble an entirely unique collection of songs.</p>	<p>Note: Many times the songbooks are direct reprints of an earlier edition, using the same typesetting conventions. Examples: Southern Harmony and (until the 2010 edition) Christian Harmony.</p> <p>Note: The 2010 edition of Christian Harmony is basically a combination of the older Christian Harmony (NC) and Christian Harmony (AL), commonly known as the "NC book" and "Alabama book", respectively.</p>
<p>Typically the host location (whether in a church building, a house singing, or at some other location) provides the song books.</p>	<p>Typically each singer has his/her own copy of the Sacred Harp book. Each group typically has a number of 'loaner' copies that visitors may borrow, and sometimes additional copies that can be purchased.</p>
<p>Often individual singers do not own copies of their own song books (though most are available for purchase, and some singers do have copies at home). Several (but not all) song leaders have copies at home.</p> <p>Singers and song leaders are encouraged to not make notations in copies that they do not own personally. (!)</p> <p>(Note: Of course, in learning environments and home environments where singers DO have their own copies, notations can be encouraged!)</p> <p>(Note: The 1956 Sacred Selections songbook contained this caveat in the preface: "I am your songbook.... I am not a notebook or a writing pad.")</p>	<p>Since singers typically own their own copies, many freely make notations in the books, as desired.</p>

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<p>As noted above, most singers do not have their own books so, except in cases of learning environments and home environments, most singers do not write their names in the song books.</p> <p>In learning environments, typically singers write (or print) their name either on the inside front cover or on one of the first pages.</p>	<p>Most singers write their names on their books so they are very visible, since it's easy to accidentally pick up someone else's book at a large singing.</p> <p>Traditionally, most singers print their names on the page edges of the book -- accomplished by closing the cover and then printing on the "solid" edge of the pages, in large letters, covering the entirety of the edge. This tradition makes it quite easy to spot your own book.</p>
<p>Probably the most common way to buy a songbook is from a bookstore. Examples: RJStevensMusic.com, Truth Bookstore, Taylor Publications, OVU.edu, etc.</p>	<p>The most common way to buy a songbook is at a singing. Most singings have both loaner songbooks and songbooks for sale.</p> <p>The Denson Sacred Harp book is available from the Sacred Harp Publishing Company, http://originalsacredharp.com/.</p> <p>Other publishers include: Christian Harmony, Shenandoah Harmony</p>
<p>The first songbook associated with the Restoration movement was published in 1805 (words only). The first with both words and music notation was the 1875 The Christian Hymnal. [Reference: A History of Our Hymnbooks by Wayne S. Walker.]</p>	<p>The Sacred Harp songbook was originally published in 1844, and has been revised/updated several times since then. The most recent revision is dated 1991.</p>
<p>Typically the hymn books are printed in "portrait" orientation -- i.e., the books are "taller" than they are "wide."</p>	<p>The Sacred Harp books (and other books in the genre, see above) are printed in "landscape" orientation -- i.e., the book is "wider" than it is "tall." They are known as oblong books.</p> <p>Note: This tradition began due to the way the music is notated (with one staff per part). More songs would fit per page when it was turned sideways.</p>
<p>Typically songs written for congregational singing have four-part harmony (soprano, alto, tenor, bass); however, occasionally there may be songs with one-part, two-part, or three-part harmonies -- and even occasionally five- or six-part.</p>	<p>Typically songs are written with four-part harmony (treble, alto, tenor, bass); however, occasionally there are only three parts. (A story is told that the older Sacred Harp and Southern Harmony songs originally only had three parts -- with no alto -- but then they learned that the altos cooked well so they wanted to let them have something to sing -- and thereby enjoy their cooking! More later on the food traditions associated with Sacred Harp singing!)</p>

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<p>Songs are referenced by song number and/or title. The title is typically related somehow to the content of the song, whether first line, chorus, or other word or phrase within the song.</p>	<p>Songs are referenced by page number (and location, if applicable -- such as top/bottom), and/or tune name. The tune name typically has little or no relation to the content of the song. For example, the tune name of "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" is <i>Coronation</i> in the Sacred Harp book. The tune name of "Amazing Grace" is <i>New Britain</i>. (See Appendix B.)</p>
<p>In general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soprano = the higher female voice, typically the melody • Alto = the lower female voice (harmony) • Tenor = the higher male voice (harmony) • Bass = the lower male voice (harmony) <p>Note that occasionally women sing tenor (either an octave higher or in the same octave as the male tenor). And occasionally men may sing the soprano (melody) or alto part (typically an octave or two lower).</p> <p>Note that if the melody is sung in a lower octave, it's still the melody part.</p>	<p>In general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treble = a 'high' harmony, sung by either male or female voice, in the appropriate octave; somewhat equivalent to our tenor • Alto = a harmony typically sung by the lower female voice • Tenor = the melody, sung by either male or female voice, in the appropriate octave; basically equivalent to our soprano • Bass = the lower male voice (harmony) <p>Note that since either male or female voices sing the treble (harmony) and tenor (melody), effectively there can be six-part harmony (four distinct parts with two doubled).</p>
<p>Typically, there are more individuals (both male and female) that sing melody than harmony.</p> <p>Note: Singers typically sing melody in whichever octave/staff they find comfortable.</p> <p>Note: Some may not realize that they're singing melody, but may think they're singing harmony just because they're not in the same octave as the soprano!</p>	<p>Typically, there are more individuals (both male and female) that sing melody than harmony.</p> <p>Note: Singers typically sing melody in whichever octave/staff they find comfortable.</p> <p>Since singers are seated by part, it's less likely that they are unaware of whether they're singing melody or harmony.</p>

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<p>Typically the singers are not amplified.</p> <p>Exception: In some groups nowadays, the "praise team" concept has been embraced, whereby one or more singers, often including one or more voices per part, are amplified. Sometimes they are "up front" with the song leader, and sometimes they are interspersed with the congregation. It is beyond the scope of this document to explore this phenomenon. Whether this practice serves to encourage or discourage others from singing four-part harmony (or from singing at all) is unknown; whether it becomes more entertainment for the listeners rather than congregational participation is also unknown.</p>	<p>The singers are not amplified.</p>
<p>Sometimes there are recording devices, especially at larger singings where CDs will be made and distributed. Typically, microphones would be placed to try to get a blended sound.</p>	<p>Sometimes there are recording devices, though it can be difficult to get a recording from the middle of the hollow square. Example: BostonSing.org</p> <p>Note: Individual singers sometime make informal recordings (audio/video) via personal electronic devices.</p>
<p>Occasionally a small group (quartet, octet, or other fairly small number) may get together to practice singing, possibly to sing for others in an informal setting, or possibly to just improve their own skills.</p>	<p>I've never experienced anything formalized in Sacred Harp tradition, though it could be possible.</p>
<p>The music is written on two staves -- the top one for soprano and alto parts, and the bottom one for tenor and bass parts. The top staff uses the treble (G) clef; the bottom staff uses the bass (F) clef. See Appendix B.</p>	<p>The music is written in four staves -- one for each part. Treble on top, then alto, then tenor, then bass. Typically the top three staves use the treble (G) clef; the bottom staff uses the bass (F) clef. However, occasionally the alto staff also uses the bass (F) clef. (Example: Easter Anthem.) See Appendix B.</p>
<p>Typically, the words (lyrics) are written between the two staves. (This applies to all verses, choruses, repeats, echoes, codas, etc.) Exception: Occasionally a descant or other "special" part might be written above the appropriate staff.</p>	<p>The words (poetry) are written between the staves where possible, but only one verse at a time. Verse 1 is usually between the treble and alto staves; verse 2 is usually between the alto and tenor staves; verse 3 is usually between the tenor and bass staves; verse 4 is usually under the bass staff... and if there are additional verses, they are listed under that. Example: Parting Hand.</p> <p>Terminology note: The song's lyrics are typically called "poetry."</p>

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Depending on the hymn book/supplement, the key may be spelled out above the top staff. (Examples: A, D, G.) Unless otherwise noted, it is assumed that the key is major.	All keys are spelled out above the top staff. (Examples: E Major, A Minor.) Note that both Major and Minor are spelled out.
Flats/sharps and time signatures are noted in 'standard' notation.	Ditto. Flats/sharps and time signatures are noted in 'standard' notation.
Repeat marks are mirror images of each other; the starting repeat mark is a reverse image of the ending repeat mark.	Repeat marks are slightly different. The starting repeat mark is typically noted by four vertical dots between the staff lines (without a vertical bar); the ending repeat mark is four dots and a vertical bar.
Repeats are typically honored in each verse.	Repeats are typically honored only in the last verse. Note that this varies slightly by singing group. Often the song leader specifies details about whether (and when) the repeat is honored; however, other times, the singers are expected to know the custom for a particular song.
There can be second endings, codas, and other such variations.	Second endings, codas, and the like are very rare.
Hymn books typically contain shaped notes, based on 7-shape Aiken system (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti), so the major octave scale is: Do (triangle) Re (semicircle/bowl) Mi (diamond) Fa (flag/right triangle) Sol (circle) La (square) Ti (cone) Do (triangle)	When singing with a 4-shape tune book (like Sacred Harp), the tune book contains shaped notes, based on 4 shape system (Fa, So, La, Mi), so the major octave scale is: Fa (flag/right triangle) So (circle) La (square) Fa (flag/right triangle) So (circle) La (square) Mi (diamond) Fa (flag/right triangle) (As one commentator quipped, it's like having 7 children but only 4 names!)
A C major scale: 	A C major scale: 

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<p>The minor octave scale is:</p>  <p>La Ti Do Re Mi Fa Sol La</p>	<p>The minor octave scale is:</p>  <p>La Ti Do Re Mi Fa Sol La</p> <p>Note that, in some Sacred Harp traditions, the sixth is "raised" in minor songs, making the chords more "diminished."</p>
<p>The intervals between the notes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do-Re = whole step Re-Mi = whole step Mi-Fa = half step Fa-Sol = whole step Sol-La = whole step La-Ti = whole step Ti-Do = half step <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do-Mi = a third Do-Sol = a fifth Do-Do = an octave 	<p>The intervals between the notes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fa-So = whole step (when adjacent) or fifth (when separated) So-La = whole step (when adjacent) La-Fa = half-step (when adjacent) La-Mi = whole step (when adjacent) Mi-Fa = half step Fa-Fa = octave or fourth <p>Personal note: This is the aspect of Sacred Harp singing that is the most confusing to me. By looking at the shapes alone, I don't know how to determine which Fa I'm on (one that acts like a Do or one that acts like a Fa), or which So (one that acts like a Re or one that acts like a So). If you look at the key signature, you can figure it out, of course, but that seems to defeat the purpose of singing the shapes. However, dyed-in-the-wool Sacred Harp singers have no problem at all sight singing new tunes that are written with the four shapes.</p>
<p>Most songs are written in a major key.</p>	<p>While many songs are written in a major key, a lot are also written in a minor key -- a MUCH higher percentage than in our hymn books.</p>
<p>Most songs in a major key begin with Do, Mi, or Sol. Most songs in a minor key begin with La.</p>	<p>Most songs in a major key begin with Fa or So. Most songs in a minor key begin with La.</p>

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<p>Song leaders may use a pitch pipe or other small device to get starting note. Examples include tuning forks, electronic pitch pipes, SmartPhone apps, etc.</p>	<p>Song leaders do not use pitch pipes or other mechanical means of locating the starting note. If they do not have 'perfect pitch,' they typically find a good note by singing scales and/or fa-la-so intervals. Reference: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitching_Sacred_Harp_music</p> <p>Note: In a large singing, often there are at least one or two tenors who can pitch songs well; these often provide the starting pitches to the song leaders.</p>

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>Depending on the song leader, the note(s) given to the singers may vary. One of the following is common:</p> <p><u>Technique = The note obtained from the pitch pipe is always Do.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the song is in a major key, the song leader finds a Do, and then hums or sings Do, Mi, and/or Sol (as appropriate, either up or down or both) to get the starting melody note. • If the song is in a minor key, the song leader finds a Do, and then hums, Do-Ti-La to get the starting melody note. (Most minor songs begin on La.) <p>Note that, with this technique, the song leader needs to know the key of the song to be able to select the correct Do equivalent on the pitch pipe. The song leader may raise or lower the Do (usually not more than a whole step in either direction), based on his experience with the singers' ranges.</p> <p><u>Technique = The note obtained from the pitch pipe is the starting melody note.</u></p> <p>Note that, with this technique, the song leader needs to know the names of the notes on the staff. As in the previous technique, the song leader may raise or lower the starting note based on his experience with the singers.</p> <p><u>Technique = The song leader uses a tuning fork.</u> The tuning fork always emits an A (440 Hertz). After finding the A, the song leader can determine the correct starting note. (Note: This technique is not used much, except by very proficient musicians!)</p> <p><u>Technique = The song leader does not use a pitch pipe (or other device),</u> but rather just picks a note and starts singing -- and the singers follow. Sometimes he does a Do-Mi-Sol first, but often not. Note that, with this technique, sometimes the song is pitched in a singable key, but sometimes the range is too high or too low for the singers to comfortably sing all the notes -- depending on the experience and ability of the song leader.</p>	<p>The song leader typically gives the singers the Fa, La, and So (equivalent to the Do-Mi-So intervals in our singing).</p> <p>Note that, also with this technique, sometimes the song is pitched in a singable key, but sometimes the range is too high or too low for the singers to comfortably sing all the notes -- depending on the experience and ability of the song leader.</p>

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<p>Occasionally the song leader specifically gives a starting note to the individual parts.</p> <p>More typically, however, the singers find the harmony starting pitches from the first melody note and/or from the Do.</p>	<p>Occasionally the song leader specifically gives a starting note to the individual parts.</p>
<p>Singers may briefly hum -- or softly sing the shape of -- their starting note prior to singing the first note.</p> <p>Note: This is especially common in workshops or other learning situations.</p>	<p>Singers may briefly hum -- or softly sing the shape of -- their starting note prior to singing the first note.</p>
<p>Typically, songs are sung with words, with all voices singing their own parts.</p> <p>Exception: During workshops, singing schools, and other learning situations, individual parts may be focused on -- and/or shapes may be sung. However, the words are vital in the worship environment, since the meaning of the words are really what are important for understanding. (And we're to sing with understanding!)</p>	<p>Almost always, singers sing the song once through with only the shape names (in their own parts) -- and then sing the words.</p> <p>Exception: For a few really long songs (such as Easter Anthem), the tradition of singing the shape names first is typically bypassed.</p>
<p>Note: During workshops, singing schools, and other learning situations, if individual parts are sung (with words or shapes), typically anyone is permitted (and even encouraged) to sing the part being practiced/learned. Examples: All singers might sing through the tenor part, in their own voice ranges.</p>	<p>Ditto, though this would more likely occur with shapes than with words.</p>
<p>Typically the song leader sings the melody in his own range. Exception: Typically the melody is the soprano part. If a different part has the lead, the song leader may sing it instead of the soprano part.</p>	<p>The song leader can sing either the melody or harmony, according to personal preference.</p>
<p>In a regular worship service, song leaders are always male. (See I Cor 12 and others.)</p> <p>Exception: If only women are gathered (such as for a Ladies' Bible study), a woman might lead singing.</p>	<p>Song leaders may be male or female. (Again, Sacred Harp singing is considered to be folk music, not worship.)</p>


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<p>Historically, song leading has not been a paid position in the worship environment, but rather another opportunity to serve. Exceptions to being paid may occur in learning environments, workshops, etc.</p> <p>Note: Some congregations now include one or more paid worship leaders "on staff". It is beyond the scope of this document to discuss this phenomenon.</p> <p>Note: The song leader is not to be the focus of the singing.</p>	<p>Song leading is not a paid position. Any singer may lead a song. (In fact, all singers are encouraged to lead a song, especially in smaller groups.)</p>
<p>Depending on the song leader, the style of leading may vary widely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many trained song leaders use a 'down-in-out-up' pattern for four-beat rhythm, a 'down-out-up' pattern for three-beat rhythm, and a 'down-up' pattern for two-beat rhythm. • Others use a 'down-up' pattern for all rhythms (i.e., a down motion for each beat or for each measure). • Others may not use any arm motions at all. 	<p>The song leader emphasizes the first beat of the measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a two-beat measure, the pattern is down-up. • For a three-beat measure, down-down-up (with the first 'down' only going about halfway down). • For a four-beat measure, down (hold 2)-up (hold 2). • And a six-beat measure, down (hold 3) up (hold 3).
<p>Typically only the song leader beats the rhythm, though individuals may sometimes keep time at their seats (tap fingers, toes, etc).</p> <p>Exception: During workshops, singing schools, and other learning situations, it is not uncommon to see more singers beating time.</p>	<p>The song leader beats the rhythm in the middle of the hollow square. Individual singers often beat time (in the same manner as the song leader) in their own seated locations.</p>
<p>During a worship service, typically one song leader leads all the songs (though occasionally multiple song leaders may be involved). Depending on the size of the congregation and the men who have volunteered to lead, the responsibilities may be rotated from one worship service to another.</p> <p>In other settings (such as larger singings), often multiple song leaders are involved.</p>	<p>Ideally, all singers have the opportunity to lead at each singing, if he/she desires. Depending on the size of the group and the time available, each song leader may only lead one or two selections.</p> <p>In smaller groups, still everyone who wants to lead has the opportunity, but each person may lead more selections.</p>

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>Typically, no one specifically keeps track of the songs sung. Song leaders may keep personal records to try to avoid duplicating songs too frequently, or to notice trends; however, typically record-keeping is not formalized. Since usually there is only one song leader (or one song leader who coordinates a singing), duplicates during a specific session are minimal. Even during informal singings with multiple song leaders, typically the song leaders pay attention to what has already been led, and do not duplicate.</p>	<p>Since multiple song leaders are the norm, and since there is no advance coordination, it is not uncommon for someone (or for multiple people) to keep track of the songs that have been sung. During larger singing events, often these lists are formalized (listing not only the song name and number, but also the name of the song leader), and submitted to be published in the national minutes book.</p>
<p>In some environments, song leaders may use Power Point presentations or some other electronic or multimedia versions of the songs (hopefully with both notes and words). Sometimes this is in conjunction with hymn books (so singers have a choice which one to use) and sometimes not (for example, for newer songs).</p>	<p>Only the oblong songbook is used.</p>

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>Area singings, house singings, and other singing events are often scheduled -- sometimes on a regular basis (sometimes monthly, quarterly, and/or annually).</p>	<p>Local groups of singers are encouraged to host annual sings and conventions. A "singing" is a one-day all-day singing; a "convention" is a two-day event. Some general characteristics of these larger singings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are formal officers and committees who plan these events. • The singing begins with an opening prayer, and ends with a closing prayer. • "Minutes" of the events are kept, consisting of the names of the song leaders and the numbers of the songs they each lead; these minutes are submitted to a national organization to be published. (A new book is published each year.) • During this event, usually the song is pitched by a tenor who has good pitching capabilities; the pitch is then given to the song leader. • A "memorial lesson" is always included to honor singers who have become deceased during the last year. • Terminology note: For these events, the songs are typically called 'lessons,' and the singers are called the 'class.' • Typically the event includes a "dinner on the grounds" with singers bringing their favorite foods - and a prayer before eating. Food is an integral part of the Sacred Harp tradition! • There are no specific songs that are always sung; however, Holy Manna is often the first song, and Parting Hand is often the last song.
<p>Some larger singings are publicized well in advance to a wide audience (examples: 1000 Voices, A cappella Jubilee, Diana singing); other smaller ones tend to be more localized and spontaneous.</p>	<p>Regular and annual singings tend to be publicized both locally and nationally. The national minutes book, the Fasola.org website, the Google fasola singing group, and individual groups' web pages and email lists help communication.</p>

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>Workshops, singing schools, and the like may occur to help singers improve their abilities to sing, read music (and shaped notes), etc.</p>	<p>In conjunction with the singings and conventions described above -- or at any other time -- a "singing school" may be planned. This is typically an hour or two, and typically covers the basics of reading the four-shape system, and basics of counting rhythm. There are also some longer learning events staged throughout the country -- some weekend-long, some week-long.</p> <p>Some good online resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://weelyrd.net/SS_Workbook/ • http://www.fasola.org • http://www.campdoremi.org • http://www.dogwoodnc.net/charlottesacredharp/
<p>Resource material is available to assist learning to sing, read music (and shaped notes), etc. Examples: rjstevensmusic.com, Taylor Publications, etc.</p>	<p>The Sacred Harp book itself contains 25 pages (in very small font!) of "rudiments of music," covering many aspects of pitch, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, keys, etc. Other oblong song books also contain basic principles of music.</p>
<p>Song leaders (and singers) may be able to acquire a large-print version of the hymn book/supplement. Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For song leaders, being able to place the book on the podium (or other stand) and still see it well. • For all with "aging eyes," being able to easily see the words and notes -- and to easily distinguish the shapes. (In some songbooks, it's difficult to distinguish between a Re, Sol, and Ti.) 	<p>There is no large-print version available. Some of the words (and notes, for that matter) are quite difficult to read.</p> <p>Note that in other oblong books of the same genre, the tpestyles are even more difficult to read than in the standard Sacred Harp book!</p> <p>(Note: Thankfully, the Christian Harmony 2010 book has adopted a much more readable typestyle!)</p>
<p>Hymn books/supplements may be printed via a variety of methods. Most traditional hymn books are hard-bound. However, some are spiral bound; some informal ones are stapled together or in notebooks (with 3-hole punched paper) -- and sometimes new songs are distributed on single sheets of paper, and others might be projected via PowerPoint.</p>	<p>The Sacred Harp song book, as far as I know, is only available in an oblong, hard-cover version.</p> <p>Occasionally new songs are distributed on single sheets of paper, typically at a local singing or a larger all-day event.</p> <p>Note: The Shenandoah Harmony book is now available in an electronic format.</p>
<p>Songbooks typically do not show meter notation for each, though there may be a meter index in the back of the book.</p> <p>Occasionally a song will have a CM, SM, CMD, etc notation to indicate meter.</p>	<p>Songs typically note whether they are <i>common meter</i>, <i>double-common meter</i>, <i>single meter</i>, or other metrical pattern. This notation was common in the 1800s (and before). Some denominations still note these meters with each song. Example: Presbyterian.</p>

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
Depending on the hymn book/supplement, a Scripture reference may be provided for each song.	A Scripture reference is provided for each song.
Typically, the songbook indexes, titles and first lines -- and possibly scriptures, authors, tunes, and meters.	There are indexes for tunes and first lines. Through fasola.org , you can search the text (poetry) of all songs.
<p>Most songs fall into one of these categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parts sing the same words in the same rhythm, throughout the song. Example: Just as I Am. • Most of the time, the parts sing the same words in the same rhythm; however, occasionally one part may have a slight variation (such as an alto 'echo'). Example: I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord. • The parts sing the same words in the same rhythm in the verse, but then one part has a 'lead' in the chorus with the other parts singing complimentary words and/or rhythms. Example: Sing and Be Happy. • Parts echo each other throughout the song -- or in certain parts of the song. Example: The Steadfast Love of the Lord. • Songs may be sung as rounds. Example: Love, Love. • Occasionally, each part may have very different words and/or rhythms. Example: The Greatest Command. 	<p>Most songs fall into one of these categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parts sing the same words in the same rhythm, throughout the song. Examples: Africa, Old Hundred. • "The parts fall in one after the other, with the same or similar rhythm and with related melodic lines, at different pitches; at the end of the section, the parts come together." These are called fuguing tunes. (There are a lot of these in the Sacred Harp book!) Examples: New Jerusalem, Lenox, Sherburne. • The song is long and complex, often with time changes, key changes, repeats, and changes from homophonic to polyphonic. Example: Easter Anthem.
<p>Most songs are "homophonic," meaning that the soprano line is the melody.</p> <p>Note: As mentioned earlier, many less-experienced singers may sing the melody, in their own ranges.</p>	<p>Many Sacred Harp songs are polyphonic, meaning that while "the tune is carried by the tenor part (usually), but the other parts, ideally, are good melodies on their own, making all parts interesting." (Quote from the Sacred Harp book.)</p>
Often, singers try (somewhat) to 'blend' voices to make a pleasant harmony.	Sacred Harp singing is less concerned with blending, but more with singing "pure, full, firm, and certain." (quote from the Sacred Harp book.)
<p>Dynamics are marked occasionally, and followed occasionally -- most notably in learning environments.</p> <p>Note: Most of the Italian dynamic notations can be summed up in one word: Watch! I.e., watch the song leader for direction. (adage from Richard Morrison in the Oklahoma sight-singing class.)</p>	Dynamics are marked occasionally -- but not always followed. :)

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>The tone of the lyrics can vary widely.</p>	<p>Older lyrics often are more "vivid" than those from the 20th/21st centuries.</p>
<p>In the U.S., typically the songbooks are in English; however, there are a number of Spanish songbooks (and song sheets, PowerPoints, and other resources) that are available for Spanish-speaking (and bilingual) congregations. And there are hymn resources in other languages, both in the U.S. and in other countries. Since worship is to include "singing with understanding", being able to sing in the participant's language is important.</p> 	<p>As far as I've seen, Sacred Harp music is available solely in English -- even in countries where English is not the primary language.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Sacred Harp Germany, http://www.sacredharpgermany.de/;</p> <p>Sacred Harp Bremen, http://www.sacredharpbremen.org/</p>
<p>Hymn books/supplements contain songs from a variety of eras, including 20th and 21st century. Music can be very traditional, or it can have a more contemporary flavor (or a combination of both).</p>	<p>The songs in the Sacred Harp book are predominantly from the 18th and 19th century. However, there are some newer songs -- and songs do continue to be written in the Sacred Harp style.</p>
<p>CCLI licenses cover replication of many songs in hymn books; however, each individual song should be researched before copying for any purpose.</p>	<p>I'm unsure about CCLI coverage. Since so many of the songs were written in the 1700s-1800s, those songs would be in the public domain and would not require any licensing -- on an individual basis, at least. The song book itself IS copyright. For songs written in the last hundred years or so, however, there are copyright holders. Whether they are covered by CCLI is unknown. I would imagine that most of the current copyright owners would freely give permission to sing their songs, but I would not recommend reprinting without checking with them individually.</p>



Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>New songs can be disseminated and learned in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) singing schools, regional singings, hymnals & supplements, recordings (CDs, DVDs, etc), internet, etc.</p> <p>Note: Before distributing any new music, it is important to research the associated copyright restrictions. For example, some composers/copyright holders are covered by CCLI, some encourage free distribution for personal and congregational use, some want you to contact them to obtain permission for reprinting, some require permission if you are republishing, and some may have other restrictions. It is important to respect these restrictions.</p>	<p>Ditto. Note that a website has been launched to encourage composers to write and freely distribute Sacred Harp-style music: http://sacredharptunes.com/.</p>
<p>Hymn books typically contain several songs with roots in the Sacred Harp tradition, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name (Coronation) • Amazing Grace (New Britain) • All People that on Earth Do Dwell (Old Hundred) • A Charge to Keep (Boylston) • Jesus, Lover of My Soul (Martin) • Lo What a Glorious Sight Appears (Northfield, New Jerusalem) • Tell His Praise in Song and Story (Holy Manna) • Wayfaring Stranger (Wayfaring Stranger) • Wondrous Love (Wondrous Love) <p>Note: I imagine that if we were in a worship service in the mid-1800s, our singing may have sounded a lot like Sacred Harp. While music styles and tastes have changed a lot over the last couple hundred years, our 4-part a cappella American songs have deep roots in Sacred Harp type of music.</p>	<p>Sacred Harp music is considered to be one of the few truly original genres in the U.S. (along with barbershop and jazz).</p>

Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>In addition, many of our hymns have the same words as Sacred Harp songs -- though the music is quite different. For example, here are some familiar first lines from the Sacred Harp songbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A charge to keep I have • Alas! and did my Savior bleed? • All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name! • Amazing grace! how sweet the sound • Blest be the tie that binds • Brethren, we have met to worship • Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing • Come, we who love the Lord • Hark! the Herald angels sing • How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord • How long, dear Savior, Oh how long • How shall the young secure their hearts • I am a poor, wayfaring stranger • I'm not ashamed to own my Lord • Jesus, Lover of my soul • Love divine, all love excelling • Oh for a thousand tongues to sing • On Jordan's stormy banks I stand • The Lord is my Shepherd • The spacious firmament on high • What wondrous love is this! • When I can read my title clear <p>Note: There are many additional "familiar" songs in the Christian Harmony songbook. (Example: Angel Band.) I'm not well versed in the other oblong songbooks, but I imagine there may be other familiar words or tunes in others too.</p>	<p>See http://www.entish.org/sh/sh-in-mh.html for additional tunes found in some denominational hymnals.</p> <p>Note that there seems to be little overlap in Sacred Harp tunes and those used by the Puritan/Presbyterian psalm-only singers.</p>
<p>Most congregations sing at least at worship services on Sunday mornings and evenings. Most also sing after mid-week Bible study; children's classes typically sing during each class. Informal singings and other singing events can occur most any time.</p>	<p>Sacred Harp singing groups typically sing at least once a month. Some meet more often, and some meet for 'special' events. Singers often travel great distances to participate in all-day singings hosted by groups in neighboring regions.</p> <p>Example: At a recent all-day singing in Rutherfordton, NC, a visiting singer was from Wales!</p>
<p>Where? Most anywhere!</p>	<p>Where? For all-day singings, care is taken to ensure that the location has good acoustics for Sacred Harp type singing -- and that a good "hollow square" can be set up.</p>














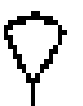









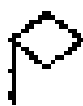












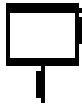



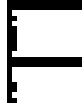
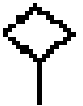
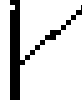

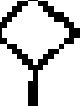







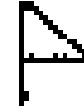



Singing in Churches of Christ (Generalizations)	Sacred Harp Singing
<p>Even if a song is in a hymn book or supplement published by baptized believers (and even if the editors have striven to ensure that the song's teachings are scriptural), the song leader and singers should still analyze the words to ensure the soundness of the message. Some popular songs may promote false doctrine, either intentionally or unintentionally.</p>	<p>Even though Sacred Harp music is typically considered to be "folk music" and not worship, the cautious singer should still pay attention to what is being sung. Sometimes lyrics may contain doctrinal error, so it is very important for the singer to recognize potential issues.</p>

Appendix A: Various 19th Century Notation Systems Using Shaped Notes

4-Shape System

Sacred Harp (current)	Fa 	So 	La 	Mi 
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Historic 7-Shape Systems

	Do	Re	Mi	Fa	So	La	Ti
Aiken (current)							
Aiken 1846							
?? 1847							
Swan 1848							
Junk 1849							
Gilham 1852							
Johnson 1853							
Walker 1866 (Note: A slightly modified version is used in Christian Harmony)							

Appendix B: Song Samples

Amazing Grace/New Britain (Sacred Harp)

Amazing Grace 205

The exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
Eph. 2:7

G-3 - SOL↓ G-2

1. A - ma - zing grace how sweet the sound That
 2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And
 3. Thru man - y dan - gers, toils and snares, I
 4. The Lord has prom - ised good to me, His
 5. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was
 grace my fears re - lieved; How pre - cious
 have al - read - y come; 'Twas grace that
 word my hope se - cures; He will my
 shin - ing as the sun; We've no less

lost, but now I'm found, Was blind, but now I see.
 did that grace ap - pear The hour I first be - lieved.
 bro't me safe thus far And grace will lead me home.
 shield and por - tion be As long as life en - dures.
 days to sing God's praise Than when we first be - gun.

John Newton, 1779

Arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1910

NEW BRITAIN. C.M. 45

"And David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord?" -- 1 Chron. 17:16.

C Major John Newton, 1779. Columbian Harmony, 1829.

1. A - maz - ing grace! How sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now I'm found, Was blind, but now I see. see.
 2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re - lieved; How pre - cious did that grace ap - pear The hour I first be - lieved! lieved!

3. Thro' man - y dan - gers, toils and snares, I have al - read - y come; 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home. home.
 4. The Lord has prom - ised good to me, His word my hope se - cures; He will my shield and por - tion be As long as life en - dures. dures.

5. The earth shall soon dis - solve like snow, The sun for - bear to shine; But God, who called me here be - low, Will be for - ev - er mine. mine.

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name/Coronation (Sacred Harp)

All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name 434

But we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor. Heb. 2:9

G - 4 - SOL↓ P-2

1. All hail the pow'r of Je - sus name! Let an - gels pros - trate
 2. Ye cho - sen seed of Is - rael's race, Ye ran - somed from the
 3. Let ev - 'ry kin - dred, ev - 'ry tribe, On this ter - res - trial
 4. O that with yon - der sa - cred throng We at His feet may

fall! Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, And
 fall, Hail Him who saves you by His grace, And
 fall, To Him all maj - es - ty as - cribe, And
 fall! We'll join the ev - er - last - ing song, And

crown Him Lord of all; Bring forth the roy - al
 crown Him Lord of all; Hail Him who saves you
 crown Him Lord of all; To Him all maj - es -
 praise Him Lord of all; We'll join the ev - er -

di - a - dem, And crown Him Lord of all.
 by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all.
 ty as - cribe, And crown Him Lord of all.
 last - ing song, And praise Him Lord of all.

Edward Perronet, 1779 Oliver Holden, 1792
 St. 4. John Rippon, 1787

CORONATION. C.M. 63

"Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the land of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of God." -- Isa. 62:3.

G Major Edward Perronet, 1779. Oliver Holden, 1793.

1. All hail the pow'r of Je - sus' name! Let an - gels pros - trate fall, Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, And
 2. Ye cho - sen seed of Is - rael's race, A rem - nant weak and small; Hail Him who saves you by His grace; And
 3. O that with yon - der sa - cred throng, We at His feet may fall! We'll join the ev - er - last - ing song, And

crown Him Lord of all; Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, And crown Him Lord of all. all.
 1. 2.
 crown Him Lord of all; Hail Him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all. all.
 1. 2.
 crown Him Lord of all; We'll join the ev - er - last - ing song, And crown Him Lord of all. all.
 1. 2.