

### Broaden Your Horizons

During my sophomore year of high school, I really got interested in singing. I had, of course, sung with fellow Christians during worship services (Col. 3:16), for some time. But in 1992, I was being encouraged to join the school chorus, as well as a newly formed men's ensemble. Singing in these select groups allowed me one of the best highlights of my high school years and ultimately led to a scholarship to sing in the chorus and men's ensemble at East Tennessee State University.

Many times, I recall statements made by my high school and college choral directors and use them to this day – even in sermons. After all, a truth is always a truth and is beneficial in every aspect of one's life. I remember one particular statement made by my high school choral director, Mrs. Debbie Gouge. She did not coin the quote, but nonetheless, the statement, in the context in which she used it, is very applicable to our lives today. She made the statement while teaching about classical music, and as you can imagine, classical music is not a very popular genre among teenagers. Yet, Mrs. Gouge encouraged us to “*broaden our horizons*” by not just listening to classical music, but other styles of music as well. At that time, I rarely listened to anything other than country music. However, being in the chorus allowed me the opportunity to sing a variety of songs, from various genres of music. In the men's ensemble, we sang songs that would be characterized as Pop, R&B, Soul, Choral, and Barber Shop Quartet. To this day, I still enjoy listening to a multiplicity of song genres – all because I was encouraged to “broaden my horizons” over a decade ago.

Today, many people are, figuratively, “still listening to country music,” allowing for no other radio station to be played. Many continue to dig deeper into the rut of “what we have always done,” and fail to broaden their horizons, particularly in regards to fellowship. To be sure, there's nothing wrong in being comfortable with certain people or certain traditions, as long as such does not contradict God's Word. Still, one can fail to experience the great joy which comes from branching out and meeting or getting to know new people if one doesn't make that effort. We should all take the time to sit down and visit with those whom we may not think we have much in common. We may find a refreshing source of joy and comfort. In this time of infancy for our new congregation, let us take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about each other. Let us broaden our horizons by *talking more* to those whom we may *see less*. This is an important time in the development of this new congregation. Let us build upon the Rock Solid Truth of God (Mat. 7:24-25; 16:18; John 17:17), the strength which comes from being Scripturally united (1 Cor. 1:10) and grow together (2 Pet. 3:18), that we “*all* may be *one*” (John 17:21).

– *Brad Green*