

CROSSACCENT



Worship Beyond Style



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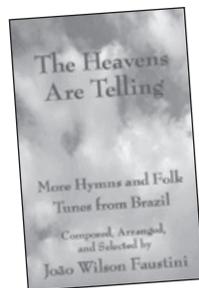
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Jennifer Ollikainen

These are some of the many questions to ask besides the simple question of access . . . as we pick our way through a dizzying multitude of music choices.

IT IS GOING AWAY, YET IT ISN'T QUITE GONE YET. It is the question of worship “style”—often reduced to a conversation about what music is chosen for worship.

Last year one of the most commented-on posts on the ALCM Lutheran Church Musicians Facebook page was about the question of worship “style.” The comments illustrated that we all struggle with the difficult process of choosing music for worship.

The comments also illustrated that we were not all using the same criteria or underlying assumptions for this task. Do we choose music based on how familiar it is to those currently on the outside of the church, those whom we’d like to welcome inside? Do we choose music based on its time-tested value to the church throughout history? Do we choose music based on the theological content or biblical imagery of the words? Or do we choose music based on how the music will shape an emotional response? These are some of the many questions to ask besides the simple question of access (print or electronic) as we pick our way through a dizzying multitude of music choices.

That Facebook conversation and Nancy Raabe’s Take Note article observe that these questions are active and lively in the church, in our minds, and in church music conferences.

Kent Bureson moves us beyond a simplistic question of “style” toward exploring how the tension between the unchangeable

proclamation of the gospel and our ever-changing cultural context shape our worship.

Samuel Torvend’s work, first presented as an address at the April 2013 Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University, gives us a different lens through which to examine these questions. How do our bodies engage the living Christ in worship? While not strictly a musical question, the assembly’s song offers a primary way the members of the assembly encounter the holy in sound, breath, voice, and movement.

Ron Rienstra offers yet a third perspective as he explores how technology serves the central proclamation of the gospel. He urges us to discern how technology supports or distracts from the gospel.

Stephen Rosebrock presents a planning guide to Ash Wednesday. The editorial board is seeking ways to offer useful and practical elements that support your music ministry. We look forward to your feedback about this element. As always, if you have ideas for features in this journal or if you would like to offer your work for consideration by the editorial board, please e-mail me at crossaccent@alcm.org.

I hope this issue inspires us to challenging conversations about how we choose music for worship by engaging the deeper questions and theological foundations of worship. The community of ALCM gives us the gift of wise and talented conversation partners in this important work. It was your conversation that sparked this issue theme, and I look forward to how we continue the conversation into the future.



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Music of the Church: An End to Division? Fall Conference Report

by Nancy Raabe

TO MANY OF US, SUMMER MEANS CONFERENCES. It is that happy time of the year when we look forward to being challenged, stimulated, and inspired by gatherings of fellow workers in the kingdom. It is a time to share ideas and experiences, to drink in the wise words offered by mentors and peers, to join together as the body of Christ in worship that summons from us the very best we can offer using the gifts God has given us. We return home refreshed, renewed, and restored.

Yet in the Upper Midwest, as hearty souls brace for the icy blasts that are just around the corner, mid-autumn has also come to be a time of great vocational enrichment. We owe this to a pair of well-established conferences: the Vi Messerli Memorial Lectures in Church Music at Concordia University Chicago, held each year during the third week in October, and the Good Shepherd Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, which takes place two weeks later at the beginning of November.

The music of the church was the subject of close scrutiny at both events. It was addressed pointedly by Paul Westermeyer in his keynote address at the Lectures, and less directly at the Good Shepherd Institute, whose theme this year was “An Open Conversation on Music in the Church: A Look at the Elephant in the Room.”

At Fort Wayne, Thomas Winger—who is president of Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario, and who served on the liturgy committee for *Lutheran Service Book*—spoke on music in the liturgy. In “What’s Right for the Rite? Theological Discernment in Matching Music to the Liturgy”



he tried to establish an “axis of mandate” that indicates which parts of the liturgy are divinely mandated, which are the product of human decision, and which are mixed (or somewhere in between). In his chart, music appeared in both the “mixed” and the “human” columns: the use of music, he noted, is mandated in both the Old and New Testaments. But what we play, how we play it, and what instruments we use have no such mandate, so humans are left to make those decisions—putting us, it would seem, right back where we started.

Other presenters were Kent Bureson, dean of the chapel at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (see his similar article in this issue); conductor and music educator Barbara Resch, who talked about how we are shaped by the music we listen to and helpfully pointed out that music designed with an affect (emotion) in mind has no place in worship; and composer Stephen Johnson, who gave us an engaging foray into the theological shortcomings of praise songs (the product of the sentiment-steeped pop style) and cautioned composers to strive to “communicate the poetry but to give our modern listeners something to grab onto,” given that they are writing for ears dulled by popular culture.

Westermeyer’s keynote talk at the Lectures in Church Music was titled “Lutheran Church Music in America: Roots and Identity, 1864 and 2014” (reflecting Concordia University Chicago’s 150th anniversary next year; it will also be the 50th anniversary of the Lectures in Church Music). Yet this was no dry historical address. Rather, it opened before us the sometimes tortured and sometimes inspired



pathway that has led the church and its music to the sadly divided position in which we now stand. And best of all, Westermeyer proceeded to lay before us a clear road forward with signposts by which we may recover not only our identity but also our sanity.

He began in the morass of 1864 when one would have been hard-pressed to distinguish Lutheranism from Methodism. In the ensuing years a return to Lutheran confessionalism gathered steam, leading to Harriet Reynolds Krauth's landmark *Church Book* (with music) in 1872 and then the uniting influence of the Common Service in 1888. This confessional revival, Westermeyer affirmed, was centered on "congregational and choral song intrinsically linked by alternation" and was "conceived around word, font, and table, and as the song of the royal priests in continuity with the whole church."

Westermeyer moved us through the neoclassicism of Distler and Bender and the music of such composers as Hillert, Bouman, Pelz, and Schalk—who were identifiably of their age but also strongly rooted in history—to the 1960s when the civil rights movement brought strong reactions to the surrounding culture in which people "abandoned worship and took to the streets." Two decades later, however, the church found itself trying to align *with* the culture in the belief that that was what would attract more people. The presumption was that "people will sing easily that which they know well."

Projecting ahead to 2014, Westermeyer continued, we live in the wake of division, beset by unresolved disputes extending back into the 19th century and mired in disagreement on how or whether the church should respond to the surrounding culture. As a result, he said, "We have split. We have taught ourselves how to hate one another on the basis of differing musical styles."

Exacerbating this, Westermeyer said, is the way social media are being used for personal branding. This reinforces the culture of "like" that has invaded the church. "Choosing hymns has become about what we like. And we've divided the intergenerational body of Christ into pieces [family service, seeker service] under the

assumption that there are different brands that will get more customers to buy your product."

Yet people know on a deep level they are not being nourished by worship that is based on personal preference, he continued, but they don't know how to express it. "We have set up a dishonest system that denies that disappointment exists," Westermeyer observed. "One of the church's great temptations is to pretend to rejoice, a forced spontaneity that music can attract people like TV commercials—but never admitting there is frustration."

But we know there is always hope. "Debates have required us to think more deeply and critically about worship," he said. In each time period the challenge is taken up, and the roots of our identity have been re-examined. "As the 19th century indicated, where roots and identity are strong, where identity has integrity, balance is found. In this way the ship moves forward and the church serves the world well."

So what might our road map look like? Westermeyer urged us to:

- Reinforce the conviction that worship takes place in continuity with the whole church and that we, as members of the church, share in its song.
- Look to the liturgical resources that have been bequeathed to us, through trial and error, across history. "We are not starting from scratch. We are called to strong singing, strong preaching, strong celebration of the sacraments."
- Be aware of ongoing sectarian challenges including the "like/dislike" that goes into worship planning; of pastors who conceive of the church as a noncollaborative business model; of music that tries to market an agenda; and of music that is really entertainment.
- Be prepared to respond to these challenges: remember that "the cloth of the liturgy protects us from idiosyncratic tendencies and the tyranny of leaders"; remember that "pastors are not CEOs; a good rule is that they are to be silent unless the liturgy calls them to speak or sing"; remember that church musicians in their settings are cantors, not entertainers or impresarios; and remember that "the music of the church is fundamentally vocal and communal."

Continued on page 7

Service Planning Ideas for Ash Wednesday

by Stephen Rosebrock

ASH WEDNESDAY MARKS the beginning of Lent. This 40-day period before Easter began around the 4th century. Penitents would enroll for a period of public penance and eventually public reconciliation. They would wear special garments and sprinkle themselves with ashes. By the end of the first millennium public penance had fallen out of use; the imposition of ashes was retained, but was now applied to all the faithful. Following the Lutheran Reformation the Imposition of Ashes was suppressed, but the rite was brought back into use with the implementation of *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *Lutheran Worship* in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The rites for Ash Wednesday in the more recent *Lutheran Service Book* and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* have similar contents, although they occur in a different order in each rite.

LSB

Imposition of Ashes
 Confession & Absolution
 Kyrie
 Salutation & Collect
 Joel 2:12-19
 Psalm 51
 2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10
 Verse: Joel 2:13
 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
 Hymn of the Day
 Sermon
 Creed
 Prayer of the Church
 Offering
 Offertory
 Service of the Sacrament

ELW

Penitential Psalm, Kyrie, Litany, or
 Hymn
 Greeting & Salutation
 Prayer of the Day
 Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
 Psalm 51 or Psalm 103
 2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10
 Gospel Acclamation: Joel 2:13
 Matthew 6:1-16, 16-21
 Sermon
 Hymn of the Day
 Invitation to Lent
 Confession
 Imposition of Ashes
 Declaration of Grace
 Service of Communion

Music for the Ash Wednesday Service

Both *LSB* and *ELW* rubrics indicate that the service begins in silence. This marks the solemn character of the day. Although neither rite specifies one way or the other, the best practice would be to exclude a postlude as well. This said, organ accompaniment of congregational singing needs to be soft, as some may suggest. The texts and the resources available on individual instruments will govern registrations used for this service. However, there are ample opportunities for the inclusion of choral music to enrich the service, music that underscores the penitential theme for Ash Wednesday. Following are some suggestions.

Columba Kelly.

Be Merciful, O Lord in Lectionary Psalms for Lent and Easter.

Cantor/choir and congregation.
GIA (G-6056).

In this responsorial setting of Psalm 51 the refrain is a chant; the psalm verses are set to a double psalm tone in mode 3. This is the appointed psalm of the day in both *LSB* and *ELW* and is also recommended for the Imposition in both rites. *ELW* also recommends it as Gathering Music.

Ralph C. Schultz.

Create in Me.

SATB, organ.
MorningStar (MSM-50-3034).

This beautiful choral setting of Psalm 51 would be best used as an anthem during the offering or distribution rather than as the Psalm of the Day. It is important that the entire psalm or at least part of it be sung by the congregation.

David von Kampen

Forgive Us, Renew Us in Scriptural Meditations.

SATB, soprano descant, keyboard or guitar.
Concordia (98-4151).

This is a brief, Taizé-like composition. The *LSB* rite allows the Rite of Corporate Confession and Absolution to be used. In this rite penitents may be absolved individually, in which case the choir could sing this chant throughout the time where absolution is given. The chant is simple enough that the congregation could join in.

Harrison Oxley.

Forty Days and Forty Nights.

SATB, organ.
Distributed by Mel Bay Publications (MB97597 A).
This is a typical anthem setting of an English hymn tune. Oxley uses his own tune and sets it to the text of G.H. Smytman and Francis Pott.

From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee.

Arr. Bret Heim.
SATB, organ.
Concordia (98-3879).

Heim provides a compilation of two 16th-century Lutheran composers (Johann Walter and

Arnold von Brick) who arranged Martin Luther's penitential hymn based on Psalm 130. There are also three additional settings in *Lutheran Choral Anthology: The 16th Century* (Concordia [97-7347]) composed by Matthaeus Le Maistre, Benedictus Ducis, and Caspar Othmayr. These settings can be used as independent choral anthems during the Imposition of Ashes, the offering, or distribution; or select stanzas could be used with congregational singing. This is the appointed hymn of the day in *LSB*. Note that this is one of the more difficult hymns in the hymnal. Care should be taken in teaching it to the congregation. It could be sung throughout the preceding Lent so that it does not inhibit the Ash Wednesday service by presenting a musical hurdle.

Kyries for Choir.

Ed. Carl Schalk.
Concordia (98-4023).

This collection of six different Kyries for the Mass ranges from unison chant from the *Liber Usualis* to SATB settings composed by Michael Praetorius and Hans Leo Hassler. The *LSB* rite uses a Kyrie following Confessional and Absolution, and the *ELW* rite suggests it as one of the options for the Gathering Rite. One of the chant settings would be a suitable choice for Ash Wednesday.

Lent Prose.

Chant.
The Lent Prose, otherwise known as Attende Domine, is from the *Liber Usualis*. There is a transcription of the Latin chant on the Choral Public Domain Library (CPDL #29677) on the Internet. There is also an English and Latin version in *Ash Wednesday to Easter for Choirs* (ed. Lionel Dakers and John Scott, Oxford University Press [978-0-19-353111-6]), with an organ accompaniment by Scott. The two Latin editions are compatible with one another.

Richard Farrant.

Hide Not Thou Thy Face.

SATB, unaccompanied.
CPDL (multiple files).

Benjamin M. Culli.

Ob, the Height of Jesus' Love.

SATB, horn, organ.

Concordia (98-3941).

This is a setting of William McComb's text *Chief of Sinners Though I Be*; the composer has re-ordered the stanzas. Culli uses the tune *GETHESEMANE* as the basis for both the choral lines and horn descant but with significant development.

Thomas Tallis.

Purge Me, O Lord, from All My Sin.

SATB, unaccompanied.

CPDL (#02781).

David von Kampen.

Remember That You Are Dust in Scriptural Meditations.

SATB unaccompanied.

Concordia (98-4151).

This is a setting of Genesis 3:19, the versicle used in the Imposition Rite in both *LSB* and *ELW*.

Kenneth T. Kosche.

Return to the Lord.

Two part, equal or mixed, accompanied.

Concordia (98-3798).

This is a simple choral setting of Joel 2:13, the Gospel Acclamation in both the *LSB* and *ELW* rites.

Carl Schalk.

The Lord Is Righteous in Lamentations of Jeremiah.

SATB unaccompanied.

Concordia (98-3601).

This brief setting of Lamentations 1:18 could be used as additional choral music during the Imposition of Ashes, during the offering, or during distribution.



Stephen Rosebrock

Kantor

Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church

Saint Louis, MO

Music of the Church: An End to Division? *continued from page 4*

- Celebrate the Eucharist weekly and the prayer offices during the week with the fullness of our Lutheran heritage; support the pastoral office; support collaborative discussion; do the work of the church to the glory of God and resist anything that pretends to be a silver bullet; resist defining worship by instrumental style; resist the temptation to be exclusively local and contextual; support the use of the Revised Common Lectionary; and trust the Holy Spirit to sustain the church.

Both conferences included outstanding hymn festivals. At the Lectures the music of Walter Pelz was featured, with Pelz heroically holding forth at the organ for the entire service. Perhaps most affecting was his magnificent setting of “All the Earth with Joy Is Sounding,” which sent into heavenly orbit Stephen Starke’s soaring images of the resurrection (“He, the

greater Jonah bounding/From the grave, His three-day bed,/Wins the prize:/Death’s demise—/Songs of triumph fill the skies”). The hymn festival at the Good Shepherd Institute featured a string of typically creative, elegantly crafted settings by Kantor Kevin Hildebrand, including a joyous processional for trumpet and organ prefacing “Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng” in which one could vividly see the high-mounted festal banner waving and sparkling in the sun.



Nancy Raabe

Composer, author, and church musician

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Editorial board, CrossAccent



Music is a vital component in the discourse of faith and the experience of living as a baptized child of God.



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Beyond Style: The Worship of Christ's Body within Cultural Diversity

by Kent Burreson

“STYLES OF WORSHIP.” The phrase undoubtedly provokes visceral reactions—both positive and negative—for pastors, church musicians, and worship leaders. In many ways it was *the* phrase that galvanized the church's worship life in the 1990s. As one way of attending to the diversity in modern culture, the foray into styles of Christian worship spawned such new ecclesial industries as Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) and also spawned a new vocabulary to describe worship, including such phrases as “contemporary,” “blended,” “traditional,” and “Hip-Hop Eucharist.”¹ In Lutheran circles many articles and books fostered the discussion about styles of worship, including David Luecke's *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance: Facing America's Mission Challenge* and *The Other Story of Lutherans at Worship: Reclaiming Our Heritage of Diversity*.²

Often conversations and debates about styles of worship have focused almost exclusively on styles of worship music. Notes Joe Horness (former worship leader at Willow

Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL) regarding contemporary styles:

Contemporary worship endeavors to use modern instrumentation (e.g., guitars, drums, synthesizers, percussion, horns), contemporary music styles (e.g., rock, jazz, hip-hop, rap, gospel), and freshly written or arranged songs (both new choruses and fresh treatments of traditional hymns) in the language of this generation to lead people into authentic expressions of worship and a genuine experience of the presence of God.³

While Horness does not limit a contemporary style of worship to musical styles, both the quote and the title of his article, “Contemporary Music-Driven Worship,” do betray where his focus and direction lie. Contemporary worship styles have been driven by questions about what style of music is most attractive to those in various generational groups, starting with the Baby Boomers.

In certain regards the preoccupation with music in questions about style is

justifiable. Music serves as a primary mode of communication and participation for human beings in worship. The emotive value of music is significant and heightens the experience of engagement with God and his community, the church, in worship. Music permeates all cultures, and the music to which we listen and sing shapes our human perception and what it means to live our lives. Music is a vital component in the discourse of faith and the experience of living as a baptized child of God. Whether an organ or an electric guitar is used in worship is an important question that has implications. The organ has proven its versatility in leading congregational song for centuries. The guitar, while less ably equipped to serve that purpose alone, captivates modern sensibilities about music to which one can easily listen and in which one can easily participate. The question of musical style is an important question.

Musical style is a question that attracts much disagreement, but it is not the only question. Questions of style are not shaped solely by the issue of particular musical styles or usages. Ultimately styles of worship involve a plethora of things including the sacraments, the role of the word and preaching, prayers, dialogue, acts of reconciliation, postures and gestures, hospitality, dress and vestments, liturgical environment and architecture, exhortation, witnessing, and the like. Issues of style push the church to consider the entire contextualized setting of worship. But is the concept of style sufficient to address the underlying questions of contextualization?

Now that we are into the second decade of the 21st century, one wonders whether the profuse discussion of styles of worship is dead. Could it have been purely a cultural fad? The phrase certainly is still in use, and many Lutheran churches offer more than one style of worship service on any given Sunday: a traditional, blended, contemporary, and

perhaps even post-modern/emergent service. While these are often seen primarily from the music perspective, there is much more at stake: how does all that the church does in worship reflect its grappling with a wonderfully, multifaceted cultural milieu?

Worship questions no longer can be framed solely within the paradigm of styles of worship. The questions have shifted to the broader dialogue between tradition and context, an eternal gospel in a multicultural world.

My personal experience speaks to the drift of style to the periphery. I arrived at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis as professor in 2000. The issue of style was still very much alive in the church's conversation. That conversation often focused on music, but involved other

things such as the structure of the service (did it follow the received Western rites), presiding style, worship architecture, the use of electronic media, and the like. Concordia Seminary offered only one style of worship in its daily chapel services: traditional, hymnal-structured worship led by an organist. While students have raised the issue of styles of worship and often advocated strongly for or against particular styles during my earliest years as a professor, the language about worship has definitely shifted over the past six or seven years. Discussions in worship classes are less vitriolic than they once were. Instead of focusing on the question of which style of worship might most effectively make a congregation attractive to the unchurched, students are now more engaged with asking: How can worship be Lutheran in a multicultural environment? How can we engage the traditions of the church, and of Lutheranism in particular, in the current cultural and ecclesial context? What do worship services look like that are for the sake of the baptized? What does a worship setting look like that is for the sake of the mission of the church to the unbaptized? How can the word and sacraments be at the center of Lutheran

Worship questions no longer can be framed solely within the paradigm of styles of worship. The questions have shifted to the broader dialogue between tradition and context, an eternal gospel in a multicultural world.

worship and best give shape to current cultural forms? These questions push us well beyond questions of musical style, instrumentation, and performance, and they transcend the limiting perspective of styles of worship. They reflect the wonderful complexity of the cultural matrix in which worship is enacted and embedded.

The lens of style presumes a fairly fixed, structured, and coordinated relationship between culture and the church's worship. But the cultural shifts have been so momentous as to create a seismic fracture in the tidiness of that relationship.

But is the issue of styles of worship really dead? Might not the question of style in worship be a perennial question for the church? In *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance*, Luecke made the negotiation with culture sound very simple, like a mathematical equation. Negotiating culture is a matter of substance and style:

Congregations or church bodies have as their substance the part of their identity that has to remain unchanged. Style can be identified with how a church expresses that substance. Style can and does change over the years, just as languages and cultures do. Adopting new styles of church expression amounts to adapting to changes in culture.⁴

Mix Lutheran substance (at the heart of which is the unchanging gospel) and style in the proper proportion and out pops a Lutheran service that fits the cultural context. Admittedly, Luecke's books do not actually argue that the negotiation with culture is this simplistic. But conceiving of cultural engagement simply from the perspective of style inordinately makes a challenging question a simplistic one. From that perspective the question of style in worship indeed is dead. But when this question points to the larger question of how the church manifests its ecclesial identity within a diverse cultural context, the question of style is very much alive. The church's engagement with culture is a perennial question.

The Cultural Fad: The Fading of the Style Question

Cultural, theological, and ecclesial shifts have precipitated a movement to the periphery of debates over styles of worship and music. As already noted, there have been significant cultural shifts for the church in North America over the past 50 years. The lens of style presumes a fairly fixed, structured, and coordinated relationship between culture and the church's worship. But the cultural shifts have been so momentous as to create a seismic fracture in the tidiness of that relationship. As David Kinnaman notes regarding the shifts in culture and their impact on the Mosaic/Millennial generation (born 1984–2002; the eclectic generation):

The next generation is so different because *our culture is discontinuously different*. That is, the cultural setting in which young people have come of age is significantly changed from what was experienced during the formative years of previous generations. In fact I believe a reasonable argument can be made that no generation of Christians has lived through a set of cultural changes so profound and lightning fast. . . . The last fifty years have been a real-time experiment on the next generation, using free markets, media, advertising, technology, politics, sexuality, and so on as our lab tools. The experiment continues, but we can already observe some of the results: Fluidity—Diversity—Complexity—Uncertainty.⁵

The fluidity, diversity, complexity, and uncertainty of the cultural experience everyone has undergone means the paradigm of worship styles is simply insufficient as a cultural and ecclesial category from which to address worship in the 21st century. Styles presume that Christians (and the unchurched) live within some fairly uniform cultural paradigms. But the cultures around us are so richly diverse that various styles of worship cannot capture that cultural diversity.

Styles of worship also were developed to make the church's worship attractive to the unchurched who were not attuned to the

church's worship culture. The various styles of worship were grounded in particular assumptions about missiology. Those assumptions included operating within the attractional and consumerist paradigm of ecclesiology. Here the assumption is that "to bring people to Jesus we need to first bring them to church."⁶ These attractional and consumerist assumptions have been overturned as the church has encountered a society increasingly disassociated from and antipathetic toward the church. New forms of evangelism and new approaches to missiology have arisen that question the assumption that the church's worship is the primary ground for evangelism and that the worship service is the primary agent for attracting the unchurched. These new models, says Alan Hirsch, demand that we

Engage our culture on its own turf (missional), rather than expecting them to come to ours (attractional). . . . Missionary questions . . . require that we pay attention to the existential issues confronting a people *as they experience those issues*. And that we try to shape and form communities of faith so that they can become an organic part of the cultural social fabric of the people group we are trying to reach. . . . We concluded that the missional church must seek to redeem the social pattern/rhythm of such spaces—reinvesting it with religious significance—and express what it means to be a people of God [in that context].⁷

Worship in this re-envisioned missional context is concerned with the formation of disciples/missionaries within a particular cultural context and not solely with an attractive and desirable style of worship. Culture gives shape to worship that forms disciples who are at home in culture. Yet they also live in contrast to and, when necessary, against the culture as those formed by the church's worship to live as disciples.

New ecumenical and Lutheran perspectives on worship have given shape to a renewed theology of worship, which is represented in the new hymnals of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *Lutheran Service Book*,

respectively. Both hymnals represent Lutheran worship that is grounded in the primary acts of God through God's Word—baptism, proclamation of the word, and the supper of the Lord, and the primary response of the people of God in prayer, praise, song, and lament.⁸ As a result, important questions about the styles of music, communication, preaching, hospitality, and leadership increasingly are framed within the context of worship that is centered on God's actions as revealed through the biblical narrative and experienced in a symbolically enriched ritual context.

These changes are encapsulated in the move away from a contemporary, church growth response to the de-churched and unchurched and toward an emerging Christian response to the church's life and witness. The emerging church, which often challenges contemporary responses to church life and worship, doesn't approach the question from the perspective of an attractive style, but from the perspective of forming and shaping authentic disciples of Christ. For Jim Belcher, author of *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*, the emerging church has prompted serious engagement with worship that forms faith-seeking disciples in substantive ways.⁹ He describes worship at congregations affected by the emerging church approach as worship with depth: worship that is ancient and new; represents the biblical drama; is filled with joy and reverence; involves the priesthood of all believers; contains profound but accessible sermons; is focused around weekly communion; and is for believers but is hospitable to unbelievers. More than the question of the most effective style, what is at stake is worship that forms and shapes disciples as the body of Christ for life in the world.

Engaging the Culture: Moving Past Style

The shifts that have occurred in Christian worship since the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church have been profound for all Christian traditions. Whether considering the liturgical movement across Christian traditions and the renewal of worship and hymnbooks, or the interaction between southern and northern hemisphere Christianity, or the questions raised by contemporary approaches

to worship on the basis of generationally focused styles, all have had one thing in common: the intention to engage the diverse cultures standing on the doorstep of Christian churches. In a 2001 article titled “Beyond Style,” John Witvliet (director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship) noted that many factors led to the profusion of worship styles, including the liturgical movement, the church growth movement, the hymn renaissance, the cross-cultural sharing of resources, the charismatic movement, the inclusion of children in worship, technology, and liturgical eclecticism.¹⁰ These factors, which originally propelled the move toward a plurality of styles in worship, also prompted a more substantive and detailed engagement with culture that has moved beyond the question of style. Three of the factors Witvliet isolated in particular have facilitated this localized, congregational negotiation with culture: the proliferation of hymns, hymnals, and worship resources (the liturgical movement and the hymn renaissance); localized worship production capabilities (technology and liturgical eclecticism); and the global sharing of worship resources through the World Wide Web or Internet (cross-cultural sharing of resources and technology). All three factors together entail a move beyond style to specific engagement with ecumenical and global expressions of Christian worship and the diversities of cultural expression. We have access to and are influenced by an incredible variety of worship resources from a great diversity of cultures.

It has nearly become a platitude to say that in the 20th and 21st centuries there has been an explosion in hymn writing, and that these centuries have been the most productive in hymnic composition. Yet the evidence is the hymnals.¹¹ As examples, first consider the primary publishing houses associated with the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.¹² These are the hymnals published since 1970 by those publishing houses:

- OCP Publications: *Flora y Canto* (1989); *Rise Up and Sing* (1992); *Journeysongs* (1994); *Glory and Praise* (1998); *Spirit & Song* (1999); *One Faith, Una Voz* (2005); and yearly missal and music publications;
- GIA: four volumes in the *Worship* series

(1971–2011); *Lead Me, Guide Me* (2 editions; 1987, 2012); five volumes in the *Gather* series (1988–2011); *Hymnal for Catholic Students* (1988); *Hymnal for the Hours* (1989); *Hymnal Supplement 1991* (1991); *RitualSong* (1996); *Catholic Community Hymnal* (1999); *Singing Our Faith* (2001); *Oramos Cantando/We Pray in Song* (2005); and *Cross Generation* (2009); and

- Liturgical Press: *The Collegeville Hymnal* (1990); and *Sacred Song* (2004).

Lutheran churches exhibit a similar proliferation, here grouped by denomination:

- Association of Free Lutheran Congregations: *Joyful Sounds: The New Children’s Hymnal* (1977); and *The Ambassador Hymnal* (1994);
- The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: *Lutheran Worship* (1982); *All God’s People Sing!* (1992); *Hymnal Supplement 98* (1998); and *Lutheran Service Book* (2006);
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978); *With One Voice* (1995); and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006);
- Evangelical Lutheran Synod: *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (1996); and
- Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod: *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* (1993); and *Christian Worship Supplement* (2008).

And these are just two traditions in the United States! The provision of and availability of hymnals to congregations, pastors, and music leaders has opened the floodgates of worship resources that can be accessed, thus confounding the question of distinct styles.

Along with this hymnal proliferation, the advent of the personal computer and printer has enabled congregations to produce and print their own worship resources in-house. For the first time, worship folders can be produced that are completely contextualized to one particular congregation and its setting, a style all its own. Broad style descriptions no longer have viability, because a congregation’s ritual practices, textual choices, and musical genres can be unique to that particular congregation at any particular worship service/event. Just as the printing press further decentralized worship on a regional basis in the 16th century, so the personal computer and printer have decentralized worship on a local basis

and created the possibility of worship styles potentially equal to the number of global congregations. While this development raises serious challenges to ritual unity across regional and denominational lines, it does enable congregations to grapple with the culture that surrounds them and it gives shape through worship to the lives of those who comprise the body of Christ in that place.

Finally, the most significant factor in the cultural shifts has been the development of the World Wide Web or Internet. This development has revolutionized worship, allowing congregations, pastors, and worship leaders unprecedented access to global and denominational worship resources at the touch of a keyboard. In a matter of seconds, in so far as language is not a barrier, one has access to worship materials from the World Council of Churches, the Vatican, Orthodox and mainline Protestant churches throughout the world, and evangelical and Pentecostal churches from sub-Saharan Africa to Brazil to India. Technology has fed a liturgical eclecticism in which congregations increasingly became willing to draw from a variety of resources to construct worship services. Such resources could be as wide-ranging as the hymn “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” (from the 5th century liturgy of St. James) to Keith Getty and Stuart Townend’s modern hymn “In Christ Alone” to Chris Tomlin’s midrash on Amazing Grace, “Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone.” Pastors, musicians, worship leaders, and congregations will continue to use the Internet to access, develop, and share worship resources. Those who plan worship within this richly multifaceted culture are called to be discerning and increasingly intentional about the musical setting, content, purpose, and meaning of worship services and practices for the sake of the church’s life.

A prime example of the accessibility of worship resources and hymnody and songs

through the Internet is the development and growth of CCLI. The idea was developed in 1984 at Bible Temple church in Portland, OR, by music minister Howard Rachinski, and it was incorporated in 1988 as Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc. (“Inc.” was later changed to “International.”) A year later it was serving 9,500 congregations; it now serves well over 200,000. Through its licensing services, congregations can access and download for use over 300,000 worship songs, essentially all of the contemporary worship songs that have been published.¹³

CCLI usage over the years manifests the move beyond style to engage the culture in more substantive ways. Comparing the top 25 Christian songs in terms of usage from CCLI in the years 1992 and 2012 bears this out. In 1992 the orientation of the songs was toward what has been labeled “Praise and Worship” music. As defined by the editors of the Word Music collection, Praise and Worship music is “congregational song that usually incorporates harmonies and rhythms. Its lyric usually utilizes a first person expression of praise to God for who he is. . . . The melody supports the heart of the lyric by its emotionally expressive contour and design.”¹⁴

A good example is the most utilized song as reported in 1992, “He Has Made Me Glad,” by Leona Von Brethorst:

Chorus

He has made me glad,
 He has made me glad,
 I will rejoice for
 He has made me glad.
 He has made me glad,
 He has made me glad,
 I will rejoice for
 He has made me glad.

Stanza

I will enter His gates
 With thanksgiving in my heart,

Just as the printing press further decentralized worship on a regional basis in the 16th century, so the personal computer and printer have decentralized worship on a local basis and created the possibility of worship styles potentially equal to the number of global congregations.

I will enter His courts with praise.
I will say this is the day
That the Lord has made,
I will rejoice
For He has made me glad.¹⁵

Repetitive and simple, the song allows the individual believer to rejoice in the Lord. However, the language lacks references to the biblical narrative, to Christ, to the Trinity, to salvation, or to any of the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith, except a subtle allusion to creation: “The Lord has made me.” It is a simple song of praise.

In contrast, the top two songs for 2012 manifest a decided shift in content and, I would contend, a different understanding of the church’s engagement with a changing culture. The top song is “10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)” by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin. While also a praise song, it is not simple in content.

Stanza 1

The sun comes up, it’s a new day dawning;
It’s time to sing Your song again.
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes.

Stanza 2

You’re rich in love, and You’re slow to anger.
Your name is great, and Your heart is kind.
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing:
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

Chorus

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
O my soul,
Worship His holy name.
Sing like never before,
O my soul.
I’ll worship Your holy name.

Stanza 3

And on that day when my strength is failing,
The end draws near, and my time has come;
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending:
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Ending

Worship Your holy name,
Lord, I’ll worship Your holy name.
Sing like never before,
O my soul.
I’ll worship Your holy name,
Worship Your holy name,
Worship Your holy name.¹⁶

The simple praise element is present in the ending. But the song itself might be considered in the tradition of Christian morning hymns. It develops a narrative from morning to evening, from the beginning of life to the end of time. It praises God for the morning; reflects confident faith in one’s daylong singing; praises the Lord for the Lord’s love, mercy, and kindness; and concludes in stanza three with an expression of eschatological hope. Although it does not reference Christ or the Trinity or other foundational themes of the Christian faith, it possesses significantly more theological substance than a simple praise hymn.¹⁷

The second-most-used song in 2012, “How Great Is Our God,” was written by Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves, and the most prolific Christian worship song writer of the last decade, Chris Tomlin. Six of Tomlin’s songs appear in the 2012 top 25. Even more than “10,000 Reasons,” this song exhibits the shift toward engagement with a Christian culture that is woefully ill-informed both about the biblical narrative and about fundamental biblical themes and a Christian culture that is awash in a secular culture to which the biblical narrative and gospel story are at minimum severely distorted, if not completely foreign. The song praises God with the repeated title refrain. But it does so in the midst of stanzas that highlight the contrast of darkness and the light of God; the power of God’s voice; God’s eternity; God’s providence; and that God is Alpha and Omega, Three-in-One, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the Lion who will lie down with the Lamb.

Chorus

How great is our God,
Sing with me.
How great is our God,
And all will see,
How great, how great is our God!

Stanza 1

The splendor of a King,
Clothed in majesty.
Let all the earth rejoice,
All the earth rejoice.
He wraps Himself in Light,
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice,
And trembles at His voice.

Stanza 2

Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands.
Beginning and the End,
Beginning and the End.
The Godhead Three in One,
Father, Spirit, Son;
The Lion and the Lamb,
The Lion and the Lamb.

Bridge

Name above all names,
Worthy of all praise.
My heart will sing
How great is our God!¹⁸

While simple praise songs are still in use by congregations that offer different styles of worship, the move toward increased use of biblically and theologically more substantive hymns represents a move beyond an appealing and engaging style toward an intentional and deeper engagement with a culture that is estranged from the biblical narrative. Is this proof that we are moving beyond style to deeper meaning and greater intentionality about context and culture in worship? Jim Belcher, in his assessment and critique of the emerging church, would respond in the affirmative with regard to the engagement with post-modern culture. A third way beyond the traditional contemporary style divide is possible. Here is worship that “embodied a genuine encounter with God, had depth and substance, included more frequent and meaningful communion, was participator, read more Scripture in worship, creatively used the senses, provided more time for contemplation, and focused on the transcendence and otherness of God.”¹⁹ The ready availability of such songs through the Internet and from licensing services such as CCLI and OneLicense has allowed congregations to choose a diversity of ways in which they can engage the culture in liturgy, ritual, hymn, and song.

Lutheran Style: Worship That Is for the Life of the Body of Christ

In order to invigorate congregational life and shape worship that is attractive to those outside the worshipping community, congregations often focused on developing a style or styles of worship that best served their worship identity and mission. Developing worship that is contextualized in the way of a particular style is certainly one aspect of attending to the cultural

matrix for congregational life and worship. Yet, as Witvliet observed in 2001,

Many congregations are discovering that while they have obsessed about stylistic identity in worship, they have failed to cultivate conversations *about its deeper meaning*. Style has taken precedence over content. These congregations are discovering the need for a winsome, well-grounded, and well-articulated vision for the purpose of worship.²⁰

While we are showing signs of moving beyond the question of using a particular style of worship toward engaging the multiplicity of cultures with worship that is richly meaningful for Christian faith and life, the postmodern environment and the attendant consumerist culture has created the worship mall in which congregations shop for an endless variety of options for use in public worship.²¹ Such liturgical and worship consumerism can move toward liturgical and ecclesial nihilism. Everything is available for the choosing, but increasingly the freedom of choice becomes one’s god and the mishmash of choices becomes a vanity of vanities. What will save us from the mall of liturgical death?

Worship that is planned for the life of the body of Christ must move beyond the myriad choices in the worship mall into a close examination of culture, tradition, content, and meaning.

Worship that is planned for the life of the body of Christ must move beyond the myriad choices in the worship mall into a close examination of culture, tradition, content, and meaning. Such worship both practices and juxtaposes the central things that express and constitute the life of the body of Christ: word, water, bread, and wine. In those central things is the life of an assembly. In such worship the assembly lives by remembering the story and promises of God. The assembly lives in cleansing, quenching, and life-restoring water. The assembly lives by eating the bread of the reign of God and drinking from the cup of the crucified One who was raised to live forever.

The assembly lives by the words of the Lord. The assembly lives by the creaturely gifts that flow from these central things: reconciling words; oil that heals; hands that love, invite, and touch in care; times and seasons that live us into the story of God; and furniture, crosses, paintings, icons, and sculptures that allow us to glimpse the life of the body of Christ in God's final, eternal reign.

Worship that attends to the life of the body of Christ and is set within the local Christian assembly necessarily dialogues with the culture so as to effectively communicate the story of God and to form the assembly to live as the body of Christ today. The church's attempt to define that dialogue through style categories helped to open the door for more intentional dialogue with culture and context. Worship that has moved beyond style inculcates the gospel so that the texts, rituals, symbols, music, and song of the Christian assembly can be claimed by the assembly *as their own* within the greater context of God's story in the saving work of Jesus Christ.²²

Worship that attends to the life of the body of Christ in the local Christian assembly forms and shapes disciples of God the Father through the Son Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit through its worship practices. It is the meaning of and formative power of practice not style that shapes disciples who live by the word, pray to the God who loves them, love and forgive all those around them (including enemies), tend the gift of God's creation and sing in prayer, lament, and praise. Worship that forms disciples through liturgical praxis should, as Spinks observes,

Entice and enchant us not only to desire, but also to fall in love with God the Trinity, and thereby love our neighbours. . . . Serious postmodern worship, whatever its actual form, and wherever it takes place, should ravish the heart, and wound the soul with love.²³

Worship that shapes disciples who trust and love God and love their world is worship that has moved beyond style.

What style of worship do you employ? One of my colleagues is fond of asking "Why do you want to know?" in order to discern what the pressing issue is behind any

question. While the question of style moved the church to take seriously the engagement with a changing and diversifying culture, there is much more to the issue behind the question. Authentic, contextual and faithful Christian worship:

- will not take the minimalist route and communicate in cultural forms that fit a style pleasing only to some;
- will flow from the biblical story interacting with our lives today;
- will reveal and empower the living body of Christ in the local worshipping Christian assembly.
- will proclaim the living presence and promise of God in Jesus Christ in song, praise, and prayer;
- will sing the story of God in Christ and in Christ's Body through the gifts of the numerous cultural languages that surround us; and
- will embrace the cultural traditions of the church's past, including those of music and song, in service to the church's life today

Christian worship practices the faith in cultural forms that are more than just a style. Here the church is culturally at home: washing, eating, drinking, reconciling, praying, praising, singing, thanking, celebrating, loving, and serving—disciples living and desiring the reign of the Lord.



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Notes

1. On Hip-Hop Eucharist, see Bryan D. Spinks, *The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture* (London: SPCK, 2010), 14–17.
2. St. Louis: Concordia (1988) and Tempe, AZ:

Fellowship Ministries (1995), respectively. Compare Rick Stuckwisch, "The Other Story of Lutherans at Worship?" *Logia* 5, no. 3 (1996): 39–44.

3. Joe Horness, "Contemporary Music-Driven Worship," in *Exploring the Worship Spectrum: 6 Views*, ed. Paul A. Basden (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 102.
4. Luecke, *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance*, 21.
5. David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church—and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2011), 38 (author's italics).
6. Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2006): 275. As Hirsch notes, "Consumption is detrimental to discipleship" (45). See also pages 42–45.
7. Hirsch, 37 (author's italics).
8. The work of Gordon Lathrop, an ELCA pastor, has had significant influence on a Lutheran (and ecumenical) theology of worship. See his trilogy, all published by Augsburg Fortress (Minneapolis): *Holy Things* (1992), *Holy People* (1999), and *Holy Ground* (2003). In the LCMS, renewed attention to the Lutheran Confessions and Martin Luther's theology of worship has invigorated a deeper appreciation for the vitality of word and sacraments and for the rhetorical and symbolic power of rites.
9. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books (2009).
10. John D. Witvliet, "Beyond Style: Asking Deeper Questions about Worship," *Congregations* 27, no. 4 (July/August, 2001): 19–21, 35.
11. See *Studia Liturgica* 31, no. 1 (2001): 2–124. Articles include John F. Baldovin, "The ICEL Proposed Sacramentary"; David Stancliffe, "The Making of the Church of England's Common Worship"; Norman Wallwork, "The British Methodist Worship Book"; Stewart Todd, "The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland"; Frank W. Stoldt, "New North American Lutheran Worship Material"; Ruth A. Meyers, "Ongoing Liturgical Revision in the Episcopal Church USA"; Alan Barthel, "The United Church of Canada Celebrates God's Presence"; Yngvill Martola, "Worship Renewal in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland"; Nils-Henrik Nilsson, "The Church of Sweden Service Book"; K. H. W. Klaassens, "A New Dutch Reformed Service Book"; Stuart Ludbrook, "The 1996 Liturgy of the French Reformed Church"; and Thaddeus A. Schnitker, "The New Altar Book of the Old Catholic Church in Germany."
12. Wikipedia provides a very helpful listing by denomination of the hymnals those denominations have published, primarily in the 20th century: "List of Hymnals," last modified Oct. 27, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_hymnals.
13. A similar examination could be made of the other principal hymn licensing service, OneLicense (www.onelicense.net), which provides hymns and resources

from primarily mainline Christian music publishers; CCLI (www.ccli.com) primarily represents the evangelical music publishers.

14. *Songs for Praise & Worship*, Worship Planner ed. (Waco, TX: Word Music, 1992), 446, quoted in Luecke, *The Other Story of Lutherans at Worship*, 24.
15. Maranatha Praise (1976).
16. Shout! Publishing (2011).
17. The purpose of praise songs and hymns is to glorify and praise God, usually for an attribute of God or for an act of God. They allow a direct and focused praise and thanks to God. The *Agnus Dei* is a simple praise hymn in the traditional western ordo.
18. Alletrop Music (2004).
19. Belcher, *Deep Church*, 124.
20. Witvliet, 21 (italics mine).
21. See Spinks, xiii–xxiv.
22. On inculturation, see Anscar J. Chupungco, "Liturgy and Inculturation," in *Fundamental Liturgy*, ed. Chupungco, Handbook for Liturgical Studies vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 337–75.
23. Spinks, 216.

Carl Schalk

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Touch Me and See: A Resurrection of the Body in the Church?



Appearance of Christ to the Apostles (fragment) by Duccio (1311). wikipedia.org

Editor's Note: Samuel Torvend presented the following address at the 65th Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University, IN, in April 2013. He notes that Saint Augustine enumerated over 300 sacraments or ways in which God communicates God's presence and grace through ordinary matter, through ordinary gestures, postures, and actions including sacred songs. Although Torvend does not draw a line directly through the music ministry of worship, his work in this journal is intended to invite readers to imagine how music, in particular, embodies that presence and grace of God in breath, gesture, voice, and instruments. The work of the musician is profoundly physical and honors the gift of the body in a glorious way: the musician uses the gifts of the human body to invite the worshipping assembly into the presence of God through song.

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by Samuel Torvend

The Bodily Actions of Jesus

Eight days after Jesus' birth, his father clipped the foreskin from his penis, an action indicating the father's public acknowledgment of the newborn child as his son (Luke 2:21).¹ Upon reaching puberty he was taught to trim his beard and cut the hair on his head short—short—for no male was to look like a female whose hair grew long. Each year of his life he drank wine cut with water and ate unleavened bread with roasted lamb at the spring equinox. At some point in early adulthood he was washed in river water, joining a group in waiting for the advent of their god (3:21). One report notes that he was able to read the Scriptures in the midst of an assembly, claiming as his own the words of a prophet who brought good news to the poor, release to captives, sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed.

As a wandering leader he rebuked unclean spirits (4:31-37; 8:26-39), healed people with fevers (4:38-39), exorcised demons (4:40-41), raised the dead to life (7:11-17) and, surprisingly, touched the leprosy with his own hands (5:12-16). It was said, "all in the crowd were trying to *touch him*, for power came out from him" (6:19; italics mine). He gained a reputation for joining meals with hated agents of empire (5:27-32) and the wretchedly poor (9:12-17), with male critics who held him in skeptical regard (7:36-50) and

women who were his students (10:38-42), with political assassins (6:15) as well as the nonviolent. He was familiar with the need for grain (6:1-5), daily bread (11:3), salt (14:34), fish (9:12-17; 11:11), wine, and olive oil (16:1-9)—all elements of a Mediterranean peasant diet—but also counseled his followers to live from day to day on the generosity of strangers (10:1-12).

From time to time he left the crowds and wrapped himself in stillness (4:42; 6:12; 9:10). Indeed, he stopped frequently to pray, alone and with others. While the religious leaders of his day—lovers of their holy text—were known for their wordiness, it seems that he did not fear but rather embraced the great silence. As a man from peasant stock, he wore an ordinary tunic yet was familiar with fine clothing (7:25) and the purpled garments of the wealthy (16:19). He noted that sitting in sackcloth and ash signals the turning of the heart to God (10:13). He received the marking of his feet with tears and fragrant oil from a prostitute who had turned herself toward his mercy (7:37-38), and after his death some of his women followers prepared spices and oils in order to anoint his dead body (23:55–24:1).

Toward the end of his life, he led a procession into the great city and, upon seeing it, began to weep, exclaiming that its inhabitants had not “recognized . . . the things that make for peace” (19:42). At what would be the last supper with his followers, he gave them food and drink and, turning social and political practice upside down, suggested that leaders exercise their influence and power in service to others (22:24-27), their lives broken apart like nourishing bread, their power poured out like wine flowing from a flagon into a cup for the thirsty. While he had once received the tender kisses of a weeping woman (7:38), he also recognized that a kiss can be a sign of betrayal (22:47-48). Captured by the police, he was blindfolded, mocked, and tortured (22:63-65), stripped of his clothing, placed upon a cross with arms outstretched, and there, in an unholy place outside the great city, he died. (23:26-46). His body was wrapped in donated linen and placed in a rock-hewn tomb (23:53-54).

Some women came to the funerary cave ready to complete the burial practice, but

encountered, to their utter surprise, two men in dazzling clothes, an astonishing counterpoint to the borrowed shroud that only recently covered his deathly nakedness (24:1-7). On the next day, a work day, he who once was dead appeared on a road and interpreted the Scriptures for a disheartened couple and then, at table, gave thanks over bread, broke it, and gave it to them, leaving them shocked and amazed (24:13-35). On that same day, a work day, he who once was dead appeared to his followers and, in the midst of their astonishment and fear, said to them, “Touch me and see”—*touch me and see*—“for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (24:39). And this, too, he asked, as if the prodigious labor of being raised from the dead had sapped his energy: “Have you anything here to eat?” (24:41).

Though each evangelist offers a distinctive portrait of Jesus and his disciples, they are of one voice in their insistence that, with us, he was flesh and blood.

Though each evangelist offers a distinctive portrait of Jesus and his disciples, they are of one voice in their insistence that, with us, he was flesh and blood. That is, with all humanity, he was and remains an “adam” (Hebrew *‘adam*, an earth creature). While a Hellenistic viewpoint would suggest that he and we are *incarnate spirits* (emphasis on the spirit), the anthropology of Jesus’ ancestors, the Hebrews, would suggest that he and we are *animated bodies* (emphasis on the body). Thus the Gospel writers draw our attention to his birth and his death; to his Galilean mother, Mary; and to Pontius Pilate, prefect of the Roman province of Judea, under whose rule he was crucified.² The gospels note that he was fed, clothed, circumcised, washed, anointed, caressed, kissed, tortured, stripped, placed on a cross, wrapped in linen, and touched in his wounded side—things done to Jesus. At the same time, they narrate a variety of his bodily actions, gestures, and postures: speaking, reading, singing, calling to people, bowing, sitting, reclining, healing the sick or possessed by touching, spitting, marking, shouting, transforming water into wine, weeping,

mourning, lifting his arms, lifting his hands, giving thanks over food and drink, eating and drinking, walking into a place of silence, leading a procession, carrying a cross beam, showing his wounded body and asking others to touch him. “Touch me and see,” he says, “for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (24:39).

The Actions of the Redeemer Have Passed into the Life of His Body

Leo the Great, bishop of Rome in the 5th century, preached this during the Easter season: the actions (*sacramenta*) of the Redeemer during his life on earth have passed into the life of his body through the actions of the church.³ That is, the Lord’s bodily presence, to which the Scriptures testify, has been poured into the lives of every new generation through the gestures, postures, and actions of the Christian people, the body of Christ: his visible and public presence in the world. Thus for Leo, Christians are washed in water, smeared with fragrant

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oil, clothed in a white robe, handed a burning torch, led in procession to the assembly, greeted with bows, kissed repeatedly, marked with pungent incense, served honey mixed with milk, and given a fragment of real bread and a generous drink of wine. They fast with the Lord throughout the year on Wednesdays and Fridays, keep silence in prayer, and receive the imposition of hands on their heads as they mourn their sins. They are veiled or crowned, kissed by the presider, and receive cups filled with new wine when they present themselves for the blessing of their union. When ill or near death they are marked with oil of the sick or invited, if you can imagine, to drink this “healing fat of the olive tree.”⁴ At the hour of death, the dying are to receive, if possible,

the Lord’s body and blood as John’s narrative of the passion, death, and resurrection is read aloud. The deceased is clothed in a burial shroud of cotton or linen, so that their clothing could be worn by a member of the family or a poor person, and then sprinkled with baptismal water before burial.

Some of these actions—washing and eating, for instance—are referred to as sacraments among most Christians and, *as* sacraments have received, in the history of Christianity, considerable attention from bishops, theologians, and catechists in terms of their dominical origin, benefits, and significance for Christians. As you well know, some of the theological debates of the 16th century centered on the number of sacraments: Roman Catholics held to seven and Lutherans claimed two based on their dominical origin and promise. But I wonder:

- Is it possible that the debates and their subsequent solidification of seven or two sacraments have obscured from our vision and thus from our practice the far greater number of bodily gestures, postures, and actions to which the New Testament writings and the Christian tradition bear witness?
- In the conflicted atmosphere of the 16th century, did the understandable need and incredible effort to identify one’s group (e.g., Lutheran) over and against another (e.g., Roman Catholic) actually relegate the many actions of Jesus and his companions to the category of *adiaphora*, matters of indifference neither to be forbidden nor commanded, actions of seemingly little consequence, bodily actions meriting little or no homiletical and theological reflection?
- Was St. Augustine on to something when he claimed that there are at least 300 Christian *sacramenta* or sacred actions, at least 300 ways in which God communicates God’s presence and grace through ordinary matter, through ordinary gestures, postures, and actions?⁵
- Does an understandable and necessary concern to establish sacrament—a means of grace—within dominical origin bear the unintended consequence of limiting the flow or radiance of grace?

- Why would there be a concern to name as “indifferent” what may well be in our own time the astonishing experience of God’s presence and grace?

I ask these questions not only out of a desire to expand our lexicon of ritual actions, bodily actions, and sustained and serious reflection on their meanings—I do mean to do that, not one without the other—but also because we live in a time when ecological theologians, Christian ethicists, feminist historians, New Testament scholars, pastoral counselors, and social activists are drawing attention to the human body and to earth’s body, that is, to the mystery of the Incarnation. Indeed, are not many of our contemporary social issues actually issues of the body: abortion, capital punishment, domestic abuse, famine, gender construction, healthcare reform, hunger and food insecurity, marriage and divorce, sexual relationships, and torture? All of these we find present, to one degree or another, in the Scriptures and in the life of the early Christian community. Indeed, in light of these contemporary crises and questions, biblical scholars, ethicists, historians, and theologians are constructing Christian histories, ethics, and theologies of the human body and earth’s body, but alas—but alas—histories, ethics, and theologies rarely grounded in the liturgical and sacramental practices of the churches.

Is that so, I wonder, because the churches have given considerable attention to the celebration of the liturgy and very little attention to the body in liturgy and in life? Is that so, I wonder, because the churches and their leaders have seen the manifold actions, gestures, and postures of Jesus as mere matters of indifference, his speaking, his preaching alone regarded as significant?

Who or What Shapes Our Experience and Perceptions of the Body?

At this moment I am mindful of the university students I teach and of the enquirers or seekers who come to the parish where I serve, many of them with some experience in the churches yet all of them—all of them with you and me—schooled and tutored, whether we know it or not, in what I call the catechism of contemporary American culture. Of course such a claim implies that there is more than

one “catechism” alive in the hearts and minds of those who constitute the worshipping assembly. It is to suggest that the culture we inhabit is not a value-free and neutral reality, though much of the time this is the experience and understanding of culture with which we are raised. Rather, our culture is full of messages that invite you and me to imitate various lifestyles, of visual images and musical messages that seek to shape our consciousness, and of persuasive communications prone to deception and manipulation. While we might think that we participate in or inhabit North American culture, it is probably far more accurate to say that North American culture inhabits us, given the pervasiveness of the print, digital, and electronic media we and others may find so difficult to turn off or ignore. This is to suggest that powerful and persuasive forces in our culture aggressively and constantly shape perceptions of our bodies and of others’ in order to achieve a particular end. For instance, we inhabit a capitalist economic system in which we are free to acquire as much capital as possible, unfettered, it seems, by any restraint. We also inhabit a culture in which we are told daily that one’s body is in constant danger of aging, of becoming unproductive. Here’s where economics and marketing converge: if, in a free-market economy, you or I have the funds, and we must have the funds, to purchase the right exercise regime, diet, clothing, or injections, we are promised in the most alluring manner that we will be saved from a dated and useless future, from—note the word—the “ravages” of time, an understanding of time alien to Christian faith and life. One wonders, then, how the precious teaching on justification by grace might offer a robust critique of this ever-present “cultural catechism” whose curriculum subverts the great baptismal action of *unity* by, in fact, dividing male from female, ethnicity from ethnicity, the privileged from the powerless, the wealthy few from the many poor, the young from the old—dividing people into neat demographic quantities for the sole purpose of increasing market share and making a profit.⁶

My university students, tutored in this cultural catechism, are well acquainted with political leaders who divorce their spouses

diagnosed with cancer and tweet photographs of their genitalia to high school girls. They are well aware of church leaders and athletic coaches who privately molest children and publicly condemn faithful relationships between gay and lesbian Christians. In the midst of much body anxiety, I wonder if our students can experience the compassionate and healing touch of Christ, mediated through my hands, your hands. I wonder if they or their children will experience the baptismal bathing and the generous anointing of their bodies with fragrant chrism. Having rarely if ever experienced formation in their God-given social nature and the ways in which their actions affect others, they are not immune to binge drinking and date rape. Experts at finding every website on the Internet, they have quick access to hundreds of porn sites yet they are quick to hear from their conservative evangelical friends that the Bible teaches a punishing sexual ethic and absolute sexual abstinence prior to marriage. Between these two extremes—the sexually objectified body and the untouchable docetic body—there seems to be no other alternative. I wonder: why?

My students are now surrounded by noise day and night, addicted (with many of us) to the smart phone or the ear buds sealing off any voice from the outside. And yet I dare say that, once monastic silence was thrown out the window in the reform of the 16th century, the need for a constant stream of wordiness has been the hallmark of most Protestant worship.

My students are now surrounded by noise day and night, addicted (with many of us) to the smart phone or the ear buds sealing off any voice from the outside. And yet I dare say that, once monastic silence was thrown out the window in the reform of the 16th century, the need for a constant stream of wordiness has been the hallmark of most Protestant worship. Entering the great silence with Jesus does not seem to be a productive use of one's time in a capitalist economy. While college-age women, schooled

by the fashion industry, have suffered with astonishing degrees of anorexia and bulimia, their male classmates have finally caught up with them in the pursuit of the perfectly ripped body, aided by harmful steroids and punishing exercise regimes. No wonder it is easy for them to consume the paper-thin wafer we call the body of Christ and the tiniest sip of grape juice from a shot glass: the thought of eating real bread and drinking real wine is anathema to the cultural tutors in bodily perfection.

Is the Christian Liturgy a Form of Resistance to Cultural Malformation?

I think we would all agree that the practice of the liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments are primary means of grace, God's merciful advance in Christ toward God's creatures. But I wonder if the liturgical and sacramental practices—if the gestures, postures, and actions of the worshipping assembly—might also serve as an embodied form of resistance to a cultural catechism focused on toxic individualism (that is, only my body matters) and as a consumerist commodification (that is, your embodied well-being is dependent on your capacity to purchase goods and services, unfettered by regard for others and the earth)? On the one hand there is the idolatry of gaining and hoarding earth's goods for the individual or closed community alone, an objectification of creaturely, bodily existence and a subsequent reduction of personal relationships to "dominance and self-aggrandizement."⁷ On the other hand there is the Christian liturgical and sacramental vision of life as relationship with embodied and different others—different others—and life as a generous sharing of God's gifts among all God's creatures.

In other words, might we see the Christian assembly as a gathering before God in which the word of God is proclaimed in its evangelical radiance and the gestures, actions, and sacraments of grace are celebrated in their catholic fullness and, at the same time, might we recognize that at the center of this gathering is the One, crucified and risen, who—with his bodily gestures, postures, and actions—questioned, critiqued, and reversed cultural messages and expectations?

Might we see the Christian assembly as that gathering in which we actively cultivate

practices that honor the body: the body in need of washing, moisture, clothing, and light; the body in need of others in order to become more fully human; with hands opened, the body in need of food and drink in order to live; the body fasting from food and drink, fasting in order to share bread and cup with the hungry poor; the body at rest and repose in the great silence; the body—marked repeatedly in the sign of the cross—processing (walking) steadfastly into a world marked by overwhelming suffering; the sick or suffering body receiving the healing oil and caress of the olive tree; the body crowned with greens and flowers, crowned with another body in common faith and mutual love until death parts them; the body of the font, ambo, and altar, the bodies of the very young and the very old, of the “abled” and disabled honored with profound bow and the pungent smell and smoke of incense; the dying body touched and held tenderly, fed a morsel or given a sip of Christ’s own food and drink, surrounded by images of the Lord’s suffering and resurrection; the dead body clothed in the baptismal garment, crowned with earth’s flora, and laid to rest in God’s garden, the earth?

Is it possible that the many congregations, schools, and seminaries of the church might yet become centers of formation in practices, inspired by the Bible and the liturgy, that both honor the body and challenge those cultural practices that dishonor or malform this profoundly personal and social gift of God?

Discerning a *theologia crucis* in Christian Rituals of the Body

In his work on the prophetic dimension of the liturgy and sacraments, Joseph Martos notes that “what Christians find in the Bible is . . . a prophetic revelation of who we are and what we are called to be. The proclamation of the Scriptures in the midst of the community is prophetic in that it reveals what God wants us to hear, not about there and then, but about here and now.”⁸ (Good God, deliver the churches from those preachers who invite the assembly to imagine what it would be like to be with Jesus in the 1st century, when what the assembly desperately needs to hear is how he is with us in the 21st century!) Yet Martos also notes that we should not overlook the fact that

the liturgical and sacramental rites themselves—themselves—communicate messages to us and with us. That is, these actions communicate persuasively, louder than words, “especially when we are not passive observers but active

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participants in the ritual [actions] for they immediately affect our behavior, and through repetition influence our perduring attitudes and inclinations.”⁹ We hold—do we not?—that through the liturgical preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Spirit awakens or re-awakens the assembly to faith in God and love for the neighbor in need. That is, there is a theological dimension—trust or faith in God—and an ethical dimension: faith active in love for the neighbor in need, not one without the other. But I wonder: Do we recognize and affirm Martos’ claim, that the bodily gestures, postures, and actions of the liturgy are prophetic communications of God’s presence, a presence marked not only with personal but also social and ethical value? That these actions affect behavior, attitudes, and inclinations?¹⁰

If the bodily gestures, postures, and actions of the liturgy are simply matters of indifference, mere adiaphora, why bother? But if there is any truth in Leo’s claim that the actions of the Redeemer during his life on earth have passed into the life of his body through the actions of the church, do not such bodily actions call out for sustained practice, engaging catechesis, and greater theological reflection, catechesis not marked—not marked—by deadening “explanation” but rather by the evocative unfolding of the gestures’ many meanings? And one wonders why the churches are in decline. Is it not clear that too often and too widely the

mystery of God's holy and life-giving presence is transformed—by sermon, lyric and tune—into the tiresome and the conventional, the worship of the churches into an unending stream of chatter?

Indeed, I want to suggest that the many bodily gestures, postures, and actions of the liturgy possess not only a theological dimension—Christ acting in the assembly through the assembly's actions—but also an ethical dimension. Let me offer one example. In Luther's condemnation of the spiritual economy of the late medieval church, he saw an intimate relationship between the human condition apart from grace—the self turned inward on the self alone—and an insatiable desire for wealth manifested in individuals, corporations, and empires.¹¹ Such overwhelming desire for more and more in the presence of incredible need could be symbolized by what Luther and his colleagues witnessed everywhere: the *grasping hand* of a robust mercantile class, greedy clergy, and the imperial pillaging of the New World set next to the *open hand* of orphans, widows, the homeless, and the hungry poor begging for food or coin. The power of grace, so Luther claimed, was the power to turn the self-absorbed and grasping hand open and outward in evangelical charity to one's neighbor in need. At the same time, the open hand is also recognized in the crucified hand, where one sees God's embrace of human suffering. And this, too: the open hand receives the gift of Christ's body given in a fragment of bread. Here the theological—Christ's gift—joins the ethical—care for the suffering neighbor. Is it any wonder, then, that Luther's last will and testament, inscribed on that scrap of paper found in his coat, read "*Wir sind Bettler*" (we are beggars).¹² For Luther knew well and had reflected on the evangelical and ethical significance of the open hand: God's open hand casting seed on the soil of the newly created earth; Christ touching the leper with his open hand and thus joining him as an outcast; the open hand of the crucified Christ; the open hand of the Christian awaiting the Bread of Life; the open hand of the poor, hoping for a morsel of bread to sustain them through a cold and bitter night. And so I wonder: might there yet be a resurrection of the body, that is, a revitalization of the gestures, postures, and actions of the body in Christian worship, the Christian's imaginations, and Christian life in the world? For indeed, these very

ordinary actions, rooted in our biology, ecology, and psychology are transfigured by Christ into gestures of identity and purpose, thanksgiving and supplication, lament and healing.

In his little yet remarkable book *Sacred Signs*, a commentary on the body in worship, the German liturgical theologian Romano Guardini wrote that Christian leaders and theologians readily *avoid* talk of the body, perhaps because they are uncomfortable in their own bodies, perhaps because they are susceptible to the gnostic heresy that always asks for hearing in every generation. "Something within us objects [to such talk]," he wrote. Within the prosaic and analytical systems of our cherished theology and theological categories, perhaps the body—with its vulnerability and inevitable diminishment and decay—seems unworthy of much attention. And so Guardini offers this advice: "Let us avoid all empty and unreal talk and concentrate the more carefully on the actual doing [on the bodily actions themselves]. That—the doing of the actions—is a form of speech by which the plain realities of the body say to God what its soul means and intends."¹³

Yes, I say: let us avoid unreal talk and concentrate on the actions and their meaning for life in this beautiful yet troubled world. Yes, I say: let us avoid unreal talk and enter into the bodily gestures of the One who humbly chose the Virgin's womb.

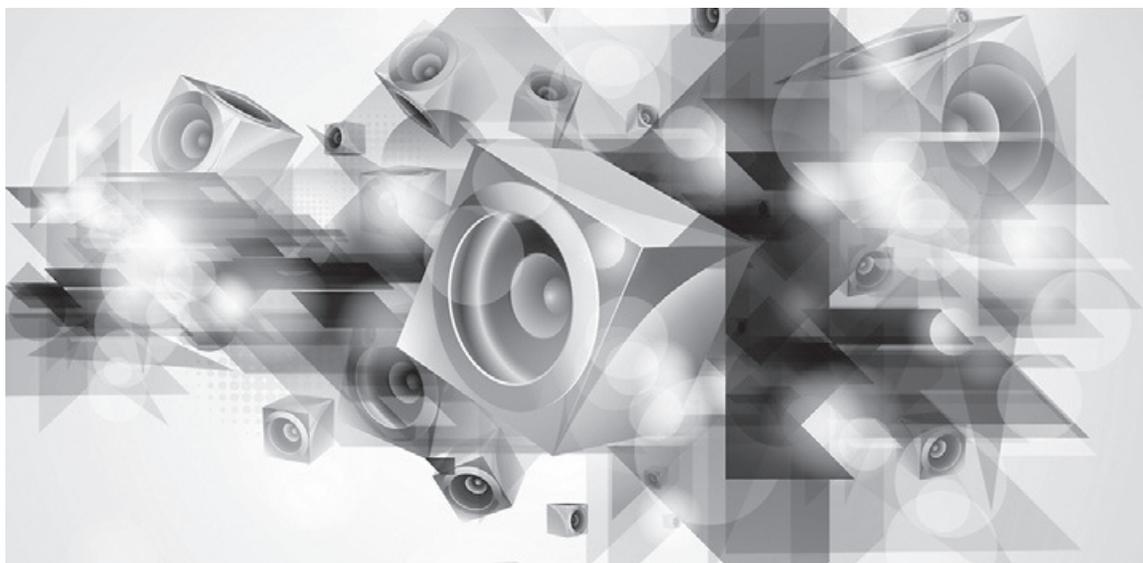


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Notes

1. All Bible references in this article are to the Gospel of Luke (NRSV).
2. Note their mention in the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds.

3. Leo the Great, "Sermon 74," in *Sermons*, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland and Agnes Josephine Conway, Fathers of the Church, vol. 93 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 326.
4. Robert Cabié et al, *The Sacraments*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, new ed., The Church at Prayer, vol. 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988), 123–124.
5. "St. Augustine had enumerated 304 sacraments," writes Leonardo Boff, *Sacraments of Life: Life of the Sacraments*, trans. John Drury (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1987), 56. Boff offers no reference in the works of Augustine. More to the point: "Now, every reader will notice that Augustine calls all kinds of things *sacramenta*. . . . In the letter to Januarius . . . he uses the word *sacramentum* for the constituent elements of the visible cultus, and its meaning is much wider than it is with ourselves. . . . He applies the same word [sacrament] to the annual celebrations of Christ's resurrection. . . . Elsewhere he speaks of the following as *sacramenta*: the sign of the cross, salt, exorcisms, contemplation, the penitential garment; the bowing of the head, the transmission of the *symbolum* [the Creed], the taking off of shoes, and other rites of the catechumenate; and the entry on the period of being *competentes*; the octave of Easter, penance, the laying-on of hands, reconciliation, the great fasts, spiritual songs, the Lord's Prayer. Their common characteristic is that they are all of some spiritual importance and are externally visible," writes Frederik Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop: Religion and Society at the Dawn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Brian Battershaw and G. R. Lamb (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 280–281. See as well *Augustine, Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, Fathers of the Church, vol. 38 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 198–202, in which he speaks of a great many *sacramenta* (sacred signs or actions).
6. Is no one struck by the ways in which such corporate thinking has thoroughly permeated the life, thinking, and language of the contemporary church? With declining numbers and the anxiety such a decline prompts among some, the churches have run to corporations and non-denominational, non-sacramental, and thoroughly American church growth strategies in order to find the "solutions" that will allegedly staunch the bleeding. One is mindful of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's condemnation of the church in Germany: "The price that we are having to pay today in the shape of the collapse of the organized Church is only the inevitable consequence of our policy of making grace available to all at too low a cost. We gave away the word and sacraments wholesale: we baptized, confirmed, and absolved a whole nation unasked and without condition. Our humanitarian sentiment made us give that which was holy to the scornful and unbelieving. We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow was hardly ever heard," in *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1959, reissued 1963), 58. As one German Lutheran commentator of North American liturgical practice recently noted: "The American tendency to ensure that every single option—liturgical and musical—is offered in a 'menu' of services has more to do with the practice of McDonald's than it does a clear sense of Christian identity and purpose."
7. Michael Paul Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith & Culture* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 129.
8. Joseph Martos, *The Sacraments: An Interdisciplinary and Interactive Study* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 228.
9. Martos, 228.
10. If there is any truth in this claim, one then wonders how robust catechetical, homiletical, and theological reflection—in the midst of enquirers, catechumens, children, and the assembly—will take place, given the remarkable paucity of resources available to Anglicans and Protestants. Consider Antonio Donghi, *Words and Gestures in the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009); Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language: Introduction to Christian Worship: An African Orientation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997); *Liturgical Gestures, Words, Objects*, ed. Eleanor Bernstein (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy, 1995); Balthasar Fischer, *Signs, Words & Gestures: Short Homilies on the Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo, 1981); and Romano Guardini, *Sacred Signs* (St. Louis: Pio Decimo, 1956; rev. ed., Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1979). These book chapters discuss selected gestures, postures, and movements: Anna Kai-Yung Chan, "Participation in the Liturgy," in *Fundamental Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chapungco, Handbook for Liturgical Studies, vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998); Peter J. Elliott, "Ceremonial Actions," in *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite: The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995); Aimé Georges Martimort, "Liturgical Signs," in *Principles of the Liturgy*, ed. Martimort, The Church at Prayer, vol. 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987); and Gilbert Ostdiek, "Liturgical Action" and "Liturgical Objects," in *Catechesis for Liturgy* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1986).
11. See "Greed Is an Unbelieving Scoundrel," in Samuel Torvend, *Luther and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 115–123.
12. Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar Ausgabe, vol. 85, 5 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1909), 317–318.
13. Guardini, 18.



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Audio Technology in Worship: Keeping the Central Things Central

by Ron Rienstra

Introduction

The pastor was known for beginning worship punctually. Even though the volunteer technician who ran the computer and the PowerPoint had not yet given the go-ahead, it was 9:30 and God's people were waiting. So the service began with a familiar call to worship from Psalm 121.

"I lift my eyes to the hills," the pastor intoned.

"From where will my help come?" responded the congregation.

And then, in the breath before the pastor could speak the next verse, the answer was provided, booming over the sanctuary speakers: the distinctive and familiar startup sound of the computer's operating system, a sonic signature that seemed to answer the congregation's question not with the biblical "My help comes from the Lord," but with a more problematic "My help comes from Microsoft."

Astute interpreters of Psalm 121 will know that there is ambiguity in its opening lines: are the mountains to which the Psalmist looks a *source* of the sought-for help? Or are the high places there a source of *danger*? Or perhaps they are a *distraction* from the One who is able to help: the *shomer*, the maker of heaven and earth?

As the opening story demonstrates, every action and event in worship carries with it—explicitly or implicitly—some theological meaning. And the theological meanings of technology in worship are profoundly ambiguous. Technology can be a source of great promise and blessing but also be a potential distraction and, at its worst, a subversive siren call to idolatry.

My intention in this article is neither to look back with rosy glasses at some pristine past before technology intruded in the sacred space nor to uncritically embrace every next new thing. It is, instead, to help pastors, musicians, and those involved in the preparation of worship think carefully about technology in order to keep the central things central.

There are, of course, many types of technologies in use in North American churches every week: ATM cards for giving offerings, electronic nursery signs ("child #42 has a dirty diaper"), live-blogging a sermon, or a preaching-event Twitter feed, and the like. But to keep our explorations manageable, I will focus primarily on audio amplification technologies for voice and music.

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Some Preliminary Assumptions

Two preliminary assumptions will inform our exploration. First, technology is not an inherently bad thing. On the contrary, it is an inevitable part of human cultural creativity, and its use in worship is common, uncontroversial, and desirable. The City of God in Revelation welcomes the products of human activity as we transform and unfold the potential found in God's good creation. Some often think of technology primarily as something electronic or newfangled. But the church's worship has long involved technology. Think of candles, stained glass, organs, central heat, and timepieces. The more mechanically sophisticated technologies available to us today (spotlights, screens, amplifiers, microphones, and so on) do not necessarily displace these others but stand alongside them.

Second, technology is more than just physical devices. When we bring technology into the sanctuary we bring along with it the *symbolic* meanings and uses that are attached to them in other cultural arenas. A car, for example, speaks symbolically of "independence." A cell phone says "connection." Not every technology carries the same amount of signifying freight. Candles and watches and air conditioners are so ubiquitous that they carry thin symbolic meaning. But technologies common in other arenas—particularly entertainment—bring these meanings with them into worship. When a worship leader is projected onto a jumbo-size screen wearing a headset microphone, the larger-than-life image says "celebrity"—and this meaning may be very far from what we believe worship leadership is about, theologically speaking.

Quentin Schulze suggests, in his book *High-Tech Worship*, that a wise approach concerning technology is to practice saying "Yes, but . . ." ¹

- YES: we will consider using it to love others, to glorify God, and to build up the body of Christ,
- BUT: we won't be duped by inflated rhetoric about its inherent goodness or badness.
- YES: new technologies are part of the unfolding of God's original creation,
- BUT: we are fallen and can never use them to usher in heaven on earth.

Or, to turn the syntax around:

- THOUGH: we are full of foolishness and hubris;
- STILL: God is in the salvage business and can bless our imperfect use of technology.

Central Things

To carefully discern the proper use of technology, then, requires recalling worship's primary purpose, reminding ourselves of the central things to which we attend when God's people assemble to worship. Gordon Lathrop's *Central Things* provides a short, simple list: Word, Bath, Table, Prayer.² All our technology should serve to lift up these things: to deepen and strengthen our prayer and our song; to enrich the reading and proclamation of Scripture; to strengthen the bonds of community within the assembly; to make us mindful of and grateful for Christ's sacrifice, God's holiness, and the Spirit's gifts to the body. All that we do in worship serves the encounter with Christ that is at the heart of the assembly of God's people. We must not allow the meanings and values associated with technology to distract us from worship's fundamental purpose. The dangers here are many.

All that we do in worship serves the encounter with Christ that is at the heart of the assembly of God's people.

Some will argue, for instance, that a church needs technology to keep up with another church or with the culture at large. Or it needs to make use of high-end amplification equipment in order to encourage more powerful worship experiences, especially for the young people. Or that it needs screens and video technology in order to attract seekers. These are not unimportant goals for a church. But if churches decide that attraction rather than adoration is the fundamental purpose of worship, they put themselves in competition with every other institution and cultural structure that offers an attraction. Once the church steps on that playing field, the game is lost. The church down the street—or the multimedia conglomerate pushing content through TV, movies, and the Internet—will always have more resources and thus a more attractive show.

The thing we need most for good use of technology is not so much the technical know-how (though the church could certainly use more people who value such know-how). What we need most is liturgical sensibility and sensitivity, i.e., people who know how to put a liturgy together and how each part does what it does, people who are able to work with the complexity that technology brings to worship and find it a stimulating challenge.

Audio Amplification

One of the most common technological additions to a church's worship life in the past few decades has been the use of aural amplification equipment. Few churches are now without microphones, speakers, wires, and all that go with them. So maybe it's helpful to practice the "yes, but" exercise we spoke of earlier.

- **YES:** An amplification system can lift up for all ears the quiet things in church: the voice of a lay speaker, a child reading Scripture, a gentle flute obbligato floating over a sung psalm. Put in common theological terminology, amplification can enable the full, conscious, active participation of the whole congregation in the acts of corporate worship. Amplification has thus been a special blessing for the elderly and hard of hearing, who can now participate by listening in ways they heretofore could not. Likewise, many congregations are now blessed by the thoughtful and passionate preaching of individuals who just a generation ago would have been considered unsuitable to step into the pulpit because they had not been blessed with a strong voice.
- **BUT:** The cords, monitor speakers, and other visible components of a sound system can be visually distracting, as when a large soundboard, placed in the center of the sanctuary, has more prominence than the font or pulpit or table. Likewise, the voices of a congregation can be displaced by the voices of a new select priesthood: the praise band singers, armed with microphones and spotlights and amplifiers, doing for the congregation what Martin Luther and others so passionately fought for congregations to

do themselves. And in some congregations the sheer volume of the amplified music can alienate people from their own worship service, as they are blasted into stupefied silence.

Of course, this dynamic is not unfamiliar to congregations with a large organ and an insensitive organist!

Another technological innovation related to aural amplification that is finding its way into worship is the personal computer and special sound effects software. This technology is foreign to most churches, as it emerged from the urban rave culture of the last few decades, but it is now rather common in what are being called "emerging" or "alternative" worship gatherings.

The software—sometimes called DJ, looping, or mixing software—can take small bits of recorded sound (a "sample") and play it repeatedly, in a loop. The sounds can also be manipulated electronically in hundreds of ways, changing fundamental and subtle sonic characteristics such as pitch, timbre, reverb, and so on. Looped sounds are then layered with other sounds—typically with synthesized drums and strings—to create a unique aural environment. Those who use this software are both technicians and musicians. They do programming and preparation beforehand, but the environments they create in a particular service are as unique as any live musical event.

Amplification and Musical Style

The question of musical style as it relates to amplification technology needs to be addressed. Perhaps the most noticeable change as a result of the use of amplification equipment has been a musical shift in many congregations: a shift away from an organ-and-choir-led style of congregational song (predominantly hymns and anthems) to a pop/folk style of singing driven by keyboard, guitars, and drums and led by a small team of vocalists. There are those who declare that this shift is a "dumbing down" of worship, and others who suggest that it has brought a spirit-led vitality to a moribund church. Perhaps neither side is quite right, or altogether wrong.

It is true that praise band singers use a very different vocal style than does the traditional

choir. It is a style that makes trained vocalists cringe: loud without proper breath support, often sung “up in the head” with little tonal control, employing highly idiosyncratic melodic embellishments that can make it difficult for congregations to follow along. And too often the traditional choral and community task of blending voices together in song is displaced by a congregation whose voices are lost in or superfluous to the sea of sound washing from the front of the sanctuary.

While this may seem a disaster, there is something else going on here. The question to ask is not whether these sorts of stylistic changes in worship make for better or worse musicians, but whether they make for better or worse worshippers: whether they make for better or worse *Christians*. What we need to explore is this: does the new music help people to participate more fully, more actively, more intelligently? Does it deepen their prayer and lift up their spirits? Does it call forth their presence to engage the presence of the Triune God who meets them in worship? The surprising answer, at least in those churches where the congregation has not lost its voice altogether, is a qualified yes.

The inclusion of folk and popular music styles in worship is not merely a capitulation to culture, it is (or can be) a healthy enculturation of congregational song. The Reformers long ago realized that worship was the “work of the people,” not the sole province of a trained clerical class. The Word needs to be spoken and responded to in the vernacular of the worshipping congregation. The church honors martyrs who died because they believed this. And here’s the cultural reality check: in North America at the start of the 21st century, folk music and musical styles emerging from folk music (pop, rock, blues, and the like) are the musical vernacular for most people in most of our congregations. Thus to make use of these styles in worship is to allow the people to express their prayer in their own language, to speak to God in their native musical tongue.

This language is particularly well-suited to certain types of expression. Exuberant joy and praise is very fittingly expressed in pop music, as is intimate loving and longing (a devotional trope at least as old as the Song of

Solomon). Some might say that these two types of expression, authentically felt and expressed, are at the heart of a valuable Christian piety. Worship that had lost them has found them again, and there is much rejoicing.

Music in worship serves a liturgical purpose, and there are some things we wish to say to God or hear from God that are not fittingly or excellently expressed in a folk-derived musical genre.

Unfortunately, in borrowing and baptizing popular music, composers have often limited themselves to these two dominant models, which for all their benefit tend to emphasize internal, individual, positive emotional states. Surely there are many other underutilized and wholly fitting musical options: jazz to express the complexities of the Christian life, blues for communal prayers of lament, and even heavy metal for Psalms of imprecation. There is still work to be done.

Of course, even if fully developed, this still has significant limitations. Music in worship serves a liturgical purpose, and there are some things we wish to say to God or hear from God that are not fittingly or excellently expressed in a folk-derived musical genre. As Matt Redman, a popular contemporary songwriter and worship leader once told me: “Love it or hate it, the organ in a cathedral tells us that we worship a majestic God. I can do intimacy on my guitar, but when I try to use it to communicate transcendence, it just sounds inky-plinky.”

Then there is the matter of the song lyrics: there is a troubling lack of theological content in the most commonly used repertoire of popular worship songs. A study by Lester Ruth, associate professor of liturgy and worship at Asbury Theological Seminary, discovered that the most commonly sung contemporary worship songs for a recent 15-year period (as measured by CCLI reporting data) demonstrate an almost complete absence of Trinitarian language for God.³ Of course it doesn’t have to be this way. With the skill and the will, theologically substantive lyrics that balance God’s objective activity with

our subjective appropriation of it can be set to contemporary folk music—as, for example, the growing body of work from songwriters Keith Getty and Stuart Townend show.

When the professional quality of a mediated accompaniment is preferred over the indigenous, incarnate giftedness of the local body, worship is veering dangerously close to being reduced to mere entertainment.

Cautions

I have two concluding cautions about the use of amplification technology and its effect on worship style. First, any amplification brings with it a complicating intermediateness that should give us pause in embracing it too quickly or completely. Jesus Christ was the Word made flesh. As a professor of mine used to say, Jesus went to some trouble to become incarnate. Our own expressions of the Word then—whether in spoken proclamation or in music, in voice and string and waves of sound—ought to have an incarnational character about them. Confounding to me is the phenomenon of what I call Karaoke Kirk, where a vocalist offers “special music” in worship, accompanied not by another church member, but by a recording played over the sound system. When the professional quality of a mediated accompaniment is preferred over the indigenous, incarnate giftedness of the local body, worship is veering dangerously close to being reduced to mere entertainment.

Second, it’s important to note that the function of the music created with mixing or looping technology is very different than the function of the music previously discussed. It is still used to engage the worshipper, to draw the worshipper into the presence of God. But it is not intended as accompaniment for congregational song, to give voice to the prayer of the people. Rather, it is meant to shape space with sound, to provide a sonic backdrop to whatever liturgical or ritual action might be taking place (prayer, offering, meditation on Scripture, hand-washing, and the like). The “feel” of the music might be agitated or peaceful,

it might ebb and flow from intense to barely noticeable, but its values are quite different from other church music: it is more concerned with texture than with structure, with ambiance than with content, and its patterns are cyclical rather than linear.

This sort of music reflects a theology of worship that resembles that of our Orthodox brothers and sisters. In an Orthodox-influenced view, worship’s purpose is to draw back the veil separating heaven and earth, to invite the congregation into the constant, cosmic worship of the Trinity by all creation. Both Orthodox worship and this ambient music have a sense of mystery, timelessness, and hospitality.

Conclusion

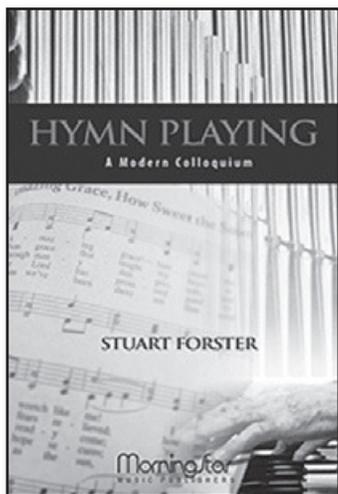
Whether the trends highlighted here stand the test of time—whether they offer something of lasting value to the life of the church—remains to be seen. But they are all attempts today to open up and make use of culture, to follow the creation mandate to fulfill and subdue the earth. Avoiding technology in worship is simply not an option. Whatever the future holds, the church will continue to need pastors, pastoral musicians, and artists who are theologically astute, culturally discerning folk who can help design, develop, and support worship that brings glory to God and enhances the worship of God’s people.



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Notes

1. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker (2004), 44.
2. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress (2005).
3. “*Lex Amandi, Lex Orandi: The Trinity in the Most-Used Contemporary Worship Songs*,” ch. 14 in *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer: Trinity, Christology, and Liturgical Theology*, ed. Bryan D. Spinks (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 342–59.



Stuart Forster.
Hymn Playing: A Modern Colloquium.

Fenton, MO: MorningStar, 2013.

352 pp.

ISBN-13: 978-0944529607.

\$24.95, paperback.

THIS NEWLY RELEASED BOOK is an engaging and unique publication for organists. It is helpful to examine what this book is and what it is not. It is not an organ method book. It is not a how-to or self-help book. Neither is it part of the ever-expanding “For Dummies” genre. Instead, its subtitle, *A Modern Colloquium*, better describes the book as a collection of wisdom, thoughts, and ideas from several leading organists. Forster is really more of an editor or arranger who interviewed the subjects and organized their thoughts into a systematic whole.

The subjects are eleven organists and teachers from around the United States (and one from Australia), including familiar ALCM members David Cherwien (Mount Olive Lutheran, Minneapolis) and John Ferguson (St. Olaf College), as well as such other noted organists as Bruce Neswick (St. John the Divine, New York City) and John Scott (St. Thomas, also New York City). Topics discussed by the interviewees range from such practical considerations as articulation, tempo, and registration to such other influential factors as working with choirs and clergy.

Reading the book is enjoyable and easy, with the content of the book consisting of edited transcriptions of the interviews conducted with each subject. The language flows conversationally, the way a good teacher would conduct a lesson, filled with ideas, illustrative examples, and humor. Forster freely admits in

the preface that throughout the interviews there are duplicate answers and even contradictory opinions, as will be the case when gathering opinions from any number of experts.

And therein lies a real strength of the book’s topic: there is no one silver bullet or magic formula for hymn playing. There are good overall principles, but ultimately each organist must struggle, experiment, and be creative in his or her own church in order to find what works or doesn’t. Gleaning the interviews for ideas to use in one’s own parish is arguably the best way to read this book.

Organists will undoubtedly read some ideas that they have already found useful and helpful in their own circumstances, though perhaps expressed in a better and more complete manner. There are other sections that provide much food for thought, such as Cherwien’s anecdote about Paul Manz stating that he used the entire compass of the organ registration in order to be a good steward. Equally interesting were John Ferguson’s suggestions about involving the choir in helping to try out one’s ideas for a hymn.

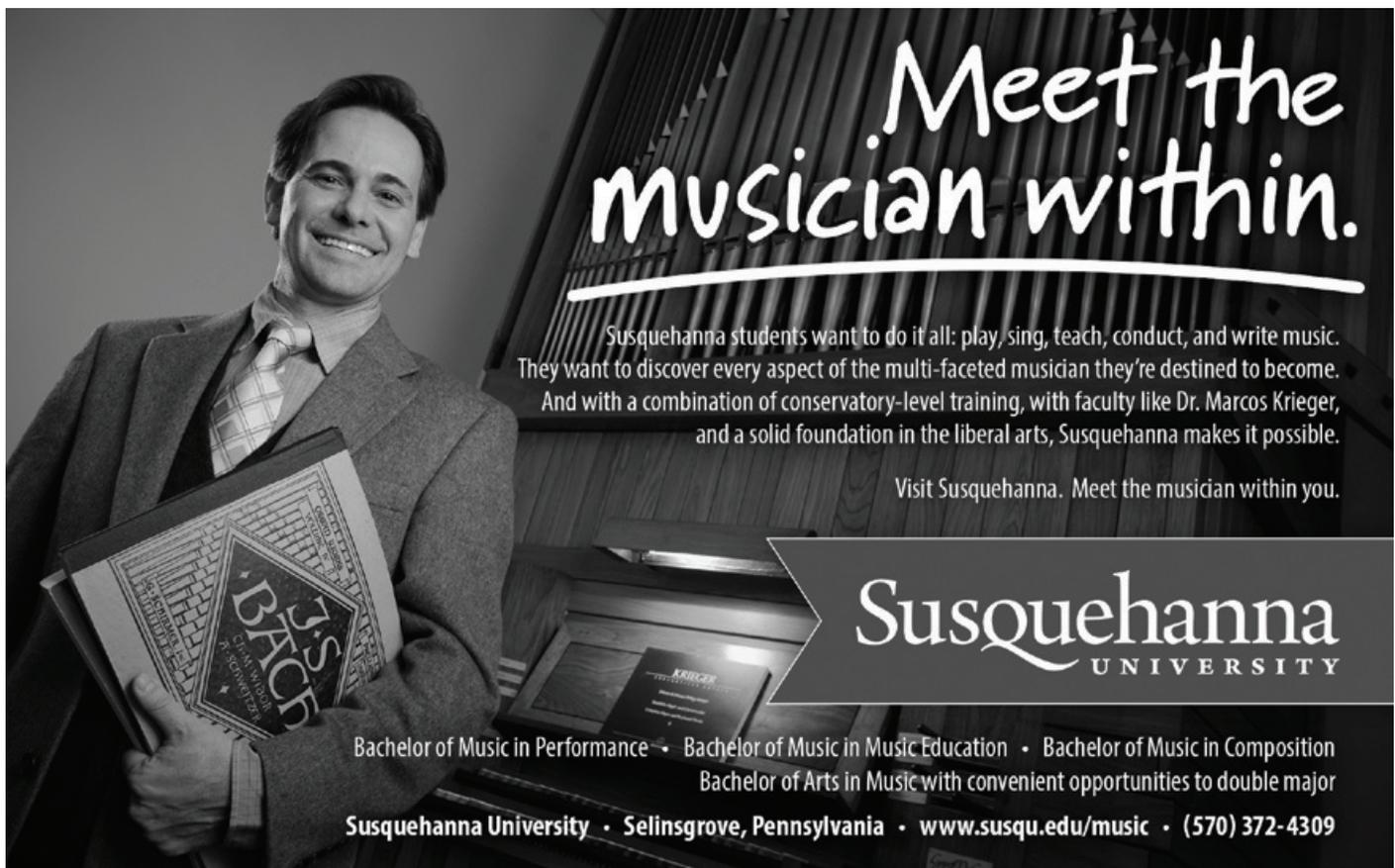
The topic of hymn playing is broad enough for organists in a variety of local congregations to find plenty of useful information. If there is any criticism of the book, it would be that the interviewees—an array of excellent teachers and stellar organists—all represent significant congregations or colleges with such splendid

resources as magnificent pipe organs, choirs of men and boys, superb architecture, and large budgets. Of course, when you want to ask expert organists, many of them play in such settings and their counsel is wisely sought. However, many of these settings and circumstances are far from the norm in many congregations. The organist in a parish with modest (at best) resources would be wise to use discernment regarding suggestions such as what to do with a 55-rank organ or how to work with a professional brass quartet.

Who would benefit most from reading the book? Experienced and skilled organists who

have mastered basic technique and who desire to continue to improve their playing will find many gems within the covers. Hymn playing is really the most important playing that church organists do. This volume will encourage hymn playing in a well-informed, creative, and engaging manner.

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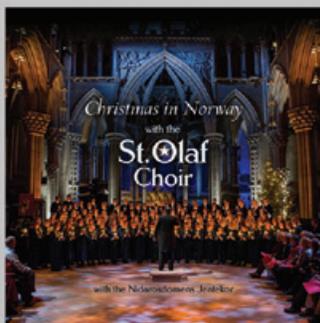
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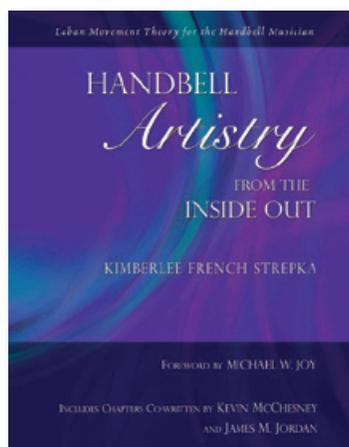
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Kimberlee F. Strepka.
Handbell Artistry from the Inside Out.
 Chicago: GIA, 2012.

166 pp.
 ISBN-13: 978-1579999230.
 \$19.95, paperback.

A CHRISTMAS-SEASON ROMANTIC COMEDY currently in production is premised on the meeting of two love interests who are members of a church handbell choir. The producer asked if I could provide a troupe of handbell ringers for two of the scenes. The Concordia students and alumni who were involved had great fun, but we wondered what such representations say about the public perception of handbell artistry. Handbells have long been viewed primarily as tools for worship and music education; or as a craft, hobby, or social activity for artistic dilettantes; and perhaps a musical activity for those who do not sing or play other instruments. In her new book Strepka impresses upon us her “sincere desire . . . that these unconventional, but proven, ideas will lead us toward a deeper level of musical awareness, instruct us on how we can become more musical beings, and equip us to bring more expressive performances to our audiences” (xxiii).

Though smaller volumes on handbell technique appear with some regularity, notably the late Donald Allured’s *Mastering Musicianship in Handbells* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), the publication of a full-size book on any topic about handbells has been rare, no less one on the artistry of ringing. The cultivation of handbell artistry was arguably spearheaded by Dr. Allured and his Westminster Choir College handbell choirs of the 1970s. Since then numerous handbell ensembles have explored how movement can enhance

handbell performance. This is well exemplified by the early Glee Handbell Choir under the late Katsumi Kodama and more recently by Kevin McChesney’s Pikes Peak Ringers and Jason Wells’ Ring of Fire. As ringers began to perform increasingly challenging repertoire, ringers and directors became more conscious of ringer health. Thus emerged Susan Berry’s *Healthy Ringing* (Dearborn, MI: Handbell Services, 2012), a valuable book-size manual rooted in conversations with medical professionals about the effects of ringing technique on the bodies of active ringers.

Strepka’s book is a natural and timely outgrowth of emerging interest in both handbell musicianship and the physical underpinnings of technique and expression. She draws from a music education background and a variety of sources to present a system leading to effective, artistic ringing through analysis of movement. She is influenced by theories and practices of movement and pedagogy familiar to many (such as those of Jaques-Emile Dalcroze, Kevin McChesney, and William Payn), but her undergraduate encounter and long professional relationship with choral music professor James Jordan led her to drink deeply of the early 20th-century work of Hungarian dance pedagogue Rudolf Laban (1879–1958), noteworthy for his development of a system that “allows us to analyze, describe, and record movement on every level” (xii). “Labanotation” enabled dancers to codify their movements such that

the movements could be learned by dancers elsewhere, much as a musical score is read by an orchestra.

Laban determined that movement could be observed through four models: Body, Shape, Space, and Effort. Strepka walks us through these models and several more layers of Laban's theory, leading us to understand eight "Effort Actions" that she considers an appropriate performance vocabulary for handbell artists, namely Float, Glide, Dab, Flick, Wring, Press, Punch, and Slash.

Most of these actions, she believes, can be directly observed, studied, practiced, and performed in handbell music, the results of which are healthy, artistic performance and musical empathy within the audience. Moreover, directors can engage their ringers in score study based on movement inherent in the music, and the conducting gestures can depict these movements in musical ways, thus allowing empathy to be aroused in audiences through the expressiveness of these movements.

The structure of the book and its visual presentation are clearly the product of much thought. Great pains have been made to break the text into sections, with extensive use of numbered lists and boldface type to clarify concepts and terminology.

Chapters 1 and 2 are a presentation of Laban's theory and an overview of applications to handbell performance. Chapters 3 through 6 present more specific applications of the theory to handbell movement, including the central concept of "bound flow" (discussed below).

Chapters 7 and 8 are two very different modes of examining the nature of expressiveness through a wide range of short examples and a few longer musical ones. Chapter 7 is a kind of dialogue between Strepka and Kevin McChesney that interprets the role of movement in several musical excerpts from two perspectives. Strepka's model describes "the ringers internalizing the Effort Action words as they ring," while McChesney's depicts how "the ringers bring expressiveness to the music by being intentional with the Space they inhabit with their bodies and the Shapes they create in the air" (88). It is interesting to see these two lines of reasoning in tandem, but it is not clear whether McChesney's model is a

conscious, intentional application of Laban's theory or whether Strepka is imposing aspects of Laban's theory on McChesney's model.

Chapter 8 is a case study of the American Negro spiritual as a genre that "presents unique challenges to our instrument" (109). Based on insights into the history of Negro spirituals by Andre J. Thomas, Strepka suggests that by thorough analysis of the movement profile of spirituals one can present "handbell spirituals" in a "new style—the handbell spiritual" (113).

Chapter 9 is an independent paper on "Foundational Skills" by Strepka's mentor Jordan, who discusses the notion of "entrainment" or "rhythmically empathetic movement," which would presumably be a valued goal of handbell ensembles. This goal is actually by implication, since handbells are discussed only in three sentences near the end of the paper. It is interesting and reasonably appropriate but something of an interpolation both in substance and style, since it does not smoothly follow Strepka's line of thought in the book.

Chapter 10 is a useful though catchall catalog for score analysis, preparing for rehearsals, warming up, troubleshooting, conducting, and arranging handbell music with movement in mind. Some of these areas merit some elaboration but certainly are adequate as a basis for productive action by directors and ringers.

A helpful glossary and substantial bibliography of handbell and dance sources follow the body of the book.

The typical director looking for clear and practical applications of Laban movement principles might find chapters 3 and 10 most helpful with their descriptions of movements and actions as they relate to ringing, as well as the discussions of how to analyze music and plan rehearsals using movement principles. Directors who have been leery of encouraging their ringers to explore space with their bodies might have fun applying vertical, horizontal, and sagittal (diagonal) dimension and their combinations, such as the wheel, door, and table planes. Laban's eight Effort Actions have obvious analogs to handbell motion, though Wring (ironically) may be problematic. I do wonder what the more daring but less movement-savvy director might do with young ringers in attempting these

applications without a mentor present at some point; one really needs to see these principles in action. These Effort Actions will, however, resonate with the physical sensibilities of ringers, though they might in their simplicity also be superficially abused, with ringers and directors at risk of missing the deeper concepts Laban hoped to communicate.

The thoughtful ringer might be especially intrigued by the expanded and slightly more esoteric discussions in chapters 4 and 5 of “sonic” and “visual possibilities.” These are meaty but not excessive extensions into aspects of posture and its many visual and sensory nuances with bells in hand, all with the aim of developing a sense of “3-dimensional ringing.”

At the center of Strepka’s discussion, however, is Laban’s concept of “bound flow,” described in chapter 6, “Bound Flow Is Our Friend: The Key to Stopped Sound Techniques.” Few will argue that the rehearsal and performance of martellato, malleting, echo, thumb damping, and the like require the utmost discipline. Strepka describes “bound flow” as movement that is “cautious, controlled, and can be stopped and started at will” (77), that is, movements that are precise, studied, regulated, and give evidence of the ringer’s ability to contain the outpouring of emotions in deeply expressive ways.

Her discussion offers cogent thinking on how to cultivate a more expressive integration of mind and body through these techniques, and assures the more reluctant ringers and directors that these concepts are not about ostentatious flailing of bells but about refined artistry of fine musical repertoire, much as preachers practices their rhetoric and presentation to illustrate more effectively their exegesis of God’s word.

In general Strepka writes with refreshing clarity of organization as well as lucidity and accessibility of style. The book has something for every conceptual level, from that of the everyday church ringer to that of the astute, experienced, scholarly director. The structure of the book effectively supports Strepka’s contention that “embodying the music we perform is the highest form of artistry” (146) and leaves the reader with a meaty menu of material to absorb, reflect upon, and apply in rehearsal and performance as well as pursue through further study.

Handbell Artistry from the Inside Out is provocative reading for handbell directors and ringers and will excite those who have sought clarity in teaching and learning about ringing as a movement art. It will challenge those who have been suspicious or curious about forays beyond the traditional marching-band style of ringing.

Herbert Geisler
Concordia University Irvine
Irvine, CA



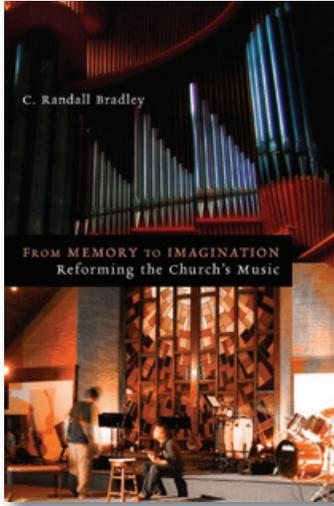
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C. Randall Bradley.
From Memory to Imagination: Reforming the Church's Music.

Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.

235 pp.

ISBN-13: 978-0-8028-6593-9.

\$25.00, paperback.

IN HIS WELL-RESEARCHED BOOK Bradley engages in a detailed examination of the state of music in the church. He brings to this study his experience as both a practicing church musician and an academician. He has been part of the music ministry in several Baptist churches; and is the Ben H. Williams Professor of Music, professor of church music, and director of the Church Music Program and the Center for Christian Music Studies at Baylor University. He is Baptist by birth and training, having grown up in southern Alabama, and has been an active musician in Baptist churches from an early age.

Bradley approaches the subject by identifying church music prior to 1960 as being part of the modern era with its “value for absolute truth, researched knowledge, careful order, emotional restraint, organized programs, outlined sermons, logical worship, fully orbbed song texts, structured music and methodical operational procedures” (14). Church music is rooted in that past, in that history, or—as he puts it—in that memory. Modernity is this particular paradigm, and we have wrapped ourselves in it with the music, liturgies, structures, and practices that we know and with which we feel comfortable. As post-modernism—with its emphasis on the individual and on the lack of ideological boundaries, philosophical fences, and clearly defined arguments—began to take root in our culture, the worship of the church found itself in crisis “because we have denied that cultural shifts have been occurring and that these shifts have been affecting the church. . . .

We have retreated to the safety of the past and the security of the memory of a time that no longer is nor shall ever be again” (14). Because of this we are unable to move ourselves from our memory into our imagination; unable to adapt to a new paradigm; unable to look at the future, trusting that through God’s grace we will discover the new music, the new liturgical patterns, and the new ways of organizing our congregations that will speak to the post-modern world in which we find ourselves.

The shortcomings of the institutional church and its worship are addressed, including the church’s dependence on the academy, which for generations has provided its highly educated clergy; its denial that it should radically change how it thinks about worship and the relationship of the individual worshipper to it; its need to control and exercise power over the parish; its provincialism; its dependence on commercial interests as resources for worship; and its insistence on preparing a worship experience for those who attend and in which they are expected simply to do what they are told.

Musicians are taken to task for their fear of the new; for creating leader-dominated music; for maintaining their power over worship planning and not letting the worshipping community have any choice in the kind and style of music through which they worship; and for creating music programs that are essentially elitist in nature, performance driven, and lacking in imagination. In these comments Bradley

does not take sides in the choir/organ vs. praise band/worship team debate, pointing out that both styles of music have similar characteristics of organization, power, and control, and that their leaders often create musical groups that operate at musical levels open only to the skilled few in the congregation.

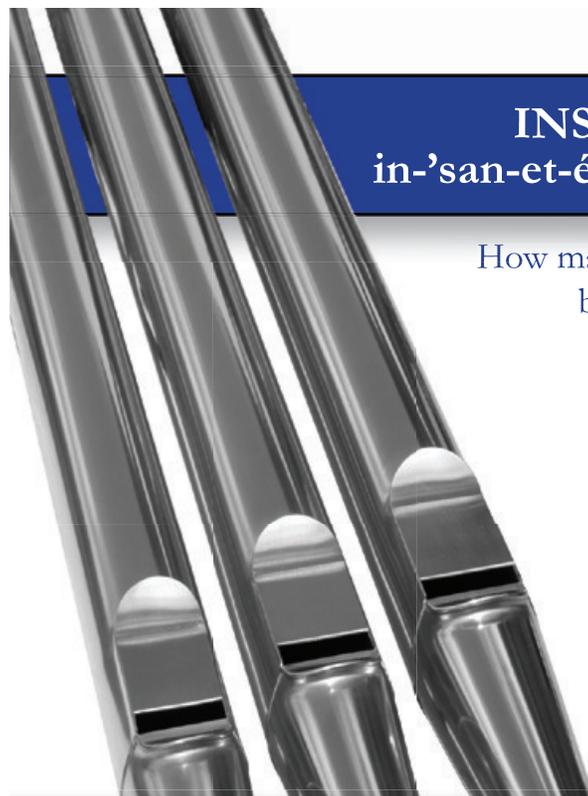
A chapter on music in the Bible details what Scripture does and does not say about music; another chapter on biblical interpretation suggests that Scripture is open to many readings and points of understanding. The intent is to encourage us to stop hiding behind the Bible by using selected Scripture passages to defend our choices in music no matter what they are.

Bradley recognizes that all of us who lead music in worship passionately defend our work and our musical paradigms. The music we do, even if very wide in stylistic breadth, is what we know and what we have decided is in the best interest of our congregations. It is music that artistically and emotionally suits us and the other musicians with whom we work, music that is the product of our prayer and reflection, and (though we might not want to

admit it) music that helps us maintain our place in the professional hierarchy of our profession. However, in one provocative passage Bradley asks church musicians to consider that “the church’s music, the institutions it embodies, the ideals it upholds, and the legends and stories that surround it are a multilayered myth that the church and its musicians have served without pausing to question its origins, its contextual truth, or its relevance to the future” (20). Is our devotion to this myth what prevents us from imagining a future different than our present?

Bradley makes many suggestions on how the church and its musicians can move from their “memory” forward into their “imagination.” Each of the following points is fully developed in the book, showing the many ways music can play a part.

- Do not lose the historic music of the church; it should be the foundation upon which we build the future but must not bind us to the past.
- Preaching must become collaborative and communal and provide opportunity for input and shared ownership by the congregation.



INSANITY
in-'san-et-é\ noun:

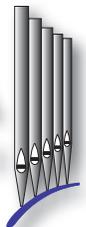
Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

~Albert Einstein

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- Community within the worshipping church must be characterized by genuine love for God and for others, with everyone having a sense of belonging, of friendship, and of having a place. We should make the community a part of the creative process of worship planning, discarding the "top down" model mentioned above. Our choices of music should represent a broad cross section of the body of Christ, with everyone having an investment in the plans that are made. No one musical style is more sacred than another, and the plans we make should be collaborative and communal, influenced by the histories, stories, and contexts of the people involved. While recognizing that not everyone is a composer or a poet or knowledgeable about repertoire, all can have a place by being a part of the education, prayer, dialogue, and discernment process.
- The chapter on hospitality may be one of the most important in the book. Noting that "true worship involves our practicing hospitality as host, stranger, and guest" (158), he discusses in great detail how the church can become "home" for us when we are hosts welcoming people to worship, when we are guests needing a temporary home, and when we are strangers in need of hospitality.
- Finally he suggests that church musicians must become multimusical, that we must move out of our artistic and professional comfort zones. In order to sing God's redemptive story in a strange land, our textual and musical vocabularies must not be so foreign that those we are trying to reach are effectively shut out from our faith communities. We need to learn new musical styles, even perhaps new instruments. We should learn the histories and stories of folks with backgrounds different from our own as well as their music, their songs, and their contexts. We should try to become acquainted with musicians who work in very different musical styles and learn to value their art and their ministries. The challenge is to preserve and treasure the historic music of the church while finding or creating new songs to sing of God's love.

Bradley's vision for how the church moves into the future with imagination will please some, surprise a few, and frighten others. He suggests that our overly zealous concern for theological orthodoxy, differing liturgical practices, and music of our own choosing should be replaced with shared beliefs and goals developed through the communal and collaborative work of the church. I have difficulty understanding how worship and the music used in it would be planned routinely by people who—no matter how well-meaning—likely don't have much knowledge about the process and likely have little awareness of the vast universe of resources available to them. I struggle with the notion that the liturgy through which the church has sung its praises and laments, proclaimed God's word, and celebrated the sacraments for millennia can be casually set aside. The liturgy does not prevent us from singing new songs or limit the voices that sing them. It does not prevent the creation of new forms of proclamation or limit the telling of our own stories and histories. It does not depend on charismatic preachers, brilliant organists, splendid choirs, skilled praise bands, great buildings, beautiful bulletins, elaborate vestments, or any of the other ways churches identify themselves. By rehearsing again and again the great arc of salvation history, the liturgy provides an anchor, a constant in the midst of change, and a reliable place and way for us as a community of whatever size to be fed by the Word, to be put in touch with the means of grace, to be renewed by them, and from them be sent into the world to be the face of Christ to all we meet.

I believe this is an important book and should be read by all church musicians. Each will have to determine what, if any, changes in his or her ministries might result. But to labor in ignorance of the world around us is to do the church and the people with whom we work a disservice. This is our challenge now, as it has always been. And only through God's grace and the movement of the Holy Spirit will each musician find his or her way forward.

*Donald L. Armitage
Cantor Emeritus, Augsburg Lutheran Church
Winston-Salem, NC*

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Dan Damon and Gracia Grindal.

A Treasury of Faith: Lectionary Hymns,
Series A.

Wayne Leupold Editions (WL800041), \$21.25.

Here are 74 original hymn texts (originally published in 2006) on the Epistle or Gospel for each Sunday and festival of Year A, along with 74 original tunes (published with Grindal's texts in 2011).

Like so many good hymn writers, Gracia Grindal honed her poetic craft through translating classics. Her hymns in this collection not only draw the congregation into the Gospel for the day but also to the Christ there revealed. More than merely restating a Gospel, "lectionary based" means for her (as Luther said) "urging Christ (to us)." Here are solid hymns not only for the great festivals, such as "O Why Did Jesus Have to Come to Earth?" (Christmas Day), but also useful hymns for other, more difficult days, such as "Go Down, Joseph, Take That Baby" (Matthew 2:13-18; Christmas I) or "Christ Broke the Idols of My Heart" (Matthew 23:1-13; Pentecost 26).

Dan Charles Damon, a United Methodist pastor-musician in Richmond, CA, writes accessible melodies that move step-wise or in easy intervals—tunes that also express the sense of Grindal's texts. So, for example, the Christmas hymn above gets a noble, lyric kind of tune (LEEDS), the Christmas I hymn a tune in minor like a spiritual (TURNBRIDGE), the hymn for Pentecost 26 a most "un-pharisaical" tune, almost child-like in its joy (SHINGLE SPRINGS).

The book is well edited, with indexes of topics, Scripture sources, tune meters and names, and first lines. Preachers will find here insightful help for preparing sermons on the Gospels. Choir directors who buy enough copies for their choirs will find a whole year's worth of possibilities for "Gospel motets." DS

João Wilson Faustini.

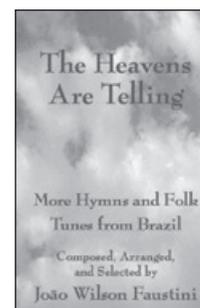
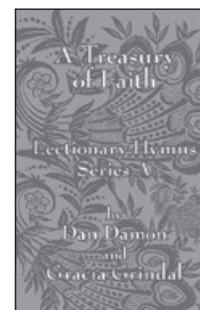
The Heavens Are Telling.

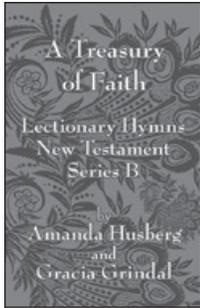
Wayne Leupold Editions (WL800039), \$24.00.

Designed as a companion for *When Breaks the Dawn* (WL800014), *The Heavens Are Telling* is a 182-page volume that can help familiarize people with music from Brazil for possible inclusion in English worship services and in denominational hymnals in the years to come. In the foreword of this opus, Pablo Sosa comments that "the use of minor modes, melodic turns and feminine endings create a harmonic transparency and a distinctively Portuguese melodic sound" (viii), and these are the kinds of sounds that are prevalent in Faustini's work. He uses English prose and poetry and weds it with Portuguese tunes from folk traditions to create new songs for the people of God. Brazilian folk songs and Brazilian *modinha*-style music (considered the first type of Brazilian composition in the 17th century) make for Romantic songs of lament in minor keys that characterize many pieces in Faustini's book.

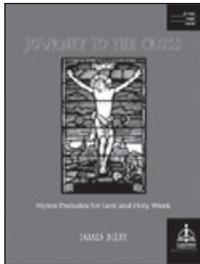
Faustini uses existing texts and also composes new ones to use with these melodies that underscore the broad beauty of the church's song. Although many of the *modinbas* (which have been influenced by Portuguese, African, and Indian musical elements) have not been used previously for worship, they are known by many in Brazil from childhood. It is helpful that tune names and meters are provided for each hymn. Another bonus is that the hymnal is indexed by composers and arrangers, authors and translators, topic, source (Scripture citations), meter, tune, and title in the same way that many hymnals are for easy reference and possible use by choirs and ensembles even where Portuguese is not currently spoken, since many of the texts are in English.

The volume combines pieces with easy refrains and antiphons that quote or paraphrase Holy Scripture or homiletical ideas, and congregations with intentionally progressive





musical leadership may see how many of the pieces can become congregational favorites with ease, especially since many of the texts are familiar in English already. Although not intended to be a self-standing hymnal, *The Heavens Are Telling* provides a rich tapestry of diverse and fresh Brazilian music that can be used in Lutheran congregations with musicians of all skill levels. *DT*



Amanda Husberg and Gracia Grindal.
A Treasury of Faith: Lectionary Hymns, New Testament, Series B.
Wayne Leupold Editions (WL800044), \$21.00.

This is a worthy sequel to the Series A collection (above). Included are 70 singable new tunes by Husberg, all harmonized in four parts, 19 with instrumental descant. Husberg writes, “The music should not be so distinctive as to draw attention away from the words, but rather should wrap itself around the text, weaving melodies over and under the rhythms of the text” (viii). The 70 texts (mostly from Mark, Year B Gospel) are ably crafted by Grindal. Here are three examples.



In “Lift Up Your Hearts with Joy and Sing” (Advent 1), Grindal sums up well the “edgy reassurance” of Mark 13:24-37. Husberg’s 6/8 tune sustains us through this long hymn (847 847 887—22 bars) by quoting part of an older Advent tune (MILWAUKEE), with syncopations (m. 7 and m. 13) and by climaxing about half-way through (high D, m. 14).

The text of “As Moses Lifted Up the Brazen Sign” (Lent 4) gives John 3:16 a fresh refrain and strong key words—“For God so loved the world he gave, he gave his Son, his only Son”—and at the refrain, Husberg’s heretofore rather pedantic tune (SAMANTHA) changes tonality, rhythm, and lyricism to express it.

From the complex gospel of Mark 3:21-35 (Pentecost 4, Proper 5) Grindal has “coaxed out” a hymn on family (certainly an underserved hymn topic!), “Christ Jesus Speaks with Love to Those.” This is well-matched to a tune (WITH

LOVE) of nicely sequenced phrases, not to mention a cheerful descant, too.

Like the Series A volume, this book is well edited and well supplied with indexes; highly recommended! *DS*

INSTRUMENTAL | ORGAN MUSIC

James Biery.
Journey to the Cross.
Organ.
Concordia (97-7537), \$24.00.

Eight hymn tunes are set as preludes, suitable for the weighty messages of Lent and Holy Week. Biery’s treatments include the use of dissonances, such as diminished-5th and 7th intervals, manual changes, effective registrations utilizing three manuals, changing meters, and range of dynamic expression. The tune *KINGSFOLD* is cast as an homage to J.S. Bach’s *Erbarms dich mein, o Herre Gott*, BWV 721. His varied techniques bring to life the message inherent in the music. These substantial preludes range from simple to complex, from sight-readable to medium level of difficulty. Other hymn tunes in the collection include *CAITHNESS*, *FORTUNATUS NEW*, *LOVE UNKNOWN*, *NEW MALDEN*, *O TRAURIGKEIT*, *REALITY*, and *AN WASSERFLÜSSEN BABYLON*. *CP*

Jeffrey Blersch.
Partita on “Voices Raised to You We Offer.”
Organ.
Concordia (97-7494), \$20.00.

This enjoyable work features five settings of *SONG OF PRAISE*: “Fanfare and Dance,” “Duo,” “Trumpet Tune,” “Reflection,” and “Fanfare and Toccata.” Utilizing mostly duple and some irregular meter, Blersch dresses the hymn tune in varied rhythmic colors, ending the collection with a brilliant toccata that contains a straightforward pedal statement of the tune. Articulation and ornamentation add a tuneful, upbeat quality, especially to the “Trumpet

Tune,” and the “Duo” features interesting play between voices. Slightly above sight-reading level, this collection could fill multiple needs within a single worship context or make an attractive recital offering. *CP*

David M. Cherwien.

Prelude and Postlude on THAXTED.

Organ.

MorningStar (MSM-10-627), \$11.00.

Marked “Mysteriously,” the prelude movement begins and ends with soft chromatic chords and clear melodic statements. A louder middle section varies the tune slightly. The postlude movement incorporates several different toccata figurations, giving enough of each idea to unify the piece without letting any pattern become tiresome. Melodic snippets drawn from the hymn tune appear in the pedal in the opening and closing sections. The middle section is primarily for the manuals, with the melody in the right hand. Faster toccata figurations at the end bring the piece to a triumphant finish. *LW*

David P. Dahl.

Variations for Organ on Dix.

Organ.

MorningStar (MSM-10-212), \$9.00.

This piece was originally composed for an antique Italian organ built around 1680. The composer points out in his opening comments that the bass on this instrument consisted of a “short octave” in the bass, which explains why this set of variations could easily be performed on manuals alone. The variations are composed for the five-stanza text of “As with Gladness Men of Old.” Variation 1, which is canonic in style, makes use of musical elements to bring out the text and it begins with an upper voice ornament used to portray the twinkling star. Variation 2 is written in a two-voice duo. Subsequent variations are labeled as an aria, invention, and finale. The music is of medium difficulty and would be very useful in the Epiphany season as organ statements of a stanza of the hymn. *MS*

Healing and Funeral.

Organ.

Augsburg Fortress (ED023408), \$40.00.

Augsburg has added this 10th volume to the Augsburg Organ Library series. Included in the collection are non-hymn-based pieces such as Peeters’ pensive and haunting *Aria* and Ashdown’s lyrical *Elegiac Pastorale*. Hymn-based repertoire on hymns old and new include Haan’s dignified setting of “Oh, What Their Joy and Their Glory Must Be” (O QUANTA QUALIA), Cherwien’s exuberant setting of “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart” (MARION), and Aaron David Miller’s playful setting of the Norwegian tune I HIMMELEN, I HIMMELEN. The collection includes well-crafted arrangements of hymns often requested at funerals, such as “Abide with Me,” “Be Still My Soul,” “How Great Thou Art,” “On Eagle’s Wings,” and “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling.” Editors Norma Aamodt-Nelson and Mark Weiler have compiled a collection of arrangements that may well become your “go to” book for funerals, healing services, and commemorations. *JRB*

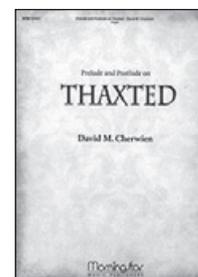
Samuel Metzger.

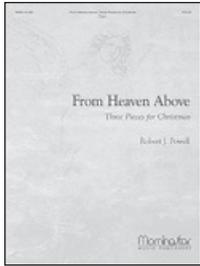
***The Festival Hymn Collection*, vol. 2.**

Organ, SSA.

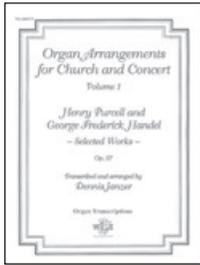
MorningStar (MSM-10-225), \$29.00.

Festive hymn arrangements for organ and brass are plentiful, but those for organ and choir descant are less frequently found. This volume contains organ settings of 15 familiar hymns along with corresponding choral descants for SSA vocalizing on the vowel “ah.” A typical setting includes an organ introduction, standard verse harmonization, an interlude that contains a modulation to a new key a step higher, and a concluding stanza in the higher key. The concluding stanza in each setting has an optional choral descant that may be reproduced for the singers. Many of the concluding stanzas place the hymn cantus firmus in the tenor with descant material in the right hand. While the modulation embedded in the interlude may not be to everyone’s taste, the concluding stanza descants are attractive and noteworthy. The composer wisely recommends that users adapt

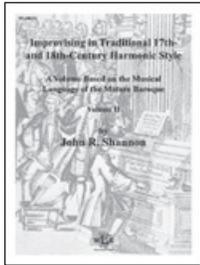




the material to their own needs. “Depending on the placement in the service, a shorter introduction and interlude may be required. Feel free to shorten to suit your needs. Most introductions end with the final phrase of the hymn—a logical place to start for a shorter introduction. The modulations may be replaced or shortened as well” (2). *JB*



Robert J. Powell.
From Heaven Above.
Organ.
MorningStar (MSM-10-180), \$10.00.



While not explicit in the title, this collection makes use of traditional German Christmas carols (although some are less familiar than others). The first arrangement combines the carol “While by My Sheep” (ECHO CAROL), played on manuals, with Luther’s well-known hymn “From Heaven Above” (VOM HIMMEL HOCH) in the pedal. It begins quietly and then builds to a rousing finish, which would work well as a hymn prelude. The second piece is a setting of SUSANNI (a carol that is also often translated as “From Heaven Above”). The melody is first quoted in the pedal and then repeated with various registrations and in new keys. It retains its essential characteristic as a lullaby and ends with the “Susanni” refrain. In the final piece of the set, Powell uses bird-like motifs and a light texture for the carol DIE WEIHNACHTSNACHTIGALL. These settings may be especially appreciated by German-speaking parishioners, but they would also make a nice addition to your Christmas repertoire. *DR*

Henry Purcell and George Frederick Handel.
Organ Arrangements for Church and Concert, vol. 1, **Selected Works.**
Transcribed and arr. Dennis Janzer.
Organ.
Wayne Leupold Editions (WL600273), \$24.00.

This volume provides the organist the opportunity to play works by Purcell and Handel originally scored for varied ensembles of strings, winds, brass, and percussion. These include familiar favorites such as “Trumpet Tune

in D major” (from *Suites, Lessons, and Pieces for Harpsichord*) by Purcell, “Rondeau de Concert” (from incidental music from *Abdelazer*) by Purcell, and “Sinfonia—Arrival of the Queen of Sheba” (from Act III of *Solomon*) by Handel. In all of these pieces, repetitions of sections are further ornamented following the Baroque practice. Janzer states in his preface that “As arrangements, rather than transcriptions, free use of additional material as well as alterations to the originals will be found throughout the collection while still maintaining the musical integrity of the original.” Janzer has skillfully handled these arrangements so that they are idiomatic to the organ. Many of the works would be highly suitable for weddings and other festive occasions. *JB*

John R. Shannon.
Improvising in Traditional 17th- and 18th-Century Harmonic Style, vol. 1.
Organ.
Wayne Leupold Editions (WL600187), \$28.00.

Shannon’s fine instructional book on improvisation takes the approach that learning to improvise and practicing this skill require choosing a musical style in which to develop this art. His chosen style is the language of the mature Baroque, a style very well suited for the organist. Because of this approach to teaching improvisation, he weaves music theory instruction throughout the book as a necessary foundation for gaining proficiency in improvisation. Shannon employs two basic perspectives in presenting improvisation: contrapuntal and harmonic. Both are necessary for a secure foundation, and it is to his credit that they are both included in this book. Already in Unit Two students are introduced to two-voice writing (essentially first species counterpoint). A soprano melody (at first only the initial phrase) of a familiar hymn tune is given and the student adds a bass line to it. Harmony in major keys is introduced by various chord categories: primary triads (I, IV, V), V7 chords, root position “secondary” chords (II, III, VI), and later by inversions of both triads and V7 chords. A very useful summary of typical chord progressions is given in Unit Four (30–31).

Shannon introduces harmonic progression exercises to develop confidence and speed. The preferred format is one encountered in basic continuo realization: three voices in the right hand in closed position over a bass line played in the left hand. Figured bass is introduced in Unit Six and serves admirably to imply harmony without immediate reference to chord function. Thus, given a figured bass line of half notes, broken chords in eighth notes can begin to be improvised in the right hand in two-voice texture (46). Eventually nonchord figuration is added to the right hand in improvising on a figured bass or embellishing a familiar hymn tune (62ff). Some common nonchord tone figures such as changing note group, *cambiata*, and *messanza* are studied.

Issues of part-writing are dealt with succinctly as they arise. “Particularly, observe the general rule *when connecting one chord to another, hold over common tones and move the other voices the shortest possible distance*” (19). Part-writing the dominant 7th chord is taken up in some detail in Unit Three. Two of the admirable features of this book are the inclusion of excerpts from 17th- and 18th-century organ literature and the use of many hymn-tune melodies. The inclusion of keyboard harmony exercises is also a valuable tool. Shannon wisely states in his Introduction, “Units are not intended to be completed within a given amount of time. The techniques described in any good musical text likely take a long time to perfect. This is especially true of books on improvisation. Although it might be possible for a student to use these books alone, the help of a competent, compassionate, and interested instructor is certainly desirable” (4). I wholeheartedly recommend this book for those willing to put in the necessary practice to improve their improvisation skills. *JB*

David Evan Thomas.

Variations on Simple Gifts.

Organ.

MorningStar (MSM-10-450), \$11.00.

With the ghost of Copland hovering, David Evan Thomas gives us an introduction, theme, five

variations, and a finale. Harmonies shimmer as the composer explores that quintessential American tune, SIMPLE GIFTS, through a half-dozen key changes and as many moods. Yet there is a pervading, straightforward simplicity about the music that always keeps in touch with the Shaker hymn. The work is long for Sunday morning worship. Each variation transitions without pause to the next, so there is no graceful way of excerpting. The work might serve as an extended prelude for a service that includes “Lord of the Dance” or some other text sung to SIMPLE GIFTS. Also the many registration changes would be tough to pull off without pistons. These challenges aside, Thomas’ piece deserves to take its place in the American repertoire alongside Ned Rorem’s *A Quaker Reader* and Samuel Barber’s *Wondrous Love* variations. *KO*

Jacob B. Weber.

Christmas Mosaics.

Organ.

Concordia (97-7517), \$21.00.

This is a collection of six settings of familiar Christmas carols. The arrangements range from easy to medium difficulty levels. The composer has taken great care to present musical settings for an organist of average ability to use. Tunes represented in this collection are AWAY IN A MANGER, CRADLE SONG, GLORIA, LASST UNS ALLE, MANGER SONG, TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM, and UN FLAMBEAU. The settings carefully reflect the mood of the carol. The setting of “Away in a Manger” uses both of the familiar hymn tunes. The pedal parts are generally easy; however, in a couple of the settings there is a more challenging part that is used to express the joy and excitement of the carol. *MS*

Jacob B. Weber.

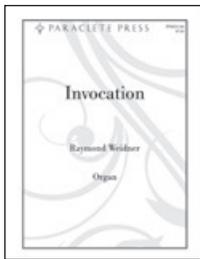
Soli Deo Gloria: Eight Distinctive Chorale Preludes for Every Organist, Set 2.

Organ.

Concordia (97-7496), \$19.00.

Weber has distinctively cast eight chorale preludes in settings that range from meditative





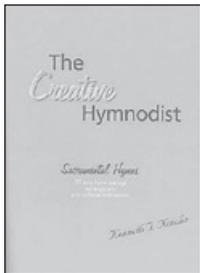
to martial. One particularly uplifting treatment couples the hymn tune GRAFTON with a triplet-rhythm accompaniment featuring articulative intricacy. Other melodies treated include DER MANGE SKAL KOMME, LAND OF REST, VIENNA, and DIE GÜLDNE SONNE. Weber's suggestions for registration add interest to the music and foster the organist's creativity. This collection is well suited to an instrument with solid principal and reed choruses. While at sight-reading level or slightly above, these settings are well constructed, giving them a learned air. Presentation is sure to orient the heart and mind toward a great and holy God. *CP*

Raymond Weidner.

Invocation.

Organ.

Paraclete (PPMO1146), \$7.50.



This subtle, brief piece marked “Slow and Serene” features an undulating neighbor-tone figure in half notes and later in quarter notes to accompany a lyrical, *affettuoso* melody in the right hand. The contrasting section brings us a new pentatonic melody still accompanied by the undulating quarter-note figure in the middle voices and a few whole-tone sonorities. Some large stretches in the “accompanying hand” notated across two staves present some challenges. A subtle touch of Lydian mode in certain places adds charm to this piece. *JB*

Jerry Westenkuehler.

Rejoice and Sing! Twenty Festive Hymn Introductions for Organ.

Organ.

MorningStar (MSM-10-748), \$19.00.

This will be a useful resource for organists. While most of the introductions are not too difficult to play, they communicate the excitement that is appropriate for a festival day. Most introductions are the length of one to two hymn stanzas, and harmonies are creative without being overly dissonant. They include enough of the melody to encourage the congregation to sing confidently. Several introductions are printed in two keys, to accommodate users of different

hymnals (DARWALL'S 148TH, DIADEMATA, LOBE DEN HERREN, NETTLETON, and SINE NOMINE). The other tunes included are also familiar festive hymns, among them AUSTRIAN HYMN; AZMON; CWM RHONDDA; DUKE STREET; FESTAL SONG; MENDELSSOHN; ST. ANNE; and ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR. *LW*

KEYBOARD AND INSTRUMENTS

Kenneth T. Kosche.

The Creative Hymnodist: Sacramental Hymns.

Keyboard, with optional instruments. Northwestern (27N0054), \$20.00.

This is the final volume in the Creative Hymnodist series, which features well-known hymn tune settings as alternatives to standard hymnal arrangements. They are designed to be played on an organ, piano, or keyboard without the need for pedals. Each tune is given a brief introduction and two varied settings. The second setting includes an optional instrumental descant, and parts are provided for both cantus firmus and the descant for both C and B-flat instruments. It is therefore possible to combine forces with whatever instruments are available; most should be playable by high-school level orchestra and band students, perhaps even well-prepared middle school players. All settings are identified by tune names, making it possible to apply their use to any texts that use the given name. This volume centers on hymns associated with Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Even if some tunes are not sung or well known by a particular denomination or tradition, the settings provide a fine way to introduce a new hymn and utilize the talents of instrumentalists in worship. *JG*

Organ Plus Brass, vol. 2.

Eds. Carsten Klomp and Heiko Petersen.

Organ, brass choir.

Bärenreiter (BA 11202), \$16.50.

This volume contains five Romantic chorale preludes arranged for organ and brass. Each

prelude is followed by a harmonization of the chorale tune written by Klomp. The editors intentionally arranged the brass parts to be playable by amateurs, and they simplified the original organ parts. The result is a collection of accessible, quality music. The chorale preludes are relatively short (one to three pages in the full score). The subsequent harmonizations assign the melody and a simple four-part setting to the brass, giving the organ moving descants and countermelodies that expand on the brass setting. Tunes included are WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET; JESUS, MEINE ZUVERSICHT; SOLLT' ICH MEINEM GOTT; NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT; and CHRISTUS, DER IST MEIN LEBEN. The brass score in C (BA 11202-51) and individual parts for B-flat trumpets (BA 11202-52 and BA 11202-53), F horn (BA 11202-89), and trombones (BA 11202-58 and BA 11202-59) are available separately. *LW*

Anne Roberts.

Traditional Hymn Tunes for Today's Ensemble.

Piano, solo handbells, 1 or 2 instruments.
GIA (G-7477 and G-7477INST), \$25.00.

This collection with its arrangements specifically for piano, handbells, and treble instruments provides a unique resource of instrumental music. The handbell parts are for either a 3- or 4-octave set, designed to be played by one ringer, although that could be a shared responsibility. Both C and B-flat instrumental parts are provided, and they also appear on the piano part. Delightful arrangements for an ensemble include ancient tunes (VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS; NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND; and the English tune KINGSFOLD), and two 20th-century songs, "The Summons" and "Canticle of the Turning." These arrangements will provide an instrumental "breath of fresh air" for both worshippers and musicians. GIA offers some other mixed ensemble editions, mostly for keyboard, C instruments, guitar, and bass. More information can be found on the GIA website (www.giamusic.com). *JG*

PIANO

Sandra Eithun.

Little Ones to Him Belong: Sunday School Songs for Piano.

Piano.

Concordia (97-7543), \$21.00.

This newly published book contains eight piano settings of well-known and beloved hymns. Each song would be an appropriate selection for a worship service, a children's gathering, a funeral or memorial service, Rally Day, or a celebration of Christian Education. The book could even be a gift for a budding young pianist. The pieces may be played on a synthesizer, allowing the performer to utilize other sounds. Using this collection may not only give a young pianist an opportunity to inspire older generations who recognize the tunes, but also give younger generations a glimpse of how to incorporate keyboard music throughout the worship service. Moderate difficulty. *JG*

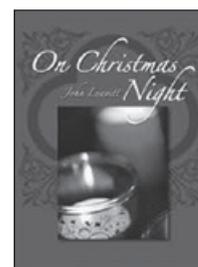
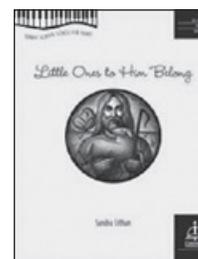
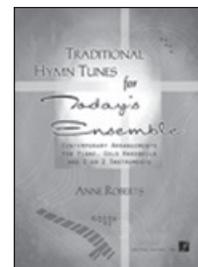
John Leavitt.

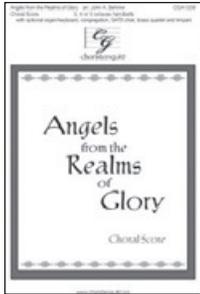
On Christmas Night.

Piano.

John Leavitt Music (JLPB030107), \$17.00.

This collection contains nine time-honored Christmas carols in a variety of settings, plus an original composition by Leavitt himself. Each setting is uniquely characteristic to the carol, capturing its essence. Ranging from whimsical to dance-like to upbeat and challenging, Leavitt's arrangements will fill a variety of Christmastime worship needs. Most are a bit above sight-reading level. Taken from a variety of European traditions, settings include "Away in a Manger," "Come, All You Shepherds," "On December Five and Twenty," and "Sleep, My Little One." A companion CD recording (JLRCD081306) is also available. *CP*

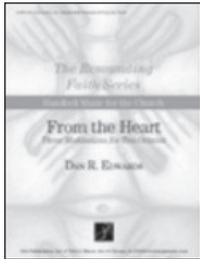




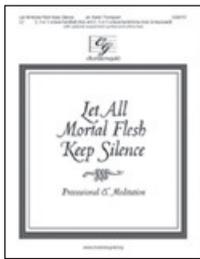
HANDBELLS

Angels from the Realms of Glory.

Arr. John A. Behnke.
3–5 octaves handbells, with optional organ/
keyboard, congregation, SATB choir, brass
quartet, timpani.
Choristers Guild (CGB792), \$4.95.

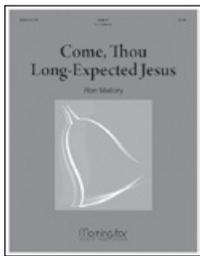


This festive setting of REGENT SQUARE can be
rung strictly as a bell piece or with choir, brass,
and organ. The bell parts include martellato,
lift, and shake. The full score is CGB791; the
set of reproducible parts is CGRP27 (for brass
quintet, timpani, and organ); the choral score is
CGA1339. Level 2. *LS*



Dan Edwards.
From the Heart.
2 octaves handbells or handchimes.
GIA (G-8514), \$5.25.

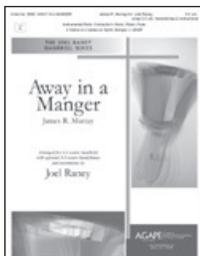
Though scored for just two octaves, these
three arrangements are well written and within
the scope of beginning handbell or handchime
ensembles. This meditative collection includes
“Our Hearts Are Open, Lord,” “I Long for You,
Jesus,” and “Cantate Domino.” Level 2. *LS*



Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (Processional and Meditation).

Arr. Karen Thompson.
2, 3 or 5 octaves handbells, 2, 3 or 5 octaves
handchimes (or keyboard), with optional
suspended cymbal and chime tree.
Choristers Guild (CGB757), \$4.50.

The *Processional* has seven parts that are
memorized (4-measure patterns) and layered.
It is intended to begin with the ringers of each
part positioned in different places in the room.
The *Meditation* is a duet with bells and chimes
or bells and keyboard. The use of suspended
cymbal and chime tree adds to the mysterious
feel of this piece. Level 2. *LS*



Ron Mallory.
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus.
3–5 octaves handbells, with optional 2 octaves
handchimes.
MorningStar (MSM-30-005), \$4.50.

This piece is a welcome addition to the Advent
repertoire. While this setting of JEFFERSON
requires no special bell techniques, dynamic
variations do add interest throughout the piece.
Level 3. *LS*

Away in a Manger.

Arr. Joel Raney.
3–5 octaves handbells, with optional 3–5
octaves handchimes and instruments.
Hope (2655), \$4.95.

This charming piece begins as a soothing
lullaby and transitions to a childlike playfulness
in the middle section using plucks, thumb
damps, ring touch, mallets, and martellatos. The
concluding section ends as the piece began,
with the addition of chimes. The addition of
instruments would add a lovely dimension to
the piece (piano, flute, and two violins and two
cellos [or synthesizer strings]). Level 3. *LS*

Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds.

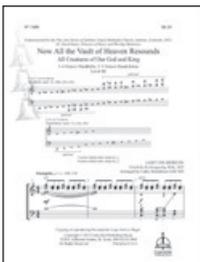
Arr. Cathy Moglebust.
3–6 octaves handbells, 3–5 octaves handchimes.
Concordia (97-7488), \$4.25.

This vibrant setting of LASST UNS ERFREUEN makes
use of chimes and surprising harmonic changes,
keeping the piece interesting for both ringers
and listeners. Level 3. *LS*

Advent Suite for Handbells.

Sondra K. Tucker.
2–3 octaves handbells, with optional 2 octaves
handchimes, sleigh bells, finger cymbals, wind
chimes, hand drum.
Beckenhorst (HB444), \$5.95.

This versatile collection can played as a suite
or as three individual movements. Included are



FREU DICH SEHR; NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND; and BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN. This compilation is a welcome addition to 2–3 octave Advent repertoire. Level 3. *LS*

When Morning Gilds the Skies.

Arr. Sandra Eithun.

5, 6, or 7 ringers (2 or 3 octaves handbells).
Choristers Guild (CGB789), \$4.50.

Written for smaller forces, this piece can be rung by five, six, or seven ringers. This lovely setting of LAUDES DOMINI is melodic, interesting, and accessible. Level 2. *LS*

VOCAL MUSIC | CHILDREN’S CHOIR

Shaw Bailey and Becki Slagle Mayo.

The Lord God Made Them All.

Unison/two-part, piano, with optional 3 octaves handbells or handchimes.
Choristers Guild (CGA1322), \$2.10.

Bailey and Mayo give us a new musical setting of “All Things Bright and Beautiful” that includes an optional, fairly easy part for handbell (or handchime) choir. An optional responsive reading based on Psalm 148 that precedes the anthem also involves the congregation. A rhythmically straightforward melody fits the text well. The refrain is set to two different melodies that combine (optionally) in the final refrain, making this useful for children’s choirs new to singing in two parts. Useful for any Sunday focusing on creation or for services celebrating the blessing of the animals. *AE*

John D. Horman.

Echo Carol.

Unison/two-part, piano, with optional percussion, Orff instruments.
Choristers Guild (CGA1319), \$1.95.

With a text referencing the Nativity, this pleasing melody will be highly teachable to elementary-age students. Suggested performance is for a

large group of children singing the call with echo sung by smaller group, or solo voice singing the call echoed by the remainder of the choir. A bonus feature is the option for rhythm instruments: tambourine, maracas, and claves. These conceivably could be played by middle schoolers or older elementary youth with solid Orff background. Percussion parts are included with the choral score. The piano accompaniment is written in calypso style. Individual components of text, melody, and instrumentation embody innocence through their uncomplicated styles, yet the sum total is never trite or repetitious. Each musical component is individual yet complementary. This setting would enhance any Christmas worship where children and youth participation help relay the news of Messiah’s birth. *CP*

Larry E. Schultz.

God Is There.

Unison, piano, with optional violin.
Choristers Guild (CGA1323), \$2.10.

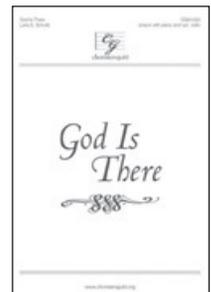
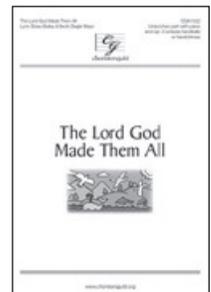
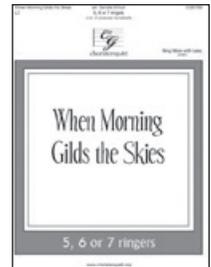
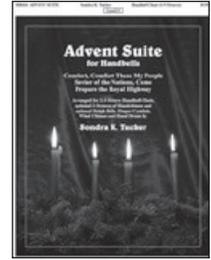
The message of this work is that God is found in worship, in our families, and in our loving, making this a good general anthem for a children’s choir. Schultz suggests also that the first stanza can be used as a call to worship. The piece opens with a simple melody in F major. A contrasting section follows that can be sung as a “choral crescendo,” starting with one or two singers and building the sound by adding voices in successive phrases. The final section brings back the original melody, modulating to G major. An optional violin part adds musical interest and is within the capabilities of a good high-school player. *AE*

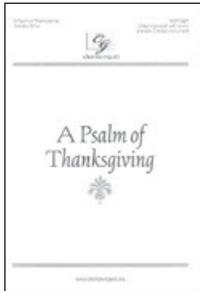
Timothy Shaw.

A Psalm of Thanksgiving.

Unison/two-part, piano, with optional C treble instrument.
Choristers Guild (CGA1321), \$2.10.

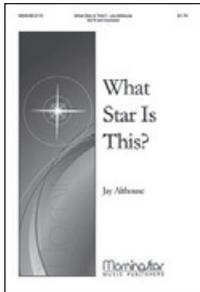
Based on Psalm 100, this is an attractive, cheerful piece for one- or two-part children’s choir. It is in an ABA form, the A being “Come, all the earth, and praise the Lord, Be joyful





and sing, for the Lord is good,” and the gentler B section being, “You know the Lord is God who made us, and we are his.” The A material returns with a fun Alleluia descant. Shaw gives kids a singable, solid piece for Thanksgiving or throughout the year. *KO*

ADULT CHOIR



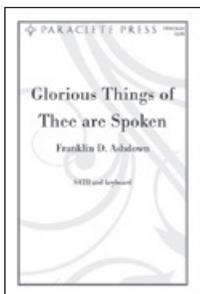
Jay Althouse.

What Star Is This?

SATB, keyboard.

MorningStar (MSM-50-2110), \$1.70.

Althouse has composed a lovely setting for an Epiphany text based on Charles Coffin’s “Quae stella sole pulchrior” from the *Paris Breviary*. The music with its basic rhythms is simple, quiet, and prayerful. However, fluctuations in tempo and dynamic as well as frequent ebbing and cresting of the melodic line will keep the interest of the listener. Harmonies are traditional, with some 2nd, 7th, and 9th intervals. A director and choir sensitive to the text and skilled at bringing forth musical nuance should help create a memorable worship experience inspired by the Holy Spirit at this most meaningful time of year. *CP*



Franklin D. Ashdown.

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken.

SATB, keyboard.

Paraclete (PPMO1129), \$2.90.

Ashdown begins his setting of Newton’s traditional hymn text with newly composed music subtly derived from the hymn tune NETTLETON. Written in the key of D-flat major, the phrases are gentle and fluid as they follow the arc of the poetry. The second stanza continues in this style but with yet another melodic line, creating unity through the repeating rhythmic patterns and overall mood. When the familiar hymn melody finally appears in stanza 3, its impact is all the more inspiring and affirmative. This anthem would be a beautiful option for All Saints Sunday or for general use on the themes of eternal life, heaven, or the church. *DR*

Augsburg Motet Book.

Ed. Zebulon Highben.

Various voicings.

Augsburg Fortress (ED018754), \$18.95.

Meant as a companion to other recent collections published by Augsburg, including the *Chantry Choirbook* and *Augsburg Choirbook*, the *Augsburg Motet Book* contains 36 pieces spanning seven centuries of motet writing. For the purposes of this anthology the editor used as his criterion the following definition: “relatively brief choral works on sacred texts, to be performed unaccompanied or with instrumental doubling.” In addition, the texts of the chosen works are mostly either biblical prose or biblically inspired prayer collects. This collection is a combination of some well-known works (e.g., Vaughan Williams’ “O Taste and See”) and lesser-known and newer works (e.g., Anne Krentz Organ’s “Love One Another”). While the rationale behind the ordering of the pieces is a bit unclear, the indexes allow the user to locate a piece by title or composer. Lectionary, topical, text source, and hymn tune indexes are also included.

All the works in this collection include English texts. Foreign-language motets are underlaid with both the original language and an English translation. The editor includes no editorial performance markings on the scores themselves, but the front matter contains a brief history of each piece as well as performance suggestions, a valuable addition to the collection.

Churches with extensive collections may find that they already own many of the older or better-known pieces, so they will need to weigh the usefulness of the collection against the price. Considerations also include being able to have newer pieces alongside older and more well-known pieces, all in a newly engraved and easy-to-read anthology. Churches looking to expand a smaller choral library may especially find this collection to be quite useful. The complete table of contents for this collection can be found on the publisher’s website (www.augsburgfortress.org). *AE*

Elaine Aune.

Free to Serve.

SATB, piano, with optional flute.
Augsburg Fortress (ED023380), \$1.80.

Aune gives us a beautiful setting of a new text by Herbert W. Chilstrom. The flowing melody, which features an interplay between G minor and G major, is introduced first in the women's voices. A brief two-part section that follows underlines the plea to "Untie me Lord" and leads seamlessly to the second stanza, set for SATB. This piece would likely be within the ability of most SATB church choirs. With its prayer to "untie me Lord, free to serve," this anthem is a good choice for services centering on stewardship or vocation. *AE*

Mark Bender.

How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds.

SAB, keyboard, flute.
Concordia (98-4156), \$1.60.

This fresh, new setting of the hymn text by John Newton is a good addition to the repertoire for SAB church choirs, suitable for youth and adult choirs. The dancelike 6/8 rhythm is punctuated by brief sections in 3/4 meter at the ends of phrases. The interplay between flute and piano as they trade off 16th-note passages adds to the dancelike feel, with a nod to the Baroque. The three stanzas are set for various forces. Stanza 1 is set for unison voices and stanza 2 for SAB. In stanza 3 the voices exchange phrases, with the altos singing phrase 1, baritones phrase 2, and sopranos phrase 3 before they all come together. The flute part is suitable for an advanced high-school player. *AE*

Michael Burkhardt.

O Come, Ye Servants of the Lord.

SATB, with optional instrumental trio (2 C instruments, bass instrument), keyboard, continuo.
Concordia (98-4136), \$45.00.

This anthology contains seven motets from the 16th and 17th centuries arranged by liturgical calendar (Tye, "O Come Ye Servants of the

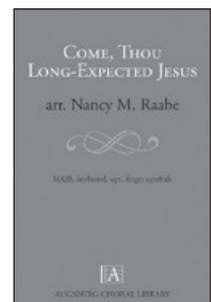
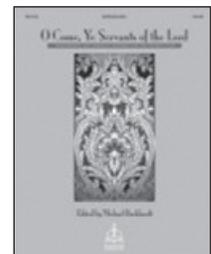
Lord"; Anonymous, "Rejoice in the Lord Always"; Praetorius, "To Us Is Born Emmanuel"; Schütz, "With Heart and Voice"; Farrant, "Lord, for Thy Tender Mercy's Sake"; Praetorius, "Today in Triumph Christ Arose"; Tye, "O Holy Spirit, Lord of Grace"). Motets all include English text along with the original language for foreign-language works. Burkhardt includes editorial markings as well as keyboard reductions. He provides continuo realizations where appropriate and has added optional instrumental parts for Michael Praetorius's "En natus est Emanuel" ("To Us Is Born Emmanuel").

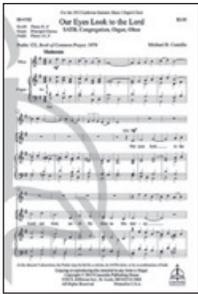
Many of the pieces in this edition have been published elsewhere, although some directors may find useful the editorial markings, performance suggestions, and brief historical notes. Some may also find the new engraving and, in some cases, new English singing translations worth the price. The audience for this collection will likely be church choirs who want to quickly expand their library of Renaissance and early Baroque motets. The price includes permission to reproduce the music. *AE*

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus.

Arr. Nancy M. Raabe.
S(A)B, keyboard, with optional finger cymbals.
Augsburg Fortress (ED023378), \$1.80.

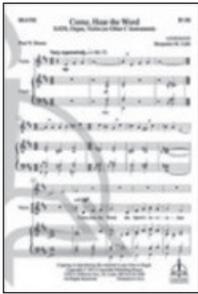
Sometimes simpler is better. Raabe's setting is a case in point. The fine Charles Wesley text has been set countless times, and this time is paired with the tune JEFFERSON from *Southern Harmony*, yet Raabe's setting sounds fresh. Her austere texture and slightly dissonant harmonies underscore the sense of longing that is Advent. Modal touches and finger cymbals give the piece an exotic touch. This music can be performed effectively by the smallest choir. It could also be a lifesaver for a larger choir with limited rehearsal time during the busy Advent/Christmas season. *KO*





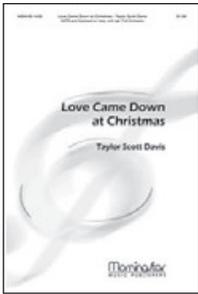
Michael D. Costello.
Our Eyes Look to the Lord.
 SATB, congregation, organ, oboe.
 Concordia (98-4152) \$2.00.

This setting of Psalm 123 is taken from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1979). The antiphon, written for the congregation, contains intervals that are easy for a congregation to sing. The oboe part, which is included, assists the congregation with the first statement of the antiphon. The psalm verses are easily accessible for the average church choir or small ensemble. Parts of the piece are unison or two-part, with four-part harmony used to bring extra emphasis to the text. The congregational insert is included and is reproducible for single uses. *MS*



Benjamin M. Culli.
Come, Hear the Word.
 SATB, organ, violin (or other C instrument).
 Concordia (98-4155), \$1.90.

Paul Hosea's text paints a glowing picture of heaven as glimpsed in Revelation. The imagery of the Bride, the city shining with precious stones, the river of life, and the everlasting feast are all there. Culli weds this beautiful text to an equally beautiful original hymn tune that he names LINDEMANN. The stanzas are punctuated by interludes featuring a lyrical violin part over the organ accompaniment. The violin also provides an obbligato over some of the stanzas, with the sopranos providing a descant on the last triumphant section, when we "Shall know in full the mystery of love." *Come, Hear the Word* would be a fine addition to worship for All Saints, at funerals, or the church triumphant. *KO*



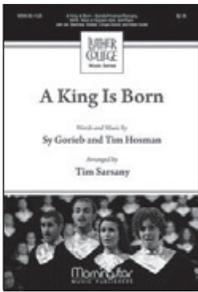
Taylor Scott Davis.
Love Came Down at Christmas.
 SATB, keyboard or harp, with optional full orchestra.
 MorningStar (MSM-50-1435), \$1.85.

Christina Rossetti's lovely poetry has been set to music plenty of times, but Davis' setting is fresh and original. He opens with repeated accompaniment figuration à la Phillip Glass,

weaving over it a striking harmonic tapestry with the choir singing on "ooh." The wordless material alternates with a delicate setting of the text, gradually building to *fortissimo* at the words "Love shall be our token, love be yours and love be mine," then tapering off for a quiet, moody ending. The keyboard part is really a harp part, complete with glissandi. These are difficult to pull off on the piano and impossible on the organ. A sensitive accompanist will have to do some creative adapting, maybe omitting some of this material. The piece is worth the effort: a new look at a beloved poem with a sound for our own time. *KO*

Sy Gorieb and Tim Hosman.
A King Is Born.
 Arr. Tim Sarsany.
 SATB, tenor or soprano solo, piano, with optional marimba, shaker, conga drums, and bass guitar.
 MorningStar (MSM-50-1125), \$2.35.

This exuberant calypso celebration will be sure to bring the joy of Christmas to all who hear it. Beginning with soloist and piano, then moving into a dialogue between the soloist and the choir, it requires a strong soloist and involves frequent syncopation, with three-part *divisi* in both men's and women's parts. A central a cappella section builds from one voice to the full choir before returning to the main theme in a new key, again with full instrumentation. Full score (MSM-50-1125A) and reproducible instrumental parts (MSM-50-1125B) are available separately. Also available for TTBB (MSM-50-1135). *LW*



Christian Gregor.
Hosanna!
 Arr. Jeffrey Blesch.
 SATB, children's choir, organ or piano.
 Concordia (98-4140), \$1.95.

This festive Palm Sunday anthem is based on an antiphonal Hosanna chant by Moravian composer Gregor (1723–1801) and weaves in a stanza from the favorite hymn "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" (ELLACOMBE). The phrases alternate



throughout between unison children's choir and SATB choir, and the children's choir is given the hymn tune to sing. Singers will enjoy the quick back-and-forth from choir to choir, and the part-writing is not difficult for the adults. For special effect you could position your choirs at opposite ends of the sanctuary or the aisle; you might also consider having the anthem sung while others process with palms. *DR*

David Halls.

Give Me the Wings of Faith.

Unison, with optional descant, keyboard.
Paraclete (PPMO1138), \$1.70.

A new setting brings freshness to the well-known Isaac Watts hymn text. The unison indication is misleading, as the anthem is set for mixed voices and includes a section of two-part writing for soprano and alto. Hall sets four stanzas in 3/4, the first two to the same expressive melody and both stanzas 3 and 4 to different melodies. The work begins with the lyrical phrase "How great their joys, How bright their glories be," which Hall uses as a refrain that appears at the end of each stanza. He provides variety in the use of forces as well as in key changes: stanza 1 for SA, stanza 2 for all voices, and stanza 3 for SA *divisi* are all in D major. The use of harmonies outside of D major add interest and help set up the move to B-flat major in stanza 4, sung in unison by TB, before moving back to D major at the refrain. The final refrain includes an optional descant. Medium-easy. Good for general use, All Saints. *AE*

Neil Harmon.

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day.

SATB, flute, handbells (3, 4, or 5 octaves), harp or piano.
MorningStar (MSM-50-1580), \$1.85.

The appeal of this setting of the beloved Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem is Harmon's charming new melody, along with the instrumental colors (you can listen to the complete version on the publisher's website, www.morningstarmusic.com). It would also be very effective with a set of 3-octave handbells

and piano, although the entire piece may be performed simply with piano accompaniment. An instrumental ritornello precedes the first three stanzas, which progress from unison to two-part women's voices to four-part a capella in the relative minor. The ritornello is presented once more, and then the final three stanzas build in excitement all the way to the end. This piece would work in a program of lessons and carols and could even be presented in the weeks after Christmas as a call for peace. The edition reviewed here includes piano and vocal parts. The full score as well as the instrumental parts must be purchased separately. *DR*

Gustav Holst.

O God beyond All Praising.

Arr. Hal H. Hopson.

SATB, organ, with optional handbells, brass quartet, timpani, assembly.
Augsburg Fortress (ED023388), \$1.95.

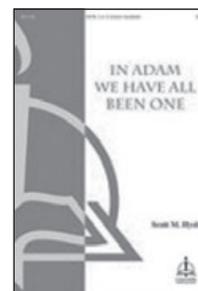
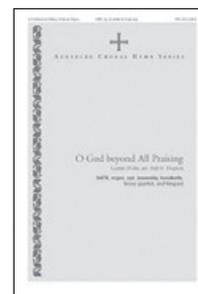
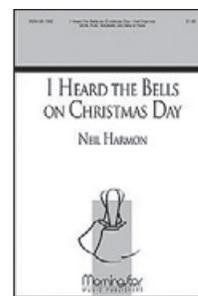
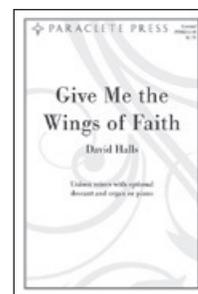
Hopson arranged the well-loved pairing of Holst's THAXTED and Michael Perry's hymn text "O God beyond All Praising" for choir and organ plus optional instruments. In the first stanza, phrases in unison alternate between women and men before breaking into four-part writing. A choral Alleluia interlude set as a three-part canon builds from *piano* to *forte*, leading to the second stanza for choir and congregation, with soprano descant. A four-part choral Alleluia concludes this festive anthem. The sensitive part-writing puts this anthem within the range of most SATB church choirs, while the optional instrumental parts and congregational participation help make this anthem a good choice for a festival service. Instrumental parts and full score available separately. Medium-easy. *AE*

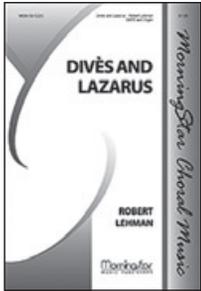
Scott M. Hyslop.

In Adam We Have All Been One.

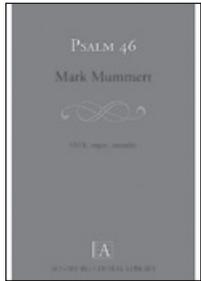
SATB, 3 or 5 octaves handbells.
Concordia (98-4142), \$1.60.

The anthem is based on a hymn found in many hymnals, using the tune THE SAINTS' DELIGHT. It begins with octaves being played by the





handbells using the singing bell technique. (A wooden dowel is rubbed around the outside rim of the bell in a circular motion, producing a “singing” effect.) This adds a mysterious and much-sustained effect to the setting. Much of the octavo is written in two-part (male/female) voicing. The fifth stanza is set in four-part harmony where the soprano doubles the tenor and the alto doubles the bass part. In the final stanza the handbells break away from the singing bell technique to a more active eighth-note rhythm. This reflects the excitement of the lyrics of that doxological stanza of praise. The anthem concludes quietly as it began, with a restatement of the first phrase of the hymn. This would be easily presented by a church choir and handbell choir of average ability but will present a new musical experience for both the ensembles and the worshipping congregation. *MS*

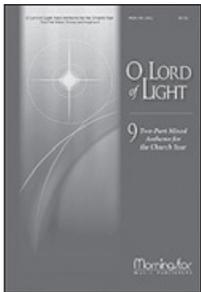


Robert Lehman.

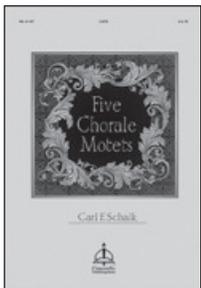
Divès and Lazarus.

SATB, organ.

MorningStar (MSM-50-5220), \$1.85.



Based on a traditional English carol, this striking anthem features newly composed music, with text rooted in the Gospel of Luke 16:19-31. Major and minor keys, tempo changes, and dynamics help paint a picture of these two biblical characters. Basic quarter- and eighth-note rhythms add a sense of forward motion, marching the characters toward their eternal destinies. The voice and organ parts are not particularly difficult. The organ part at times takes on a more independent role than mere support of the choir. As such, a confident, capable, well-balanced choir will bring out the best in this stirring piece of music. *CP*

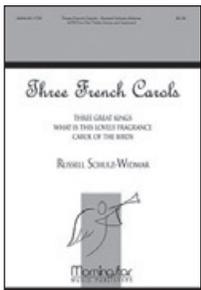


Mark Mummert.

Psalms 46.

SATB, organ, assembly.

Augsburg Fortress (ED023391), \$2.25.



This setting has a memorable yet easy refrain for the assembly. The choral settings of the psalm verses are very musical, making sensitive

use of dynamics, rhythmic figures, and vocal lines, which bring the text to life. The setting is written in D-flat major and uses a variety of mixed meters. The quarter note does remain constant throughout, which will help with the meter changes. The vocal range is kept very comfortable for the outer voices. There is a reproducible congregational insert page included on the octavo. *MS*

O Lord of Light: 9 Two-Part Mixed Anthems for the Church Year.

Two-part mixed voices, keyboard.

MorningStar (MSM-55-9930), \$8.50

This collection, commissioned by Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chicago, contains music by nine different composers, providing quality two-part, mixed-voice music for the liturgical seasons of the church year. Accompaniments have been purposely kept to either piano or organ, although options are provided for some instrumentation; vocal ranges are moderate and interesting. Five of the nine anthems are based on hymn tunes. Each of the pieces in this collection is available as a separately printed octavo and as a downloadable product on the publisher’s website (www.morningstarmusic.com). *JG*

Carl F. Schalk.

Five Chorale Motets.

SATB.

Concordia (98-4147), \$4.75.

The five works in this collection are all based on 16th- or 17th-century German chorale tunes: “Christ Is Arisen” (CHRIST IST ERSTANDEN), “From Depths of Woe” (AUS TIEFER NOT), “Grant Peace, We Pray, in Mercy, Lord” (VERLEIH UNS FREIDEN), “If God Himself Be for Me” (IST GOTT FÜR MICH), and “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright” (WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET). All use English texts and are meant to be sung unaccompanied. The motets evoke the style of Renaissance motets in their use of imitative polyphony. Most pieces are for SATB choir, although there are brief *divisi* passages. The piano reduction is a practical feature. This is a useful addition for

church choirs who can sing unaccompanied with independent voice parts. The collection includes anthems appropriate throughout the church year (Epiphany, Lent, Easter). The prayerful piece “Grant Peace, We Pray, in Mercy, Lord” was written in commemoration of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. *AE*

Russell Schulz-Widmar.

Three French Carols.

SATB, two-part treble voices, keyboard.

MorningStar (MSM-50-1730), \$2.35.

Schulz-Widmar has arranged three well-crafted settings for the Advent and Christmas seasons: *Three Great Kings* (SATB), *What Is This Lovely Fragrance* (two-part treble), and *Carol of the Birds* (SATB). The vocal parts could be easily learned by most church choirs in a couple of rehearsals. Of the three, *Carol of the Birds* requires fast, crackling diction and will take more time to prepare. *What Is This Lovely Fragrance* is simple enough that it could be performed by most children’s choirs. *Three Great Kings* is also suitable for Epiphany. All three pieces contain short sections for solo voices or small groups. This set provides an affordable way of getting three high-quality arrangements. *KO*

Stanford Scriven.

When Jordan Hushed His Waters Still.

SATB *divisi* a cappella.

MorningStar (MSM-50-1117), \$1.85.

This reflective piece beautifully sets a 19th-century Christmas text by Thomas Campbell and A. H. Palmer. Beginning with three-part women’s voices followed by three- or four-part men’s voices, the full choir enters for stanza 3, building to a climax in the middle of stanza 4 when “the joys of nature rise again.” A quieter ending follows. Scriven utilizes his lovely original melody throughout, varying the setting to express the text and achieve musical interest. The piece is moderately difficult due to frequent *divisi* and the a cappella texture. *LW*

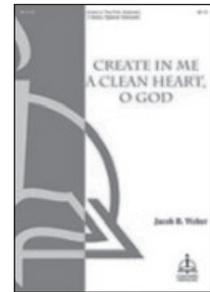
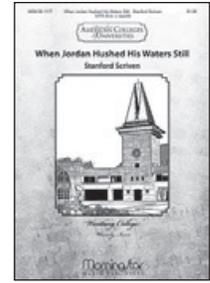
Jacob B. Weber.

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God.

Unison or two-part voices, keyboard, 2 violins, with optional violoncello.

Concordia (98-4133), \$2.10.

What a blast of nostalgia for Lutherans brought up with the old communion liturgy on page 15 of *The Lutheran Hymnal*! Jacob Weber has cleverly arranged the tune with Baroque-style ritornello material inserted between its familiar phrases. This piece would be sung effectively by a treble choir, since the lower part may be muddy if sung down an octave lower by men in a two-part mixed choir. The violin parts are not doubled in the accompaniment, so they may not be considered optional. Furthermore, the violin parts are very high, so other C instruments would probably not be a satisfactory substitute. Practical considerations aside, the music is very successful. If there is a criticism, it is that the piece feels short. One wants the Baroque dance to go on and on! *KO*



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David Bielenberg

“IS YOUR SERVICE TRADITIONAL OR CONTEMPORARY?” How many times have we all heard that question? Those two words have been used to try to describe various worship styles and practices—not to mention musical styles—for nearly a half century now. The question is misleading and tiresome.

This is why Kent Burreson’s article is so interesting. His argument that we are beyond those questions in the second decade of the 21st century is intriguing. “Worship that shapes disciples who trust and love God and love their world is worship that has moved beyond style.” Whatever your musical ministry is or is called, let us all be practitioners of that kind of worship.

Ron Rienstra’s article about technology in worship, which asserts that technology should augment or support our worship rather than be a central focus, speaks a truth we all know but sometimes forget. It can be a thin line at times, and we need to be vigilant about our purpose in worship. We are reminded that the effect of using technology may not always be what we had in mind. While we have come to easily welcome technology (such as the pipe organ to support assembly singing, or microphones to amplify the voice of a lay reader or preacher so that all can hear the word of God), newer technologies still warrant careful attention. We are wise to examine our worship practice and technological advances for how they support the central focus of the gospel.

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us . . . full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This passage from the Gospel of John came to mind after reading “Touch Me and See: A Resurrection of the Body in the Church?”

by Samuel Torvend. This incarnation of God in our midst is what we anticipate in this season of Advent in both the remembrance of the birth of Jesus and the reminder that he was and is human. “Touch me and see,” Jesus told doubting Thomas (Luke 24:39). Both the baby born in Bethlehem and the risen Christ are flesh and blood, just like us. This bodily reality of God infuses our worship in our gestures, actions, and song. It is a gift of faith that urges us to believe the Gospel accounts of God’s physical presence and the promise of that presence in worship. It is true. Our music ministry is an experience of the holy.

“Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending” (ELW 435, LSB 336, LBW 27, CW 29) is one of my favorite Advent hymns. Sung in our worship, the hymn speaks of that glorious day to come even as it is coming into our midst in worship.

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
once for our salvation slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
join to sing the glad refrain:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Christ the Lord
returns to reign. (ELW words)

May your Advent be a time of hopeful anticipation for the coming of the Word made flesh.



2014

REGIONAL CONFERENCES



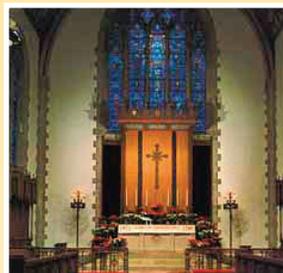
Region 1 Conference July 14–16, 2014

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