Abstract

"SINGING A COMMON SONG: HYMNAL REVISION IN A LITURGICAL, CONTEMPORARY, AND ECUMENICAL CONTEXT"

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Under the direction of Professor Kenneth Miller

This thesis addresses the topic of hymnal revision in the context of liturgical churches by proposing a methodology that takes into account both historical developments in the field of hymnology and recent concerns regarding the Liturgical Movement and theological considerations that have arisen in the last few decades. The text is structured in two parts: Part 1 summarizes some key points of the History of hymns in the Church and helps identify some patterns of Tradition and movements of reform throughout the centuries. Part 2 proposes, in practical terms, a methodology and a structure for developing and/or revising hymnals in the context of ecumenically minded, contemporary, liturgical churches.
SINGING A COMMON SONG: HYMNAL REVISION IN A LITURGICAL, CONTEMPORARY, AND ECUMENICAL CONTEXT

by

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To God be the glory. Amen.
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INTRODUCTION: NEW HYMNALS FOR CHURCH RENEWAL

Throughout the 20th century, sacred music in a wider context has heavily changed. There was a wave of liturgical renewal that affected most churches, allowing them to flourish in terms of what kind of music was composed and sung in church environments. New songs were composed, taking into account local ethnomusicological approaches, lyrics that tackled concepts such as promoting peace and justice and a whole missiological approach that was based on the Missio Dei. At the same time, a set of traditional hymns persists as part of the affective memory of the faithful, promoting theological and liturgical continuity with earlier generations.

There is a clear demand for conversations on hymnal revision that take into account several principles that are not often addressed in an integrated way. Such principles include, but are not limited to:

1) An ecumenically-minded development, not only by choosing pieces that belong to a wider tradition that encompasses different faith communities but also in terms of publishing resources that could be approved, used and validated by different church bodies for common use.

2) Creatively merging ancient and contemporary worship songs, paying attention to new, enculturated lyrics and tunes but also to older hymns that, despite having foreign roots, have been fully embraced by worshipping communities and creatively claimed as their own.

3) Variability in terms of musical arrangements, so all hymns (both “contemporary” and “traditional”) can be sung and performed in any church community, regardless of size and availability of an organist.

4) Language revision, in order to contemplate manifold ways of referring to God and making sure the people of God are fully represented, regardless of gender.
In this thesis, I propose some key elements that should be taken into consideration by church communities, liturgical commissions and related ecclesial bodies when addressing hymnal revision for a 21st century, mission-oriented church. The first part covers a brief history of hymnody in the life of the church and the challenges that lay ahead, in order to characterize the scenario which is dealt with by contemporary liturgists and church musicians. Finally, part two addresses some practical pointers that should be taken into consideration when revising hymnals in a contemporary context, including a tentative structure for a novel hymnal which could be embraced by any liturgical church.
PART I.

CHURCH MUSIC THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES AND THE CHALLENGES THAT LAY AHEAD
Chapter 1

An Emerging Tradition: Hymnody from the Dawn of Christendom until the Middle Ages

The need for Music in people’s lives

Music has been part of the human experience for centuries. As both an artistic and social phenomenon, it has been present in humans’ ordinary lives. It tells and retells stories, and finds ways of binding groups of people together, through sounds and lyrics that are memorized, passed through generations and used as a sort of social cement that unifies a culture through bonds that go beyond the “concrete.” In fact, music is a totally abstract construct; it is ephemeral when played or sung; it cannot be touched; it does not stand as a sculpture or painting. It is part of immemorial patrimony that needs ears, memory, and hope (and, sometimes recordings and musical notation) to remain eternal and relevant.

Music’s emotive power can be directly related to human experience,¹ and to the integration of cognitive experiences.² It thus contributes to the development of meaning and provides another kind of vernacular (which both complements and reinforces spoken/written language) that makes the subtleties of human imagination possible.

Contemporary society provides a plethora of different musical styles that define different “tribes” and provide opportunities for people with different tastes to gather around a specific “style” and find meaning in the message it conveys. However, for most of the history of humankind, music was intrinsic to a rather uniform cultural experience. It was fully functional,


and helped mark seasons, feasts, and traditions. Despite the variety of trends and styles in contemporary music, it is possible to discern this social, communitarian aspect of it even in our midst. Some songs have retained their power in terms of binding groups of people together: birthday songs, lullabies, and wedding tunes are some examples of music that has a quasi-universal meaning to a certain cultural group.

Sacred music, as the name implies, is music set apart for religious purposes. With a few notable exceptions, most religious movements (both Christian and non-Christian) have relied on some sort of music to bind the faithful together, and to make community. Sacred music makes sense to the faithful when it is able to provide intimacy, relate sounds, bodies and psyches and create narratives. In that regard, music can become an outward sign of a "system of communication whereby [humans] may establish contact with each other and with the world of the spirit." It provides another dimension to the human experience.

Christian music that is effective in bringing people together and weaving them with the ground of their being needs to possess these qualities. Throughout its history, it has drawn from different surrounding contexts to tell the Gospel narrative, mark seasons and feasts and bring the faithful together. When one looks into the past and studies the history of Christian music, it is necessary not to examine it as an outdated, dead tradition, but to find in its essence the key elements that kept the faith and helped its transmission throughout the centuries. Westermeyer defines five key elements intrinsic to church music throughout the centuries that have found their

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3 For example, among Christians, Quakers and some religious orders often resort to silence, and do not adopt any kind of music in their worship.


5 Blacking, "The Value of Music in Human Experience," 70-71.
locus and make sense in the context of a worshipping community: binding together, memory, joy, lament, and proclamation. Music gathers people in worship, helps them memorize the history of salvation, expresses both joy and lament, and serves as a very special form of interpreting a text and proclaiming it. These key elements are the ones which should orient one’s understanding of the Christian music tradition in the last two millennia: what was essential and what went wrong.

The roots of Christian music in ancient Israel

The Old Testament is filled with references to worship and singing. The Song of Miriam was a celebratory proclamation of the people of God’s victorious escape from Egypt. It immediately followed a call to worship by Moses, who, according to Jewish tradition, led the Hebrews in worshipful singing of God’s praises several times. The book of Genesis contains a mythological account of the first musician, Jubal, whose occupation is paralleled with other important tasks of a rural community, such as shepherding. To the ancients, music was as intrinsic to life as raising cattle.

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7 Exodus 15:20-21

8 Exodus 15:1

9 For example, in Numbers 21:17 and Deuteronomy 31:30

10 Genesis 4:21
Perhaps echoing the Song of Miriam, Deborah celebrated her people’s victory with music. 11 Other judges and kings used worship music in key moments of their people’s history. 12 The era of David, however, points out to an ever-growing usage of music for worship in ancient Israel. By then, liturgical music managed to fully cover its functions as a vehicle for uniting the people of God, celebrating their victories and expressing their aspirations, frustrations and desires. 13 A liturgical caste, called the Levites, was in charge of conducting official worship, which achieved magnificent proportions. 1 Chronicles 25, for example, mentions a temple choir and orchestra that is composed of several thousand people, divided into twenty-four groups, trained by Asaph’s sons. It is debatable if Levites were as rich, powerful and central to Israel as it may be inferred from some biblical texts. This grandeur of Levite worship might be a later addition by the editor of Chronicles. 14 Nonetheless, it is impossible to deny that a viable musical development was in place back then.

For Christians, the Psalms were the greatest contribution of Old Testament cultures. They were, in fact, the first organized hymnal that has been known to those who follow the Judeo-Christian tradition. “Hebrews sang in unison without need of harmony or counterpoint. The effectiveness of the music depended on the number of singers and the size of the participating orchestra … [which] played instrumental interludes indicated by the word selah (louder playing or forte).” 15

11 Judges 5:1-13

12 For example, Joshua 6:4, Judges 11:34, 1 Samuel 16:23 and 1 Samuel 18:6

13 For example, 1 Chronicles 15:22, 1 Chronicles 25:1-3, II Chronicles 23:18 and so on…

14 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 14

Psalms were truly meant to be sung, a fact that can be obviously inferred from biblical texts (in fact, Lockyer points out that references to music and singing in the Bible outnumber references to prayer almost two to one).\(^{16}\) Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine and Ambrose, among many other early church fathers, were keen to emphasize the importance of Psalms as sung worship, thus indicating they belonged to a received tradition.

Psalms have been used in Christian worship throughout the centuries, but in many circumstances, their usage as music has been put aside. However, they possess all characteristics of celebratory music that makes community, eschatologically recalls our salvation history, proclaims God’s love and mercy, and expresses human feelings of joy and lament. The loss of their original tunes did not (and should not) stop the Church from trying to express them according to music that was culturally significant in different places and at different times of the Church’s history. But as important as the recovery of psalms as sung music in our churches is the fact that they encapsulate the original essence of sacred Christian music, and therefore, should be used as a springboard for any further endeavor in terms of hymnology.

**Music in the Early Church**

The New Testament is not as prolific as the Old Testament in terms of references to a musical tradition among first Christians. However, several references to Christian hymns can be found there.

First of all, it is reasonable to infer that early believers continued to attend the temple and sing psalms and Old Testament canticles (such as the song of Moses and the song of Deborah)

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., 6.
according to the Levitical tradition. On top of that, several doxologies appear throughout the New Testament, interspersed with other texts, which indicates that they were often proclaimed as conclusions to prayer, music, or both. It is not unlikely, also, to infer that they were sung as well.

Another tradition that emerges from early Christian communities is the adoption of some of their texts that possessed a psalm-like quality as canticles. Westermeyer recalls six relevant canticles that have become commonplace in the Church’s worship: the Benedictus, the Magnificat, the Gloria in Excelsis, the Nunc Dimittis, the Dignus Est and the Te Deum. Of all six, four are purely scriptural, with lyrics that certainly resonate Old Testament psalms and canticles in their fulness. The Gloria in Excelsis and the Te Deum are not. In common, all of them stand in line with the Jewish tradition of praise and worship.

From this early tradition of psalms, canticles and doxologies emerges some of the service music we currently know, which includes hymns such as the Phos Hilaron and service music such as the Trisagion, the Kyrie, the Sursum Corda and the Sanctus. At times, Christians would

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17 Acts 2:46

18 For example, variations of “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” appear in 2 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 11:31, and 1 Peter 4:11. Variations of “To God be the glory forever” appear in Romans 11:33-36, Romans 16:25-27, Galatians 1:4-5, Ephesians 3:20-21, 1 Timothy 1:17, 1 Timothy 6:15-16, 2 Timothy 4:18, Hebrews 13:20-21, 1 Peter 4:11, 1 Peter 5:11, Jude 1:24-25, and Revelation 1:5-6. The repetition of such patterns indicates that—at least—such verses were constantly recited by the faithful and, at a time when a strong Jewish musical tradition persisted, it is not too far-fetched to assume they were at least sung at times.

19 Luke 1:68-79

20 Luke 1:46-55

21 Luke 2:29-32

22 An amalgamation of different verses from Revelation, which always includes some verses taken from chapter 5 and might include other verses from chapters 4, 9, 13, 15, and 19 (depending on the source)

23 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 46
gather in worship and sing with one voice (Kyrie); at times, they would recall the history of salvation (Nunc DIMITis); at times, they would burst in joy and praise (Gloria in Excelsis); at times, they would beg for God’s mercy (Trisagion) and at times, they would proclaim God’s justice (Magnificat). They would also continue singing the psalms and canticles from the Old Testament, and create new hymns that matched their quality and made references to their messiah, Jesus.

There is not much evidence from contemporary sources on how they managed to sing those hymns, doxologies, psalms and canticles. A letter from Gregory the Great to Bishop John of Syracuse indicates, for example, that the Greeks sang Kyries in unison, as opposed to the Romans, who adopted a responsorial pattern.24 Both Quasten25 and Westermeyer26 suggest that early Christians sang in unison, based on writings of the early fathers that mention the harmony of all Christians as the prefiguration of the Kingdom of God. Ignatius of Antioch, for example, suggested Christians should “become a choir, that being harmonious in love, and taking up the song of God in unison, you may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ.”27 Clement of Alexandria, likewise, used a similar figure of speech by saying that “the union of many in one, issuing in the production of divine harmony out of a medley of sounds and division, becomes one symphony following one choir-leader and teacher, the Word, reaching and


26 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 59-66

resting in the same truth, and crying Abba, Father.”28 It is not clear if singing happened in true polyphony or in monophony (which becomes a simple form of polyphony if one realizes women, men and children sing the same melody at different octaves). It is clear, however, that congregational singing had a clearly developed theological understanding. The people of God, albeit from many different nations and social backgrounds, gathered in worship and sang together, as active participants of the coming Kingdom.

**Early restrictions**

Early Christianity drew much more from synagogues, where most singing was unaccompanied, than from the temple of Jerusalem in terms of proportions in worship. Therefore, it did not adopt much of the grandeur the Levitical class could provide at the temple. The fact that it also suffered persecution from early on probably led to a virtual impossibility of noisy public worship. Musical instruments, clapping and dancing had to be absent from the experience of early Christian worship in most places where Christians were actively persecuted. However, on top of it, the writings of some fathers strongly discourage the use of musical instruments in Christian worship, for a variety of reasons.

As Christianity evolved from a sect of Judaism into a religion that embraced gentiles of many cultural backgrounds, one challenge that seemed to be crucial for some was not to adopt “the ways of the world,” which included the kind of music that Greco-Roman culture adopted for private celebrations and public acts of worship. Without the temple of Jerusalem as a viable reference of worshipping God through musical instruments, they soon became linked with the

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ways non-Christians worshipped their gods, and ended up being shunned from worship.

Tertullian, for example, was very clear in terms of what music for Christians should be: it should be confined to psalms and hymns, sung *a cappella* without the extravagance of pagan banquets and the idolatry of pagan worship (which also implies that dancing was forbidden).\(^\text{29}\) Clement of Alexandria also refers to the excesses of dancing, clapping and loud instruments as idolatrous and not fit for Christian worship.\(^\text{30}\) He also went to great lengths to allegorize Old Testament references to musical instruments, in true Alexandrian fashion. To him, the trumpet, the psaltery, the cithara and the tympanum were metaphors to parts of the human body and to the chorus of the people of God.\(^\text{31}\) Basil the Great explicitly referred to two different kinds of music: vocal music and instrumental music. To him, vocal music was the only one that was fit for Christian worship, for it brought together the sounds of all people into a single, unified voice.\(^\text{32}\) John Chrysostom, who saw the theater and all sorts of Roman festive celebrations as immoral, believed Christian music should not have anything in common with them: another argument for unaccompanied singing. His explanation for Psalm 150, for example, was that the usage of musical instruments there was a mere “concession to weakness” which should not be the Christian high standard.\(^\text{33}\)

For similar reasons, women became more and more excluded from worship. The association of female voices with pagan cults and the laxity of theater and music was a strong

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\(^{30}\) Stapert, *A New Song for an Old World*, 47-50

\(^{31}\) Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, 74

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 69-70

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 71-74.
argument against them, even if some fathers, like Ambrose, emphasized the importance of singing for both sexes.\textsuperscript{34} Their exclusion, however, eventually prevailed. With the need for high pitched voices, boy choirs start to appear. Egeria is thought to be the first person to mention their existence; she also mentions the duties of cantors.\textsuperscript{35} By the time Christiarity had become a public, state-endorsed religion in many parts of the world, the development of castes of church musicians gradually led to the exclusion of most of the congregation from actually singing the liturgy.

Despite these caveats, early fathers unashamedly, and almost uniformly, defended the adoption of psalms and hymns in worship. In their mindset, they were to propose a new kind of music: one that praises God. Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine, for example, were eloquent in praising those Christians who sang psalms and hymns daily.\textsuperscript{36} Psalms, in that regard, had an even more appealing characteristic: they linked Christian worship with a centuries-old received tradition, which, at that point, was already starting to be seen as scriptural.

Hymns, on the other hand, were capable of encapsulating some of the novel theological concepts which were being developed by the Church. They could be trinitarian in nature – something that psalms were not, and tackle some of the latest developments on the nature of Christ. Not surprisingly, there were several hymns attributed to church fathers – some of which endure to this day. Initially, they found much more ground in the East, where they constituted a very wide repertoire. In the West, Ambrose is thought to have been a very prolific hymn writer,

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 78.

\textsuperscript{35} Quasten and Ramsey, \textit{Music & Worship in Pagan & Christian Antiquity}, 89

\textsuperscript{36} Stapert, \textit{A New Song for an Old World}, 149-150
even if only four hymns can be unquestionably attributed to him. Those were mentioned in the writings of Augustine, who also wrote extensively on the nature of music. His treatise De Musica is a collection of six books which focus on the nature of music and poetry, and provide a concluding theological reflection on the subject. His thought also reflected the spirit of his time, with thoughts wavering between being in awe with the beauty of sung church music and expressing fear of it being a mere gratification of the senses (which would be the case with secular music).

The development of chant

A natural evolution of unaccompanied sung music was the development of chant, which is exclusively vocal, melodic and does not have any harmony. Over the course of the centuries, different styles of chant evolved, based on emerging Church traditions such as Byzantine, Slavonic, Coptic, Gregorian, Old Roman, Ambrosian, Mozarabic, just to name a few. The development of chant occurred as a response to a simple demand: if Christian people are to sing a cappella and use as references (both for singing and for composing new hymns) the psalms and canticles found in scripture, there must be a simple way of easily adapting those texts to simple melodies which fit in any liturgical text.

Chant originally possessed a simple, elegant quality. It did not demand much in terms of voice range, and adapted easily to most psalms, canticles and hymns composed throughout the

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37 Those hymns are: Aeterna rerum Conditor, Deus Creator omnium, Iam surgit hora tertia, and Intende qui Regis Israel
38 Stapert, A New Song for an Old World, 172
39 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 88-89.
first twelve or so centuries of Christian history. At the same time, with the emergence of chant, early forms of musical notation were developed, which helped retain some tunes which are sung to this day, even if the rhythmic nature of original chant is still highly debatable.40

Thanks to the development of chant, musical notation was reinvented and it was possible to compose and write music for later generations. Musical notation had existed in Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Greece and in other civilizations, but its knowledge had been lost by the time Isidore of Seville wrote about music, defining it as something that is "impressed on the memory."41 Around the 9th Century, the Western and the Eastern halves of Christianity had already started developing their own notations, which evolved throughout the Middle Ages (see figures 1 and 2).

Chant basically covered entire Psalters, with sung psalms being an integral part of daily offices; sung parts and responses; the ordinary of the Mass (Kyrie Eleison, Gloria in Excelsis, sometimes the Credo, the Sanctus-Benedictus and the Agnus Dei); plus other propers such as introits, graduals, tracts, alleluias, offertory and communion sentences – often derived from scriptural references. These were organized into liturgical books, such as sacramentaries and missals. These were, to a certain degree, precursors to what we currently understand as hymnals. However, they contained more than music, and incorporated other liturgical texts.

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40 For example, Westermeyer argues that a lot of what we currently understand as chant was invariably derived from the methods developed in 19th Century Solesmes, which leaves some level of uncertainty. See Ibid., 97.

41 Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, Music in the Western World: a History in Documents (Schirmer Books, 1984), 34
Fig. 1. The evolution of Western chant notation: on the left, 11th Century chant notation used for services at Winchester Cathedral; on the right, how it evolved into more complex notation, which already resembles, in some aspects, contemporary musical notation. Square notation is still a standard in modern chantbooks.

Winchester Troper, MS 473, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

*Salvator Mundi*, page from an Illuminated Antiphonary, c. 1425-1450, Minneapolis Institute of Art
Fig. 2. The evolution of Byzantine chant notation: on the left, a Gospel lectionary with ekphonic notation (9th Century); on the right, more complex Middle Byzantine notation, which allowed for longer melismatic chants. The latter remained in use until the 19th Century, when liturgical reforms introduced Chrysanthine notation, which is still used
Arundel MS 547, British Library
Sloane MS 4087, f007r, British Library

Throughout the Middle Ages, the nature of chant became more and more elaborate. By the end of the first millennium AD, all singing in most places was done by a Schola Cantorum, thereby eliminating any possibility of congregational singing. By the end of the Carolingian era, chant had become highly complex and artistic.

42 Congregational singing, especially of the shorter pieces of the ordinary of the mass, seems to have persisted in certain pockets of the Christian world.
For the Western Church, the High Middle Ages brought an increase of such complexity. At a point theological arguments both against polyphony and the use of musical instruments belonged to a distant past, new developments brought back such innovations to the world of sacred music. The earliest form of polyphony was called organum, which was done by singing in parallel fifths or fourths. What came to be later called the Ars Nova consisted of a gradual separation of individual lines one from another, and became fashionable from the 13th century and beyond.\(^43\) It provided a fruitful ground for the development of Renaissance polyphony a few centuries later.

Concomitantly, pipe organs, which in their earliest form were known since Ancient Greece, were gradually introduced to Western church music, becoming the main instrument for Christian worship for centuries. On one hand, the prohibition against instruments was no longer valid. On the other hand, organs monopolized much of the Western Church and, for a long period of time, were quasi-canonized by many church communities as the ideal instrument for sacred music.

It is important, however, to mention that on the eve of the Reformation (and of the Counter-Reformation), church music in the West had achieved a level of extravagance never seen before.\(^44\) This was perceived by some as something that detracted from the quality of true worship,\(^45\) and a symptom of the scandalous nature of the Roman Catholic Church at that point.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 113-116


\(^{45}\) For example, Erasmus, one of the most influential humanist scholars, often expressed his dislike of the church music of his time: “when the sacred words are obscured by the unnatural roar of voices ... when silly human compositions take the place of the sacred, when one hears nothing in church but an incessant chanting, here too the cord begins to be in danger.” For example, see Ep 2206:97-109 and Ep 1756:107-116.
Folk music did not stop, however. It survived outside of Church buildings and retained a very distinct devotional quality. In the Middle Ages, carols and other religious songs, which could be found in either Latin (albeit not rarely macaronic Latin) or in one of the many vernaculars, were increasingly popular among ordinary Christians.

**Lessons to be learned**

It is beyond the scope of this text to provide a detailed coverage of church music from its beginnings until the High Middle Ages. However, in terms of its development, some key points are worth reemphasizing.

- Psalms are the basis upon which most of hurch music was developed. They were the original hymns our Hebrew ancestors of faith composed and encapsulate all main aspects of human relationships towards the divine: they bind the faithful together in worship, they help the people of God remember who they are, they allow worshippers to express a variety of feelings towards God (ranging from joy to sorrow) and they are proclamatory.

- Early Christian music stems from both the synagogue and the temple traditions. The first one was based on unaccompanied unison singing, as opposed to the second one, which relied on professional musicians, musical instruments and a sense of grandeur. Eventually, the first one prevailed, and set the tone for most of the first millennium AD.

- It is possible to identify a clear theology of congregational singing in the writings of some church fathers. Singing together was eschatologically linked with being part of the Body of Christ.
- For manifold reasons, however, church music became more and more exclusionary. Musical instruments were removed from worship, because they were being used in profane settings. Women were discouraged from singing, because female choirs were still regarded as an aspect of pagan worship. The (male) congregation gradually lost its roles in worship, when cantors and choirs took over most of the singing with musical settings that were more and more elaborate.

- In the West, the organ eventually found its way as an acceptable musical instrument for worship, but at the exclusion of most others.

- Throughout these times, hymn writers and composers continued to produce music that employed the celebratory characteristics of psalms and early canticles. Some of those hymns remain to this day.

- Sacramentaries and missals, which contained hymns with proper musical notation, were the precursors to contemporary hymnals.

- While it is possible to say that not all was lost (and, in fact, some marvelous pieces of church music come from these centuries), at the end of the Middle Ages, hymnody had lost any traces of congregational worship.

These few points summarize some of the main characteristics of such a long period of time. They help identify what the good essence of tradition is, and what should be seen as wrong moves to be avoided by the current generation. In essence, early Christians, not long after the Paschal mystery, tried to set apart their worship music from the surrounding culture so intensely that it eventually lost its capacity of being in conversation with different cultures, and with Christians in general – who are invariably embedded in a specific cultural setting. The emergence of carols in the Middle Ages, for example, is a clear example of religious music that
stems from popular culture, and suits the purposes psalms (which, at that point, were being sung in melismatic Latin) were once meant to fulfill.
Chapter 2

Hymnals as we currently know them: the Reformation and evolutions in church music until the 19th century

Winds of Change

The movement which we now know as the Protestant Reformation brought integral changes to Western Christendom (and to Christendom in general). It was the apex of several tensions and calls for reform coming from different corners of the Christian world in the centuries that preceded Luther’s 95 theses. Religious orders, pre-reformers and humanist thinkers had been challenging some aspects of theology, worship and Christian life during the High Middle Ages, but the sweeping winds of reform that came after Luther influenced the Church in a way not seen before.

Some church historians have described the Protestant Reformation by focusing on some central theological points, such as justification by faith alone, the priesthood of all believers and quarrels among reformers over issues such as double predestination and the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. However, church music was also heavily impacted by the Reformation. On one hand, the development of the printing press made it possible for churches to develop hymnbooks and quickly print copies of them. What we currently understand as a hymnal has its roots in the Protestant Reformation.

Also, in many places hymns started to be offered in the language of the people, and were meant to be sung by all the faithful (or, at least, by a wider choir). In a certain way, some key elements that characterized early church music were retaken centuries later, with the advent of the Reformation.
These new developments in church music set the pace for changes that eventually affected most Christian confessions, including those – such as the Roman Catholic Church – that went beyond Protestant and Reformed churches. They also paved the way for further changes and for a golden era of hymn writing that took place throughout most of the 19th century.

Such developments in terms of church music were, however, very different from confession to confession, and reflected the developing theologies they embraced. For example, Zwingli was opposed to any kind of music in worship, some Anabaptists were not so keen on embracing it either, and Quakers continue worshipping in silence to this day. It is possible, however, to identify a very strong Lutheran musical tradition, a distinct Reformed contribution, Anglican peculiarities and Roman Catholic reactions to what Protestants were doing in terms of sacred music. Pietism, revivals and other later movements were also extremely influential on defining musical trends for the Church Catholic. All of the aforementioned confessions produced hymnals throughout these centuries. Hence the need to briefly examine their musical approaches and understand the unique contributions they had to offer.

**Luther and Music**

Martin Luther was very likely the most enthusiastic of the reformers when it comes to church music. Westermeyer summarizes his approach to music in six points:

1. He sought advice from and surrounded himself with able musicians. ... The first “hymnal” prepared under Luther's guidance was edited by [Johann] Walter; and Georg Rhau, the cantor from Leipzig, came to work with Luther at Wittenberg as a music publisher.
2. Luther attempted to enlist the support of the civil authorities on behalf of music and musicians.

...
3. Luther was a discriminating judge of music who understood polyphony, was delighted with it and ... had a high regard for Josquin [des Prez] who was the finest composer of his day.
4. Luther was an able amateur musician. ... He also had ability as a composer. ... [T]he hymn tunes he wrote have proven to be of exceptional quality.
5. Luther regarded music as integral to a child’s education and to the education of teachers and ministers.

... 6. Music often invigorated Luther.

Luther recalled in his theology some of the key elements that characterize the essence of the Christian tradition of music. He saw it as a gift of God’s creation,\textsuperscript{46} and, possibly, as a parallel to preaching.\textsuperscript{47} In that regard, it was clearly to him a means of proclamation. The works he commissioned included Mass settings (including the well-known \textit{Deutsche Messe}), chant, new hymn tunes, contrafacta and folk songs.\textsuperscript{48} He was not opposed to musical instruments, nor to instrumental music.\textsuperscript{49} Finally, he was able to see, in the culture that surrounded him, elements that could influence the production of music for sacred use, from Gregorian chant to medieval vernacular hymns and folk music.

\textsuperscript{46} Robin A. Leaver, "Luther on Music," \textit{Lutheran Quarterly} Volume XX (2006), 130

\textsuperscript{47} Westermeyer, \textit{Te Deum: the Church and Music}, 147-149


\textsuperscript{49} Leaver, “Luther on Music,” 132
Ein Christenlichts lied Doctoris
Martini Luthers/die unangrechliche
grauen Gottes und des rechtas
Glaubens begreiffend.

Nun freut euch lieben Christen gmein.

Dem Teufel ich gefangen lag/Jm todt war ich verloren/
Nie spricht mich quellen nacht es tag/Darum ich war ge-
loren/Joch viel auch ymmer trefst dein/Es war kafigst
am leben mein/Die sindt hat mich gesessen.

Nun freut euch lieben Christen gmein/Vnd lasst von feh-
luch sprungen/Das war getrost und all in ein/Hit lust und
liebe singen/Was gut an uns gewendet hat/Vnd seine stipe
wunder that/Gar theat hat er erworben.

Fig. 3. A page of the second Lutheran hymnal, the “Erfurt Enchiridion,” containing musical
notation and three stanzas of a hymn by Martin Luther entitled “Nun freut euch, lieben Christen
Gmein” (Dear Christians, one and all rejoice)
Erfurt Enchiridion, 1524, Rare books collections, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
This tradition fostered a considerable share of church music that has been inherited not only by Lutherans but by many other churches, and which includes – but is not limited to – Laurentius Petri, Philip Nicolai, Johann Crüger, and Paul Gerhardt. It was also a source of *Theologia Secunda*, and for that same reason, he suggested guidelines on how to correctly appropriate elements from the world and complement them with lyrics and proper accompaniment that emphasize their sacredness. More importantly, the Lutheran tradition improved the level of participation of the faithful in hymn-singing.⁵⁰ It did not exclude choirs, but provided numerous opportunities for the people to join them – both in monophony and in polyphony. Within such context, composers like Johann Pachelbel, the Bach family, Dietrich Buxtehude and many others developed choruses, cantatas, and other elaborate pieces of sacred music. It has been a prolific tradition which has produced a bountiful amount of hymnals of its own (fig. 3) and which has contributed to hymnbooks that were organized by Christians of other denominations and churches.

**Calvin and Reformed Psalters**

John Calvin, on the other hand, was not as enthusiastic as Luther in terms of what was appropriate in worship in terms of music. However, the tradition he fostered also influenced the world of church music to a great deal.

It must be noted that Calvin (unlike Luther) had not been a priest prior to his conversion to Protestantism. He was – first and foremost – a theologian whose approach to church music was mostly limited to his theological views. Under certain circumstances, he found music in

church reasonable and compatible with his systematic theology. For example, he did not
"condemn words or singing, but rather greatly commend them, provided the feeling of the mind
goes along with them." For Calvin, music could be mutually edifying and proclamatory, which
points to well-known characteristics of church music such as building community and
proclaiming God’s glory. Given the fact he greatly emphasized the psalms, it is safe to say he
also favored the unity of the people of God, recalling their salvation history through music, and
expressing their joy and lament in the presence of their Maker.

However, Calvin did impose several restrictions on how church music should be. It was
very clear to him sacred music had to be very different from the music found in the world. First
of all, with a few notable exceptions (mostly canticles taken from Scripture), he considered
psalms to be the only holy and appropriate sources of music in the church, therefore, excluding
the possibility of composing lyrics for new hymns (which was common among Lutherans).
Also, church music should possess a quality of “majesty,” with “metrical psalms, a single
monophonic line, one note for each syllable of text, without melismas, without polyphony,
without instruments, and without choirs except as a group of children led by the congregation’s
singing." This was stricter than even the most strict early fathers.

51 John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, III.20, retrieved from
52 Ibid., III.20
53 Leaver, “Luther on Music,” 136
54 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 157
PSEAVME I. CL. MA.

Ce pséume chante, que ceux sont bien-heureux, qui résistent les mœurs & le conte du mauvais, s'adonnent à connoître & entendre le Seul la Loy de Dieu: & mal-heureux ceux qui sont au contraire.

Vi au conseil des malins n'a été,

Qui n'est au trac des pecheurs n'a été: Qui des

moqueurs au banc place n'a pris, Mais nuit &

tour la Loy: contemple & pris, De l'Eternel,

et es de se reux. Certainement celuy-la est

heureux.

Et semblera vn arbre grand & beau, Planté au long d'un eau courant ruisseau, Et qui l'on fruit en la saison apporte:

Duquel aussi la feuille ne chut morte:
Si qu'un tel homme, & tout ce qu'il sera
Toujours heureux & prospere sera.

Mais les peruers n'auront telles vertus:

A. J.

Fig. 4. Psalm 1, from the 1562 Genevan Psalter
Collection, Bibliothèque de Genève
Nonetheless, music that came out of the Reformed tradition also left an indelible mark on today’s church. The Genevan Psalter (fig. 4), with metrified psalms organized by Clément Marot and Theodore Beza, coupled with music by Louis Bourgeois, has produced some famous and well-known tunes, which eventually found their way into other lyrics, and even turned into polyphonic settings. Calvinist psalters were the hymnals of most Reformed churches until well into the 19th Century. Their easy-to-sing tunes - adapted to the voices of regular people singing - were an innovation at a time polyphony and complicated settings were so much in favor. Hence their usage in contemporary hymnals as well, which do emphasize active participation of God’s people in worship.

Establishment of an Anglican musical tradition

Among Anglicans, the winds of reform also brought changes in the way they worshipped through music. In 1534, Henry VIII broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in what became known as the Act of Supremacy. However, for more than a decade, the Church of England did not implement any liturgical reforms. Only in 1549, under the reign of his son – the boy king Edward VI – Thomas Cranmer (English reformer and Archbishop of Canterbury) was able to produce two Books of Common Prayer in 1549 and 1552. The Prayer Book tradition, which was followed by subsequent books and their revisions – in many different provinces – is still central to Anglicans and Episcopalians today.

55 Leaver, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 1,” 287

It is impossible to talk about Anglican Church music without examining the basic structure that underpins every Book of Common Prayer. Two main offices (Morning and Evening Prayer) replace eight offices of the monastic tradition, and are meant to be used by all the faithful, either in public or private worship. The original BCPs also offered “new translations of texts, including graduals, alleluias, tracts, sentences, antiphons, and responsories. As a result, most of the music that had been sung in worship up until this point was rendered obsolete.”57 Almost immediately, a musical setting by John Merbecke appeared. It was notable in that it was simple enough for a congregation to sing. Merbecke – who was heavily influenced by Calvinism and who would end his life as a puritan – followed the rules set forth by Calvin and Cranmer: monophony, with every syllable corresponding to a note.58 He published a version of the Book of Common Prayer, set to music, entitled “The Book of Common Prayer Noted” (see fig. 5). In this case, “noted” means “with notes.” Other composers, such as Thomas Tallis and Christopher Tye, were not that austere in their compositions, and found ways to hold the tension between polyphony and audibility of liturgical texts, thus creating choral settings that were simple enough to be properly interpreted (thus satisfying Cranmer’s concerns) yet contained an aesthetic quality that has been appreciated by multiple generations.

57 Matthew Hoch, Welcome to Church Music & the Hymnal 1982 (New York: Morehouse, 2015), 4-5
58 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 168
Evensong.

The Queene with the Priest.

O

Are father which arte in hrae, halowed, ac.

O

Wile. God make spede to save me.

Hum. lohe make hast to helpe me. C. i. Gloyp

Fig. 5. Sung Evening Prayer from Merbecke’s Book of Common Prayer Noted Collection, British Museum
The BCP tradition also includes a psalter, and suggests its singing (or recitation) over the course of one month, or as part of the Daily Offices and Communion services. Metrical psalms became popular, and led to the production of a handful of English psalters.\textsuperscript{59} Their popularity only vanished in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{60} Anglican chant, a simplified type of chant which has the intonation omitted and respects the natural rhythm of the words (as if they were being recited), was developed and fully embraced by the time the monarchy was restored, in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. It allowed the singing of unmetrical texts, thus preserving the original translations of the BCP, which tended to be more faithful to the original psalms in Hebrew, if compared to metrical psalms.

The anthem, a choral setting for a short scriptural or religious text, was another development unique to Anglicanism. It composed a repertoire sung mostly in cathedrals and other important churches, together with Anglican chant and sung choral services.\textsuperscript{61} Ordinary parishes, on the other hand, preferred metrical psalms and other simpler kinds of music,\textsuperscript{62} until the 19\textsuperscript{th} century brought new influences and changes to the Anglican tradition.

Several Anglican hymnals and psalters were published throughout this period of time, and used according to local trends or fashions. Some Anglican jurisdictions do not have an official hymnal to this day. The wide variability of Anglican music is one of its most important characteristics. It was meant to complement the BCP without strictly following it, so there was plenty of room for composers of sung BCP music and other church music. Also, this tradition

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 171

\textsuperscript{60} Leaver, “Liturical Music as Corporate Song 1,” 290

\textsuperscript{61} Westermeyer, \textit{Te Deum: the Church and Music\textquoteright}., 174.

\textsuperscript{62} Hoch, \textit{Welcome to Church Music \& the Hymnal 1982}, 6
never had a central reformer, nor a unified systematic theology. This meant that many quarrels on the appropriateness of specific kinds of church music quietly disappeared over the course of the centuries. Anglicans gradually were able to incorporate music from different sources and traditions when organizing future hymnals.

The Counter-Reformation and Church Music

In a certain way, the Council of Trent also proposed a series of liturgical reforms that paralleled those of reformers. By then, Masses had become extremely effete and elaborated. Complicated polyphonic settings, an abundance of rites, unnecessary repetitions, and an overall sense of opulence, were detracting liturgies from their original meaning, and portraying worship as something akin to theater, as Erasmus would criticize.  

Roman Catholic reforms were, however, more moderate than elsewhere. Polyphony and choirs were retained, as long as “worldly forms were excluded and the texts were understood.” Rites were unified and, to a certain degree, simplified. This applied to both the Mass and to the offices. Liturgical texts (and, of course, most of liturgical music), however, continued to be offered in Latin, which limited the level of comprehension and participation one could achieve among the laity. Curiously, in one sense, Roman Catholic reforms were very similar to Calvinist thought: the council affirmed nothing could be sung in church unless it was taken from Sacred

63 Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, 163

64 Ibid., 164.
Scripture, or in agreement with it\textsuperscript{65} (the exceptions – of course – would be the very well known hymns from the Early and Medieval Church traditions).

At such point, nothing close to a hymnal (as we perceive it) had been produced in a Roman Catholic context, but at a time the printing press was becoming common place, different books containing sheet music for graduals, breviaries and sung masses started to be published and compiled, thus reaching a wider spectrum than their medieval counterparts. This era saw the development of elegant and inspiring works by composers such as Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and Tomás Luis de Victoria – many of which continue to be sung in churches of all sorts today.

**Music of the Spirit**

So far, this brief summary of post-Reformation music in Western Europe dealt with 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century developments. The 18\textsuperscript{th} century, however, was characterized by new and revolutionary advances in church music, which came from the fringes of the Church, and often as a natural response to the increase of rationalism the Enlightenment brought to Western Christianity.

In England, Isaac Watts, who came from a Puritan Congregationalist tradition, revolutionized his denominational line of thought by reembracing hymn-writing as wholesome and necessary at a time metrical psalms had become the main source of music in Reformed Churches. His hymns and adaptations of Old Testament psalms “to the language of the New

The “Testament” were published in four different collections. They were simple and easy to learn by a largely illiterate public. If compared to other kinds of sacred music being produced in England at the time (one must not forget this was the time Georg Friedrich Händel was producing and enacting magnificent oratorios for the British court), he relied on music that was much more straightforward and simple (such as metrical psalter tunes). His argument was direct: new hymns had to be written in order to relate to contemporary experiences of the people. Watts himself “wrote about 700 hymns. The ones from 1707 and 1719 are the best known.” Watts is one of the most popular hymn writers to this day, having been listed as the third most common author among different contemporary hymnals in North America.

In what is now known as Germany, the Bohemian Brethren, a group of followers of Pre-Reformer Jan Hus who faced persecution for over a couple centuries, were finally granted refuge in the lands of Nicholas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf. Their estate was called Herrnhut (God’s shelter). The Brethren already possessed a strong musical tradition. Michael Weisse, back in the 16th century, developed a series of hymns which were sung by the community in the vernacular, without accompaniment, several times a day. His strategy was very similar to Luther’s in that regard.

After Zinzendorf’s protection and leadership, however, this sophisticated tradition reached new levels. He had come from a pietistic Lutheran background, which had already developed a distinct musical tradition. On top of that, he was a prolific hymn writer, who

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66 Ibid., 203

supposedly composed over 2,000 hymns throughout his life. The Brethren (by then already
known as Moravians) started to add organs, polyphony, cantatas and even solos by women.68

In England, Methodism developed as a revival within the Church of England, but
eventually led to the creation of a new denomination, mostly due to persecution Methodists faced
in their mother church. John Wesley, the founder of the movement, was deeply impacted by
Moravian hymn-singing, and sought to replicate this same experience among English speakers.69
He and Charles Wesley composed a variety of much loved hymns, which combined Evangelical
commitment to conversion with a very distinct high view of the sacraments.70 It is understood
that Charles wrote original hymn texts, while John translated texts from German into English.
They were meant to be used in congregational singing, and thus paired considerably simple tunes
with well-crafted lyrics, aimed at help worshippers reach sanctification and God’s glory through
music.71 The Wesleys produced hymnals that covered the church year, service music, and
general worship (see fig. 6). Such hymns remain among the most sung hymns and usually rank
number one in terms of appearance in hymnals in English.72

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68 Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, 224

69 Leaver, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song I,” 296-297

70 Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, 209-211

71 Craig B. Gallaway, “Patterns of Worship in Early Methodist Hymnody, and the task of Hymnal

206 **Hymns and Sacred Poems.**

Stedfast thy Heart, serene thy Brow;
Divinely confident appears
Thy mounting Soul, and spreads abroad,
And swells to be dissip’d in **God.**

**XII.**
Is this the Soul so late weigh’d down
By Carcs and Sins, by Grievs and Pains!
Whither are all thy Terrors gone?
**Jesus** for Thee the Victory gains;
And Death, and Sin and Satan yield
To Faith’s unconquerable Shield.

**XIII.**
Blest be the **God,** that calls Thee home;
Faithful to Thee his Mercies prove:
’Thro’ Death’s dark Vale he bids Thee come,
And more than conquer in his Love;
Robes Thee in Righteousness Divine,
And makes the Crown of Glory Thine!

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**Hymn for Christmas-Day.**

**I.**

**Hark** how all the Welkin rings
“Glory to the Kings of Kings,
“Peace on Earth, and Mercy mild,
“**God** and Sinners reconcil’d!

**II.**

Joyful all ye Nations rise,
Join the Triumph of the Skies,
Universal Nature say
“**Christ the Lord** is born to Day!

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Fig. 6. Page scan from John and Charles Wesley’s “Hymns and sacred poems,” 1743
Public Domain, retrieved from archive.org
Other renewal movements did spread throughout Europe and North America in the 18th century. The most influential ones to contemporary hymnody happened in the English- and German-speaking worlds. George Whitefield was another important name among Evangelicals in the Church of England at the time. Unlike the Wesleys (who were Arminian), he was a strict Calvinist. His circles helped produce a variety of hymnals that included works by Watts, Wesley, the Moravians and other popular authors of the time, including John Newton and William Cowper. These two hymn writers had their works compiled as one of the main hymnals of their time, called Olney Hymns. Well known hymns such as “Amazing Grace” and “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds” come from this collection.73

Finally, the Welsh revival led to the production of a series of much loved tunes, which stem from a strong choral tradition found in Wales. At that time, most of Wales spoke only Welsh, so not always lyrics were fully translated. However, tunes, such as as Aberystwyth, Tony-botol, Hyfrydol, Cwm Rhondda, among many others, were adapted to a variety of lyrics in several different languages and have withstood the test of time.

The 19th Century: widening the circle of Liturgical Renewal

Throughout the 19th century, the scope of Western Christian hymrody was broadened in order to include new religious movements, restore old ones and hint at including non-European (or, at least, purely European) traditions.

Revivalism found its way into North America in the 19th century. At a time the United States’ western frontier was expanding, several religious movements appeared among the faithful. Camp meetings were commonplace in this new religious scenario, and used simplified

73 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 216
forms of well-known hymns sung in choruses in order to stimulate an emotional response.74 This created a demand for hymnals suitable for revivals, which go beyond the purpose of this text and will not be examined in detail. Suffice it to say that a plethora of hymnals was published at that time, which include Charles Finney and Joshua Leavitt’s *The Christian Lyre*, several hymns by Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings, William Bradbury’s hymnal collections, and an incredible amount of compositions by revivalists by Ira Sankey (Dwight Moody’s chief musician) and Fanny Crosby.75 Crosby herself wrote at least 8,500 hymn lyrics, which were matched by tunes by several composers. They include all-time favorites such as “Blessed Assurance,” “Pass me not, O gentle Savior”, and “To God be the glory.” Gospel music became a tradition of its own, and remained strong throughout the 20th century as well. Their characteristic tunes are catchy and lively, and, when coupled with easy-to-remember lyrics and refrains, led to proclamatory hymns that evoked emotions ranging from repentance to ecstatic joy. In a certain way, they fulfilled the role psalmody had among other groups of Christians.

In France, the Priory of Solesmes, under the guidance of Prosper Guéranguer, fostered a revival of Gregorian chant in its original, unaccompanied form, and devoid of fancy accompaniments and polyphonic settings. Their work was fully embraced by the Roman Catholic Church under pope Pius X,76 who placed restrictions on “noisy” instruments such as the piano, drums and cymbals, and enshrined the organ as the most appropriate instrument for Christian worship.77 This revival of plainchant was not limited to Roman Catholics. Other

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74 Leaver, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 1,” 297

75 Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, 264-269

76 Molloy, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 3,” 329

77 Ibid., 270-271
denominations, most notably Anglicans, gradually added more and more hymns based on chant to their repertoire, often translated into the vernacular.

Another very modest movement towards the establishment of hymnals among Roman Catholics was the publication of a few hymnals of “spiritual songs,” easy-to-sing hymns, either in Latin or in the vernacular, that should be used for private devotions or in processions, but not as music for the Mass (a distinction that gradually became more and more blurred as the 20th century loomed). These were not meant to sound “too ethnic” (non-European) either. Also, devotional hymns were suited “to individual feelings but rather expressed time of day or liturgical feast of season and … paid little attention to liturgical proprieties.”

Despite all efforts among Anglican/Episcopal bishops in order to curtail revivals in their churches, they were not able to stop what became known as the Oxford movement. Curiously, it started on the same year Solesmes was reinstated by Guéranger. Unlike previous evangelical reform movements in Anglicanism, it had such a high concern for the Church catholic that resisted all sorts of persecutions without schisms. Apart from a few, well-known conversions to Roman Catholicism, Anglo-Catholics (as they became known) stayed, and helped change immensely the music of the Anglican tradition. Their desire to reinstate lost Christian traditions led to a flourishing of new compositions and to a resurgence of ancient forms of musical

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79 Ibid., 129
worship. For example, Edward Caswall published *Lyra Catholica* in 1849, a collection of translations of hymns and service music from the Roman Missal and the Breviary. John Mason Neale and Thomas Helmore produced *The Hymnal Noted* within the period of 1851-1856, a collection of Latin Hymns with plainsong notation, plus some translations of Greek canticles and new compositions.

Also, throughout the 19th century, Anglicanism saw the merger of both the cathedral choral tradition and of the congregational singing tradition into a unified Anglican tradition, especially after a widely publicized 1820 court case determined that the Church of England never outlawed the singing of hymns (contrary to common thought, which believed it was bound to the Puritan rule of not singing anything but psalms). In 1861, the first edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was published in the United Kingdom. Its first board was composed by some well-known Tractarians (followers of the Oxford Movement), such as William Henry Monk, John Mason Neale and John Keble. Over the course of the years, this and other hymnals were reedited with an even broader focus, embracing Reformation music, 18th century hymns, some of the best 19th century revival songs and a great deal of ancient music (which includes some very ancient Eucharistic hymns like “Pange Lingua” and “O Salutaris Hostia”) adapted to congregational singing and to contemporary languages. German hymns were incorporated into Anglican hymnals (Catherine Winkworth was the main translator of German lyrics into English). Also, hymns based on medieval music or developed by contemporary Roman Catholics were incorporated into Anglican worship. This golden era produced musicians such as Ralph Vaughan

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81 Hoch, *Welcome to Church Music & the Hymnal 1982*, 8

82 Leaver, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 1,” 299

83 Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, 278
Williams, Edward Elgar and Herbert Howells. It also saw the adaptation of several tunes into majestic arrangements, with descants and special accompaniments for the organ and other instruments.\textsuperscript{84}

A parallel, non-European development in terms of Church music was the consolidation of African American congregational songs in the United States. This distinct style emerged out of former slaves’ faith traditions. It covered a wide variety of spirituals, but also some “Africanized” versions of well known hymns (most notably Isaac Watts’), and what became known as Black Gospel. The African-American musical tradition relies on simple refrains, repetitions and syncopation, coupled with hand clapping, improvisations and spoken interjections.\textsuperscript{85} It is largely an oral tradition, based on the fact most slaves and free blacks could not read at the time it first appeared. However, by the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, it had reached high levels of sophistication, with hymnals and compilations becoming widespread.\textsuperscript{86} Unfortunately, it only found its way into mainstream church music in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, when it became one of the major influences of Pentecostal music. Until then, it was largely confined to the Black Church world.

\textbf{And what about Eastern Music?}

Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy musical traditions have remained largely unchanged after the first millennium AD. They still rely exclusively on traditional chants and hymns, without any

\textsuperscript{84} Hoch, \emph{Welcome to Church Music & the Hymnal 1982}, 9

\textsuperscript{85} Westermeyer, \emph{Te Deum: the Church and Music}, 280-281

\textsuperscript{86} Melva Wilson Costen. "Published hymnals in the Afro-American tradition," \emph{The hymn: A journal of congregational song} 40/1 (January 1989), 10-13.
sort of accompaniment. It is worth noting, however, that there was a rediscovery of Eastern
liturgies and chants among 19th century Western Christians, and especially among Anglicans,
who were keen on adapting pre-Reformation sources to their worship. Some Eastern hymns and
chants were introduced to a Western public, such as the Phos Hilaron, thus diffusing (albeit
slightly) the barriers between Eastern and Western Christian music.

**Common features and emerging patterns**

Western Church music was not the same after the Reformation, and the numerous
movements it fostered over the following centuries. With a few notable exceptions, churches
became more aware of the need to improve congregational singing, and fostered the production
of hymnals that suited individual needs and denominational theologies. Such centuries were a
very fruitful period of hymn writing.

By the end of this period, one could witness what was called the “golden era” of
hymnody. Music inspired by early reformers and revivalists was not the only music available. A
rediscovery of ancient traditions reinstated the usage of chant, medieval and early church hymns.
Festal arrangements, choirs and organ improvisations could be complemented by congregational
unison or four-part singing. Several hymns which were either composed or, having belonged to
an older tradition, arranged in the 19th century are still the core of many hymnals one can find
today. This, however, does not mean the 19th century was more important than any other period,
or produced more able lyricists and musicians. It witnessed a production of hymns never seen
before (surely thousands and thousands). Percentwise, very few found their way into the 20th
century. Those, usually, are of the finest quality possible.
It is also noteworthy that such hymns were still largely European or North American, and mostly confined to the wider German and British traditions. The same period saw the emergence of global missionary initiatives, which at first were not able to incorporate local cultural traditions (including music). Not rarely, missionaries mixed the Good News of Christ with Western culture, which meant new converts needed to adapt to the way Western white people dressed, behaved, and worshipped. So, the great improvements that could be seen in the post-Reformation period in terms of adapting folk tunes and embracing popular movements as sources of inspiration for hymnody were not replicated in non-Western scenarios. In India, Korea, or Mexico, people sang the same tunes, accompaniments, and styles that originated in European and North American churches. Only lyrics were translated. This is one of the main sources of tension that emerge throughout the 20th century, and one of the key points that must be addressed when revising or updating hymnals nowadays.
Chapter 3

A world of music for a Christian world: the spread of Christendom, the Liturgical Movement, and their current implications

A world religion

Early in the 20th century, the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference marked both the apex of the (largely Protestant) missionary movement and the beginning of the ecumenical movement. Previous decades had witnessed an expansion of Protestant and Anglican missions around the world, a considerably novel development, since most missionary activity until then had been carried out by Roman Catholic religious orders. Roman Catholics, not surprisingly, were also founding new missions and expanding in other parts of the world.

Not rarely, those missions followed the path of colonialism. Major European powers had sliced large swaths of Africa, Asia, and Oceania and imposed their institutions, language, and culture. Missionaries were part of this movement, and could very rarely be dissociated from it.\(^7\) In Latin America, North American missionaries tried to convert the locals, who were overwhelmingly Roman Catholics. In all parts of the world, churches were expanding at fast paces and – not rarely – competing with each other for new faithful.

Newly born churches mimicked their Northern counterparts. In terms of liturgy and music, everything followed patterns defined by missionaries and church authorities abroad.\(^8\) Very few accommodations were made in terms of incorporating local cultural expressions in

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\(^7\) David J. Bosch, *Missão Transformadora: Mudanças de Paradigma na Teologia da Missão* (São Leopoldo: Editora Sinodal, 2002), 329

\(^8\) Daryl M. Balia and Kirsteen Kim, *Witnessing to Christ Today* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 61
worship. Therefore, hymnals produced in the mission field were largely based on music imported from Europe and North America. Local hymn writers produced lyrics to foreign tunes or composed music in the missionaries’ tradition – which was often perceived as the proper way of creating liturgical music.

Cooperation among churches in the field led to some very fruitful ecumenical agreements. However, after a few early and fruitful experiences of joint hymnal production, different churches ended up publishing hymnals of their own, without mutual consultation. And despite some commendable examples of united churches (like the Churches of North India, South India, and Pakistan), in most cases denominations continued to be independent from each other, producing their own hymnbooks.

The Liturgical Movement

It is nearly impossible to properly summarize the deep impact the Liturgical Movement brought to the life of the Church catholic, for it so impacted the way we worship nowadays. A few major concepts that guided it, however, can be highlighted and presented in this survey.

First of all, the roots of the Liturgical Movement go back to the 19th century, when monks such as Guéranguer and others tried to restore more ancient liturgical practices. This eventually developed as scholarship which intended to understand the origin and development of rites. However, instead of finding the holy grail of a single, unified rite that once existed, scholars realized that the early Church was nothing but wide and varied. Liturgy had a shape. What was done had a shape, but individual rites varied from place to place. 89

89 Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (Dacre Press Westminster, 1949), 214
Liturgy which were to be conformed to the spirit of early Christianity had to be of a certain pattern, without necessarily using the same exact words at all times and in all places. By rediscovering the worship practices of the early Church, Liturgical Movement scholars understood liturgical rites as patterns to be followed, with instances that often changed from place to place, according to the needs and customs of local churches. This permitted wholesale revision of liturgical books, which were broadened to include a multiplicity of Eucharistic prayers, collects and optional rites – as long as they followed their original shape. Curiously, this development also greatly diminished the liturgical gap between different church communions and restored ancient liturgies (such as Holy Week liturgies) to the life of the Church. The movement’s ecumenical character meant that scholars from different traditions often worked alongside each other. The attempts at restoring ancient liturgical shapes led to joint revisions, borrowed materials and a complete re-examination of what denominations once thought was proper and correct worship.

Many Western churches reformed their liturgy according to the principles of the Liturgical Movement. The Second Vatican Council and the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (CSL) were turning points in the life of the Roman Catholic Church, which, in musical terms, saw a formidable growth of hymn writing and hymnal compilations.\(^9\) Although the CSL did emphasize the importance of chant and traditional sacred music, it subordinated their usage to the need for the assembly’s participation,\(^9,1\) which fostered the production of new hymns and


\(^{9,1}\) Quinn, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 2,” 314
service music that were easier for the faithful to follow. The Anglican Communion also experienced major liturgical reforms in most of its provinces. Lutheran, Reformed and Methodist churches also largely adhered to this crescendo of reforms. By the end of the 20th century, those churches’ liturgical books were much more similar to each other than they had been before. Lectionaries, Daily Offices, Holy Eucharist, Holy Baptism, Pastoral and Special Rites followed similar structures and not rarely had lots of overlapping and intersections.

Worship was increasingly seen as an organic human activity, and therefore needed to be connected to people’s daily realities. This provided arguments for the simplification and inculcation of liturgical rites - so that the whole assembly could have a grasp of what the texts actually say and see in them an instrument of teaching and mission adapted to local contexts. An active participation of the people in worship implied a multiplication of lay ministries and opportunities for the assembly to engage more fully in worship. It also aimed to restore the importance of baptism in the life of the Church, by granting each person the possibility of fully living the priesthood of all believers.

As the sweeping winds of reform blew upon different church communions, many visible changes were perceived in churches. The new liturgies often demanded reordering of church spaces, renewal of church music and experiments in ritual that gradually changed the way we do and see Church. The aesthetic dimension certainly remains an important element of liturgical reform and it should be used in order to counteract the “didacticism and over-verbalization”

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that characterize so many services nowadays. It also suits the transcendent aspect of worship and allows people to better respond to God.

For this new kind of worship, new church music was needed. 20th century composers experimented with different forms of music, thus trying to erase the distinction between secular and sacred. Instruments such as drums and guitars were brought into churches, folk masses and worship songs were composed and presented as supplements to hymnals. Unlike in previous times, this appropriation of popular music was not done under special conditions. Composers and theologians were happy to infuse the Church with musical forms that related to people’s daily experience without forbidding some kinds of instruments, or even some types of gestures (like clapping or dancing).

One would expect that hymnals would incorporate the spirit of reform as quickly as missals, prayer books and other liturgical materials did. However, they did not. Many denominational hymnals still rely mostly on music that was conceived until the beginnings of the 20th century, interspersed with some notable contemporary works, which are, however, outnumbered by older hymns. For example, in 1958, Pablo Sosa, an Argentinian Methodist minister and liturgics professor, composed a carnavalito entitled “El cielo canta alegría.” This was the first Christian hymn based on a Latin American folk tune after more than 400 years of evangelization in the Americas.

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95 S. T. Kimbrough Jr., "Mille voix...pour te chanter/A thousand tongues to sing to You: The first French-language hymnal for United Methodists in Europe and Africa", The Hymn: A journal of congregational song 66/2 (Spring 2015), 13-14

96 C. Michael. Hawn, Gather into one: praying and singing globally (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2003), 41-44.
In terms of ethnomusical diversity, the scenario can be even worse. Take for example, *The Hymnal 1982*, the official hymnal of the Episcopal Church. It contains no more than six African American spirituals, two African songs, two Asian hymns, two Native American songs and one villancico ⁹⁷— out of more than seven hundred hymns. The Episcopal Church, like many other liturgical churches, tried to compensate this deficit by publishing special supplements, which attempt to cover different musical traditions. They are, however, supplements, which do not carry the same weight a main, official hymnal has. A comparison with other churches in the United States shows that a similar pattern of discrete, but statistically irrelevant, inclusion of "ethnic" hymns is the standard for most denominations.⁹⁸

A similar survey was conducted in Canada, and while it showed "a growing awareness of global and indigenous Canadian song,"⁹⁹ in practice, most denominational hymnals are still largely European¹⁰⁰ and, even when they make an effort to include songs in other languages, many of those are mere translations of works composed by North American or European hymn writers.¹⁰¹

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⁹⁸ See Carlton R. Young, "Ethnic minority hymns in United States mainline Protestant hymnals, 1940-1995: Some qualitative considerations," *The hymn: A journal of congregational song* 49/3 (July 1998), 21 for an in-depth analysis of how many “ethnic” hymns contribute to the overall hymnody of most mainline US churches. The best scenarios (the UCC and the Disciples of Christ most recent hymnals) include no more than 80 “ethnic” hymns among 700+ hymns from European/North-American sources.


¹⁰¹ Ibid., 20
Also, despite some relevant attempts at producing ecumenical hymnals in some contexts, denominations still generally rely on publishing their own hymnals. At a time of convergence of rites and music used for worship, this measure seems more and more contradictory. There is a great deal of overlap between hymnals published by liturgical churches,¹⁰² which suggests a strong possibility of unifying those as a single, ecumenical venture. In many cases, this has not been feasible due to church politics, though.

**Inculturation and worship**

Thanks to Anscar Chupungco’s excellent work on liturgical inculturation,¹⁰³ it is possible to propose two different ways of engaging with local cultures without losing or effacing key elements that define what we believe as Christians. The first concept, called creative assimilation, starts with cultural elements which derive from a variety of sources, and what can be added to Christian liturgy. The second concept, called dynamic equivalence, starts with what exists in Christian liturgies (the ordo) and allows it to be re-expressed in the customs, symbols and elements of a local culture. This is not a mixing of superstition and church rites. In fact, it is the opposite: it provides a way of discerning out of cultural elements (which also include popular piety) what can be christianized and what cannot.¹⁰⁴ These principles have been widely used when producing or revising Christian rites in local languages and cultural settings and have been considered basic paradigms of liturgical inculturation for the last few decades (fig. 7).

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¹⁰² C. Michael Hawn, “The Consultation on Ecumenical Hymnody,” 30


Fig. 7. Psalm 23: the Lord is my Shepherd in Tagalog: an example of inculturated liturgical music produced in the 20th Century, as a consequence of liturgical renewal.

Magsimba Filipino Hymnal (Manila: Magsimba Press, 1982)
Following Chupungco’s grammar, one would expect to see a similar approach applied to hymns and new compilations of hymnals. This is not always the case. There’s plenty of room for more cross-fertilizing between existing hymnals and local cultures, both by drawing from culturally appropriate styles, rhythms and metaphors as elements in Christian hymnody, and by reimagining inherited Western tunes and lyrics coupled with culturally relevant performances. African American Church music is one impressive example of such cross-fertilization of musical styles, metaphors and performances. Its extensive hymnal production could inspire similar movements of inculturation among other peoples and cultures as well.

Fruitful experiments in terms of inculturation rely on “impulses, desires, will, emotion and intelligence.”¹⁰⁵ They must take into account rational and emotional elements: theological studies, doctrines, research and scholarship that informs us what should go into a hymn; but also emphasize “imagination, dance, and fantasy.”¹⁰⁶

Theologies from the margins

The 20th century also saw the emergence of a series of liberation theologies, which intended to provide a Christian response to the plea of the oppressed. Liberation theology was, and still is, one of the main vernaculars through which theological discourse in Latin America has been developed. It is a stream that is autochthonous to that region of the world and ecumenical par excellence. In general terms, it proposes a more horizontal way of being Church, which is proposed as more in tune with the witness of the early Church. It affirms God’s

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 21.
preferential option for the poor,\textsuperscript{107} based on Biblical texts\textsuperscript{108} that emphasize God’s justice towards those who were historically excluded from society. This does not mean that God’s love is exclusive; on the contrary, God so loves humanity that it is God’s desire to bring equality. The Kingdom of God, to liberation theologians, becomes a goal to be pursued in this life, through prophetic actions that mobilize Christians to organize and fight for positive change that brings this world closer to God’s will. It is also a theology of hope.\textsuperscript{109} As a consequence of this line of thought, political mobilization against unjust leaders has been commonplace among liberationist circles as well, and even church structures were adapted to conform to a more egalitarian way of engaging with the people in theological, liturgical and pastoral ways.

According to Gibellini, liberation theology evolved according to three different phases: preparation, formulation and systematization.\textsuperscript{110} Leonardo Boff, writing about a decade later, speaks of the same three generations under different names: gestation and genesis, diffusion and growth, and consolidation – but adds a fourth one: revision and new impulse.\textsuperscript{111}

The first generation is the one which produced liberation theology’s key hermeneutics of following a God who stands in solidarity with the oppressed. It was heavily impacted by events such as the Second Vatican Council and the II Latin American Bishops’ Conference, in 1968. It brought to the fore Roman Catholic theologians such as Gustavo Gutiérrez (Peru), Leonardo Boff (Brazil), Juan Luis Segundo (Uruguay) and Jon Sobrino (Spain) but also revealed scholars


\textsuperscript{110} Rosino Gibellini, \textit{A Teologia no século XX} (São Paulo: Loyola, 1988), 27.

from other confessions, such as René Padilla (Ecuador), Samuel Escobar (Peru), Rubem Alves (Brazil), and Orlando Costas (Puerto Rico).

The second generation roughly covers the seventies and was responsible for a fruitful development of a core body of writings which broadened initial definitions of “oppressed.” Different struggles start to be addressed separately. It was no longer possible to label the poor as a single group. Theologians started – albeit shyly - to address other issues such as gender imbalance, racism and other forms of discrimination. This period also saw growing political persecution (which led to many being exiled or martyred) and increasing clashes with conservative ecclesial hierarchies.

The third generation emerged after the III Latin American Bishops’ Conference held in Puebla in 1979 and, even if it led to a consolidation of pastoral and formational initiatives throughout the continent, it also saw increasing persecution coming from Roman Catholic (and some non-Roman Catholic) hierarchy. This marginalization of liberation theologians, however, was accompanied by bolder theologies that emerged from it. The so-called “Theology of the body” was one of them. It understood liberation could not happen if human bodies were still enslaved by ownership constructs, which included, of course, sexual pleasure.\textsuperscript{112} At the same time, feminist, indigenous, black, African, Asian, and de-colonial theologies started to emerge from and cross-fertilize with the wider liberation theology movement. In sum, this movement provided a springboard upon which contextual theologies could be proclaimed, thus leading the Church to a renewed commitment towards liberating those who suffer under unjust structures.

In terms of liturgy, liberation theologies called for highly experimental forms of worship, which would both address issues of oppression and liberation and give voice to the oppressed.

\textsuperscript{112} Rubem Alves, \textit{Variações sobre a vida e a morte} (São Paulo (SP): Edições Paulinas, 1982), 30.
Hymns and other worship songs were produced in its varied contexts. They emphasize God’s solidarity with the oppressed, the Church as a community of love and action, and the need to take action and fight for the end of injustice in this world – all in Christ’s name. They also innovated in terms of arrangements, by using local rhythms and musical instruments that related to the reality of cultural groups who had historically been excluded from liturgical leadership roles (for example: the urban poor, indigenous people, and ethnic minorities). Within this context, some fine pieces of music were produced, and used both in local and ecumenical contexts.¹¹³ Nevertheless, official denominational hymnals largely excluded them, resorting to a majority of hymns composed prior to the Liturgical Movement, even in non-European, non-North American contexts.¹¹⁴ Once more, a movement of inculturation has not been appropriated in worship as much as it could, thus preventing many congregations from approaching issues of justice and liberation in their liturgical experience. In a world where injustice abounds and so much reconciliation needs to be done, how can the Church continue to worship God through music that elevates the senses and calls for personal conversion, but forgetting to call the Church to become a strong community of activists who fight evil in our society, bearing witness to Christ and prefiguring the Kingdom of God in our midst?

**New theologies demand new lyrics, new music**

Theologies that address issues of gender, ethnicity and sexuality have brought to the forefront questions concerning the appropriate use of languages in lyrics – both in terms of pronouns and

¹¹³ Duarte, "A língua vernácula na música católica no Brasil desde o século XIX," 131

in terms of metaphors. "Phrases such as 'peace on earth, good will towards men' and 'join hands then brothers of the faith' need to be carefully scrutinized and in most cases, edited to eliminate the use of male terms when used in a generic sense." In some languages, masculine neutral pronouns have been indiscriminately used throughout the centuries, thus excluding other genders from being properly nominated in worship. References to God in many traditional lyrics still use masculine pronouns, or metaphors long-associated with dominance and masculinity, and a variety of strategies have been suggested to eliminate all masculine references to God from the worship vocabulary. The usage of terms such as whiteness and darkness in order to express purity and sin, goodness and evil respectively, also needs revising. Overall, careful thought must be made in terms of adapting liturgical texts (and that includes also psalms and hymn lyrics) to language forms that do not rely on oppressive structures and metaphors. Rather than that, they must free the faithful – especially the most oppressed among them – to see themselves as part of Christ’s Body in its fulness.

The challenge is not easy. Many traditional hymns have used outdated language, which carries the weight of formerly-oppressive structures. Also, orthography and grammar may also force lyricists to be very creative when updating old texts or writing new ones, to find ways of using formal language and yet not replicate patterns of prejudice, sexism and racism which may

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116 Ibid., 96.
be found in their grammar. Resistance from more conservative corners of the Church also exists.\(^{117}\) Nevertheless, with considerable care, it can be done.\(^{118}\)

Also, the complexity of certain tunes, or their lack of coherence in some cultural contexts, have also been used as tools for excluding people from worship. Fully participatory singing must take into account that at least part of what is sung at a regular service must be simple enough to be followed by regular worshippers, which may include children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and immigrants who do not fully master the language.\(^{119}\) This does not exclude the possibility of elaborate choral performances, but careful attention must be paid not to limit music in worship to something only professional musicians are able to follow. Again, this obliges hymnal commissions to offer simplified versions of popular tunes, with easier accompaniments, no textual archaisms, and to foster new compositions that are not foreign to worshippers’ ears and intuitive enough to be followed by all. All of these questions have not yet been fully developed in the life of most churches, but are already being presented as urgent needs to liturgists and musicians who are working on revisions of liturgical materials.

**Charismatic renewal: an impoverishment of music?**

Another phenomenon that cannot be dismissed when examining developments in liturgy and music in the 20\(^{th}\) century is the emergence of the Charismatic Renewal movement. In the

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\(^{117}\) Samuel J. Rogal, "Hymnodic revision: Editorial license or intellectual laziness?" *Ars lyric: Journal of Lyrica Society for Word-Music Relations* 8 (1994), 142-146


\(^{119}\) Ríos, “El culto: el problema de la comunicación,” 214-215
early 1900’s, Pentecostalism was already a visible stream of Christianity, albeit rather segregated and treated as a sect. It started generating its own distinct musical style. After the sixties, however, a distinct process of adoption of Pentecostal practices gained ground within mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. This was called the “Charismatic movement,” since it emphasized gifts of the Spirit, or charisms.

Music that suited this movement (and its Pentecostal counterpart) has been increasingly adopted by liturgical churches, especially after the 70s. Several musical supplements (both put together by official publishing houses or shared informally among musicians) were created, containing a variety of worship songs. Some of those songs are of good quality (musically and theologically) and even found their way into official hymnals. Many of them, however, while innovating in terms of musical styles (which resonate with the pop culture of the current world), are rather poor in terms of lyrics, which do not engage the faithful with the reality of the world and over-emphasize an individualistic relationship between each worshipper and God.¹²¹

**What challenges did the 20th century bring?**

Considering the tensions between tradition and modernity, it is possible to identify a few challenges that have been experienced in most ecclesial contexts throughout the 20th century:

- Until the seventies, hymnal revisions focused on excluding hymns that were not being sung anymore and had not passed the test of time. New hymns would be added, but those were still composed according to what was considered the appropriate sacred music

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¹²⁰ Maraschin, *A Beleza da Santidade*, 57

¹²¹ Duarte, "A língua vernácula na música católica no Brasil desde o século XIX," 131
pattern: four-part singing, organ arrangements, and tunes that were highly European or North American in terms of ethnomusicological patterns.122

- As Christianity expanded into the global South, local lyricists were allowed to produce poems in their vernaculars, thus expanding the offer of hymns to several new languages. However, such lyrics were often coupled with foreign tunes,123 or tunes composed according to European patterns.124

- After the seventies, hymnal revisions started to contemplate other ethnomusicological sources, without ignoring the importance of Western/European hymns. Arrangements started to take into account, more and more, instruments such as the piano, the electronic organ, the guitar and drums. Hymnals were experimentally produced along ecumenical lines and incorporated a variety of worship music, including songs produced by communities such as Taizé, Iona and local groups that engaged in producing liberation theologies.125

- However, apart from some interesting experiences that occurred on a case by case basis, official church bodies in general were not as radical when it came to republishing their hymnals. To a great deal, official hymnals in the Global South are still mostly based on the received tradition that arrived with foreign missionaries.126 In Europe and North

122 See William J. Reynolds, "The hymnal 1940 and its era," The hymn: A journal of congregational song 41/4 (October 1990). 34-39 for a famous example of this kind of methodology, the Episcopal Church’s Hymnal 1940

123 Donaldson, "Toward a Musical Praxis of Justice," 26

124 Ríos, “El culto: el problema de la comunicación,” 218

125 Kimbrough Jr., "Mille voix…pour te chanter," 14

126 Spann, "A tale of two hymnals," 20-21
America, regardless of the growing immigrant population and of the need for reaching out to them (and, in some cases, to indigenous people), hymnals remain very Eurocentric as well.\footnote{127}

- A variety of supplements and songbooks complement hymnals with newer songs, which are still largely based on what has been produced in Europe and North America, this time in a charismatic revival context. The Roman Catholic Church is no exception to this rule, most of the time.\footnote{128}

- Very little has been written or done in terms of simplifying and adapting local languages to gender balance and inclusivity.\footnote{129}

- On top of all such issues, some churches have not yet updated their hymnals in the last few decades.

These challenges demand a coherent theology for hymnal revisions, which takes into account local and global contexts, different cultural interactions and wider understandings of God. Part II of this text is an attempt at presenting these issues in a coherent way, which can better suit different hymnal commissions but also foster deeper conversations on the relevance of hymnals today among the faithful.

\footnote{Young, "Ethnic minority hymns in United States mainline Protestant hymnals, 1940-1995," 21}

\footnote{Duarte, "A língua vernácula na música católica no Brasil desde o século XIX," 131}

\footnote{Illenseer, “Linguagem inclusiva,” REFLEXUS v. XII, n. 19 (2018/1), 40-41}
PART II.

A PROPOSED PATTERN FOR HYMNAL REVISION
Chapter 4

Concepts of hymnal revision: universality, context, balance, feasibility, beauty and theological wideness

Foreword: hymnals do still matter

The existence of hymnals has been more and more challenged at a time many church communities often resort to songs projected onto a screen or whiteboard, and software companies cater to churches offering packages of literally thousands of pieces of sheet music ready to be used by musicians and pasted onto bulletins or power point files. Why, then, would churches be willing to go through a lengthy, costly process of revising their hymnals, if all they needed was to go fully digital and keep adding new music as it gets composed and published?

First of all, revision committees, unlike companies which merely sell church music, are formed by grouping people with a wide variety of theological and musical backgrounds, and who are fully aware of the needs to provide a balanced, theologically sound collection of hymns for general church worship. They do not cater to a specific group (e.g. “traditionalists” or “charismatics”) nor intend to be so general as to include every single worship song ever created. Hymnals are, for the most part, a “safe” compilation of hymns which have withstood the test of time, are aesthetically pleasing and make sense theologically. If hymn writers and composers are said to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, those who compile hymnals are to be inspired as well.

Hymnals need not be purely available as physical books (and, in fact, some of the newest ones are also available as digital files). But the importance of physical books cannot be ignored. One reason why they are still relevant is the fact that copyright laws have not adapted well to a
digital world, and under many circumstances, their holders will not release them for digital
use.\textsuperscript{130}

Another reason is purely practical. Books can be carried to retreat centers, camp meetings
or the parish office. They may be used regardless of the availability of electricity and are
resourceful in many different scenarios.

Books also “enable the people holding them to see things that are more likely to be
features of strophic hymns—texts that develop their themes across a series of strophes or
stanzas—than of shorter form praise choruses: connections across stanzas (the fact that a hymn
poet chose to use the same word to start the fourth line of each, for example), as well as the
trajectory of a text (when it is at its midpoint and when it is drawing to a close).”\textsuperscript{131} Hymnals
provide worshippers the “big picture” of a hymn. They can anticipate what comes next, and
those who can sight read can more intuitively understand the melody if all staves are presented.

Also, at a time so much music is thrown at people’s faces in a variety of settings,
hymnals provide a sense of stability in that for a few decades, they’ll be used by people of all
ages and in many different settings. Hymns are common worship. They “grow in importance and
power through the years by their frequent repetition. Indeed, hymn singing may represent the
only consistent choral experience millions of people ever encounter.”\textsuperscript{132} This is excellent news,
for hymnals are capable to provide some stability and weight to a faith that is built upon these

\textsuperscript{130} Mary Louise Bringle, “Why hymnals matter: singing from one book,” \textit{Christian Century} (May 15,
2013), 23.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 23.

two virtues. Like most liturgical books, hymnals do not exist on their own or were created *ex nihilo*; they are properly tied and interrelated with the worship experience of the Church catholic.

A more theological argument for the existence of hymns is their stability. As people of the Incarnation, we have an entire theology built on the perspective of the transformation of our bodies, the corporeity of our worship and our inclusion in the Body of Christ. Hymnals, in their physical form, also attain this “bodily” aspect, as opposed to projected lyrics. They wear out, they are made out of organic matter, they fade and eventually need to be recycled. They go “from dust to dust,” just like these bodies of ours. Hymnals provide a core group of Christians (at least all who belong to a certain denomination, sometimes even wider groups) the unity of singing from the same book. The concept of being one single body is reinforced such an action.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that hymnbooks might also may be shared. As tangible objects, they can enhance community building, as people share the same object. “An older person’s fingers can point out words or notes to a younger person—in ways that not only strengthen the intergenerational bond in worship but also help children learn to read syllables and recognize melodic shapes.”

Therefore, hymnals do still matter. They are still a viable, much needed tool for intergenerational, inclusive, catholic worship. But, based on the brief recapitulation of history of hymns (and hymnals) and on the challenges hymn commissions face today, what qualities should a new hymnal, suitable for the 21st century, possess?

**Universality: the qualities that bind hymnals together**

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Hymnals contain hymns, but what is a hymn? In the narrowest definition, a hymn is simply a song of praise.\textsuperscript{134} This all-encompassing definition covers everything that is sung in worship: psalms, service music and all sorts of worship songs. However, other definitions of hymns usually treat them as some sort of poetry, arranged in stanzas and coupled with a specific tune. These definitions may exclude, depending on their level of rigidity, psalms, service music and even some worship songs that use free verses, which free from limitations of regular meter or rhythm.

In that regard, Leaver’s adoption of the term “liturgical music” seems to be the most appropriate and broadest definition for all that “goes in a hymnal.” Essentially, it refers to music that is used for worship. When such ‘liturgical music’ is heard and studied outside of its context and usage it “loses much of its integrity, significance and essence because worship music cannot be fully understood outside the worship – liturgy in the broadest terms – for which it was intended.”\textsuperscript{135} The kind of music that goes in a hymnal, therefore, is music intended for worship: liturgical music.

This discussion hints at the first concern liturgy and music committees should have in mind when determining what goes together in a hymnal. All works must have a certain universality in purpose, prayer and theological ground. They are to be liturgical music. Their primary objective has to be God’s worship, and not something else. Healey Willan’s “Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalenæ,” Louis Bourgeois’ tune \textit{Old 100\textsuperscript{th}}, Karen Lafferty’s “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,” Rodolfo Gaede Neto’s “For the Troubles and sufferings of the world,” the

\textsuperscript{134} Sharp, "The decade of the hymnal (1982–1992)," 32.

German hymn “Lasst uns erfreuen” and the Zulu song “Thuma mina” – all have something in
common: they were created and/or adapted for worship. In lyrics and music, they clearly refer to
the God we have known in Jesus Christ. They might come from different parts of the world,
different eras and different denominations. They might be based on liturgical texts or on biblical
texts. Or they might be entirely new compositions. However, the ones who worked on them did
so because of who God is to them and because of the Christian faith they have inherited from
their ancestors. This is what makes such pieces of music – albeit completely different – part of a
single and coherent body of music: they are liturgical music.

Another quality that must bind pieces into a hymnal is their biblical witness. Christian
worship is not a *tabula rasa* upon which anything can be “Christianized” and made holy. It has
inherited the witness and the tradition of countless generations that worshipped the same God
and gave witness for this God’s might works in their lives. Therefore, any hymn – old or new –
must also follow the qualities their predecessors had. One must, then, look at basic qualities
worship music found in scripture and created by the early Church possessed. As previously
stated, five essential characteristics of Jewish and early Christian religious music are: binding
together, memory, joy, lament, and proclamation.\(^{136}\) What goes in a hymnal must also follow the
pattern of earlier church music. It must gather people as the Body of Christ. It must recapitulate
the history of salvation, eschatologically pointing to the One who came and will come again. In
that regard, by gathering people and emphasizing common memories of their salvation history,
liturgical music is anamnetic – a rather revolutionary movement at a time most societies suffer
from amnesia (they seem to forget the past, either through alienation or through rewriting it) and
the Church itself has been taken by consumeristic patterns of worship which are anthropocentric,

\(^{136}\) Westermeyer, *Te Deum: the Church and Music*, 27-29
rather than theocentric — "with the primary concern being to please ourselves and others than to worship."\textsuperscript{137}

Liturical music must also express human feelings of joy and lament towards God, "a full range of human emotions including yearning [and] despair,"\textsuperscript{138} in sum: the essence of what makes us human. And it must be proclamatory: it must give witness of the Gospel, and call all people upon conversion, with elements of exhortation and admonition, teaching and doctrine.\textsuperscript{139}

Also, liturgical music (and that is what a hymnal is all about) is, essentially, prayer. It must be clearly recognized as communication with God. And, in that regard, it must fit one of the categories of prayer: "a prayer of confession, supplication or adoration; or perhaps ... a hymn of praise or a song of thanksgiving ... [or] some other kind of function."\textsuperscript{140} As hard as it may be to believe, some pieces of contemporary worship music fail to fit any of those categories. Their appeal to mere emotionalism turns the worship experience into something much more akin to obliging God to act in a certain way, or commanding God to do something. This is not communication, for communication presupposes a two-way (or n-way) process. In prayer, people communicate with God and let God speak through/to them. Prayer is our attention to the presence of God, which is a free gift.\textsuperscript{141} And in corporate prayer (which includes liturgical


\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 6-7

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 14-15

music), Christians pray together with one voice (hence the “binding together” quality of psalms, hymns and service music from the dawn of times). “Our worship of God is a way of producing connection with one another, God and the world. A new world is created, a cloud of witnesses is present, a wireless router can bring us connectivity just as the songs of a hymnal sung by our ancestors.”

Liturgical music as prayer, therefore, is based on the same strand of ancient witness that includes spoken prayer, which is informed by the witness found in Scripture and in the continuity of the Church’s tradition. It binds us to one another and raises awareness of our identity in Christ and of our interconnectedness as Christ’s Body. God is revealed in our midst, worshippers are transformed – personally and collectively. When hymnals provide the faithful the opportunity of praying as a community, they help them participate – together – in the Paschal Mystery.

Since liturgical music is about connecting the people of God among themselves and to God, it ought to privilege lyrics and tunes that make such communication easier. This means hymns, other than being “singable” (an aspect that will be further examined under the Feasibility topic), must contain more of “we” and less of “I.” This does not mean that any hymn that contains lyrics in the plural form of the first person is automatically a piece of music that makes community. In fact, some hymns that use only singular forms such as “I”, “my” and “me” contain theology that is better appropriated in the context of a community and, therefore, establish communion among the faithful. However, many hymns that have been written with a clear purpose of fostering people’s participation in worship are also styled in the plural form:

142 Cláudio Carvalhaes, Paul Galbreath, and Janet Roland Walton, What’s Worship Got to Do with It?: Interpreting Life Liturgically (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 233

“we”, “our” and “us” are good hints of community-binding texts. Whenever appropriate, a commission might try to “pluralize” existing texts that are written in singular forms. This is an approach that must be pursued with much care, not to ruin well known hymns as a side effect.

Finally, all liturgical music must possess sound theological quality. A hymnal must encapsulate - in all its diversity - the basic doctrines of the Church, but also challenge the faithful theologically, in order to expand their view of the Christian God. Some hymns possess a clear trinitarian aspect, and in such invocations, recall the faithful of the mystery of the Trinity; some remind the faithful of the nature of God (who created us, who sustains us, who brings us life, who redeems us from all evil…); some teach the faithful the basic Christological doctrines; some reveal the nature and works of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology); some remind the Church of what it should be and what it was instituted for (Ecclesiology); some cover the Liturgical Year and present eschatological hope in the things to come; some remind us of our hope in eternal life. These, and other core doctrines which have characterized Christians – of all varieties and denominations – over the course of the centuries, must inform a coherent set of hymns so that the faithful might be informed and reminded of the faith the assembly (and all people of God) share.

A collection of hymns that communicates theology must also strive to expand people’s imagination and challenge preconceived views of basic doctrines of the Christian faith. Take, for example, the first stanza of the hymn “My song is Love unknown,” originally a poem by 17th century Church of England priest Samuel Crossman, which received a musical setting in the 20th century, by John Ireland:

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My song is love unknown,
my Savior's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.
O who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?¹⁴⁵

It clearly talks about a central aspect of the Christological doctrine known as the Atonement: Jesus' self-sacrifice on the cross. However, Crossman was able to craft the lyrics in such a way they make the reader/singer/worshipper rethink their preconceived views of the Atonement as a somewhat cruel event, which should make us feel guilty and sorrowful. The hymn, however, presents it as a love story – in fact, the most wonderful love story that ever happened! It is the story of an unknown love, which was freely bestowed upon the loveless, so they could be lovely. What an expanding, impressive view of an often-feared doctrine of faith! See fig. 8 for the entire hymn, with the lovely tune Love Unknown by Ireland, who so masterfully crafted a crescendo that reaches its high point at the end of the first quatrain of the ABABCDDC rhyme scheme. The tune then proceeds to the last quatrain suggesting a sense of peace, which cleverly complements a poem that tackles hard to understand theological principles with much delicacy and peacefulness.

¹⁴⁵ The Hymnal 1982 (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985)
Jesus Christ our Lord

Unison or harmony

1 My song is love unknown, my Savior's love to me, love
2 He came from his blest throne salvation to bestow, but
3 Sometimes they strewed his way, and his strong praises sing, re-
4 Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite? He
5 They rise, and needs will have my dear Lord made a way; a

1 to the less shown that they might love-ly be. O
2 men made strange, and none the longed-for Christ would know. But
3 sounding all the day hosannas to their King. Then
4 made the lame to run, he gave the blind their sight. Sweet
5 murder they save, the Prince of Life they slay. Yet

1 who am I that for my sake my Lord should take flesh, and die?
2 O my friend, my friend indeed, who at my need his life did spend.
3 "Crucify!" is all their breath, and for his death they thirst and cry.
4 injuries! Yet they at these themselves dis-please, and against him rise.
5 steadfast he to suffering goes, that he his foes from thence might free.

6 In life no house, no home
7 Here might I stay and sing,
   my Lord on earth might have;
   no story so divine;
   in death no friendly tomb
   never was love, dear King,
   but what a stranger gave.
   never was grief like thine.
   What may I say?
   This is my friend,
   Heaven was his home;
   in whose sweet praise
   but mine the tomb
   I all my days
   wherein he lay.
   could gladly spend.

Words: Samuel Crossman (1624-1683), alt.
Music: Love Unknown, John Ireland (1870-1962)

Fig. 8. My song is love unknown, to the tune Love Unknown.
The Hymnal 1982 (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985)
Likewise, take, for example, this stanza from Cesareo Gabaráin’s well known hymn “Una espiga dorada por el sol”:

Como granos
que han hecho el mismo pan,
como notas que tejen un cantar,
como gotas de agua
que se funden em el mar,
los cristianos un cuerpo formarán.

*English version by George Lockwood:*
Like the grains
which become one same whole loaf,
like the notes that are woven into song,
like the droplets of water
that are blended in the sea,
we, as Christians, one body shall become.\(^{146}\)

Again, we find in this hymn a set of metaphors that provide the people of God a wide understanding of the unity of all Christians that is prefigured at God’s table, and which should be yearned, and desired, and lived as of now. The tune is typically Hispanic, with much syncopation and an overall sense of joy (see fig. 9).

\(^{146}\) *Em tua Graça: Livro de Culto e orações: Nona Assembleia, Conselho Mundial De Igrejas: Resources for Praise and Prayer* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006), 461
71. Una espiga

1. Sheaves of summer turned golden by the sun.

2. We are sharing the same communion meal,
   we are wheat by the same great Sower sown,
   like a millstone, life grinds us down
   with sorrow and pain,
   but God makes us new people bound by love.

3. Like the grains
   which become one same whole loaf,
   like the notes that are woven into song,
   like the droplets of water
   that are blended in the sea,
   we, as Christians, one body shall become

4. At God's table
   together we shall sit,
   As God's children, Christ's body we will share.
   One same hope we will sing together
   as we walk along,
   brothers, sisters, in life, in love, we'll be.

5. Como granos
   que han hecho el mismo pan,
   como notas que tejían un canto,
   como gotas de agua
   que se funden en el mar,
   los cristianos un cuerpo forman.

6. En la mesa de Dios
   se sentarán,
   como hijos un pan compartirán.
   En la espera
   caminando cantarán,
   en la vida como hermanos se anuncian.

Em tua Graça: Livro de Culto e orações: Nona Assembléia, Conselho Mundial De Igrejas:
Resources for Praise and Prayer (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006), 461
No piece of liturgical music will be capable of covering all aspects of Christian theology, but their ensemble must. The universal quality of a hymnal demands it to weave manifold pieces of musical prayer into a set of worship music that – if sung in its entirety – will inform the people of God and teach universal aspects of their faith. As Gray puts it, “[f]ine hymns in their varied uses of religious language are not only expressions of our theology but are often determinants of it, especially for many who never study theology systematically or in any significant depth, and yet week by week have it presented in clear, powerful, memorable ways through carefully worded texts and skillfully composed music.”

A hymnal that encompasses a wide breath of Christian theology, presented in inspirational and provocative ways, makes theological discourse available to all people. The collection of liturgical music, when carefully chosen, provides unifying hermeneutics that connects doctrines and theological views as part of a single, systematic, musical theology.

All aforementioned aspects (prayer, worship and theology) must be universal qualities of a well-conceived hymnal. Needless to say, these can be achieved if, and only if, worship music (which is prayer, and which is also theology) is truly corporate. Instrumental music and choral music have their qualities and are also welcome in worship. However, they cannot be the only sources of musical enrichment. Nor should music for the liturgy be treated as music in the liturgy: a “functional accompaniment to a ritual action.”

Music that is selected in order to compose a hymnal can only reach its purpose as worship, prayer and theology if it is sung and

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147 Gray, *Hermeneutics of Hymnody*, 69


149 Molloy, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 3,” 334
followed by the entire congregation, as single, unified prayer. This triggers more effectively the
universality this topic meant to emphasize.

**Context: when and where**

Hymnals do hold some universal characteristics, as previously stated. However, they are
also produced under a very particular context, which is directly related to when and where they
were compiled.

Every context carries its own challenges. At times, the Church is being called to move
forward and engage in dialogue with the world that surrounds it. At times, it is called to stand for
Gospel values that are being challenged, and denounce the oppression that exists in the world.
Drawing from the well-known taxonomy established by Richard Niebuhr,\(^{150}\) over the course of
time, the Church has responded to culture in many different ways:

- Christ against culture: Church and culture are seen as two entities in constant conflict. If
  one is to be loyal to Christ, then the world and all it entails (including culture) must be
  rejected.

- Christ of culture: Jesus is seen as the one who fulfills the aspirations of society, for he
  “directs all [people] in culture to the attainment of wisdom, moral perfection, and

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\(^{150}\) H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2001) is a seminal work in
the field. It has been challenged over the course of the years, mostly on the ground it reflects a world that
does not exist anymore (the book was written in the fifties), and therefore does not reflect current societal
nuances nor provides further categorization. It suits the purpose of this text, however, in pointing to the
reader how the Church has decided to deal with its surrounding culture in many different ways according
to different contexts.
There’s no conflict; history points to Jesus. Those followers are called cultural Christians.

- Christ above culture: those who advocate the synthesis view claim that God uses the best elements of culture to advance the Gospel. Under that view, both Christ and culture work together, and, over the course of time, both will merge into an ultimate communion with God.

- Christ and culture in paradox: this approach understands the world in a dualistic way, without, however, rejecting culture upfront like those who understand Christ against culture. The dualist sees a history of constant struggle between faith, sin, and grace; between faith and disbelief. They read interactions with culture through these lenses.

- Christ Transforming culture: the conversionists see culture – like all things – as something under judgement of God. Instead of being above culture, Christ works within culture, transforming it and converting it by transforming what has been corrupted in culture by sin.

The Church’s reaction to culture will, nevertheless, produce music that will be more or less inculturated. Chupungco’s grammar of inculturation (creative assimilation and dynamic equivalence) has been previously mentioned. Its starting points are more or less clearly defined: creative assimilation deals with cultural elements which can be added to Christian liturgy (and music!); dynamic equivalence seeks to express the ordo in the customs and ways of local cultures.

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151 Ibid., 91
However, it cannot be used as a one-fits-all strategy without putting much thought into it. Not all cultural elements should be drawn into liturgical music, at all times, and in all places. Sometimes, they are easily discernible as something that points the faithful to God, or as a well-developed local expression of faith. Sometimes, they are plain superstitions, or pure evil backed by sinful authorities. A complete acceptance of culture risks watering down the Gospel message hymnals need to convey. But a complete rejection of culture would leave them out of pace with the culture that surrounds them.

A starting point in terms of hymnal revision when addressing context is to start by asking when and how this specific set of liturgical music is being produced and/or gathered together. For example:

- A hymnal produced for a country (or group of countries) which sees itself under a totalitarian government, or under the prospect of war, cannot omit issues related to justice and peace. In fact, its main focus must be proclaiming God’s justice at such difficult times and securing the faithful of an eschatological hope that helps them see beyond their current struggles and realize the Kingdom of God is at hand.\(^\text{152}\) Hence the power of music that emerged out of liberationist movements: it spoke to the faithful that there was something greater than their current struggle. It gave them hope. For example, the hymnal *O novo canto da Terra* was produced at a time Brazil was rediscovering its democratic institutions after a long period of military governments and dictatorships. It contained hymns such as this one (Criação – in English: Creation), written by Jaci Maraschin and Décio Lauretti:

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\(^{152}\) Silas Luiz de Souza, "Do desaparecimento da Natureza na música evangélica brasileira," *Numen: revista de estudos e pesquisa da religião, Juiz de Fora*, v. 18 n. 1, 61-62
Mas no teu mundo se instalaram fome e guerra,
e os homens se esqueceram de teu Reino Santo;
quiseram destruir com bombas toda a Terra
e nos fazer acreditar que tudo é pranto.
R. Mas tu és bom, e o mundo teu é bom.

Translation:
But in your world war and hunger have begun,
men have forgotten how Holy your Kingdom is;
our Earth was meant to be razed by their bombs
and force us to believe pain is all there is.
R. But you are good, and your world, God, is good.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{153} O Novo Canto da Terra (São Paulo: Instituto Anglicano de Estudos Teológicos, 2006), 198-201

79
1. Senhor, o mundo que criaste tu nos deste
como sinal do teu amor profundo e antigo,
e a terra inteira, o mar, e a imensidão celeste
tu permitiste que exibíramos contigo.

Meu Deus, és bom, o vasto mundo é bom.

2. Mas na teu mundo se instalaram fome e guerra,
e os homens se esqueceram de teu Reino santo:
quiseram destruir com bimbas toda a terra
e nos fazer acreditá-lo tudo é pranto.

Mas tu és bom, e o mundo tu és bom.

3. Foi por amor do mundo que teu Filho amado
morreu na cruz e ressuscitou vencendo a morte,
e assim nos chama, agora, a um mundo renovado
onde o serviro impera e o amor é nosso reino.

Mas Deus, és bom, tem ser milagre é bom.

Fig. 10. Criação
O Novo Canto da Terra (São Paulo: Instituto Anglicano de Estudos Teológicos, 2006), 198-201
- A hymnal produced for a post-Christian, Western society, where the Gospel message is not widely known, might have to seek new music styles despite the fact such cultures produced impressive church music for centuries. However, many traditional hymns do not resonate to the ears of regular people anymore. Committees might have to borrow distinct elements from local cultures in order to communicate the Gospel anew. For example, rhythms and poetic imagery long associated with the secular world might be employed in such a context. For example, several news outlets have reported the success of heavy metal masses in Finland,¹⁵⁴ a country which has produced composers such as Jean Sibelius, but currently sees in heavy metal its main musical genre. The amount of worshippers who attend such services contrast with a rather-secularized society where religion lost its centrality. The trend has been going on for at least a decade, and several worship songs have been composed in order to tell the Gospel story through this often-demonized style. In this specific cultural setting and time, why can’t Christian heavy metal songs be added to a new hymnbook?

- A hymnal produced for a contemporary, de-colonial society, might have to take into account that so much of four-part harmony found in traditional hymns has also been used as military songs played by colonialist armies. No matter what the intent of original hymn writers was, their misuse as an instrument of oppressive power suggests they should not be added to any hymn collection until those wounds are healed and they can be appreciated for what they originally were. An interesting example that portrays this tension happened in South Africa, where Black African seminarians developed a tradition

of consistently diminishing and adapting colonial elements of harmonization found hymn tunes, by using techniques such as skipping thirds and localized westernisms. The result is a unique blend which preserves original lyrics and their theological depth but turns tunes into something that relates to African culture, without any traces of colonial power.

These examples do not mean that all music found in hymnals should focus on the particular issues surrounding their cultures. They still need to attain the universal qualities previously cited, and this can be done only through the selection of a wide variety of worship music. What context does is to determine particular nuances and emphases, which do not exclude certain genres or themes. These nuances and emphases do give, however, preeminence to certain aspects liturgical music should have in order to better communicate the Gospel within that particular culture and period of time.

**Balance**

Another aspect that must be taken into account when publishing a new hymnal (or revising an existing one) is to keep a certain balance between what is perceived as “traditional” and what is perceived as “new.” Context, as already noted, is based on a given culture at a given time. Balance does differ from context to context, but it is what gives context the nuances and emphases it should have.

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Furthermore, balance is what holds in tension “old and new, local and foreign” in hymnology. No hymnal should be purposely devoid of a specific genre, theological viewpoint or theme (as long as they are sound and appropriate, of course). But a commission which sees the value of balance will be able to navigate through the wide variety of liturgical music that has been produced across the centuries and the impressive number of contemporary hymns that have been composed both locally and globally.

First and foremost, there’s tradition, with its heavy weight, which can lead to extreme reactions among worshippers. Some love it – to the point of idolatry. Some hate it and want it to go away – to the point of insanity. A balanced hymnal should not follow any of those lines of thought. And more: liturgists and musicians must be aware that sometimes they might be dealing with an inherited tradition, sometimes with a perceived tradition, and sometimes with an updated tradition.

The inherited tradition is basically what has been handed over by the Church over the course of the years. It includes all those musical pieces that have truly survived across the centuries: psalms and canticles, early Church hymns, medieval and Reformation hymns, revival hymns and everything else that might be called a “classic.” They must be carefully chosen according to the relevance they might have in a specific context, but one cannot be too iconoclastic about their removal from new publications. Those serve as a common thread among all Christians.

But then, there is a perceived tradition, which – in essence – is not traditional at all. Some hymns are not even that old, others are not that widely known and have become a local eccentricity, and some more were built on very weak foundations and are of either low musical
quality or of flimsy theological constructs. These, for the most part, should make room for new and more inspiring music.

But also it should be noted there is an updated tradition. Missionaries have left their mark in many places around the world and have impacted many different cultures. For better or for worse, the result of their labor is the global Church and its beauty. The musical impact of so many years of Western dominance means that certain pieces of church music have been so much sung and repeated by generations of non-Western Christians that they have become their tradition also. Through globalization, many of those cultures are exposed to a dominant culture, which invariably has an impact on their worship practices.¹⁵⁶ Church committees must also be humble enough to realize that no matter how much they would want to see less European or North American hymns in future publications, some of those hymns are an integral part of worshippers’ faith experiences, and have been embraced as their tradition as well. It does not matter to many faithful people, if a specific hymn was originally composed for strict a cappella Reformed worship in Switzerland, but now is sung with much clapping and dancing somewhere in Africa. That piece of music has been resignified. An updated tradition has emerged. A balanced hymnal ought to make room for it (and its eventual updates and adaptations). Hence why some pieces like “Amazing Grace” and “How great thou art” are so much loved by many different cultures around the globe.

But apart from tradition (and its varieties), there is also an increasing need to accommodate new worship songs, psalm and canticle tunes, and service music that has been created by contemporary composers, and suit a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This

is a reality even in European and North American countries, where large shares of the population
can count at least one parent or grandparent who was born overseas. Liturgists and musicians
must be very generous in terms of accommodating new groups and foreseeing the impact of
changing demographics in worship. While context determines the main emphases of a hymnal,
based on location and time, balance needs to ensure that emerging cultures get proper
representation, by providing hymnals with a considerable amount of songs that come from their
traditions and from their contemporary composers. Strategies such as the publication of “ethnic”
supplements are outdated and must be avoided at all costs. It is important that all Christians,
especially those who originally came from the dominant culture, learn the virtues of worship
within their neighbor’s cultural setting. Therefore, the main hymnal itself should offer a variety
that fully represents the Church’s diversity within that context.  

A good example of a theoretical approach to balance which might be useful for hymn
revision committees was proposed by van Andel, Hoondert and Barnard. They identified three
models for a hymnal: mirror and motor (the hymnal as a representation of what is already going
on in the world, as opposed to music meant to enrich the faithful), museum and utility (a hymnal
that must preserve a heritage versus liturgical material that is useful to the current reality), and
aid and resource (music that teaches and challenges vis-à-vis context-free music that requires
little explanation). Committees must refrain from bending too much towards each one of those
models. They must keep them in balance, according to their specific context.

157 For a good example of balance in terms of hymnal compilation, see Stig Wernø Holter, "Norsk
salmebok 2013: A hymnal for church and home," The hymn: A journal of congregational song 67/1
(Winter 2016), 17-23.

Songs Derived from Constructed Meaning of a Hymnal,” Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie 53
(2014), 143-158.
Feasibility

Another concept that invariably has to be taken into account when upgrading and publishing hymns is feasibility. A hymnal must come into fruition.

Funds and other monetary resources will obviously limit what can be done in terms of publishing, procuring copyrights and providing multiple accompaniments for choirs, organists and other musicians. But other than that, feasibility involves ensuring that the newly-published hymnal can be purchased by enough congregants in order for it to fulfill its purpose (which is, of course – among other things – to provide common worship which is theologically sound and culturally-appropriate for the people of God in a specific context). If hymnals end up too costly, the faithful will settle for less expensive solutions (such as projectors or printed booklets) which are far from ideal.

Another major concern when checking if a hymnal is feasible is the availability of arrangements that can cover a wide variety of musical instruments. Long gone are the years when every congregation had an organist. Yet, worship cannot stop. Sheet music must be versatile enough to cover not only the organ, but also other kinds of instruments like the piano, the keyboard (with simplified accompaniments), and the guitar. Digital resources such as audio files could also be employed as a palliative solution in places where musicians are simply not available, but this is obviously an extreme solution. These measures should not be seen as a concession to the loss of quality in Church music; rather, they must be understood as a demand created by a theology that reinforces opportunities for all people to join in worship, including those people in small and poor congregations. A hymnal that can’t be used in such contexts is a hymnal that failed bringing its important message to a subset of all Christians.
Music should also be “singable.” This means it should be easy for anybody with minimal musical training to follow it, understand the lyrics, and reach all notes comfortably while singing. Some hymns are so musically complex that they could be of better use as standalone choral pieces. If most worshippers are unable to sing them, then perhaps they should not be added to a hymnal. Also, lyrics full of archaisms may be daunting or simply not intelligible, and need to be revised so their message is full communicated. “[L]anguage used in worship should be commonly understood in the daily experience of children, youth, adults, men, women, friend, young and old. Since one experience common to worship is learning, it is permissible to use words in worship which require explanation, as long as they are explained and kept in perspective.”

Finally, feasibility can usually be attained when commissions decide to cooperate and work together. At a time most denominations struggle with decreasing membership and increasing costs, it is scandalous that many of them still refuse to work together in terms of publishing hymnals. The winds of the Spirit that brought ecumenism to the life of the Church catholic have reduced immensely the theological gap that once separated so many churches. The Liturgical Movement, through research and praxis, also helped unite different liturgical churches in prayer, by developing rites that had many more similarities than differences.

Based on that, it is time to ponder if the joint production of hymnals should be taken more seriously, both in terms of standardizing lyrics and saving costs on copyright and publishing expenses. The major source of contempt – (minor) theological differences among denominations – could be easily solved by publishing supplements or specific denominational

159 Batastini et al, "What hymnal committees look for: Suggestions for hymn writers," 100

instances of the same hymnal, but with a few more pieces added to it. A similar approach has been applied to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which may or may not contain a few more feasts and readings pertaining to one specific church. In these cases, specific denominational versions of the RCL are published, but retaining the core contents that characterize the joint work different Church groups took in establishing a single, unified liturgical resource for Bible reading.

**Beauty: art at God’s service**

One issue that cannot be overlooked is the artistic quality hymnody must possess. “It is to the literary and musical facets of hymnody that the term ‘art’ is most obviously applicable.”\(^{161}\) Art should be, then, another important factor while examining the pertinence of specific songs in a hymnal project.

When it comes to the lyrics of a hymn, there’s the importance of poetic language as religious language, and its potential to elevate the soul. The people of God have always resorted to poetry when they needed to express their prayers through music. Psalms are a great example of this. Poetry for hymnody must possess both technical aspects (form) and artistically convey a message that communicates the love of God (content).\(^{162}\)

In terms of form, committees should seek poetry which allows easy and clear pronunciation, without cacophonies and unnecessary repetitions. Syntax must be clear and grammar should be correct. Poetic meter should match hymnic meter in a way words are

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\(^{161}\) Gray, *Hermeneutics of Hymnody*, 223

\(^{162}\) Ibid., 161
pronounced properly, without changing the tonic syllable of a word, nor cramming several
syllables together.

In terms of content, hymns must convey a theologically clear message, correctly using
figures of speech in order to enhance it, and not clutter the text, thus turning it unintelligible.
Excessive changes of word order and ellipses should be avoided. Figures of speech may be used,
but with care. Good balance must be reached between the artistic qualities of hymn lyrics and the
capacity of easily reading and understanding them.

Music that is suitable for a hymnal must be both aesthetically pleasing and complement
the lyrics with graciousness. "Beyond its own musical merit, the music must convey the basic
mood or moods of the text; give the proper accents of the words; and show attention to the nature
and meaning of certain key words."163 While it needs to be pleasing, and enhance the mood of
the text, it also needs to be simple enough so worshippers will follow it. It is also usually
confined to the length of a stanza. In that regard, it cannot privilege the text of one stanza over
the others. The music must help each section of the text convey its meaning.

In that regard, arrangements can be of much use when it comes to conveying the main
ideas hymns were written for. Music can suggest joy, contrition, expectation or penitence. Good
tunes and well-designed accompaniments will match those moods to the lyrics and to the purpose
of each hymn. In fact, sometimes good music compensates for lyrics that lack some usually
essential characteristics. For example, Suzanne Toolan’s well-known hymn “I am the Bread of
Life” has no metric (see fig. 11). It is also uncommon in that its lyrics do not rhyme.164

163 Ibid., 225

164 The Hymnal 1982 (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985)
Fig. 11. I am the bread of life

*The Hymnal 1982* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985)

This hymn’s power rests upon the fact it has some powerful music matched to it. Not only can the tune effectively adapt to different stanzas and different metrics, it also progressively conveys a triumphant mood, which calls for fanfares and lively percussion as it reaches the refrain. It is impossible not to rise up with it as it progresses. The music is so successful that a series of parodies were produced showing how the tune can match almost anything in terms of lyrics (see fig. 12).
I Am the Bread of Life: new verse

6. This song has no rhyme, nor does it have any leg-it-i-mate meter. And that's the beauty of this song! After all, what's one more slur, or one more dotted line tying lots of little tiny notes together? So you can sing whatever you want! Yes, you can sing whatever the heck you want, and just keep singing and singing 'til the last day!

Fig. 12: Parody of “I am the Bread of Life.”
Unknown author.

Theological wideness: inclusiveness at work

Finally, hymnals should possess theological wideness. This means they must give witness to different ways of understanding and reflecting upon the basic tenets of the Christian faith. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, hymns are theological statements which teach the faithful and challenge them to have deeper knowledge of their faith. A hymnal is, therefore, a systematic theology. But if such systematic theology fails to include different approaches to faith, doctrine and the sacraments, then it risks being outdated and out of pace with congregations and denominations which have become increasingly diverse, thus becoming a microcosm of Christianity’s rich inheritance.

Many hymns composed prior to the 20th century rely on ascending Christologies and high views of God. This means the divinity of Christ is usually emphasized and the Triune God is
often depicted as the Almighty, the Maker, the Judge. Sometimes, metaphors even used
references borrowed from imperialistic or military terms. On the other hand, as modern theology
started to promote alternative views of God, hymn writers began exploring a descending
Christology, emphasizing the humanity of Christ. They also sought to find, both in Scripture and
in imagination, alternative names and characteristics that define God. God is presented as
mother, peacemaker, enabler; God is shown as the One who walks in solidarity with the poor.

Westermeyer argues that such differences must be held in tension, so hymnals must be
able to cover the whole breadth of theological approaches to a given discipline. Therefore,
instead of replacing all hymns that emphasize Jesus’ divinity with those that aim to show his
human face, it is possible to force both views to coexist. “Music that affirms bodily movement
and music that lives in an ethereal world of contemplative mystery might be forced to live in an
incarnational tension.”165

Likewise, when it comes to Christ’s main actions, at times the Church focused more on
his role as an example humanity should seek, and hymns from that era reflected this view. At
times, the Church emphasized the fall of humanity, with liturgical music that reminded
worshippers of their need to be rescued by a Savior. And sometimes, the Church saw Christ as a
mighty conqueror, who was victorious over death and sin. Some compositions also reflected this
view. Presenting the two of them as complementary options within a collection of hymns ensures
that congregations will manage to ensure “the music of marches, high art, suffering, and victory
are all given place … [and] hold together the fullness of theological affirmations.”166

165 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 52

166 Ibid., 54
Other doctrines also cover a variety of viewpoints. For example, the Church as the community of believers versus the Church as the Body of Christ on earth. The sorrow of death in “its penalty from sin and its separation from loved ones … [but also] joy in that death is not final because death no more has dominion.” Also, when dealing with eschatology, some lyrics emphasize the proximity of the Kingdom of God, while others suggest a yearning for its coming in a more distant future.

All of those tensions are not new in church history. They are inherent to the New Testament, and to the Church’s tradition. Westermeyer says:

As Arland Hultgren suggested to me with regard to eschatology, for example, in the Gloria in Excelsis, Christ is at the right hand of God already, and there is peace on earth not yet. In “Worthy is Christ” the Lamb has already begun his reign, but we join the hymn of creation as people of God still on earth not yet in the new age. In the Benedictus, God has already come to set the people free, but we continue to worship all the days of our lives not yet in the totally freed condition. In the Te Deum the reign of Christ is already begun, but that Christ will come to be our judge suggests the not yet in which we live. In the Magnificat God has already cast down the arrogant, but there is not yet in the mercy from generation to generation.  

In that regard, committees and editors must understand the purpose and theological content of each hymn, in order to assemble them together in a way they provide a hermeneutic that matches both main viewpoints of basic doctrine, and tensions found in Scripture and tradition, thus showing a biblical and theological basis for Christian hymnody. Theological wideness in worship calls for an ecumenical approach when compiling hymns. Committees must

167 Gray, Hermeneutics of Hymnody, 86

168 Westermeyer, Te Deum: the Church and Music, 55

169 Gray, Hermeneutics of Hymnody, 86
understand the importance of preserving a variety of valid theological viewpoints which reflect the tensions the Church had from its beginning. No single song will be able to hold all of them in tension at once, which requires careful weaving of different texts, compositions and musical traditions. However, sometimes hymns manage to encapsulate a myriad of theological approaches in a single piece of poetry. Those should never be missed. For example, see this anonymous 16th century poem by a Spanish author (sometimes attributed to St. Francis Xavier):

No me mueve, mi Dios, para quererte,
el cielo que me tienes prometido,
ni me mueve el infierno tan temido
para dejar por eso de ofenderte.

¡Tú me mueves, Señor!, muéveme el verte
clavado en una cruz y escarnecido,
muévenme ver tu cuerpo tan herido,
muévenme tus afrentas y tu muerte.

Muéveme, en fin, tu amor, y en tal manera
que aunque no hubiera cielo yo te amara,
y aunque no hubiese infierno te temiera.

No me tienes que dar porque te quiera,
porque, aunque lo que espero no esperara,
lo mismo que te quiero te quisiera.170

A translation into English, with different poetic meter:

I love thee, Lord, but not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
nor yet for fear that loving not
I might for ever die;

but for that thou didst all the world
upon the cross embrace;
for us didst bear the nails and spear,
and manifold disgrace,

and griefs and torments numberless,
and sweat of agony;
e'en death itself; and all for one
who was thine enemy.

Then why, most loving Jesus Christ,
should I not love thee well,
not for the sake of winning heaven,
nor any fear of hell;

not with the hope of gaining aught,
not seeking a reward;
but as thyself hast loved me,
O ever loving Lord!

E'en so I love thee, and will love,
and in thy praise will sing,
solely because thou art my God
and my eternal King. \(171\)

As a theological statement, these lyrics cover a wide spectrum of theological viewpoints often perceived as contradictory. The poet sometimes reminds the reader – quite vividly – of Christ’s agony on the Cross, a theme usually associated with the spirit of the Counter Reformation and the Spanish Baroque. At the same time, he hints at the non-existence of heaven or hell. Regardless of it he would still love and serve God. What an impressive statement which gives new meaning to a theology of atonement so much used to scare and oppress! The translation by Edward Caswall (further adapted by Percy Dearmer) is usually sung to the tune \(St. Fulbert\) by Henry Gauntlett, a simple tune which allows for great pronunciation (fig. 13).

\(171\) \textit{The Hymnal 1982} (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985)
The Christian Life

1 I love thee, Lord, but not because I hope for heaven thereby,
2 but for that thou didst all the world upon the cross embrace;
3 and griefs and torments numberless, and sweat of agony;
4 Then why, most loving Jesus Christ, should I not love thee well,
5 not with the hope of gaining aught, not seeking a reward;

1 nor yet for fear that loving not I might for ever die;
2 for us didst bear the nails and spear, and manifold disgrace,
3 e'en death itself; and all for one who was thine enemy.
4 not for the sake of winning heaven, nor any fear of hell;
5 but as thyself hast loved me, O ever loving Lord!

6 E'en so I love thee, and will love, and in thy praise will sing, solely because thou art my God and my eternal King.

Words: Spanish, 17th cent.; tr. Edward Caswall (1814-1878); adapt. Percy Dearmer (1867-1956), alt.
Music: St. Fulbert, Henry John Gauntlett (1805-1876)

Fig. 13. I love thee, Lord, but not because I hope for heaven thereby.
The Hymnal 1982 (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985)

Practical theology and transversal themes

Lastly, on top of any selection of hymns based on theological wideness, some transversal themes that pertain to current theological discourse must be addressed. These themes cut across the entire hymnal, and should guide its composition as a whole.

One of them is justice. For too long, the Church has been silent way too many times on issues related to war, human exploitation and power abuse. For some contemporary Christians, "justice has become an especially important and intense focus in ways that are far broader than
the hymnic ones. Justice must be clearly found throughout a hymnal, thus proclaiming Gospel-based moral values and the need for conversion. For the same reason, militaristic language and imagery must be avoided at all costs. How can the church ignore in worship the needs of the world, the plea of refugees, the masses of trafficked humans and displaced minorities? Liturgical materials that have heavily relied on justice-themed worship songs can be found among Hebrew psalms, African American spirituals, and music produced under the context of liberation theology. In other scenarios, including traditional Western hymnody, justice-related themes can also be found, albeit not as easily. These materials must always be examined and considered as both source of possible additions to a future hymnal and inspiration for new compositions that raise awareness of the pleas of this world, so Christians may pray, act and change these sad realities.

Another theme is gender equality. The Church has also ignored the importance of its non-male members for centuries. In terms of worship, this can easily be found by taking a look at the outdated language many hymns still possess. The challenge committees have before them is to harmonize and update lyrics in a way that doesn’t reinforce patriarchy and heterosexism. This may not be easy when dealing with 16th century hymns, for example. And it may cause a lot of contempt, but it is a pressing issue that needs to inform and transform the way we worship from now on.

For example, “[p]hrases such as ‘peace on earth, good will towards men’ and ‘join hands then brothers of the faith’ need to be carefully scrutinized and in most cases, edited to eliminate

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the use of male terms when used in a generic sense."173 This, however, is the minimum expected in terms of language revision. Commissions must ensure sexist references to God as male are either removed as much as possible, or counterbalanced with powerful imagery that portrays God as metaphorically female or genderless. If the reworked poetry is good and well-done, it will stand on its own without major complaints. Of course, these changes can be achieved much more easily when committees are gender-balanced, and not overwhelmingly male as it has been the case sometimes.

**Racial inclusion** should also be a key paradigm through which hymnal revisions need to operate. It is not enough to include some minority songs. All worship should be inclusive for ethnic groups who compose a specific culture and a specific church community. This also requires careful examination of existing hymns and the establishment of set rules for writing and composing new ones. A hymn must be free of discriminatory or pejorative language,174 its metaphors cannot condone references that might be interpreted as racist. Also, hymnals need to be more inclusive of music created by a variety of ethnic groups, which reflects their distinct genres, theological viewpoints and ways of praying to God. And finally, special care must be taken not to commit the common mistake of cultural appropriation,175 which is unacceptable – even for the sake of the Gospel!

Another relevant transversal theme that also needs addressing is care for the **Environment**, or, in theological terms, God’s creation. Nature, as God’s gift entrusted to human

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173 Batastini et al, "What hymnal committees look for: Suggestions for hymn writers," 95

174 Ibid., 97

175 Simply put, an inappropriate adoption of cultural customs, concepts, arts or ideas by a dominant cultural group.
care, is to be revered, protected and kept. Hymns must be selected in order to reflect this commandment and teach the people of God about their role as stewards of the beauty and complexity of nature.

**Awareness of the Body of Christ**, and of the “bodies of the Body of Christ” is another topic that cuts across issues regarding race, gender and other human prejudices. Notable Anglican Brazilian scholar Jaci Maraschin wrote extensively about a theology of the body and embodied liturgies, through which bodies have taste and power, and where there’s room for dance and laughter. He further suggested that Church music should be able to provide a certain level of bewilderment, by raising people’s awareness of their bodies as holy, and by using rhythms and instruments borrowed from local settings and cultures. The Charismatic Movement was able to master this approach, but it has often coupled innovation in music with a restrictive theology. Maraschin argued it was necessary to provide renewed liturgical music that made people aware, through lyrics, rhythm, song and dance, that their bodies do matter, and are an integral part of the Body of Christ.

Other transversal themes may be defined by the commission in charge of producing a new hymnal, whenever they reflect a specific context. For example, in countries where refugee and immigration ministries are much needed, a hymnal with a strong emphasis on welcoming the stranger might sound very appropriate. The events of the world, economic instability, social inequalities and other questions that bring uncertainty and desperation to the faithful must be

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176 de Souza, "Do desaparecimento da Natureza na música evangélica brasileira," 52


178 Ibid., 128.
addressed through prayer. Liturgical music is prayer. Some concessions might be made regarding themes and matters of concern that might be too ephemeral, for hymnals are put together to endure a few decades, but they cannot be alienated from the wounds and oppressions of the world either. This is why such matters are suggested as transversal themes in order to guide the committee in their choices.

So how do transversal themes function in practice? Initially, a committee must define the broadness of theology the hymnal must possess, based on what has already been discussed previously. This will define how major doctrines will be addressed, and how questions on context, balance and feasibility will be approached. Transversal themes can be used as a final thermometer of a hymnal's contextuality. Not all hymns need to address them, but a good proportion of them will. Also important: no hymn should contradict a transversal theme. In some cases of well-loved hymns, this means they might have their lyrics reworked. See, for example, how the lyrics of “Onward Christian soldiers,” by Sabine Baring-Gould were adapted as “Onward Christian pilgrims,” by David Wright:

**First Stanza - Lyrics by Sabine Baring-Gould:**
Onward, Christian Soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus,
Going on before.

**First Stanza - David Wright’s pacifist version:**
Onward, Christian Pilgrims,
Christ will be our light,
See the heav’nly vision,
Breaks upon our sight.

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179 Cláudio Carvalhaes et al., *What’s Worship Got to Do with It?: Interpreting Life Liturgically* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 233

180 *Hymns Old and New* (Buxhall, Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew Limited, 2005)
385 Onward, Christian pilgrims

Michael Forster (b.1946)  Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842-1900)

ST GERTRUDE 65 65 D and Refrain

1. Onward, Christian pilgrims, Christ will be our light;
   see, the heav’n-ly vi-sion breaks up-on our sight!

Out of death’s en-slave-ment Christ has set us free.

on then to sal-va-tion, hope and li-ber-ty.

Refrain

Onward, Christian pilgrims, Christ will be our light;

see, the heav’n-ly vi-sion breaks up-on our sight!

2. Onward, Christian pilgrims, up the rocky way,
   where the dying Saviour bids us watch and pray.
   Through the darkened valley walk with those who mourn,
   share the pain and anger,
   share the promised dawn!

3. Onward, Christian pilgrims, in the early dawn;
   death’s great seal is broken,
   life and hope reborn!
   Faith in resurrection
   strengthens pilgrims’ hearts,
   ev’ry load is lightened,
   ev’ry fear departs.

4. Onward, Christian pilgrims, hearts and voices raise,
   till the whole creation echoes perfect praise:
   swords are turned to ploughshares,
   pride and envy cease,
   truth embraces justice,
   hope resolves in peace.

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Fig. 14. Onward Christian pilgrims.

Hymns Old and New (Buxhall, Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew Limited, 2005)
All major references to militaristic, triumphant language were removed. Issues around justice and peace were included. The new version retained some similarity to the structure of the original lyrics, and of course, kept the same tune: *St. Gertrude* by Arthur Seymour Sullivan (fig. 14).

**Moving on**

This chapter dealt with some basic concepts that must be taken into account when revising hymnals. They are a starting point and can always, of course, be complemented by other concepts that a specific committee might find necessary or important.

In the following chapters, the structure of a hymnal is examined, and more specific considerations will be presented regarding each one of the main sections it might have.
Chapter 5

What goes in a hymnal? A tentative structure for contemporary hymnals

Hymnals: multipurpose tools for worship

Except in some very specific cases, hymnals are meant to cover a wide variety of services and occasions. Therefore, they should be able to encapsulate a considerable amount of music that will at least offer a handful varieties of liturgical music for every single occasion. This means that, for every specific feast, season or theme, there must be a considerable number of hymns that coherently express theological, temporal, cultural, and musical variations. For other pieces of liturgical music which are based on pre-determined lyrics (such as service music, psalms and canticles), a wide approach in terms of musical styles is still desired.

For example, for the season of Christmas, hymns should cover different theological approaches to the doctrine of the Incarnation: the glory of the Eternal Word with us, the humanity of a God who chooses to be with us, the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures, a connection with other doctrines such as the Atonement (“what has not been assumed has not been redeemed”),¹⁸¹ and so on. They also must be of a variety of time periods, which could include early Church and Eastern hymns, medieval carols, Post-Reformation hymns and modern compositions. The selection should also be respectful of different cultures and emphasize local cultural contexts. It will always include some well-known hymns from Northern Europe, which have become all-time favorites around the world, but should try to reach out to

¹⁸¹ This is a quote often attributed to several different Church fathers, such as Athanasius, Iranaeus of Lyon and Gregory of Nazianus
carols from other regions of the world as well. Finally, it should cover different musical styles, which will complement already mentioned contrast in terms of time periods and cultural settings.

**Music or no music? That is not the question!**

Hymn lyrics do not come as standalone features. They are always coupled with a specific tune. Even when originally written as poetry, after music is added to them, the text gains new life. Therefore, it is mostly unreasonable to detach one from the other for the sake of simplicity or economy.

Hymnals must always have music and lyrics shown together, otherwise they risk losing an important educational quality at a time more and more worshippers are musically illiterate. The question seems to be, instead, if music scores for pew editions will be simplified or not. Under some circumstances, funding constraints will require hymnals to possess one single edition, which will cover four-part singing (which can be used for the organ performance as well), chords and other accompaniments.\(^\text{182}\) When money permits, however, there should be different versions of the same hymnal for these uses, plus a simpler, de-cluttered version for the pew edition. Commissions should examine all of those possibilities according to their needs and limitations.

For the pew edition, different approaches have been tried throughout the years. Hymnal commissions should study them and evaluate which one is better in their own scenario. In some cases, the worshipper is presented with four-part harmony whenever available.\(^\text{183}\) Lyrics might

\(^\text{182}\) In some cases – especially when only one melodic line is available, which is the case with some medieval and contemporary pieces – an accompaniment must be available as well.

\(^\text{183}\) Obviously, various types of chant will have one single melody.
be placed under their respective notes for the first stanza (with subsequent ones organized as poetry after the staves) or for all stanzas, which can be a challenge when there are many. In other cases, only the main melody (usually taken from the soprano voice) is represented, so the faithful can more easily follow the music they are supposed to sing. This last approach is useful when the level of knowledge of music among the congregation is very low, with virtually no congregants able to sight read according to their own voice. In this case, musical notation is still a helper, which can hint at higher or lower notes or differences in tempo, but is de-cluttered enough not to scare non-musically trained people. Fig. 15 shows different ways of displaying lyrics and music notation for a well-known hymn: “Jesus Christ is Risen Today,”184 a heavily modified translation of a 14th century hymn found in the Lyra Davídica hymnal. Each one of them might work well in a specific setting.

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Jesus Christ Is Ris'n Today

1. Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia,
   our triumphant holy King, Alleluia,
   who did once upon the cross, Alleluia,
   suffer to redeem our soul, Alleluia.

2. Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia,
   unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia,
   who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia,
   and gave us the fulness of life, Alleluia.

3. But the pace that he endured, Alleluia,
   our salvation have procured, Alleluia,
   now above the sky he's King, Alleluia,
   where the angels ever sing Alleluia.

4. Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia,
   our triumphant holy King, Alleluia,
   who did once upon the cross, Alleluia,
   suffer to redeem our soul, Alleluia.

5. Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia,
   unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia,
   who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia,
   and gave us the fulness of life, Alleluia.

6. But the pace that he endured, Alleluia,
   our salvation have procured, Alleluia,
   now above the sky he's King, Alleluia,
   where the angels ever sing Alleluia.

Fig. 15. Different ways of displaying lyrics and musical notation for the same hymn.

Moravian Book of Worship (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Moravian Church in America, 1995), 367;
Oramas Cantando (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2014)
Size matters

So much variation in terms of liturgical music comes with a cost: hymnals can easily become too big and impractical for worship. A good-sized hymnal will contain no more than 1,000 pieces, with some greater latitude allowed if it also includes service music. This seems to be the standard among contemporary hymnals in the United States, Canada, and some other countries as well.

When hymnals get too large, they risk losing one of their essential characteristics: the ability to convey common worship. An extremely wide selection gives too much room for some congregations to choose a small subset which might not overlap what other congregations are singing. If, on one hand, variety is needed, on the other hand, some universality is needed as well, in order to allow Christians in different communities and locations to sing the same prayers from time to time.

The anatomy of a hymnal

Liturgical scholar Gordon Lathrop delineates an ecumenical pattern or ordo of worship which is also a pattern of meaning. His proposal of an ordo encompasses the following patterns:

- The ordo of seven days and the eighth day
- The ordo of the year and Pascha

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185 Young, "Ethnic minority hymns in United States mainline Protestant hymnals, 1940-1995," 21
186 Donaldson, "Toward a Musical Praxis of Justice," 26
187 Hymnary.org, Retrieved from https://hymnary.org
189 Ibid., 68.
- The ordo of Word and Table\textsuperscript{190}
- The ordo of teaching and bath\textsuperscript{191}
- The ordo of praise and beseeching\textsuperscript{192}

Lathrop’s summarization of the ordo is based a great deal on Justin Martyr’s Apologies, but does not emphasize a specific period of the early Church by implying the adoption of a specific rite or text. In fact, the beauty of Lathrop’s pattern lies on the simplicity it has. By going back to one of the most ancient non-Biblical Christian documents, he proposes a very elegant approach to the ordo: one that is fully compatible with the liturgies most Christian bodies continue to follow despite so many textual and ritual differences. A hymnal that is truly ecumenical and provides liturgical music for all aspects of Church life, must be able to convey music that covers all main instances of this ordo.

The next two chapters present some considerations on a suggested basic structure for a hymnal. One chapter covers music based on liturgical time: the pattern of day versus night (the Daily Office), the pattern of weekly celebrations (Sundays), and music for seasons, feasts and special days of the liturgical year. The other one deals with music for general worship, which covers the psalter, music for Holy Eucharist, Holy Baptism and other rites, plus other pieces that are suitable for the entire year, but focus on specific themes of Christian life and witness.

Based on such division, and using Lathrop’s Ordo as an analogy, a tentative summary of a hymnal could be:

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., 55.
1) Liturgical music based on liturgical time:

*The ordo of seven days and the eighth day:*

- The Daily Office – service music, canticles and hymns
- The Lord’s Day – hymns for Sundays

*The ordo of the year and Pascha:*

- The Liturgical Year – service music for proper liturgies for seasons, feasts and special days; and hymns

2) Liturgical music for special occasions and general worship

*The ordo of Word and Table:*

- Holy Eucharist – service music and hymns

*The ordo of teaching and Bath:*

- Holy Baptism – service music and hymns
- Confirmation

*The ordo of praise and beseeching:*

- Other rites* (Matrimony, Funeral rites, Ordination, etc.) – service music and hymns
- General hymns
- The Psalter
Chapter 6

Singing Liturgical Time: Themes and Motifs for Seasonal Church Music

Why Seasonal Music for Church?

Human life is based on time patterns. Since the earliest of times, human beings have tried to organize their existence around regularities of astronomy. Not rarely, such regularities, based on the observation of celestial bodies, were infused with religious meaning. Many religions often associate astronomical events to different gods, or their acts. All religions – Christianity included – are based around calendars and other time patterns. In sum, the counting of time was, and still is, sacred for humanity, to the point it gets embedded in the ways we “do” worship.

Christianity has never held the belief that celestial bodies were – in fact – gods. Yet, it has found it very useful to remind, remember and celebrate its feasts according to a calendar that takes into account the duality of day versus night, the variations pertaining to the seasons, the arrangement of stars and other events that are based on cosmic patterns. Liturgical time draws its coherence from a rich blend of metaphors that take into account weather variations, light and darkness, zeniths and nadirs. In all of that, it provides us the opportunity to delimit our religious experience according to the cosmic reality around us, which we feel with our senses as we adapt ourselves to heat, cold, harvests, rain, darkness and brightness. Liturgical time, therefore, allows our religious experience to be intertwined with our life experiences in this world.

Church music has often taken into account the richness of liturgical time. Over the course of the centuries, seasonal music that reflects patterns and motifs of both daily and yearly cycles, and of special feasts, has been composed, arranged and sung by different Christian communities around the globe. However, it gradually lost a lot of its coherence, as Christianity ceased to be a
purely Northern religion, and as secularization increasingly led to the removal of religious references from calendrical patterns.

Liturgical commissions, church musicians, hymn writers and composers must be aware of such challenges when compiling new hymnals for the people of God. Seasonal music must be adapted to different realities that take into account that many Christians now live in the Southern hemisphere, where seasons are the complete opposite of their Northern hemisphere counterparts. For those who live near the Equator, regardless of hemisphere, the concept of four seasons simply doesn’t exist, nor the useful metaphors based on long winter nights and long summer days. Cultural experiences and assumptions may also differ. In certain parts of the world, winter is actually seen as a good and fertile season, and not as a sterile time of the year. And, at a time of deep interconnectedness and reliance on electricity and artificial lights, nights have been seen more and more as useful, rich and exciting periods of time, when both productive and leisure activities can take place.

On top of those challenges, waves of immigration that have taken place over the course of the last few centuries have brought together different cultures with their own religious backgrounds. Festivals that once made perfect sense in Europe, Latin America or Africa are now recreated in other parts of the world by expatriate communities, even if weather patterns, urban settings and new languages challenge the original meaning of such feasts. To them, it matters not the apparent dissonance between their cultural inheritance and a new life in another country. Bonds of cultural affection provide an added layer of meaning to liturgical references that clearly lost their geographic context and original meaning.

This does not mean that liturgical texts (and, of course, church music) cannot draw from the rich tradition of seasonal calendars and cosmic events in order to retell the Gospel story. The
challenge behind the contemporary hymnal commission is, however, to dig deeper and find denser spiritual meaning in every pattern of liturgical time, and provide reasonable balance in terms of associating it with a variety of events that find meaning in different cultures, times and settings. Rather than reducing the power of metaphors, this means increasing and enhancing their effectiveness, so that they are more clearly linked to the spiritual truths they engender. It implies, therefore, the ability to creatively engage different references and supply new hymnbooks with liturgical references that make sense in different church environments.

In the following sections, different patterns of liturgical time are briefly examined. These include the pattern of day versus night, the pattern of Sunday celebrations, and the patterns of seasons and cycles of the liturgical year. Based on their theological meaning, a few suggestions are presented in terms of how to choose music that draws from such rich traditions and provides added layers of content that speak to the multiplicity of cultural references that characterize the diversity of Christ’s Church nowadays.

The pattern of day versus night

Daily patterns of prayer can be easily found in the Jewish tradition. In the book of Psalms, there are references to praising God “seven times a day”\(^\text{193}\), prayers in the morning\(^\text{194}\), in the evening,\(^\text{195}\) in the morning and at night,\(^\text{196}\) and “evening and morning and at noon.”\(^\text{197}\)

\(^{193}\) Psalm 119:164

\(^{194}\) Psalm 5:3; Psalm 130:6

\(^{195}\) Psalm 141:2

\(^{196}\) Psalm 92:2

\(^{197}\) Psalm 55:17
Christians followed the Jewish tradition by providing similar patterns of daily prayer. Early evidence shows that Christians followed the Jewish pattern of, at least, three times of daily prayer (morning, afternoon and evening). The Didache (section VIII) mentions praying the Lord’s Prayer “three times a day.” 198 Clement of Rome suggested prayer at set times. “Both Clement of Alexandria and Origen refer to prayer three times a day … by the fourth century, many churches offered daily morning and evening prayers, and regular attendance was expected.” 199

Thus, daily prayer has been an integral part of Christian life and worship since the beginning. It complements other cycles and patterns and enriches their spirituality. It also provides a reasonable balance between individual and corporate prayer. Over the course of the centuries, different kinds of offices have been established. A rich tradition of monastic offices emerged in the first millennium, and, in large churches and cathedrals, a simpler counterpart (known as the “Cathedral office”) coexisted with it for a few centuries. These have led to a series of breviaries, which followed the well-known liturgies of the hours. The Reformation brought a series of changes to the format of daily prayer, but many of its core elements remained intact (such as Psalm singing and an hourly pattern – albeit greatly simplified to morning and evening). The Anglican tradition, especially, was able to enrich and beautify the Daily Office, through creative craftsmanship which allowed the creation of beautiful and considerably easier-to-sing settings for psalms and canticles. 200 The Daily office remains central to the Anglican tradition and plays an important role in its liturgical ethos. In the East, a distinct tradition of sung vespers and daily prayer also


200 Hoch, Welcome to Church Music & the Hymnal 1982, 8-11
developed throughout the centuries, which remains to this day. In all cases, it is fair to say that most liturgical churches kept some sort of pattern for daily prayer that applies to both individuals and church communities. All forms of daily prayer have some commonalities, such as singing/recitation of psalms and canticles, intercessory prayers and readings from a daily lectionary.

And what characterizes the spirituality of such patterns of daily prayers? The first of it is the intersection of daily prayer and natural phenomena that happen on a daily cycle. The daily offices refer to, and draw their spirituality from, the passing of time throughout the day: morning, noonday, evening, night.

Also, the Daily Office is directly linked with the sanctification of time. Since regular days are usually work days, this means that such daily patterns of prayer occur during a regular work day. As people pause to pray, they create a new sense of glorification of time, and sanctification of all they do in their ordinary lives.201

On the other hand, daily patterns of prayer have lost a lot of their appeal at a time many people do not have a feasible work cycle, take longer commutes and work longer hours at night. It has become harder for people to meet at churches for communal prayer or to find time in increasingly busy lives. Elaborate offices in cathedrals and large churches remain doable in some church settings, but, under many circumstances, the experience of daily worship has reverted back to individual or small-group prayer.

Based on these considerations, a reasonable selection of church music that is both feasible and spiritually sound for daily prayer should pay attention to, at least, the following recommendations:

- Easy to sing tunes for psalms and canticles, which can be sung *a cappella* by small groups or individually, alongside some of the more traditional settings created for choirs and larger church settings. Such tunes can be drawn from a variety of musical traditions, such as metrified psalms, plainchant, and Anglican chant.\(^{202}\)

- A blend of office hymns that include both easier tunes and more elaborate arrangements, thus providing the opportunity for the Office to be sung by both small groups and large church choirs.

- Extensive use of plainchant and other forms of simplified chant, which restores a sense of monastic spirituality – that so strongly influenced daily prayer – and is, at the same time, doable in simpler church settings.

- Canticles, psalms and office hymns must clearly address the tradition of common prayer throughout the day, and the sanctification of time. In that regard, it is possible to venture into patterns of contemporary living, such as longer work hours, late night activities and the existence of electricity and artificial lights. For example, hymns for the daily office might offer petitions for those who study at night or who have night shifts – to those, the day is not over yet. Likewise, it is possible to be faithful to the theological importance of the coming of dawn while giving thanks for artificial lights which provide us extra hours to work and play and – in all we do – glorify God.

Regarding patterns of light and darkness, a lot can be said in terms of the role the sun, the moon and stars have played in setting the pace of our ancestors’ lives. Music for daily prayer should not de-emphasize these realities, which serve as rich metaphors for God’s love and the promise of a new dawn in Christ Jesus. However, it is a reality in many places around the world that worship in the evening will not be as peaceful as it once was in the past, due to constant noises and lights coming from the streets. Liturgies must also address such realities, and perhaps build new metaphors that take into account the ephemeral character of such artificial sources of light and sound, as opposed to the permanent promise of light that bursts forth every morning. This light, like God’s mercy, never ceases.

The pattern of Sunday celebrations

It has been said, over and over, that each Sunday is “a little Easter.” Such metaphor, albeit cute in a Sunday School setting, diminishes the real importance of Sundays as the oldest elements of the Christian calendar, or the “heart of the liturgical year.” Another common metaphor, which does more harm than good, is the depiction of Sunday as the new sabbath, which imposes a sense of obligation to something which should be portrayed as the apex of freedom.

Sundays carry an eschatological meaning. They point to a new creation found in Christ Jesus and are the main feasts of Christ’s death and resurrection, as our Sunday liturgies duly attest. Sunday has also remained the chief opportunity for celebrating Holy Eucharist, which does

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not exclude other forms of communion during the week. Different church traditions have found varied approaches to communion on weekdays. Nevertheless, since at least the 2nd century, all have advocated for at least one communal celebration of the Eucharist per week, and always on Sundays.  

This means Sundays, and Sunday Eucharistic worship, recapitulate our salvation history. They point to God’s redemptive activity within human history, and, in that regard, are a weekly celebration of Christ’s Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension, but also of our own redemption through the waters of Baptism. These motifs are reinforced in Eucharistic prayers, creeds and service music (with a special emphasis on the *Gloria in Excelsis*). Unfortunately, however, many hymnals still organize hymns for Sunday according to specific seasons, without creating a specific list for hymns appropriate for the “Lord’s Day.”

It is important to keep in mind, then, that music for Sundays need not match only scriptural themes for the day and/or seasonal motifs. Sunday Eucharists point to a wider mystery. Music created for them must also cover the economy of Salvation and the eschatological hope of a new

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However, one must notice that even the Hymnal 1982 only destined six hymns to their “Sunday” category (hymns 47-52)

and transformed world through Jesus Christ. Sundays are a single unifying factor for the absolute majority of Christians. They do not depend on weather, seasons or secondary cultural elements. They are, indeed, catholic. Sundays provide an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to act upon God’s people and bring them together in unity and truth. Sunday liturgies, therefore, bear witness to deeper theological truths that are universal for all Christians and not confined to specific metaphors that are better understood under certain contexts.

An interesting idea would be to add hymns (or compose new ones) to a specific section “of the Lord’s day” which focuses on the theology of Sundays and its eschatological implication to the people of God. Hymns with a generic focus on the redemption of humankind, on the economy of salvation or on the concept of eschatological hope could serve as an important background to the readings of the day and other music picked according to lectionary texts or church seasons. The Sunday Eucharist, through its theological focus, implies the empowerment of the assembly to do justice in the world. Music for Sundays must, as a consequence, address issues of social justice as well.

Seasons and feast days provide another layer of meaning to Sundays and may also benefit from appropriate music that, in combination with general hymns and service music, will more properly tell the Gospel story and draw the faithful closer to Christ. The following sections tackle the main cycles of the liturgical year, their meanings and liturgical approaches. It is important to

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keep in mind that such considerations apply not only to hymns but also to service music, to sung responses and to antiphons of proper liturgies for seasons and feasts.

**Advent**

Advent has always been one of the most difficult seasons to define in a concise way, as it has received several different influences. There is evidence that, at the beginning of the Middle Ages, at least one region of Christendom (Northern Italy) had established a time of preparation for Christmas. Gradually, other regions started to embrace a similar pre-Christmas season with variable durations, until church calendars settled on what we have now (for most Western churches): a season that starts four Sundays before Christmas and ends the day before it.

The theology of Advent is a creative amalgamation of different influences, all of them properly held in tension. It is, of course, a time of preparation for Christmas, and consequently points to the Incarnation as an important core doctrine of the Church. However, it also carries, in readings, prayers and antiphons, a sense of anticipation of the Second Coming of the Lord, which will lead to the end of the world as we know it. Advent is informed by the experience of those who prepared themselves for the First Coming of the Lord, as examples and inspiration so we repent, convert and get ready for this Second Coming.

Unfortunately, it has become rarer and rarer to see such important theological concepts explored in regular churches. The misappropriation of Christmas by consumer culture has forced upon us a pre-season of “cultural Christmas” in public places. Many churches have ceded to the

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spirit of the times, and tend to start celebrating Christmastide (through décor, music, art and special
liturgies) way ahead the actual season – turning Advent into some sort of “little Christmas.” The
difficulty many contemporary Christians have in terms of dealing with questions around finitude,
judgement, repentance and sin makes it even harder for liturgical ministers to address a coherent
theology of the Second Coming and of the end of this world, since many faithful either cannot see
those things as good or would rather not think about them. In doing so, they lose one of the most
important aspects of Christian liturgies as a whole: the fact they point to eschatological hope of a
new creation redeemed and held by Christ. Definitions of Advent as a time of “joyful anticipation”
cease to make sense. What is being “anticipated”? As said previously, every Sunday Eucharist
recapitulates our salvation history, and is eschatological in its essence. Advent adds an extra layer
of emphasis on how we should prepare for the things to come. It is a scriptural, ascetical and
eschatological preparation for the coming of Christ.\textsuperscript{212} However, when the final coming in glory
of the Lord, who will lead us to a new world without injustice, does not receive enough attention,
the whole economy of salvation ceases to make sense. Christ is risen. The Spirit is here. What
comes next?

The only reason Advent has not become a complete debacle in many churches is the fact
lectionary readings and moveable parts still point to what has historically been regarded as main
theological themes for the season. However, in terms of church music, a lot needs to be done.
Traditional Advent hymns found in our hymnals (which are not many to begin with – Advent tends
to be one of the most frugal sections of our hymnals) are simply not sung. This does not mean they
need to go but it is important to reexamine them in light of contemporary tendencies to diminish

\footnotesize{212} Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, \textit{The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early
Christianity} (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), p.158}
the power of Advent. New lyrics must be properly thought to communicate our hope in the Second Coming and our expectations of a new world. What does this mean for Christians who feel overwhelmed with so many tragedies, deaths and persecution that surrounds us? How can we find hope in the end of this world? What is the meaning of conversion and preparation for this new reality?

Most importantly, music for Advent must sound and look dissimilar to Christmas music. Lyrics must be clearly about Advent – not about Christmas – but music should also have distinct features. In Western cultures, for example, this might mean slower tempo and minor keys, as opposed to the perceived joy of faster tempo and major keys so many Christmas songs possess. An extensive use of plainchant (which characterizes many traditional Advent hymns) is also interesting in that regard. This applies not only to Advent hymns but also to antiphons and service music for the season. Hymn compilers must be aware of the need to present such variety in order to communicate feelings of anticipation, expectation, call to repentance and sustain the tension this season most appropriately calls for.

**Christmas**

If Advent suffers from an ever-stronger cultural anticipation of Christmas, Christmas suffers from a general sense of ignorance that it is, in fact, a season – and not a day. The pressure many liturgical leaders often face is to keep the “Spirit of Christmas” going on throughout the “twelve days” of Christmas. It has been noted that the feasts of St. Stephen and St. John,\(^\text{213}\) which

\(^{213}\) For a good description of all feasts that fall in the Christmas season and how to properly celebrate them, see: Adam, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy*, 141-144.
fall on the days immediately following Christmas, are historical accidents, and should not be merged – in terms of content – with the general motif of the season.\textsuperscript{214}

It is beyond the scope of this text to explain how Christmas came into being as a separate feast (and the season that follows it)\textsuperscript{215}. However, it suffices to say that few other feasts or seasons have suffered from so many suppressions and changes of meaning. For example, in Eastern churches, Christmas carries a much different theological content than in Western churches. Also, in the West, many churches that came out of the Reformed tradition were eminently opposed to even celebrating Christmas until very recently. An added layer of complexity is the fact that North American consumer culture brought into Christmas an amalgamation of kitsch elements with debatable roots in Northern Europe which, apart from the general message of “peace on Earth,” have little to do with Jesus’ birth and the Incarnation.\textsuperscript{216} All of this begs the need to instill, through music, worship and art, key theological concepts pertaining to the season.

There are many Christmas hymns and carols which were composed throughout the centuries. While many of them do, in fact, refer to important theological implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation, some are more focused on the innocence of the Christ child in the manger and, not rarely, emphasize emotional aspects of Christmas that are on the brink of kitsch.

\textsuperscript{214} Alexander, \textit{Celebrating Liturgical Time: Days, Weeks, and Seasons}, 46


For a more detailed explanation, see:

\textsuperscript{216} Connell, \textit{Eternity Today: on the Liturgical Year - Volume I}, 128-130.
Others still point to a romanticized view of Christmas that is culturally based on Northern European assumptions: references to cold weather, winter and snow.

All of these issues present some formidable challenges to those in charge of selecting and updating church music to adequately convey a coherent message of Christmas. First of all, it is important to notice that many hymns are well-loved and have been enshrined in people’s hearts – no matter now incoherent they might seem to the eyes of an ordinary theologian. There is some room to update a few of the more problematic stanzas (especially when such hymns are already translations from other languages), but if changed too much, they’ll lose the appeal they already have. On the other hand, new compositions that draw from musical traditions other than Northern European/North American are surely needed. Apart from using rhythms and musical styles that are regarded as joyful and festal in other cultures, they could also address themes that fit seamlessly with important contexts that are, at times, overlooked. For example:

- Summer and heat as metaphors for the coming of Christ as the Sun of Righteousness
- Longer sunny days as a reference to the birth of the Christ child, the new dawn.
- The Southern Cross as a metaphor to God’s eternal promises, in comparison to the star that shone upon Bethlehem.
- The Incarnation as solidarity: Christ who takes upon human nature comes to live our pains.
- Christ and the Holy Family as exiles, castaways who had nowhere to go – and how this teaches us to care for the poor, the immigrant and the needy.

None of those need to supplant older, beloved metaphors. It is possible to focus on the cuteness of a baby in a manger and, at the same time, remind the faithful such baby was poor and despised, which obliges us to understand Christmas as a call to liberation for all peoples. Likewise,
the same hymn can describe the coming of Christ as both much needed heat in a long winter and the warmth of summer which comes to us so a new cycle of life emerges, without risking the criticism of mere appropriation of pagan symbols.  

Epiphany

Epiphany is a feast, and not a season. Nevertheless, some Sundays after Epiphany (which, in contemporary, ecumenical calendars, are organized as the first chunk of ordinary time) carry a common theological background which points to a focus on God’s revelation to the peoples, so it might be useful to regard those as forming a continuum of Epiphany-inspired readings, which cover the Baptism of Jesus (First Sunday after Epiphany), the Wedding at Cana and other revelations.

In Western Churches, however, liturgical expressions of Epiphany might end up minimizing its rich theology by reducing it to one single revelation: the adoration of the magi. A challenge to liturgists and members of hymnal commissions, in terms of church music, is to reinfuse Epiphany (and the Sundays that follow it, whenever appropriate) with deeper theological meaning, which links the feast to the revelation of God’s glory to humankind and to its original relationship with baptism. It might be useful, then, to reduce the amount of hymns that focus solely on the adoration of the magi and cover a variety of scriptural references to Christ’s revelation to all peoples. These should also address, in creative ways, the meaning of Christ’s revelation to the people of God today, instead of merely pointing to a single event in the past.

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218 Connell, Eternity Today: on the Liturgical Year - Volume 1, 184-186
Lent

Lent derives from an amalgamation of similar preparatory practices, connected to Pascha in Early Christianity. These involved post-Epiphany fasts or the preparation of catechumens for baptisms on Easter or elsewhere.\textsuperscript{219} Only after Nicaea, it is possible to claim a more or less unified Lent as a 40-day period of preparation for Pascha (which, ideally, would involve baptisms). This 40-day period would involve fasting, prayer and penitence\textsuperscript{220} – a concept of Lent that is still in the living memory of some. With the emergence of the Liturgical Movement, however, other aspects of Lent started to be reclaimed, such as its inherent connection with the catechumenate.

Ideally, all of those themes would be addressed in the parish level, so Sundays \textit{in} Lent would be well-deserved interruptions to a routine of spiritual exercises and preparation of the faithful. This, however, seldom happens, hence the need to liturgically differentiate Sundays in Lent from Sundays after the Epiphany and, most importantly, from Sundays of Easter.\textsuperscript{221} For this reason, most liturgical texts call for the suppression of alleluias and the \textit{Gloria in excelsis}, and good liturgical practice will greatly reduce the amount of adornments commonly found in churches in other seasons. Nevertheless, Sundays in Lent must clearly point to the Easter mystery and to a baptismal motif.\textsuperscript{222}

Music for Lent should keep the same principles and help communicate modesty and austerity. A great number of fine Lenten hymns which tackle themes such as sin and repentance


\textsuperscript{220} Talley, \textit{The Origins of the Liturgical Year}, p.214-224)

\textsuperscript{221} Alexander, \textit{Celebrating Liturgical Time}, 47-48

\textsuperscript{222} Adam, \textit{The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy}, 101
have been composed over the course of the centuries. However, given the sad state of affairs our world currently faces, the Church is called to liturgically engage with matters of our own times as well. New lyrics that mention corporate sins and tragedies, such as wars, prejudices, violence in general and the destruction of the environment might serve as a good wake up call for Christians to mobilize, pray and fight for change. At the same time, a great Lenten hymn selection should also include texts which connect our acts of penitence to a clearly baptismal call, thus better engaging with a theology of baptismal renewal on Easter.

Traditionally Lenten tunes may also carry an “air of sadness,” through extensive use of minor keys, slower tempo and spartan accompaniments. These approaches can be generally applied to Western music, but might differ in other contexts. Given the fact an increasing number of Christians come from the non-Western world, it might be wise to find what works in every culture to musically convey an idea of austerity and then implement it. It is fair to say, however, that simpler arrangements and clearly penitential lyrics usually work across different cultures.

Based on that, centuries-old Lenten hymns, often based on plainchant, must also be included in hymnal selections, for they tend to pair tune simplicity with penitential lyrics. Contemporary selections must, whenever possible, follow this same principle.

Lent is also a good opportunity to promote more chanting of liturgical texts. In fact, Ash Wednesday liturgies, which mark the beginning of Lent, tend to have very few opportunities for congregational singing. Chanting, either a cappella or with minimalistic accompaniment, could be explored as a way of properly marking the Lenten season. This applies to specific liturgies, such

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as the Great Litany or eventual responses and antiphons of services such as the Stations of the Cross, but also to simpler Mass settings and service music.

**Holy Week**

Technically speaking, Western calendars treat Holy Week as the final step of Lent. Therefore, the days of Holy Week are included in the forty days of Lent. However, Holy Week liturgies are so unique that it is relevant to mention them in a separate section.

Palm Sunday liturgies encapsulate the dramatic plot twist between Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his betrayal and death. The so-called “Liturgy of the Palms” covers the first part of this story, and must convey an idea of excitement and joy as the faithful process and salute Christ as their king. Hymns such as “All Glory, laud and honor” and “Ride on, ride on in majesty” have been traditionally used in the English-speaking world224 (and in parts of the world influenced by English-speaking missionaries) as quasi-mandatory music for Palm Sunday processions. This does not exclude other pieces of music from being sung, whenever appropriate. New compilations must make provision for other hymns for Palm Sunday that draw from other musical and cultural traditions. In common, they must possess a couple important features: they ought to be easy to sing and, whenever possible, paperless; and they must make provision for joyful accompaniments throughout the procession.

The second part of the liturgy, often called “Liturgy of the Passion” should be austere and simple, in order to set the tone for the Passion narrative that ensues.225 Generally speaking,

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224 Ibid., 112-113

225 Adam, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy*, 110
appropriate hymns for this part of the liturgy should follow principles similar to Lenten hymns' – with, of course, a special emphasis on Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Apart from that, there are some settings for chanting the Passion Gospel, ranging from very simple ones with common responses to very elaborate polyphony. The simple ones could, of course, be included in a hymnal selection.

Maundy Thursday, despite falling in the last few days of the 40-day Lenten season, should be more properly understood as the beginning of a single liturgy that continues through Good Friday, Holy Saturday and the Easter Vigil. Its focus point should be the new commandment (to love one another) that was mandated by Jesus to his disciples, and the institution of the Eucharist as a sacrament of God's love. For this reason, the ceremonial should follow, whenever possible, the pattern of a regular Sunday Eucharist.\textsuperscript{226} It may include a ceremony of foot washing (a practice that has become increasingly more common), so hymnals must include appropriate provisions of music that refers to concepts such as humility, self-giving love and brother/sisterhood.\textsuperscript{227} Given the fact Maundy liturgies are often packed with actions, it might be wise to make sure at least some (if not all) of such hymns are easy to sing and do not require much practice from the congregation.\textsuperscript{228}

Good Friday takes the concept of austerity to the highest level in the liturgical year. Its main theme, of course, is Christ's death on the cross, and may include a veneration of the Cross.\textsuperscript{229}

\textsuperscript{226} Some suggestions in terms of service music for Maundy Thursday may be found in Alexander, \textit{Celebrating Liturgical Time}, 113

\textsuperscript{227} Adam, \textit{The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy}, 65

\textsuperscript{228} Mitchie. “Proper Liturgies for Special Days, 113

\textsuperscript{229} Adam, \textit{The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy}, 72-74
Musical accompaniment is restrained as much as possible, and kept only if necessary. Most music, therefore, will be sung *a cappella* by the congregation, or by a well-trained choir (which might be a constraint for most churches). It is important, then, to come up with hymnal selections that can be safely sung by regular people, and at the same time convey the idea of penitence and suffering the liturgy instills. Likewise, Holy Saturday calls for a very simple, intimate liturgy, with a musical selection that is similar to the one provided for Good Friday.

The Great Vigil of Easter is divided into four parts: the lighting of the new fire (with the singing of the Exsultet); the vigil of readings, psalms and prayers; rites of Christian initiation and the first Eucharist of Easter.\(^{230}\) For the three initial parts, all that is sung is usually included in the liturgical texts and should not have any musical accompaniment, so hymnals must make clear provisions for simple settings for the Exsultet, psalms and litanies. The last part, the first Eucharist of Easter, should contrast deeply from all other liturgies that preceded it, and will be better examined in the following section.

**Easter**

Easter is the central feast and the keystone of the liturgical year. Around Easter Sunday all other feasts and seasons are built. It recapitulates Christ’s death and resurrection in celebration of our deliverance from sin and death through this great paschal mystery. It expands the traditional Passover imagery in order to communicate a new life in Christ Jesus to God’s people. In a certain

\(^{230}\) Alexander, *Celebrating Liturgical Time*, 133
way, Easter is a heightened celebration of Christ’s victory over death which we already celebrate every Sunday,\textsuperscript{231} and should – rightly so – be regarded as the apex of our yearly liturgical life.

More importantly, Easter should not be confined to a mere day of festivities. It is, in fact a season of fifty days (or a week of weeks – seven times seven). During this season, the Church absorbs the experiences of those who were prepared throughout Lent and had just been incorporated into the body of Christ (or renewed their vows and recommitted to a Christlike life). The Easter season is a time for celebrating our liberation through Christ, but also give thanks to the Father for the gifts of faith, hope and love, and to the Spirit for sustaining the gift of life in Christ.\textsuperscript{232} Easter helps the Body of Christ perceive the universality of our salvation history, the universality of salvation and the interconnectedness of all children of God into a single body through the universality of grace. It is, in essence, a moment to celebrate our deliverance and remember God’s promises are freely given to all.

Such a season of joy and unlimited love calls for extravagant music that communicates utmost joy in the Lord, but also reflects the universality of Christ across all cultures. Curiously, a lot of Easter music that found its way into our hymnals does not reflect this wide diversity. Some very cherished Easter hymns have been composed over the course of a few centuries and in very limited cultural contexts. Commissions in charge of selecting hymns for Eastertide must make sure a wide variety of Easter hymns is provided. It should include ancient songs of praise that once spoke to our ancestors in the faith, no matter how foreign they might sound to our years. But it should also embrace festal rhythms and melodies from all sorts of cultures that compose the colorful mosaic of Christendom. Which rhythms, musical instruments and tunes are used to

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., 14-17

\textsuperscript{232} Connell, \textit{Eternity Today: on the Liturgical Year - Volume 2}, 158-160
communicate the idea of celebration in parts of Africa, Asia or Latin America? Let us use them, and incorporate them into an amalgam of different musical styles which truly provide strong evidence to affirm that every tongue, in every culture, confesses that Christ is Lord.

Lyrics should also reflect this universality of Christ’s salvation. This means that, like in Christmas, a lot of metaphors which reference weather seasons should be reviewed or expanded. Easter provides a great variety of themes that could be explored through lyrics and music: resurrection, redemption, liberation, joy, unity in Christ, eternal promises, growth in the Lord and faith in a new life (just to name a few). Metaphors that strictly reference the Resurrection as a phenomenon akin to the end of winter and beginning of spring risk losing their sense in places where winters are relatively long, might be about to start or simply do not exist at all. The depiction of the Resurrection as a new dawn, which references Christ to the ancient metaphor of light, is a universal concept that could be more thoroughly used. An analogy with Christ as the purifying water of life, which provides an important link to Baptism and its inter-relationship to Easter and a post-Resurrection life, is a desirable theme to explore, especially at a time many people around the world find clean water more and more difficult to obtain.

Another theme that must be addressed through music is the building of the Body of Christ and the strengthening of the people called by God to be the Church. This entails concepts such as Christian responsibility, commitment to evangelization, mission and a renewed call to build Christ’s kingdom on earth. In that regard, lyrics should not focus on peritence (“we have erred and forgotten to do your will”) but on renewed commitments (“through Christ, we are called to a new life, and we are commanded to share God’s mercy among all”). Hymns which tackle those themes need not be listed under “Easter,” otherwise such very important concepts will end up confined to one section of the year only (it might be useful to remind here that Easter enhances
and emphasizes theological concepts that should be present in all Sundays and major feasts). They can – and should – remain as general hymns, but provisions must be made to let liturgical planners know such motifs are also very appropriate for Eastertide.

A lot of feast days might fall during Eastertide. These include saints feasts, obviously. Good liturgical practice will emphasize their celebration in the context of Easter, a practice which should be followed by church musicians as well. One major feast of great relevance that falls on the fortieth day of Easter, of course, is the Ascension of our Lord\textsuperscript{233} – which can also be celebrated on the Sunday immediately after it. It begs for a provision of appropriate hymns, which, while touching on the specific narrative of Christ’s Ascension, should also embrace the main motifs of the season and follow many of the rules proposed for Eastertide. It is important to avoid ritualizing the departure of Jesus\textsuperscript{234} (and this includes church music as well). Rather, the main theme of Eastertide, with necessary references to the Ascension, should remain for the entire fifty days.

**Pentecost**

Pentecost (literally: “the fiftieth day”) is often reduced to a celebration of the coming of the Spirit, but its importance goes way beyond that. It is, in fact, a great conclusion for the fifty days of Easter\textsuperscript{235} and should form a continuum with the entire Easter season.\textsuperscript{236} It is also another strongly suggested day for baptisms, and calls for a wider understanding of the action of the Holy

\textsuperscript{233} Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 74

\textsuperscript{234} Alexander, *Celebrating Liturgical Time*, 20

\textsuperscript{235} Adam, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy*, 84-90

\textsuperscript{236} Patrick Regan, “The fifty days and the fiftieth day,” In *Between Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year*, ed. John F. Baldovin and Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 223-224

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Spirit in the Church and in all baptized, without romanticizing a specific event in time as the ultimate theme to be addressed.

Music for Pentecost Sunday should, then, add a special layer of emphasis on the action of the Holy Spirit but must not lose sight of all considerations that were made for the whole of Eastertide (both in terms of music and lyrics). All of this helps preserve the idea of Pentecost as a natural development of Easter, and not a feast that contrasts it or rivals it in importance. It provides appropriate closure to the era in which, by the power of the Spirit, Christ (the one true feast) is inserted into the present world “to be shared by all who believe the Good news … or how the feast, which is the person of Christ, accomplishes and expresses itself in the Church and so consecrates the world … by drawing believers into his own new humanity.”

Ordinary Time and other feasts

The Sundays after Pentecost are also called Sundays of “Ordinary Time” (which also includes Sundays between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday). They are not, therefore, part of a single season with a heightened motif. In fact, readings appointed for such Sundays provide a wide variety of themes that can be addressed through liturgical preaching, art and music. Based on that, there should not be a specific section in Church hymnals called “Ordinary Time”, but different sections that address themes such as Church’s Mission, Christian Responsibility, Church unity, care for God’s creation and general praise. As Sundays, of course, music must address the recapitulation of our own salvation history and the concept of eschatological hope.

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237 Ibid., 227

Trinity Sunday (the Sunday immediately after Pentecost) evokes a theological concept often seen as hard to digest by ordinary people, and relies heavily on the preacher’s ability to communicate what is an essential Christian doctrine in an understandable way.\(^{239}\) Music that demystifies God as Trinity and actually helps establish patterns of trinitarian prayer serves as a good complement to the liturgy of the day.\(^{240}\) Ancient prayers and teachings from Christian mystics (St. Patrick’s breastplate always comes to mind in that regard) might serve as useful lyrics for music that suits that purpose. The theological concept of Trinity as community of persons, which invites all people of God to join the Godhead in unity is another theme that might be explored when either choosing hymns for Trinity Sunday or composing new ones.

All Saints’ Day (November 1\(^{st}\)) celebrates the saints of God who preceded us in the faith. It is also an appointed day for baptisms (or the renewal of baptismal vows). It should, based on those themes, be celebrated as an Easter liturgy\(^{241}\), so hymns to be picked or composed for All Saints must follow some of the principles already suggested for Easter. All Souls’ was originally developed as an austere commemoration of the faithful departed, with prayers for a safe delivery from purgatory. Nowadays, it has been more linked with a recognition of our own mortality and with a more pastoral concern of remembering those who have departed from our midst. It is, nevertheless, of optional observance in many churches. All Saints’ remains the major feast and music for it must take into consideration its Paschal character. Special emphasis might be placed

\(^{239}\) Alexander, *Celebrating Liturgical Time*, 24-25

\(^{240}\) Catherine Mowry LaCugna. “Making the most of Trinity Sunday,” In *Between Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year*, ed. John F. Baldovin and Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 257-261

\(^{241}\) Alexander, *Celebrating Liturgical Time*, 27-28
on providing a variety of hymns from different cultures and backgrounds, which emphasizes the universal character of the Communion of Saints.

Holy Cross, which falls on September 14th might be regarded as some sort of Lenten equivalent to the Paschal aspect of All Saints’ (which falls roughly forty days before it). This concept, however, is not officially endorsed by most liturgical books, and it is not wise to treat it as such. Music for Holy Cross, nonetheless, will obviously address Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and may be selected taking into account the penitential aspect of it.\footnote{Adam, The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy, 182} It is, notwithstanding, a feast day, and should be treated as such.

The last Sunday of ordinary time is generally called Christ the King (although not all churches have followed this nomenclature). Regardless of how one calls it, lectionary readings focus on Christ’s coming in glory, and the Church’s faithful response to it. It provides a nice closure to the liturgical year and points to one of the main themes of Advent.\footnote{Ibid., 177-179} Hymns for Christ the King Sunday, however, do not need to be organized as a special section. There are plenty of hymns of general praise that touch on the themes covered by the readings without usurping the reasoning behind Advent.

Throughout the liturgical year, there are also a handful other feasts of our Lord that belong to a wider “Nativity cycle”,\footnote{Ibid., 149-154} such as Presentation of our Lord (February 2nd), Annunciation of our Lord (March 25th) and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (May 31st), which is intimately linked with the Nativity. Other than those, the Transfiguration of our Lord (August 6th) is also a major feast. All of them must be celebrated, whenever possible, according to the guidelines

\footnote{Adam, The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy, 182}
\footnote{Ibid., 177-179}
\footnote{Ibid., 149-154}
provided by liturgical texts and should have a special selection of hymns that focus both on the readings for the day and on the feast’s importance within the economy of salvation.

Saints’ feasts, of varying levels of importance, are to be seen as eminently paschal celebrations, for they commemorate the resurrection of faithful people into Christ, without losing sight that saints bore witness to the Holy Spirit that worked through them. ²⁴⁵ They are a reminder that God works through human beings as well. ²⁴⁶ Specific hymns for major saints, or for classes of saints (such as martyrs, doctors and people in religious orders) are desirable but should always carry a paschal meaning. The usage of rhythms and arrangements typical of nations from which specific saints came also contributes to a wider understanding of the Communion of Saints. Depending on the day they might fall, they are to be transferred or omitted, so they will not overrule the character of the season. During Eastertide, as previously noted, they should not supersede the character of the great fifty days of Easter.

**Liturghical music for the Liturgical year**

There is no set of rules written in stone for hymn selections according to seasons and feast days. However, the liturgical year follows a pattern that calls for certain themes based on liturgical calendars and special days.

Current hymnals already make provision for many of those elements, but sometimes lack a more universal character in terms of metaphors, lyrics, rhythms and melodies, in order to convey the importance of each season or feast day to different cultures and scenarios.


²⁴⁶ Baldovin, “The Liturgical Year: calendar for a just community,” 436-437
Churches are called, therefore, to ponder these aspects and reimagine current hymn listings by providing wider representation that includes all people of God and, at the same time, preserve an ancient heritage communicated through music. In all of this, however, it is important to focus on the main message each moment of the liturgical year brings to our attention. A truly multicultural, universal and – as a consequence – catholic hymnal cannot be created by simply picking similar amounts of songs from different ethnic backgrounds and placing them under different seasons of the church year. Attention must be paid to how they communicate the message they are meant to convey. For example, as a sign of inclusion towards the Latino(a) community, one might want to fill the Christmas section with several villancicos. However, many of those songs carry an element of kitsch that might not be useful when trying to instill in the faithful a clear notion of the importance of the doctrine of the Incarnation. This means that, sometimes, some very traditional folk tunes must have accompanying lyrics reworked or tweaked in order to provide safe balance between much loved songs and theological depth.

In the following chapter, a set of considerations in terms of what a section of “general hymns” might have is presented, thus providing a necessary closure to the discussion this chapter started on Sunday worship and Ordinary Time.
Chapter 7

Liturgical Music for Specific Days and General Worship

General is anything but ordinary!

So far, considerations on the structure of a hymnal have covered two main aspects of Church liturgical life (or, in Lathrop’s grammar, two ordos: seven days and eighth day and year and Pascha). Such music is able to cover possibilities for daily prayer and weekly Christ-centered Eucharistic worship at all times; and a year-round cycle of liturgical events, which are centered upon the Pascha, the victory of life over death and the good news that Christ is risen. It provides the worshipping community with possibilities of communal prayer events, a weekly celebration of the resurrection of the Lord, and a yearly cycle of worship which is centered upon the Pascha, thus emphasizing in all three cycles Christ’s victory over death, the beginning of a new creation and its eschatological implications.

The second part of a hymnal covers everything that is destined for “general worship.” This means it covers service music, hymns and antiphons that can be used throughout the liturgical year. In this section, a sung psalter might be added as well. Liturgical music for “general worship” does not mean it is ordinary. It as important as seasonal liturgical music. In fact, one complements the other, and it is not rare to see worship that includes seasonal music juxtaposed with non-seasonal music that enhances a feast’s (or season’s) motif.

Liturgical music for general worship must cover the ordo of Word and Table, the ordo of teaching and Bath, and the ordo of praise and beseeching. These correspond, in more customary hymnal terms, to music for the Holy Eucharist, music for Holy Baptism and music for other rites,
general worship and, eventually, the psalter. These will be examined in more detail in the following sections.

**Holy Eucharist**

Henri de Lubac, a Jesuit Roman Catholic scholar, claimed there was a disconnection between the Eucharist and the Church. He devoted a whole book to what he perceived as a shift between the terms *corpus verum* (“true body”) and *corpus mysticum* (“mystical body”), and how the ancients saw the Church as the former and the Eucharist as the latter. As time passed by, however, there was a reversal of those meanings\(^{247}\) and the Eucharist became, under most (if not all) interpretations, the true body of Christ. By proposing the reinfusion of such connection between sacramental theology and ecclesiology, he coined the famous expression that while the Church makes the Eucharist, the Eucharist makes the Church.\(^{248}\)

It is never enough to emphasize the importance of the Holy Eucharist to the life of the Church. Much has been written about it, but it is always relevant to bring to the fore its central role. The Eucharist is eschatological: it reminds the people of God of the covenant set forth between God and them, it retells people’s salvation history and recapitulates the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross – once and for all, for the sake of all humankind. In the Eucharist, a cosmic reality is prefigured, it is the encounter of Heaven and Earth through Jesus Christ.\(^{249}\)


\(^{248}\) Ibid., 103.

It is also an act of thanksgiving and praise to God.\textsuperscript{250} It reminds worshippers to thank the one in whom they are and move and have their being. At the Eucharist, the faithful give thanks for the self-sacrificing love of God through Christ. Therefore, it is also a salvific sacrament, for its act of thanksgiving allows the people of God to be aware of who God created them to be, and commit themselves to conversion and commitment to Christ.

The Eucharist is also a memorial, but not any kind of memorial. It is the memorial of the Paschal mystery, therefore its main locus lies on Sunday worship.\textsuperscript{251} Sundays and the Holy Eucharist are two intertwined realities, which shows how interrelated both seasonal and non-seasonal liturgical music can be. Obviously, the Eucharist can also happen on weekdays, but its connection with the Resurrection reinforces the need for – whenever possible – Eucharistic Sunday worship.

The Eucharist builds community. It challenges market economies and, in lieu of them, establishes God’s economy in which all share the same meal, receive the same portion and are welcome around the table. It is, therefore, a sacrament of inclusion and equality, which binds the faithful together in one single body. Plus, it is a sacrament of hospitality, where the stranger is welcomed and all are treated equally.\textsuperscript{252} As Lubac said, the Eucharist makes the Church. It gives sense to the Church, and encapsulates all that has been said.

\textsuperscript{250} The Dublin Statement: Renewal of the Anglican Eucharist -the findings of the fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Dublin, 1995


\textsuperscript{252} For an interesting recapitulation of the Eucharist and hospitality in the Early Church, see: Cláudio Carvalhaes, Eucharist and Globalization (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 35-76
So, music for the Holy Eucharist should complement the manifold actions that occur throughout the rite: reading, listening, sharing the Word of God (through music, poetry, preaching and any other culturally appropriate forms) juxtaposed with setting out food, giving thanks, making Eucharist, sending to the absent and showing concern with the poor. Such music should remind the people of God that all should be done with a renewed sense of participation (since through Baptism we are all made full members of the Body of Christ).

Therefore, a hymnal section on the Holy Eucharist should contain hymns that emphasize Christ’s presence in the sacrament of his Body and Blood, and the memorial he commanded us to do. Those hymns, however, should also contain some important complementary themes: the Eucharist’s eschatological meaning, its act of praise and thanksgiving, its function as a sacrament of conversion, its intrinsic connection with the Paschal mystery, its prefiguration of a new order where all have the same share, and its vocation as a sacrament of hospitality.

But, more importantly, given the fact that the Eucharist finds its primary locus on Sunday worship, new hymnals must provide a wide variety of Mass settings that cover fixed and moveable parts, propers and responses. In many church traditions, singing the Eucharist has become less and less common, due to a variety of reasons. This has led to a sad consequence: in many communities, all that is sung at the Eucharist are regular hymns, often placed as time-fillers for specific liturgical actions, such as processionals, setting up the table or distributing communion. The Kyrie (or, in some traditions, the Trisagion), the Gloria, the Sanctus, other antiphons, fraction anthems, psalms and canticles – which were originally meant to be sung – end up being said or completely omitted whatsoever. However, those parts carry important theological content that properly expresses the richness of Eucharistic rites, hence the importance of their appropriation as sung parts.
Holy Baptism

Invariably, the majority of Christian churches will adhere to a process of initiation into
life in Christ for those who have chosen to follow Jesus (or whose parents and/or relatives have
done it on their behalf). Johnson\textsuperscript{253} reminds us that Christian rites of initiation generally follow a
fourfold pattern consisting of:

(1) Entrance to the Catechumenate, a rite of separation;
(2) the Catechumenate and eventual “election” for initiation, a
“liminal” time of transition and preparation, during which those to
be initiated are instructed and formed in the teaching and life of the
community;
(3) the Rites of initiation (Baptism, “Confirmation,” and first
communion), by which the former catechumens and “elect” are
now incorporated fully into the life of the Christian community;
and
(4) the Period of Mystagogy (“explanation of the mysteries”), a
continued process of further incorporation or reintegration into the
community by explaining what the “mysteries” received signify
and what their implications are for ongoing life in the community.

This basic pattern emerged very early in the history of the Church, for a number of
reasons. The separation between Baptism and Confirmation as two stand-alone, separate rites
(which is still the norm among many Western churches), however, took much longer to be fully
developed. The biblical witness of the early Church, as found in Scripture, indicates Baptism as
the sole rite of Christian initiation, inherited through a direct line of continuity in practice
between John the Baptist, Jesus and early Christian communities. See, for example, the story of
Cornelius, who was baptized along with his entire household (Acts 10:1-11,18) and the
Ethiopian eunuch, whose baptism was a conscious act of faith (Acts 8:26-40). These baptisms
most likely were by immersion, and as free as possible in terms of ceremonial and ritual. There is

\textsuperscript{253} Maxwell E. Johnson. \textit{The Rites of Christian Initiation} (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press,
2007), xviii.
no indication of additional rites, but this does not mean that they did not exist. What remains uncontested was that, through Baptism, these people were made part of Christ’s body.

Baptism is teaching juxtaposed to Bath. It involves sharing the message of Christ’s everlasting love, introducing people to this transforming faith, welcoming them into the body of Christ through Baptism and offering, again, Holy Meal. Theological themes often associated with Baptism are: “Death and burial in Christ” (a theological concept drawn from Romans 6), the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan and new birth in water and the Spirit (John 3), and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation, seen by some confessions as a sacrament, is a mature affirmation of faith which should not be seen as a rite that “completes” Baptism. Confirmation, sometimes also called Affirmation of Faith, should be seen liturgically through its connection with Baptism.

Themes for baptismal hymns should include these theological emphases, and also a few other common motifs, such as: being grafted into the Body of Christ, becoming a brother/sister to many other members of the family of God, a call to a new vocation in Christ, the “ordination” to the priesthood of all believers, being cleansed from sin and the path towards sanctification, a commitment to new life, belonging to an egalitarian community of believers, and being part of a new creation in Christ.

Also, despite many past attempts at creating specific hymns for infant baptism, that should be discouraged as much as possible. Some of them ended up suggesting different theologies based on the age of the catechumen. All baptisms are baptisms. If there is a need for mentions of infant baptism, these could be added to new or existing hymns through the insertion of specific verses or stanzas, but in a way that frames them as full baptisms.

254 Ibid., 156.
Finally, hymns for Confirmation (or Affirmation of Faith) should not be dissimilar from baptismal hymns. Therefore, they must not hint at any kind of theology that diminishes the role of Baptism as the sacrament of full initiation into the Body of Christ\textsuperscript{255} (a concept shared by most churches exposed to the Liturgical Movement and to Ecumenism).

**Other Rites**

Other events of the Christian life may have music specifically assigned to them. Matrimony, funeral rites and ordinations are typical examples of rites that will happen on occasion, but not following a seasonal pattern. Each one of them has specificities that will, invariably, determine what kinds of hymns are suitable in each case. In all cases, however, themes should fit within the wider framework of Baptism, the Eucharist and the Body of Christ. A good hymn for Holy Matrimony should, for example, point out that the couple’s mutual love is based on a relational model that should permeate the Body of Christ. Music for funerals and memorials should be directly connected to the deceased person’s baptism and with their life as a communicant experiencing a prefiguration of what is to come. Ordinations could have hymns that relate them to the vocation of all baptized, and so on.

Specific hymns for special occasions, such as children’s worship, anniversaries, graduations, institution to lay ministry, and installation of a priest as rector or priest-in-charge may be added.

**General hymns**

\textsuperscript{255} *The Toronto Statement: Walk in Newness of Life - the findings of the fourth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation*, Toronto, 1991
A section on general hymns should cover all main themes that have not been dealt with before. In many aspects, they should follow the main theological doctrines described in chapter 4, plus whichever transversal themes the commission may choose, always being careful enough to include a wide variety of Christian responses to each one.

A concise list of themes should include: God as Holy Trinity, God as Creator, God as Redeemer, God as Giver of Life, God the Father (and Mother), God the Christ, God the Holy Spirit, the coming of Christ, the Church’s mission, Christian vocation, Christianity and social justice (gender justice, economic justice, racial equality, etc.), hope in a new world, conversion of life, the environment as our common home, and other themes deemed feasible.

The Psalter

Psalters are usually available in most worship books, so why include them in a hymnal? One reason is because most psalters in liturgical books are limited to text only, which may or may not have line breaks according to their original poetic structure in Hebrew.

So, even if a specific hymnal is produced for a single denomination, it should include a psalter with music, and with as much variety as possible. This means that there should be some chant tunes, which could easily be adapted to non-metric scriptural text (or text found in worship books). But it should also present other options, such as metrical psalms for congregational singing, or sung responses for the congregation (in case parts of the psalm are to be sung by a cantor).

However, adding several musical options to each psalm might be overwhelming, especially because some psalms can be quite long. The best solution is to focus on those psalms (or sections of psalms) that are found in the RCL. Based on all that has been said, there is no
reason why liturgical music for general worship could not (or should not) be available to a
variety of different churches at once, especially in specific cases (such as service music and the
psalter) which used to be considerably different from denomination to denomination, but now are
essentially the same, thanks to joint commissions, common texts and lectionaries.
CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

From everything that has been said, it is more than obvious that hymn singing is central to Christian worship. In fact, it forms part of a kernel (alongside with Scripture reading, preaching and the sacraments) that defines the experience of most Christians around the world.

In that regard, hymnals are not only desirable but also necessary. They define a core set of liturgical music that properly covers a wide spectrum of Christian theology, musical styles, cultural settings and human experiences with the Divine. They also provide a sense of harmony and stability long desired in a fast-changing world.

Hymnals have existed for some centuries. Most likely, they will not disappear in the near future. Their level of success, however, relies on overcoming the fragilities of their predecessors and broadening the scope of worship in our world. The research found in previous pages is intended to foster deep conversations on the nature of hymnals and what needs to be improved so future revisions achieve more success in terms of reaching out to the margins and providing music that builds the beloved community of believers. I sincerely hope further discussions arise from this and other texts, so that our future generations will be able to experience God and see Christ’s face – in them, and in their neighbors – as they sing in unison and become a choir, like many in one, and bearing witness to the Holy One here and there, now and forever.
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