

# Enriching Our Worship Heritage

[Essay prepared for the Convention of the Northern Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod June 23-25, 1986]

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I was asked to present an essay on worship with primary emphasis on the hymnal project. I have chosen the theme, "Enriching Our Worship Heritage." Originally the theme was, "Enriching Our *Worship*." This is really what we want to do. However, this is more than a new hymnal, or any hymnal, by itself can promise. It would be nice if the publication of a new hymnal could assure a vitalization of our worship, could bring worshipers to listen to God more eagerly, trust Him more securely, pray to Him more earnestly, praise Him more joyfully, and serve Him more faithfully. This would be enriching worship. But this is entirely God's work. We call our corporate worship "the Service" (*Gottesdienst*), but it is really God who is the "server" and host as He through His Word and Sacraments sets before us His banquet table of spiritual blessings. Our part is to receive His gifts by faith, trusting in Him and His Word, and to offer Him our praise and thanksgiving. As Luther says, "We cannot give God anything but praise and thanks. Everything else we receive from Him, be it grace, words, works, Gospel, faith, and all things. But this faith-response is a service God wills and desires from us. It is our unique God-given "liturgy" or "work." And it *is* work, physical, mental, and spiritual, something that we also need to be reminded of. In the larger sense our whole life as Christians is our faith-response, our liturgy, our service, our work. But this life comes to focus when we gather together around God's Word and Sacrament for worship. Here we realize our identity as children of God, brothers and sisters in Christ. Here God meets us, speaks to us and works in us. Here we respond to Him in faith, thanksgiving and praise. This two-way motion is worship in its fullness. Such worship is the central activity of the communion of saints. It is the most important thing we can do. In the congregational worship we come with our individual God-given spiritual gifts as members of the Body of Christ. We come to "work together" as members of that Body, learning to know God better, glorifying Him with thanks and praise, and encouraging and strengthening each other as we sing and pray and proclaim God's wondrous works and ways. Worship is our "joyful concern with God," our "duty and delight." Our congregational worship is not only the major power center for our faith, but also the motivating and energizing force for all programs and activities in the church, be they evangelism, stewardship, fellowship, or whatever. Worship is the most important thing we can do!

## Our Hymnal

The hymnal is our resource and guide for this all-important activity of worship. Though we could of course worship without it, it is, practically speaking, indispensable. Our hymnal brings us God's Word and revelation and full opportunity for faith's response. Looked at more closely, however, the hymnal is more. I like to think of the hymnal as a "rainbow" book. Just as a beam of light passing through a prism reveals its seven component colors, so an examination of the hymnal reveals its seven "colors": It is a treasury of **God's Truth**, a record of Christian **faith and response** in all kinds of circumstances, a representation of much of the best of **poetry and hymnody** down through the centuries, **music** as it has related itself to liturgy and various types of hymn tunes, a history of theology as reflected in the worship materials of various centuries, the historic **liturgies** of the church in their Lutheran reformation and later restoration, and finally, a broad and rich resource for all the circumstances of Christian life, for education, private devotion, and all the various observances of corporate Lutheran worship.

## Our Worship Heritage

All of this is for us a heritage. None of us have contributed to its treasures. None of the people who compiled our present hymnal are still living. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, produced in the eleven years between 1930 and 1941, was basically a revision of the Missouri Synod's *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1916). And this in turn owed much to three preceding English hymnals produced between 1882 and 1905.

All the English Lutheran hymnals of our century owe a large liturgical debt to the *Common Service* of 1888, which culminated a half century of effort to reclaim and restore the historic liturgy of Western Christendom as it had been cleansed and reformed by Luther. "This was truly a pioneer project, for the movements of Pietism and particularly Rationalism had in two centuries virtually destroyed both the Lutheran liturgy and the early Lutheran hymn heritage. Lutheran services in America around 1820 or so had little or no participation by the congregation except for the singing of hymns and the Lord's Prayer. The historic liturgies of Lutheranism had disappeared along with the observance of the Christian church year, as had most of the soundly scriptural hymns of proclamation and praise. Rationalism elevated reason and rejected revelation and the supernatural. Philip Schaff summarizes in these words: "Conversion and sanctification were changed into self-improvement, piety into virtue, heaven into the better world, Christ into Christianity, God into Providence, Providence into fate. Instead of hymns of faith and salvation, the congregations were obliged to sing rhymed sermons on the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the delights of reunion, the dignity of man, the duty of self-improvement, the nurture of the body, and the care of animals and flowers." And a contemporary account of the hymn singing around the middle of the nineteenth century (showing the effects of Rationalism) describes the singing in this way: "Each syllable is sung without distinction for a period of about four beats; on the last syllable of the melodic phrase there follows a long fermata lasting 8-12 beats, the last part of which is incorporated in a more or less intricate organ interlude. So all the melodies follow one line after the other in this repetitious manner, whether sad or joyous, mournful or exultant, all performed in a creeping dragging fashion. The hymns of Luther have long had their wings clipped and have put on the straight-jacket of 4/4 time. And so it came about that the more inflexible the singing of the chorale was, the more solemn it was thought to be."

A confessional revival began as early as 1817, the 300th anniversary of the Reformation. The aims of the movement were to restore the liturgies of the sixteenth century Reformation, to restore the unaltered texts of Reformation hymns, and with it the original rhythmic forms of the chorale melodies. The restoration of the liturgy was undertaken by three Lutheran church bodies, the *General Council*, the *General Synod*, and the *United Synod of the South*. Their source and basis were the Lutheran church orders of the sixteenth century, which numbered no less than 135, all based in varying degree on Luther's two liturgical revisions of the Mass, the *Formulae Missae* (1523) and the *German Mass* (1526). The principle adopted to decide questions of choice between the church orders was this: The common consent of the pure Lutheran liturgies of the sixteenth century, and when there was not entire agreement between them, the consent of the largest number of greatest weight. The *Common Service* was text only, without settings and without hymns. These were supplied in the *Common Service Book*, published in 1917, the 400th anniversary of the Reformation.

Truly we have received much from others and from the past. But if we are to trace the Lutheran heritage of worship, our debt goes back beyond Luther and the Reformation. The Reformer did not follow Zwingli and Calvin in scrapping the historic liturgy. He retained it except for excising those sections which made the Sacrament into a meritorious offering instead of the gift of a gracious God, namely, the Canon and Offertory. Luther loved the liturgy, its chants, and the polyphonic choral music. His revision of the liturgy in 1523 retained the historic Ordinary and Propers, along with the Latin language, adding only German hymns to the service. But in 1526 Luther prepared a somewhat simpler version in German so that congregations which were uneducated and could not follow the Latin and those which did not have choirs to sing the Latin chants could participate in their own language. To effect this, Luther prepared metrical (hymn) versions of the liturgical songs of the service (*Kyrie, Creed, Sanctus, Agnus Dei*) in German so that the congregations themselves could sing these noble songs. Although we now again sing these liturgical songs in their original prose texts, we have the hymns in our hymnal. In addition to Luther's virtual creation of a hymn form which came to be called the chorale, and the cleansing of the liturgy of unscriptural elements and accents, we also have him to thank for the restoration of the sermon and preaching in the liturgy, which was largely omitted in the Mass of his day.

We could continue to trace the various elements of our liturgy and worship back virtually to apostolic times, but suffice it to say that the liturgy of the Christian church by about 600 A.D. was essentially what we have today in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. As to the hymns in our hymnal, it is obvious even to the casual student

that our hymnody is drawn from many past centuries, from different nations, and from various denominations besides Lutheran. Our hymnal with 660 hymns includes in addition to the hymns from various English sources, 247 translations; German, 248; Latin, 46; Scandinavian, 31; Greek, 9; Slovak, 6; French, 2; Italian, 2; Dutch, Welsh, and Finnish, 1 each. The Lutheran church is ecumenical in its selection of hymns and other worship materials. Whatever is scripturally sound and true, poetically and musically worthy, and edifying for the faith of worshipers may be drawn on for use in our hymnal. For this principle we can thank Luther himself.

There is one other area we should discuss and one more debt we must acknowledge. That is the influence of the Anglican church as far as the language of our liturgies and other liturgical-forms is concerned. We often tend to forget that most of our hymnal originated in the Greek, Latin, and German languages. All of this had to be translated into English. The formation of the Church of England in the days of Luther resulted in the *Book of Common Prayer*, essentially the work of Archbishop Cranmer. As English services became more frequent among Lutherans in America, the language of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the King James Version of the Bible (1611) became the model for the language of worship and was incorporated in Lutheran hymnals.

Our own Synod's transition from German to English took place primarily in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The somewhat painful change was no doubt hastened by the general American antipathy or hostility to all things German during World War I. By the time *The Lutheran Hymnal* was in the making, it was natural for those preparing the hymnal to turn to the published Lutheran hymnals in which the language of the *Book of Common Prayer* and its revisions already appeared. But not only the texts of our liturgies but much of their music is borrowed from Anglican sources. The music for our TLH liturgies is a sort of hybrid, a mixture of metrical song and of free chant, but the influence of Anglican chant is strong. This has turned out to be a mixed blessing. Anglican chant, when sung properly by the choirs in four-part harmony, is beautiful, but it is normally sung poorly (incorrectly) by congregations who instinctively try to turn the chants into metrical songs. I have been told that the sub-committee on music for the liturgies in TLH wanted to set the liturgy to Gregorian chant but was over-ruled by the large group. In retrospect, the Gregorian music would have been even more difficult and less satisfactory than what was chosen. Though we have retained the present music for the revision of the pp 5/15 liturgy because of its familiarity, we should explore other possibilities for any new liturgies that may be produced for the new hymnal.

### **Preserving and Improving our Worship Heritage**

The foregoing somewhat sketchy overview of our Lutheran worship heritage should be sufficient to make the point that we Lutherans of today have a rich, broad, and varied heritage of liturgical and hymnic materials for worship. These represent both the wider spectrum of the whole Christian worship experience down through the centuries, and also the distinctive contributions of the Lutheran church. Together they represent our roots. Much of this heritage was new to members of our Synod in 1941, and we are bound to say that after forty-five years much remains to be done to possess that heritage. The Sunday liturgy is sung by heart in many congregations, but much of the liturgical material in TLH as well as some of the worthiest hymns of early Lutheranism remain unlearned and unused. In retrospect, some of the fault for this was the failure to provide a manual for worship leaders along with the hymnal, explaining particularly the liturgical materials and indicating how they should or might be used in the worship. At any rate, we have received from time to time from various areas of the Synod pleas to "throw out all that stuff in the front of the hymnal and give us some good singable hymns in a major key." Somehow this does not seem to be the appropriate action to take as we embark on a new worship book... Instead, we are firmly dedicated to PRESERVING our heritage and IMPROVING it.

Not every new hymnal has this aim. Some do not have a significant worship heritage or choose to ignore or reject it. Others aim to be wholly new, blazing new worship trails of one kind or another. Still others are narrowly parochial, rejecting materials from wider communions, and tending to be repetitive in content and form. And some are eclectic choosing materials from here and there, without any theological, poetic, or musical

guidelines except providing what might be pleasing or pragmatically useful. We prefer to stay with Luther: Include and preserve what is scripturally sound and edifying. Reject what does not breathe the spirit of the gospel. Create new materials or adapt the old to meet felt needs.

### **Enlarging our Worship Heritage**

It is obvious that the Christian worship heritage is not a static but a growing thing. Worship materials generally reflect the theology of the church body. Eras in which the theology was scripturally strong have added the most significant materials to our worship. But almost every age of Christian worship has contributed something of worth. The years since publication of our own hymnal have been decades of remarkable activity and creativity. The two recently published Lutheran hymnals, *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *Lutheran Worship* give evidence of a truly vast amount of research and have added much new material, both from the past and from our own time. They have incorporated new liturgies or, more accurately, given new form to old liturgies, provided hundreds of new hymns, a new worship language, new lectionary, a new type of liturgical music, and restored some liturgical practices from the pre-Roman Christian use. In fact, so much "new" has been added that congregations appear to be overwhelmed, which may account for much of the present criticisms. Our Synod has chosen, for various good reasons, I believe, not to adopt either hymnal for our use, but they remain rich resources for us as we prepare our own new worship book. In addition to preserving and improving our worship heritage, we should also ENLARGE it by incorporating the best and most useful of that which has emerged or been produced since our hymnal was published. PRESERVE, IMPROVE, ENLARGE. This, I believe, would constitute the "enrichment" of our worship heritage.

### **Planning the New WELS Hymnal**

How then do we propose to "enrich" our hymnal? First, some general proposals, and then some specifics on the liturgical section and the hymns. We remind all that none of our planning is set in concrete. It will need more research and study. We also intend to be informed by synodical reaction to produced materials. At this point we propose the following:

- 1) A hymnal about the size of our present book, or slightly larger (but not as large as *Lutheran Worship*).
- 2) Containing about 600 hymns, or more if there is space.
- 3) Retaining at least 400 of our present hymns.
- 4) Adding about 200 new hymns, broadening the spectrum of hymn types and drawing both from older and 20th century hymnody.
- 5) Providing hymn harmonizations basically in the homophonic(chordal) style of TLH but with some freshening of harmony and new types of harmonization where the type of hymn melody "demands" it.
- 6) Using today's English in the liturgical section instead of the Tudor language of TLH.
- 7) Cautiously revising the language of the hymns, retaining many hymns in their present form, or nearly so, and altering the poetry of original English hymns less freely than in the case of translations.
- 8) Retaining most of the liturgical material of TLH, but endeavoring to improve it by means of revisions of various kinds.

- 9) Retaining the principal liturgies of TLH (pp. 5/15, Matins and Vespers) in revised form.
- 10) Adding major liturgies: A new order of Holy Communion, and probably a Service of the Word for non-Communion.
- 11) Rites of Baptism, Marriage, and Burial
- 12) More and better indexes, including a detailed topical index for the hymns.

### **Detail and Commentary**

**The Hymns** — In revising the hymn section of the hymnal, we will need to pay attention to **balance**: theological, musical, and ethnic or cultural. We will also need to rebalance the number of hymns in the various church year and topical categories. To effect this overall balance and to make room for new hymnody, we will ultimately have to drop some of the hymns in TLH. We have 313 original hymns in the hymnal and 347 in translation. Of the latter, 248 are from the German. The German hymns, of course, reflect our roots. But, like the various types of English hymns, they are not all of equal quality. On the one hand, the appearance of *The Lutheran Hymnal* brought to English speaking Lutherans, in the words of Carl Schalk, "the treasure of confessionally orthodox and musically vital hymnody of the Reformation time." This was a major contribution and we should retain these hymns. On the other hand, Eric Routley, easily the most knowledgeable and noted hymnal and hymn critic of our time, refers to our hymnal as "the conservative and pietist *Lutheran Hymnal* of the Missouri Synod, which was packed tight with immensely ponderous Lutheran chorales. " There is also some truth here. We have a fairly large number of German hymns, especially from the later period of Pietism, which are scriptural but not otherwise memorable. These are not the dynamic "proclamations in praise" of the early Reformation, but spring from much more personal concerns and are often set to easy but rather dull tunes.

When we begin to select hymns for the hymnal, we will not only need to rank the hymns on their individual merit, but also pay attention to various kinds of hymnal balance. The strength of synodical usage, as revealed by our hymn-use survey, will also be an important factor. Some of the hymns of the type mentioned above will probably be candidates for replacement. We should include a wider variety of Christian hymnody, including a good number of contemporary hymns, at least a few of the more important plainsong hymns, some of the American folk tunes, and perhaps a few of the best of the "gospel hymns."

**Language** — In updating the language of the hymns, the Commission on Worship and The Hymnal Committee are inclined to be frankly eclectic. Each hymn should be considered on its own merit without recourse to a general guideline to update the language of all the hymns. Where thee's and thou's and the attendant verb forms can be removed what hymnists call "invisible mending," they will be updated. Less well known hymns are more easily updated, in the sense of causing less emotional upset to worshipers, than hymns which are widely known, frequently sung, and often previously memorized. Most often the hymns that need revision are the translations rather than original English poetry. That work of retranslation will depend greatly on the availability of good translators, especially for the German chorales.

**General Language Change** — It is a simple fact that we are today in the midst of a general language change in worship, induced largely by the new modern English Bible translations. It seems inevitable that at some point in time we will need to pass through the somewhat upsetting change in the language of our worship. At the same time the worship language is still in flux. Our normal conservative course might be to wait until it is in a more settled and finished state. However, our synodical publications are now using the NIV in Bible quotations, many congregations are reading and praying in today's English, and many of the children in our schools are daily memorizing their Bible passages in the language of the NIV. By the time our new hymnal is in place in

our congregations these children will already find the old language somewhat strange. And if we project the life of the hymnal thirty years or more into the future, I am sure we will be faulted for lack of vision if we retain the present language. Though the change will probably result in some flattening of language, the greater clarity and intelligibility of the modern language seems more than compensation for the loss of some of the old elegance and nobility of expression. Given time, we should see that today's English can also be made to speak with reverence, power, and grace. If congregations prepare now for the change by some use of today's English in readings and prayers, it will lessen the emotional shock when the hymnal is introduced and smooth the transition.

In addition to the removal of thee's and thou's etc. there are many words or phrases that should be updated, both in the hymnody and especially in the prayers. Expressions such as: "Bring to *nought*," "*vouchsafe* to forgive us," "*diverse* gifts," "*mortify* the flesh," "love me e'er *cordially*," "all *usury* abhor," "foul *calumny*," and other words which have lost their original meaning or simply fail to communicate.

Many of our prayers in TLH present another problem, not really a result of the "old English" but rather of the form and sentence structure of the original German. In the section titled *Prayers* in TLH (p 102 ff.), there are many examples. Long, involved sentence structure, with a number of relative clauses and modifying phrases, are not the way we like to pray today nor do they reflect good English form. Prayer #14 on page 103 is fifteen lines long and all one sentence.

**Addition of New Liturgies** — The two new liturgies planned for the Sunday worship are offered to present congregations with choices. We seem to have many congregations which use our present pp. 5/15 liturgies regularly and are satisfied to do so. But we also seem to have many who are discontented with that service and are simply making new local liturgies. With today's growing ease of duplication, it seems likely that more and more of this will be done. In the past, most of the local variations in the use of our present liturgy were in the form of omissions. But many today are reproducing new hymns, psalm settings, prayers, and other material from a variety of hymnals, not always with copyright clearance, it might be added. But it does indicate the growing interest in worship and new hymns and liturgical material not found in TLH. The negative side of this is that TLH no longer enjoys the relatively uniform use in the Synod that was once the case. Perhaps no future hymnal will. Yet a *general* uniformity of worship material in the Synod is desirable for obvious reasons. A new hymnal, presenting more choices in liturgy, modernized language, some new hymns and new types of hymns, a more comfortable singing range for both hymns and liturgies, and a user-friendly format could perhaps restore a larger uniformity in the use of the hymnal.

**Baptism, Marriage and Burial** — These are rites our hymnal. In 1941 most all baptisms were performed outside the corporate service. Most today are part which have not been in of the Sunday service. Difficulties with sponsors and lack of provision in our present rite for parental and congregational participation have resulted in a number of different forms for baptism in use in various parts of the Synod. We badly need a careful revision of the baptismal rite and it really should be included in the hymnal since it has become a part of our Sunday worship.

Inclusion of the marriage rite is favored for somewhat different reasons. Marriage is not a sacrament but a part of God's natural order. The State has some legitimate concerns and regulates marriage in various ways. At the same time it is fitting and normal and the desire of most Christian couples to enter marriage in a way that is sanctified by God's Word and prayer. In America the government has agreed to permit ministers to perform marriages. The result is that we have in our church weddings a kind of forced mating of secular and sacred. All kinds of secular customs involving elaborate dress, music, photography, and ceremonial are coupled with the solemnity of a Lutheran worship service. Most pastors can testify to perplexities and problems that tend to arise in pre-marital counseling because of the desires of the couple for certain types of vocal or instrumental music, or for changes in the traditional service itself, or for inclusion of various "beautiful" ceremonies they have viewed on TV, read about in wedding magazines, or experienced by attendance at weddings of friends in other

churches or denominations. The problem arises because the pastor and wedding couple often view the ceremony from different perspectives. The couple tends to consider it "their" wedding which they can plan according to their private wishes. The pastor views it as a Lutheran service and has difficulty in permitting things which would be totally out of place or even unthinkable in a normal Lutheran worship. Including the marriage rite in the hymnal would not immediately solve all of these problems, but it would provide a norm, easily accessible for study by those contemplating marriage, which would make clear the spiritual nature and purpose of the marriage ceremony. It could also provide for the singing of a congregational hymn or two and thereby provide a basis for the type of music appropriate to the service, and also give friends and relatives some way of sharing the joy of the occasion with the couple beyond that of mere attendance. In short, the inclusion of the marriage rite in the hymnal might effect some stabilizing influence and help congregations and couples to keep a spiritual viewpoint of the ceremony rather than a concentration on the secular or sentimental.

The inclusion in the hymnal of the rite of Christian Burial is also favored. The nature of today's society has produced some practical problems. Funeral customs vary considerably in various areas of our country, but a common problem is that the funeral service is often attended only by the immediate family and relatives and perhaps a sparse sprinkling of friends or congregation members. Most absentees have previously "paid their respects" at the funeral home. (It might be good for us to provide a brief service of responsive prayer and Scripture for use at the funeral home.) Where evening funerals are held in the church, a larger number of friends and congregation members can attend. The inclusion of a burial rite in the hymnal might be helpful and appreciated, especially where there is a substantial congregational attendance or the relatives are mostly Lutheran. If included, the rite should provide for and encourage some participation by the congregation. Liturgically speaking, our synodical practice is quite barren. Though it should not be burdensome, some use of responsive readings and strengthening hymns which accent our Christian hope and the resurrection would be edifying.

Most of what has been said about the inclusion of these rites reflects personal opinion. The Liturgy Committee has not really studied these rites as yet, although preliminary decisions favor inclusion. A service for Confirmation has so far not been included, although it would not take up more than three pages in the book.

### **The Sampler**

Though we are still early into the hymnal project and not really in the production stage of liturgical material or actual selection of hymns, we have thought it useful to offer congregations a taste of new hymnody and a revision of our common Sunday liturgy. This "Sampler of New Hymns and Liturgy" will be a 64-page booklet and will be offered for trial use to all congregations of the Synod which are willing to give it such trial between Advent and Pentecost. Evaluation will be solicited from congregations through a questionnaire at the end of the trial period. Pastors have been asked to indicate preliminary intent of their congregations to participate and to indicate the number of copies needed. After the Sampler is printed, copies will be sent for inspection and firm orders taken. The hymns included are such as have appeared in other hymnals and proved to be popular. The hymns can be used after the trial as a small hymnal supplement in the interim before publication of the hymnal.

### **The Sampler Hymns**

Twenty-one hymns will be included. Ten are twentieth century hymns and eleven are older texts. Nine are church year hymns and twelve are topical. One original WELS hymn by Werner Franzmann is included. Music for the hymns includes 2 chorale melodies, 7 folk tunes (2 American, 2 Dutch, 2 French, and 1 Welsh), 6 tunes by composers of the 16th-19th centuries, 5 twentieth century tunes, and 1 adaptation of a spiritual. A few new settings (harmonizations) were provided by Hymn Committee; otherwise they appear as published in LW or LBW. Some textual refinements were made and a few stanzas were dropped, usually for theological reasons. The list of hymns included is as follows:

- 1) Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending (ADVENT)
- 2) Once in Royal David's City (CHRISTMAS)
- 3) Your Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We (CHRISTMAS)
- 4) The Only Son from Heaven (EPIPHANY)
- 5) Down from the Mount of Glory (EPIPHANY - Transfiguration)
- 6) Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle (LENT)
- 7) This Joyful Eastertide (EASTER Season)
- 8) Alleluia! Sing to Jesus (ASCENSION)
- 9) Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling (PENTECOST)
- 10) We Praise You, Lord (BAPTISM)
- 11) Thy Strong Word (WORD OF GOD)
- 12) Here, O Lord, We See you Face to Face (LORD'S SUPPER)
- 13) Amazing Grace (TRUST)
- 14) Love in Christ Is Strong and Living (CHRISTIAN LOVE)
- 15) In Christ There Is No East Or West (THE CHURCH)
- 16) Lift High the Cross (MISSIONS)
- 17) Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness (STEWARDSHIP)
- 18) Son of God, Eternal Savior (STEWARDSHIP)
- 19) Our Father, by Whose Name (CHRISTIAN FAMILY)
- 20) Lord Jesus Christ, the Children's Friend (CHRISTIAN EDUCATION)
- 21) Let All Things Now Living (PRAISE)

Why were these particular hymns chosen for the Sampler? To give our congregations a sample of contemporary hymnody, of types of hymn tunes not represented in TLH, and of a somewhat different style of harmonization. From a practical standpoint, the *topical* hymns were chosen to provide more or better hymns in categories not so well represented in our hymnal. Several of the church year hymns were also chosen for that reason. The hymns, with a few exceptions, are not difficult to learn. Some will need repetition. Notes will appear on the margin of each hymn page giving information about the hymn text and tune, suggestions for singing, or other comments which might be helpful or interesting.

### **The Revised Liturgy**

The revision of the familiar pp. 5/15 liturgy attempts to respond to some of the improvements suggested in the five regional interview meetings with about 150 men and women from all districts of our Synod. The revision is offered now to give members of the Synod opportunity to respond to the solutions proposed by the Liturgy Committee as they grappled with various concerns and problems with the liturgy as we have it in TLH. Reaction to the trial use will assist in printing the liturgy in the hymnal in a version acceptable to the majority of our congregations. The structure of the liturgy in the Sampler will be the following:

- Opening Hymn
- Confession, Kyrie, and Absolution
- Song of Praise (Gloria in Excelsis)
- Prayer for the Day (Collect)
- Psalmody (Psalm or Psalm section)
- Scripture Readings (2 for Holy Communion, 3 for non-Communion)
- Verse (New proper to introduce the Gospel).
- Creed
- Hymn of the Day
- Sermon



Offertory  
Offering  
Prayer of the Church (General Prayer)  
The Preface and Proper Preface  
The Song of Saints and Angels (Sanctus)  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Words of Institution  
The Peace (Pax)  
The Agnus Dei  
The Distribution  
The Song of Thanksgiving - Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)  
The Thanksgiving  
The Benediction

The two liturgies of TLH are combined into a single service, basically to save space. The familiar music is retained but the text is entirely updated. The structural differences occur in the first part of the liturgy. The Holy Communion section is unchanged in structure or order of elements. A listing of the structural revisions includes the following:

- a) A single, new Confession of Sins — Briefer and with the Kyrie sung between the confession and absolution.
- b) The traditional Introit is omitted.
- c) Psalmody is introduced before the scripture readings and functions somewhat as the traditional Introit. It may be spoken responsively or sung.
- d) Provision is made for an Old Testament reading in non-Communion services.
- e) A new proper, the Verse, is sung just before the Gospel. This is basically a New Testament verse, often a "gem" of Scripture, relating to the season and the particular Sunday. It is intended to be sung by the choir. If there is no choir, it may be spoken by the pastor and concluded with the familiar triple Alleluia of the congregation.
- f) When there are three readings, no Gradual or other type of response is provided between the first and second readings.
- g) Prayer of the Church: A responsive form of our present General Prayer is provided which may be used when desired.

Twelve psalms or psalm sections will be printed in the Sampler. Their use is distributed by repetition for the trial period, Advent to Pentecost. The psalm tones are included from LW so that the choir (or congregation) may sing the Psalm. No firm decision has yet been made on the choice of lectionary for the new hymnal, but the use of the new 3-year series of readings (Year A) is encouraged for the trial period. The Psalms have been selected with those readings in mind and the Verse will fit better.

The revised language will probably be the feature most noticeably affecting the worshipers. At first the committee had decided to retain the old language for the liturgical songs (Gloria in Excelsis, Sanctus, etc.) but in the interest of consistency and to gain congregational reaction, they also were updated. Because the familiar melodies were retained, it was not always possible to make the revised texts fit perfectly. All the texts of the liturgy have been updated, including the Creeds. The Lord's Prayer is the one exception. It is offered in two versions.

The melodies of the hymns in the Sampler include the usual four-part harmony. The liturgy, however, is printed in melody-text fashion. This was done not only to save space, but to make the liturgy easier to sing and follow. The pitch range has been lowered for more comfortable singing. The method or style of printing the

melody is, somewhat different from that in TLH and will, we hope, assist in singing the chants more smoothly and easily. A separate accompaniment for the liturgy has been prepared by Prof. James Engel of DMLC and will be sent out to organists in time for their adequate preparation.

We have been somewhat bold in revising the liturgy, or at least it may seem so to some congregations. However, in this trial use we can gain reactions to changes. Congregations may approve or reject individual items or features through the questionnaires at the end of the trial period. We will be responsive to such reaction.

Positive attitudes during the time of testing will be helpful. Initial reactions are usually based on the fact that the new is simply different from the familiar old. It takes time to become comfortable with the changes, but only when this is accomplished can we become objective in our opinions. Notes for worship leaders are included in the Sampler and other helps may be added for pastors and church musicians to assist in preparing for the use and in preparing the worshipers. A tape recording will be made in early fall of both the liturgy and hymns and will be distributed to participating congregations.

The Commission on Worship and the Hymn and Liturgy committees who have prepared the materials for the Sampler have done so with eagerness. We hope that our congregations will also welcome this first visible step on the path to a new hymnal. If we are interested in improving and enlarging our worship heritage, it will mean learning some new things. Only through the effort of learning can new hymns or liturgies become familiar and valued. Only by personal effort can we really possess our heritage. With God's blessing we may be able to produce an enriched hymnal resource. May He use it as His tool to bring us to a more vibrant, thankful, and joyful worship of our loving and gracious God.