

# **A Historical Survey and Brief Examination of the Hymnbooks Used Within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod**

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### CHAPTER ONE: THE WISCONSIN SYNOD'S EARLY YEARS (c. 1850)

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a small, conservative Lutheran body numbering slightly in excess of 400,000 souls, has, due to its size, seemingly little impact on the state of Lutheran Christianity. However, the effects of the actions of the Wisconsin Synod have been noteworthy, even since its early, humble beginnings. To truly appreciate this humble start and its long-range effects, it is in order to examine the personalities and events preceding the publication of the Wisconsin Synod's first hymnbook.

While many characteristics and qualities proved to be outstanding influences upon the young Wisconsin Synod, there was no stronger influence than the personality of Pastor Johannes Muehlhaeuser. Neither the purpose of this thesis, nor of this individual chapter, is to present the life of Muehlhaeuser in any depth. Yet, to comprehend the motives of this man whose name became synonymous with the Synod he organized, it is in order to set forth a few facts of his life

Johannes Muehlhaeuser (b. 1803) was a native of Suabia, a small south German territory. The Suabians were predominantly Lutheran, although their brand of faith was not as confessional and staunch as the *altlutheraner*. Rather, they were "tolerant toward the minority of Reformed and the growing number of Roman Catholics. Without stressing the difference in doctrine or forcing Lutheran teaching on the Reformed, the Lutherans would admit the Reformed to the Lord's Table in their churches."

As a young man, Muehlhaeuser received theological training from the Baseler mission Society and the Barmen mission seminary. The Langenberg Mission Society in 1837 sent Muehlhaeuser as one of its first two missionaries to America. Meeting no success in New York City as a teacher for a Lutheran parish, he moved westward to Rochester, New York, where he was subsequently colloquized and ordained into the New York Ministerium which he served for over ten years. Here, "his Suabian Lutheranism and his Barmen training made it possible for him to minister to a congregation that included the Reformed among the Lutherans."

Upon hearing of the great need for a shepherd of souls in the far western reaches of the Great Lakes region, namely in Wisconsin, Muehlhaeuser's missionary spirit urged him westward. He arrived in Milwaukee in June of 1848. By October of that same year, he established an "evangelical" congregation that eventually was incorporated as the "German Evangelical Lutheran Grace Church."

The following year, 1849, Muehlhaeuser, along with two other mission society graduates now in Wisconsin, Johann Weinmann of Barmen and W. Wrede of Langenberg, expressed his desire to form a synod in which the monumental work of the church could be shared, while remaining aloof from the Old- Lutherans

whom Muehlhaeuser distrusted. In the next year, the "first German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin" was formally brought into existence.

In examining Muehlhaeuser's life, one cannot help but note that his practices in church matters would probably not be tolerated today within the Synod that he helped found. For instance, consider these points:

His background was suspect in that he was born and raised in an area of Germany that based its theological notoriety on its confessional laxness

In his first charge as a pastor in America, Muehlhaeuser served a congregation in Rochester, New York, that was nothing more than a transplant of the Prussian Union church—a mixed membership of Lutherans and Reformed

Muehlhaeuser unashamedly solicited funds from Protestant groups beyond his congregation and the Synod. In 1850, he traveled to Boston to gather financial aid from non-Lutherans so that his congregation could purchase a used church. Throughout his term as the Synod president, Muehlhaeuser saw to it that special thanks was offered to the unionistic German missionary societies, Langenberg and Berlin in particular, for their financial support over the years

Finally, Muehlhaeuser desired to maintain cordial relationships with other Lutheran groups, like the Pennsylvania Synod, even though Wisconsin and Pennsylvania were not in full agreement on matters of doctrine and practice

This question then must be considered: how did a man like Muehlhaeuser, who was seemingly lukewarm in his attitude toward confessionalism, help found and nurture a Synod that, within a few short years, became a pillar of confessional Lutheranism?

The answer to this question can be found by investigating the nature of Muehlhaeuser's character, as well as the prevailing conditions of the Wisconsin wilderness. As evidenced in early manhood, Muehlhaeuser was a man who sought first to bring lost souls to Christ. Only later did he examine the means that were used. No better example of this trait can be found than when at age twenty-six, Muehlhaeuser embarked on a *Pilgermission*. The concept of the *Pilgermission*, originated by Spittler, a member of the Baseler Mission Society, was to send skilled laborers and craftsmen throughout Europe to testify about their Savior, while earning their keep via a trade. Muehlhaeuser's *Pilgermission* took him through Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia. During the forty-five months that this trip entailed, Muehlhaeuser withstood long and difficult travel, hard labor for little compensation, discrimination, accusations, arrest, and even prolonged imprisonment. In spite of these intolerable circumstances, Muehlhaeuser ever kept before him, with missionary zeal, his real purpose: to preach the Gospel. During the course of his *Pilgermission*, Muehlhaeuser's witnessing was very successful, due not to his own power, but rather, to the efficacy of the Word of God.

The primitive situation of the recently created state of Wisconsin further elucidates Muehlhaeuser's seemingly vacillating theological stance. Muehlhaeuser, a simple-hearted Lutheran who sought to serve his fellow Christians through the Word of God and the Sacraments, might be compared to a small boy and a stray dog. Just as the boy felt pity for the helpless dog and took it into his care, so Muehlhaeuser, ever so mission-minded, felt pity for the unguided Christian. Muehlhaeuser knew that left to his own devices, the unsuspecting German, so new out of the fatherland and the Prussian Union Church, would easily fall prey to the humanists or Methodists. Only by practicing soul conservation, with the zeal of a true Gospel missionary, could Muehlhaeuser and the pastors aligned with him in the Wisconsin Synod, keep so many from going astray.

Therefore, the Lord's real purpose in Johannes Muehlhaeuser as the founder and molder of the Wisconsin Synod was that of an energetic missionary gatherer. Muehlhaeuser was not an outstanding dogmatist of the caliber of C. F. W. Walther, nor were his practices in line with what his present-day counterparts would conceive of as being entirely beyond reproach. Yet, in Muehlhaeuser, the Lord sent to His Church an enabler, a doer, a man of immeasurable talents. Muehlhaeuser was able to gather together the diverse groups of German immigrants and rather than them into a branch of the Church militant. The Wisconsin Synod, let alone any other denomination, will probably never again see such a man with widespread talents, so eager to use them for the Lord. The refinement of the Synod with regard to doctrine and especially practice would take place at later times under leaders like Bading, Hoenecke, Koehler, and Pieper, just to name some of the Lord's

faithful workers and witnesses.

Thus having examined the single most important influence upon the early years of the Wisconsin Synod (c. 1850c. 1860), attention should now be turned to the formation of the Synod itself.

As early as the 1830's, large numbers of Germans desired to and actually began emigrating to America. Of the dozen or so German Lutheran groups settling throughout Wisconsin in large numbers during the 1840's, it would appear that the first congregations-comprising the Wisconsin Synod were made up primarily of Pommeranians and Branden-burgers.

As was previously alluded to, the "First Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin" was organized on December 8th, 1849, in Milwaukee. Formal structuring of the Synod did not occur until May 27th of the following year. Present at the first meeting were Muehlhaeuser, Weinmann, and Wrede, who in the second meeting became the Synod's president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively. conspicuously absent was Pastor H. L. Dulitz, a Langenberg missionary of very good report who had preceded Muehlhaeuser in Milwaukee by a year. Dulitz, who never officially joined the Wisconsin Synod, eventually became disgusted with the Synod for its "formlessness in doctrine and practice, so he left and joined the Missouri Synod."

At the May 27th, 1850, meeting, President Muehlhaeuser presented a constitution to the five pastors representing eighteen congregations. The most notable feature of this constitution was that lay delegates had no voting power in regard to ordination or expulsion of the clergy from office. These matters were considered to be concerns only of the 'Ministerium.' In both concept and language, the Muehlhaeuser constitution was thoroughly eastern Lutheran, specifically of the New York Ministerium variety.

The remainder of the decade remained relatively peaceful for the Wisconsin Synod. Once manpower became readily available, the Synod began to send out traveling missionaries. (In all fairness to the early pastors of the Synod, it must be noted that nearly every pastor was a "traveling missionary" in the sense that he had to travel about to serve his several congregations with the Means of Grace.) The first such traveling missionary was Pastor Gottlieb Fachtmann, a university-trained theologian. Unlike many others of his educational background, Fachtmann adjusted well to the rigorous conditions of his missionary tours. Eventually he was called to an established congregation, thus ending his traveling missionary endeavors.

As early as the mid-1850's a "new trend ... toward stricter Lutheran practice" surfaced within the Wisconsin Synod. The source of this trend came from within the Barmen mission seminary. One may further trace this new Wisconsin orthodoxy to Johann Wallmann, inspector at Barmen.

Wallmann, son of a rationalistic city councillor, entered the University of Halle and studied exegetics and dogmatics with Gesenius and Wegscheider. He soon came into a close personal friendship with August Tholuck, a simple-hearted Lutheran much like Muehlhaeuser. Tholuck took a personal interest in each student's faith in Christ. This, too, became Wallmann's trademark. After the death of Richter, the inspector of Barmen, Wallmann accepted the call to replace him. From 1847-1857, Wallmann ably taught exegetics, dogmatics, and pastoral theology "with a father's concern for the students." During this time, many future pastors of the Wisconsin Synod came into contact with Wallmann. His unwavering understanding of strict Lutheran practice surely diffused into these men and eventually permeated the whole Synod. With little doubt, Wallmann may be pointed to as a primary source of orthodoxy within the early Wisconsin Synod.

In 1856 an important decision was reached at the annual synodical meeting that demonstrated an increased impetus in the direction of sound Lutheran doctrine by the Wisconsin Synod. A pamphlet, entitled *Definite Platform*, formulated by Dr. S. S. Schmucker, president of the theological seminary of the General Synod at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, had been in circulation among Lutherans in the east. Others who supported its views included Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, and Dr. S. Sprecher, head of the Wittenberg Theological Seminary at Springfield, Ohio.

In spite of those who espoused its views, there was sufficient opposition to it, chiefly in the persons of Dr. Mann, Dr. Passavant, and Dr. Krauth. Even the unionistic Prussian general synod had rejected a proposal of similar content in 1846.

The *Definite Platform* claimed that the Smalcald Articles were an attempt by Luther and his associates to alter the teachings of the Augsburg Confession. Among the doctrines brought forth in the *Definite Platform*,

were:

In the Lord's Supper, the presence of Christ is symbolized in the bread and wine

Christ did not descend into hell as the Apostles' Creed states

Christ received His divine nature through Mary

In the Augsburg Confession, the anathema upon individual articles of false doctrine was to be removed

Customary Lutheran forms of worship were condemned as being sentimental and meaningless

Unanimously, the assembly of the 1856 Synodical convention stood against the *Definite Platform* because it constituted "nothing else but the determined suicide of the Lutheran Church."

Lest the impression be given that Satan did not try his level best to break the Wisconsin Synod asunder, two points of controversy should be briefly examined.

The first of these was comprised of a chain of incidents involving the manner in which certain pastors of the Wisconsin Synod ministered to congregations whose allegiance belonged not only to Lutheranism, but to some other denomination as well. Time and time again, early Synod chronicles mention congregations whose confessional guidelines were a mixture of Lutheran and Reformed doctrines. Examples of such congregations included those in Manitowoc, Schlessingerville, Princeton, and Honey Creek. In most cases, such a union existed because the Lutherans or the Reformed, by themselves, could not financially support a church and its pastor. Together, they could make ends meet. In most cases such hybrid congregations worked as well as one could expect for they were merely nothing more than an extension of the congregations of the Prussian Union. Since many members of Synod congregations had belonged to such churches in Germany, they were able to comprehend and exist under such conditions.

In one case, however, the combined congregation in Schlessingerville was forcibly torn apart due to a divergency in communion practice. The Reformed faction demanded that bread be used in the Lord's Supper, while the Lutheran contingent wanted wafers to be used. The Ministerial Assembly of the Wisconsin Synod suggested that in order to maintain peace in the church, both forms were to be used. Pastor Goldammer of Newton vigorously protested this pronouncement for, among other things, it "would only tend to aggravate the differences between the two parties." The manuscript minutes of the Synod records indicate that "no further attention was paid to this."

The second incident causing considerable distress both within the Wisconsin Synod and with their relationship to other Lutherans was the matter of the Lebanon-Watertown cases. To briefly summarize the events, two Missouri Synod congregations, one in Watertown, the other in nearby Lebanon, "imposed private confession on them who preferred general confession." In both cases, a teacher from the congregation's parochial day school made himself available to the dissidents as their minister because the disputants had been excommunicated. The Wisconsin Synod eventually stepped into both controversies to supply pastors for the two congregations.

The Wisconsin Synod was to meet in convention at Milwaukee from May 30-June 3, 1858, to consider, among other things, the situation at Lebanon. In the case of Lebanon, the Wisconsin Synod report of 1858 offers this view:

Since the Evangelical-Lutheran St. Matthaues-Gemeinde in Town Lebanon contrary to the Word of God, to clear and unmistakable statements of the Augustana, and contrary to its own conscience was to have private confession forced upon it, there could be no denial of its right to protest against the imposition of such a yoke

Since this protest was not heeded by the preacher of the congregation, a part of the congregation, too, according to the documents before us, treated by him in an unchristian manner, it would have behooved the ministerium of the Lutheran Synod of Missouri to give ear to their repeated requests, and do so in a Christian way, which was not done

Since the request of this congregation for an investigation, made to the ministerium has not been heeded neither by the district president nor by the president-general, the congregation named has thus not been rendered justice over against Pastor Geyer, we do not consider said congregation as any longer under obligation to remain within its synodical association, and it is free to turn to such who share the same

basis of faith with it

Where in the method of procedure, however, this congregation, too, has erred, we do not lend our support, rather offer the admonition that it repent and seek God's forgiveness

The Missouri Synod, in its convention held also in Milwaukee from June 2-8 of the same year, called the Wisconsin Synod to account for gang work (*das rottische-Treiben*). The report on the Lebanon controversy went on to speak of the Wisconsin Synod's "unionistic indifferentism and a lack of the right observance of the confessional restrictions."

The Watertown case did not create as much public stir between the two Synods because it occurred in a year in which no synodical gathering was held. Nevertheless, "the Wisconsin men were arraigned personally, by letter, and in print for un-Lutheran conduct" by different Missourians.

The clearest result of the Lebanon-Watertown cases was that a larger wedge of animosity was driven into the gap between Missouri and Wisconsin. The Missourians before felt an air of superiority over and against the men of Wisconsin because of the former's more desirable orthodox position regarding theology. Now a measure of resentment for "sheep stealing" was added. (How soon (1877) this dislike of the two parties for each other would vanish when Wisconsin would voice its support of the Missouri Synod and Dr. Walther in the election controversy.)

On the reverse side, the Wisconsin Synod did experience some things positive on account of the Watertown-Lebanon cases, In the first place, the budding city of Watertown was brought to the fore in Synod matters and would remain in this position for years to come. This was desirable for Watertown since it was geographically centered for the majority of Synod's constituents. Secondly, and more importantly, these events marked the beginning of a period in which the Wisconsin Synod carefully examined its doctrines and practices. This was made manifest in Bading's request that at the next Synod meeting, two reports, one on the Synod's confessional stand, the other dealing with the practice of the confessional, were heard, discussed, and adopted by the Synod. This openly demonstrated a new clarity of purpose in the Wisconsin Synod regarding its desire to achieve purely Lutheran doctrine and practice.

Therefore, it has been shown in this chapter that the Wisconsin Synod of 1860 was essentially changed from the same Synod of 1850. In 1850, the Synod consisted of five pastors representing eighteen congregations; in 1860, the statistics reveal that there were twenty-two pastors serving forty-eight congregations. In 1860, twenty-three day schools were found in Synod congregations where just slightly over a decade before none had existed.

Outside of statistical growth, the Wisconsin Synod experienced changes in doctrine and practice. Johannes Muehlhaeuser, the first president of the Synod, organized a church body whose primary concern was spreading the Gospel in a truly missionary manner. Only after the Synod had gotten to its feet and was reaching full stride did the practice of faith come under more careful scrutiny. Again, this is not to insinuate that the early Wisconsin men were all lax in doctrine and practice, nor was the manner in which they handled faith situations questionable because it is not the way things are done today. Rather, it is vital to remember that the ministry of the church must adapt itself to diverse situations. Indeed, there were times when things were not in line with God's injunction to handle things "decently and in order." Yet, the Lord guided each situation in a way that suited His purpose. To God alone be glory for this, His good work.

## **CHAPTER TWO: A HISTORY OF HYMNBOOKS IN THE WISCONSIN SYNOD**

The first period in the history of Wisconsin Synod hymnody (c. 1850-c. 1870) has been generally obscured. This is due in part to the fact that the Synod itself did not participate in the publication of any hymnbooks. Therefore, any hymnbooks used within Synodical congregations came from various outside sources.

As the immigrants came to Wisconsin from their respective regions of Germany, they usually brought their native hymnbooks along. Since each little German locality had their own indigenous hymnbook, it is not hard to imagine the great diversity of hymnals present when various groups of Germans gathered together for worship. Even worshipping with those of one's own region did not assure the similarity of hymnbooks!

## A. German-language hymnbooks brought to America from Germany

As was previously stated, the departing German emigrant took with him the hymnbook of his home congregation. This can be definitely substantiated in at least one instance.

Table One		
Name of hymnbook (Copyright or edition date)	Number of congregations having used/still in use of this hymnbook	
	Used	Still in use
<i>Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch für Kirche, Schule und Haus</i> (1872)*	23	2
<i>Kirchen Gesangbuch für Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinden</i> (1892)*	5	0
<i>Church Hymnal</i> (1911)*	3	0
<i>Book of Hymns</i> (1916)*	21	0
<i>Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book</i> (1919)*	4	0
<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i> (1941)*	30	30
Other miscellaneous hymnbooks	4	1

\*Mimeographed copy of title page is shown in Appendix "A."

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Helenville, Wisconsin, was organized in 1848. At the time of its incorporation as a congregation, the hymnal it used in divine services was entitled *Gesangbuch für die protestantische Kirche des Königreichs Bayern*. This hymnbook was published by J. E. von Seidel'schen, a book seller in Sulzbach. The contents of this book included 775 hymns, texts only, along with prayers and the privilegium of Maximillian Joseph. The church records of Helenville indicate the date of printing as 1848.

*The Gesangbuch für die protestantische Kirche des Königreichs Bayern* was used at St. Peter's for a good number of years before it was replaced by the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, the Wisconsin Synod's first official hymnbook. Although church records are somewhat obscure as to when the former hymnal was phased out in favor of the latter, the period c. 1880 seems to be the time when this change took place. This assumption is based upon information which reveals that the third hymnbook St. Peter's used came into use in 1931. Church records do state that this changeover came "about fifty" years after the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* was introduced to the congregation. Simple arithmetic determines the years surrounding 1880 as the time when the first hymnbook, brought from Germany, was no longer used.

Although the congregational records from other Wisconsin Synod member churches do not shed light on early hymn book history, there is a good reason why this occurs. Koehler speaks on this matter when, in writing of the early Synod agendas, he notes:

For several years the constitution of Synod and of the congregations, the questions of widows' support, Illinois University, Definite Platform, Unionism, and the matters of various congregations and pastors occupied the body's attention...fully.

Surely, each individual congregation had its hands full with, not only these matters, but those of local interest as well. This surely accounts for conspicuous absences off hymnbook matters in congregational



records.

In studying German-language hymnbooks brought to America by the immigrants, two other hymnbooks, used in this vein were uncovered. The source of these books was Miss Edna Radloff, a woman whose immediate male family members in past generations served as workers in the Wisconsin Synod.

The first of these hymnals is entitled *Evangelisch-protestantisches Gesangbuch für Kirche und Haus*. It was published in 1859 in the city of Speyer in Bavaria by the *protestantischen Pfarrwittwenkasse*. It begins with the privilegium of Maximilian Joseph. Following this are 960 hymns, most texts having the melody shown. Those texts having no melodies have a melody number showing the proper tune to be used in connection with the words. The final section of this hymnbook is devoted to a moderate number of prayers.

The other hymnbook bears the title *Heiliges Lippen und Herzens-Opfer einer gläubigen Seele oder vollständiges Gesang-Buch, enthält in sich die neuesten und alten Lieder des seligen Dr. Luther und anderer erleuchteten Lehrer unserer Zeit. Zur Beförderung der Gottseligkeit bei öffentlichem Gottesdienst in Pommern und anderen Orten zu gebrauchen, eingerichtet, auch mich bekannten Melodien versehen. Nebst einem geistreichen Gebet-Buch von dem Herrn General-Superintendenten Dr. Laurent. David Bollhagen. Mit vermehrtem Sonn-und Festtags-Register versehen*. This Pomeranian hymnal was printed in 1868 by Johann Samuel Leich. Its contents include 1,313 hymns, with only texts, a large group of prayers, the Epistles and Gospels for every Sunday and festival day of the church year, the Passion history, an account of the destruction of Jerusalem, Luther's Small Catechism, plus four penitential Psalms.

Neither of these books bears the seal of a congregation. Taking into consideration the background of their previous owner(s), however, it may well be that they were used in Wisconsin Synod congregations just south of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

### **B. German-language hymnbooks ordered from German publishing houses**

In addition to the German-language hymnbooks brought by the immigrants to America, there were a number of congregations of the Wisconsin Synod who ordered both standard and customized German-language hymnals from both Germany and America.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Monroe, Michigan, was organized in 1838. For approximately the first sixty years, no definite record was made of the hymnbook(s) used for divine services. It appears in church records, however, that in the mid-1890's, St. Paul's obtained from Christopher Scheufele, in Stuttgart, the hymnbook *Gesangbuch für Evangelische Kirche in Württemberg*. This hymnbook contained 651 hymns, only with texts, along with the Passion history, readings, and prayers. St. Paul's congregational records indicate that the *Gesangbuch für Evangelische Kirche in Württemberg* remained in common use there until about 1915.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jefferson, Wisconsin, filled its need for a hymnal in a rather unique way—by ordering a custom-made hymnbook. The title of the book is *Gesangbuch für die Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Johannes-Kirche in Jefferson, Wisc.* The title page goes on to state this is the same hymnal as the one used in the evangelical Lutheran church situated in Bavaria. Therefore, the only truly customized part of this hymnbook is the title page.

The customized St. John's hymnbook contained 568 hymns, each provided with a melody line. At the end of the hymnbook are various morning and evening prayers.

Church records indicate that the *Gesangbuch für die Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Johannes-Kirche in Jefferson, Wisc.* came into use in 1851, the year of the congregation's inception. It still has not been taken out of use for the congregation has several German services per year. Not only is the previously mentioned book used for these German services, but the Wisconsin Synod's first official hymnal, *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch für Kirche, Schule, und Haus*, is used as well.

### **C. German-language hymnbooks ordered from American publishing houses**

An example of a congregation employing an American-Printed German-language hymnbook is

St. Peter's Lutheran in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. In the previous chapter, it was mentioned that Pastor Gottlieb Fachtmann had served as the Synod's first appointed traveling missionary. Although Fachtmann's travels took him throughout the entire state of Wisconsin, the bulk of his work was done in the Fox River Valley. Fond du Lac, located in that valley, was one of Fachtmann's pet projects. When, in 1858, St. Peter's formally organized itself, Fachtmann accepted the call to be its first pastor with the understanding that he would be periodically allowed to continue his mission journeys for the Synod.

The hymnbook first used at St. Peter's was a German language book from the Pennsylvania Synod. On this matter, church records are unclear, save the fact that the word *Gesangbuch* was found in the title and that the hymnbook came from the aforementioned Synod. Putting this together with the date that the hymnal was first used, 1858, it may well be that this mystery *Gesangbuch* was the *Deutsches Gesangbuch für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten*. The various editions of this hymnal printed on or before 1858 included 710 hymns, texts only.

Another fact that compliments the theory that the Fond du Lac congregation used the *Deutsches Gesangbuch für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten* is found in Koehler's work. He writes: "The early Wisconsin Synod, it will be recalled, was charged with using the rationalistic Pennsylvania *Agende*. That may have happened in Milwaukee, one or the other of the pastors receiving the book from Muehlhaeuser."

Further on in the same paragraph, Koehler notes "that Muehlhaeuser provided hymnals for the congregations." It is a logical conclusion that if the Pennsylvania *Agende* was given out by Muehlhaeuser, then the hymnbook he distributed may have come from the same source.

Koehler boldly points out that this rationalistic, Wollenweber-published hymnbook was faulty. Its chief downfall was that it "was minus most of Luther's hymns which...had been crowded out by songs of the Moravians, of the Reformed pietists, and even of Gellert and his contemporaries, songs that hardly struck the Lutheran keynote"

Beginning in the mid-1860's, attacks from without coupled with troubled consciences, led pastors from the Wisconsin Synod to question the denomination's allegiance and fellowship with the unionistic missionary societies of Germany. For several years the Synod had come under strong criticisms from other Lutheran leaders and their respective publications. Their charges were that the Wisconsin Synod was formless in doctrine and unionistic in practice. To clear the air once and for all, the praesidium of the Synod decided to take action.

The Wisconsin Synod Convention of 1865 tackled the question of association with the unionistic mission societies in a straightforward manner. A majority report, headed most notably by Pastor Hoenecke, condemned the practices of the Prussian Union church in no uncertain terms. For a majority of those attending the convention, the language was much too strong. To them, Pastor Neumann's minority report was much more to their liking. The minority report "thankfully accepted the loving offices of the United Societies as the agency thru which workers came to...serve in the Lutheran church here..." On the other hand, the same report "condemned all doctrinal union [as] a hindrance to the full effect of the Lutheran confession..."

Naturally, the German mission societies were upset despite the pledges of allegiance from individual Wisconsin Synod pastors. Relations steadily deteriorated as evidenced by the correspondence of Pastor Eichler on behalf of the *Berliner Missionsgesellschaft*.

It should be pointed out that the divergence of the Wisconsin Synod and the German mission societies involved more than upholding the principles of God's Word on fellowship. In 1864, Bading had gone to Germany and Russia on a Synod-sanctioned trip to raise money for a new theological seminary in Wisconsin. His trip was an immense success for it netted just slightly less than \$13,000. This amount was placed into an interest-bearing bank account. The interest was turned over periodically to a Dr. Wichern who, in turn, placed it into the seminary's treasury. So, in addition to manpower, the Synod, in attempting to cut its ties with the mission societies, was also giving up the rights to a respectable sum of money.

In early 1868, the Langenberg society sent to the administration of the Wisconsin Synod a letter informing them that "we (the Langenberg Society) don't think we can reconcile it with our conscience further to support your Lutheran synod by the assignment of preachers, as long as it adheres to the unjustified protest against the Union..."

In and of itself, this break only terminated the manpower supply, not the financial aid. The Prussian Supreme Church Council did take that inevitable step when, one year later, on March 27, 1869, it resolved "to employ the interest of said collection (Bading's \$13,000)...for the training and sending of aspirants for the work in church and school of German evang. congregations in North America devoted to the Union." Thus, the Wisconsin Synod was cut off without another red *Pfennige* from the Union.

The break with the Prussian state church over the matter of unionism came shortly after the alignment of the Wisconsin Synod with other more orthodox American Lutheran bodies in the General Council. Regardless of its positive impact on the future of the Synod, these moves to the right brought about a practical problem: if the Synod were to eradicate its seemingly unionistic past stance, all vestiges of old relationships had to be dropped. It was felt that by utilizing German-language hymnbooks from either Germany or one of the lax Lutheran Synods, the clarity of doctrinal purpose that the Wisconsin Synod sought to achieve would be only further muddled. Therefore, Wisconsin looked to the other orthodox bodies of the General Council for an acceptable hymnbook.

In the Wisconsin Synod Convention of 1865, President Streissguth appointed a committee to carry out the task of contacting the Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio Synods for the purpose of revising the old Pennsylvania hymnbook to make it more desirable to orthodox Lutherans. Previously, Wisconsin had made inquiries to the Ohio Synod regarding the use of its hymnbook and *Agende* but many of these inquiries went unanswered. Of the three bodies, only Pennsylvania made any overtures that it was interested. Nevertheless, nothing ever came of this.

The General Council, of which the Wisconsin Synod had been a member since 1866, had as a longstanding project the design of a new hymnbook. This may well have been one of the Wisconsin Synod's primary reasons for joining this organization. The Council did proceed with such a project, thus making a new hymnal appear likely for the Wisconsin Synod in the near future. However, the Council's stand "in regard to the lodge question and unionistic altar and pulpit fellowship" led the Wisconsin Synod, as well as a number of other conservative Synods, to leave the General Council in 1869. Therefore, the General Council's new hymnal would not be used by the Wisconsin Synod as it no longer belonged to that organization.

#### **D. Hymnbooks printed by the Wisconsin Synod**

It was resolved in the same year that the Wisconsin Synod should proceed with the final steps to print its own hymnbook. George Brumder, brother-in-law of past Synod President Streissguth, was given a thirty-year contract for the printing of this book. The Synod was to receive "a payment of five cents for every copy sold by the firm. The proceeds...were used by the Synod for the support of our 'schools of higher learning.'"

As the date came closer for the hymnbook to be printed, various objections were raised by pastors to its texts. As an example, two hymns that were to be included in the book, "*Eine Heerde und ein Hirt*" and "*Ihr Kinder des Höchsten wie steht's um die Liebe*" were cited as undesirable hymns for an orthodox, Lutheran hymnbook. The former was noted for exhibiting chiliastic and unionistic doctrines, whereas the latter contained casual rationalistic references and "sheer nonsense" (*theilweis Unsinn*). Another committee, boasting the membership of Bading, Hoenecke, and Koehler, was assigned to examine the contents of the book. After an exhaustive investigation, the revised hymnbook was finally published.

At first, the new hymnbook was not eagerly taken into every congregation. Some congregations had perhaps recently purchased new hymnals from German publishing houses or from another synod, while others were simply unwilling to surrender the old for the new. Nevertheless, by the early twentieth century, a majority of congregations in the Wisconsin Synod had obtained and was utilizing the *Evang.*

*Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. (Nothing will be mentioned in this chapter concerning the contents of the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* or of any other official Wisconsin Synod hymnbook, for the next chapter covers their contents in depth.)

For other reasons, the first hymnbook of the Wisconsin Synod was not an immediate success with the Synod's churches. Some Wisconsin Synod churches on the geographical outer edges of the Synod, or existing in areas where the concentration of other Lutheran bodies was greater, never made use of the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. Rather, for them, one of the printings of the Missouri Synod's *Kirchen Gesangbuch für Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinden* was their first taste of an orthodox American Lutheran hymnbook. Churches that followed this route include: Trinity of Crete, Illinois; St. Paul's of Grant Park, Illinois; St. Paul's of Monroe, Michigan; First of Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Trinity of Mequon, Wisconsin.

Although it did not result in the production of a new hymnbook by the Wisconsin Synod, an event that took place in 1890 deserves mentioning. In the Synod Convention of that year, George Brumder, the publisher of the Synod's *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, "appeared on the floor of Synod [convention] in the matter of the fat hymnbook contract, which to Synod yielded only pitiful royalties..." Brumder yielded up the printing contract to the Synod long before its expiration date had arrived. In rather questionable fashion, he was referred to as a "donor" and was "honored by...a rising vote of thanks."

Four years later, however, Brumder cancelled the aforementioned agreement because the Synod had not lived up to its part of the contract for payment to him of the hymnal's printing costs. This apparently occurred due to a lack of communication. Brumder paid the amount of the old royalties and resumed the printing work.

Brumder continued to publish the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* for the next six years until the remainder of his original contract had expired. The original edition of the *Gesangbuch* had contained typographical mistakes that were not rectified until the Synod's Northwestern Publishing House assumed the printing work in 1900.

The first significant development in the twentieth century with regard to Wisconsin Synod hymnody is seen in the report of the Book Commission given at the 1910 Synod Convention. Of the recommendations offered by the Commission, the most interesting one regarding hymnbook development is:

*Einen englischen Katechismus und ein  
englisches Gesangbuch herauszugeben. In  
bezug auf das englische Gesangbuch,  
wurde beschlossen, ein solches  
herauszugeben, wenn unser  
Geschäftsführer mit den Herausgebern des  
schon gebrauchten englischen  
Gesangbuches nicht ein genügend  
günstiges Abkommen treffen kann.*

An English catechism and an English hymnal be published. In reference to the English hymnbook, it was decided to publish one, if our editor cannot work out a favorable agreement with the publishers of our current hymnbook.

Without attempting to interpret a great deal between the lines, one may observe changes coming about within the Wisconsin Synod. First of all, at a point in their report just prior to this, the Book Commission admitted that business at the publishing house had slumped throughout the previous fiscal year. Therefore, they recommended that Northwestern Publishing House expand its scope of printing activities to include previously untouched selling fields. How natural then that now would be an excellent time to enter the arena of English language publications.

The other observation pertains more directly to the aforementioned recommendation. It must be recalled that the earliest eras of the Synod (c. 1850-c. 1870) were dominated by German-speaking,

German-born immigrants. As the Wisconsin Synod attempted a clarification of its doctrinal position, particularly in the area of unionism, it cut the umbilical cord from Germany that had faithfully and necessarily supplied it with pastors, teachers, members, money, and moral encouragement. Not only after c. 1870 did some of the incoming Wisconsin Synod pastors come from non-German backgrounds, but, to a greater extent, so did the Synod's members. To these non-Germans, the German language served only as a stumbling block in divine worship. Therefore, the Book Commission saw the need for an English-language hymnal and attempted to remedy it.

The resulting English-language hymnal was the *Church Hymnal*. Printed first in 1911, it seems to have existed well into the 1920's, with official Synod records, scanty as they are, indicating 1923 as the final year of publication. All told, the reports of the Northwestern Publishing House mention 23,000 *Church Hymnals* were published in various printings. (This number may not indicate the true number of *Church Hymnals* due to gaps in the set of the *Synodal-Bericht* or omissions of publishing figures in those reports available.)

For unknown reasons, the dominance of the *Church Hymnal* was short-lived. Perhaps the best guess as to its demise may be found in the fact that this hymnal was very small. With less than 125 hymns, its scope of choices was limited and maybe wearisome. Nevertheless, it served the Wisconsin Synod well by introducing the English-language hymnal to a number of congregations.

In 1915, only four years after the *Church Hymnal* had been introduced, the *Northwestern Lutheran* published an interesting notice.

#### Notice

The attention of all who are engaged or interested in our English work is invited to the new Church Hymnal now in preparation by the Northwestern Publishing House. There is a growing demand for a hymn-book embodying the best products of Lutheran hymnology as well as those of English origin. While a great amount of good work has already been done in this field and we are rapidly passing the pioneer stage, the publication board feels it a duty owing to all concerned in English work to take an active part in the task of laying up a stock of standard hymns for many years to come. The new book is to contain 500 or more hymns with music, also orders of service and other supplements for church use.

The co-operation of all friends of the cause is invited and earnestly requested. If you have any opinion to offer on doctrinal, literary, musical, technical, commercial, or any other considerations that may enter into the task before us--any preference, objections, or criticisms concerning publications already in the field--let us hear from you while the work is in progress. Address all communications to Rev. O. Hagedorn, 404 Thomas Ave., Milwaukee, Wis.

Inquiries in regard to this matter, if they are of sufficient public interest, will be answered in this paper.

Northwestern Publishing House

Apparently another year passed before "Hagedorn's hymnbook," the *Book of Hymns*, was printed by the publishing house. In its report of 1917, the Book Commission of the Wisconsin Synod reports that among the many things printed at Northwestern Publishing House in the past year was "*das so lange ehrrente Hymnbook von Pastor O. Hagedorn.*"

A cursory examination of the *Book of Hymns* reveals it to be a volume of only three-fifths the size that it originally was intended to be. This did not please a great many people within the Synod who had hoped for a large collection of English language hymns. However, it took upwards of ten years for any movement for improvement of Hagedorn's hymnbook to materialize.

In the August 18th, 1926 edition of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, an announcement appeared that revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the *Book of Hymns*.

Addenda to the Book of Hymns

At its last session the Joint Synod directed the Committee on Publications to prepare such additions to the present edition of the *Book of Hymns* as seem to be needed. The committee, Professor A. Pieper, chairman, has directed the undersigned to gather such materials as is needed and to prepare, with competent help, an index, or addendum to the present book.

It is understood that such an addendum would be prepared in such manner that it could be used by present owners of the *Book of Hymns* without rendering them obsolete while it would be embodied in new editions of the hymnal.

Users of the book have chiefly demanded the addition of certain "standard" Lutheran hymns and of certain hymns for occasional use.

Will all those who have thought about this matter put their suggestions in writing and send them to the undersigned?

Will all those who have had certain hymns in mind that were not included in the Book of Hymns express their wishes in the same way?

When German hymns are suggested for which the writer has no English text, it is sufficient to mention them by name and number.

Those who are in possession of suitable texts will aid in the work by forwarding them.

Corrections and alterations of the book now in use will be gratefully accepted and filed for future use.

If this work is to be successful those who have given thought to the matter and have asked for the additions must not fail to communicate their wishes and their opinions. Write before October 15th.

Address all correspondence pertaining to this subject to

H. Koller Moussa  
52 East First Street  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

The tone of this announcement seems to indicate that the desire to expand the *Book of Hymns* did not come from the hierarchy of the Wisconsin Synod. Rather, it appeared to come from a "grass roots movement". namely the parish pastors, parochial teachers and lay people. In a second announcement on the hymnal revision, Pastor Moussa draws these various elements to task when he writes:

Organists especially should heed the appeal of one of our correspondents who asks them to show interest and to offer their suggestions. That our pastors, professors, teachers, and other members have frequently criticized the Book of Hymns is not unfair nor unusual, but all of these should now take the opportunity to help make it better.

Two more years passed with no mention of the progress on the addendum to the *Book of Hymns* being made. Unfortunately, during this time, Pastor Moussa died without the realization of a completed project. August Pieper was called upon to carry forth the work of Moussa. Once again, all pastors, teachers, and members of Synod were requested to submit "one or more of such hymns as they consider appropriate for publication" in the *Book of Hymns*.

In an about-faced move slightly over a year later, Pastor O. Hagedorn reported to the Synod's constituents that the Wisconsin Synod Convention of 1930 had permanently closed the issue of revision for the *Book of Hymns*. Hagedorn proceeded to state that Synod congregations should now introduce the *Book of Hymns* without delay, if they have not done so already. He writes, "It is safe to predict that many more editions of our present hymnal will be printed before it will be forced off the market, and that Synod will authorize no alterations."

The event that may have caused the *Book of Hymns* to never undergo the major overhaul that so many wished to see, took place nearly five years earlier at the Wisconsin Synod Convention of 1925. In this convention, the Book Commission came up with a rather stunning set of proposals. The entire report

reads:

<p><i>Auf Grund der Eingabe zweier Konferenzen an das Buchkomitee, die Verbesserung unseres englischen Gesangbuchs und die Herausgabe einer eigenen grossen Agenda betreffend, möchten wir der ehrwürdigen Synode folgendes anheimgeben:</i></p>	<p>We make the following suggestions to the honorable Synod on account of the petition presented two conventions ago by the book committee concerning improvements on our English hymnbook and the production of an agenda:</p>
<p><i>Die Synode möge ein Komitee ernennen, um einen Anhang von guten, in unserm englischen Gesangbuch fehlenden englischen Kirchenliedern herzustellen</i></p>	<p>The Synod appointed a committee to study the feasibility of manufacturing a supplement containing English language hymns for our English hymnal</p>
<p><i>Diesem Komitee sollte zugleich die Aufgabe werden, zu erwägen, ob für die Zukunft etwa ein ganz neues Hymnal an Stelle des jetzigen treten solle oder nicht; und wann, dass dann dies Komitee das Material für dasselbe sammle</i></p>	<p>When this committee began to collect material for this supplement, they considered the possibility of compiling an entirely new hymnal</p>
<p><i>Da manche unsrer Pastoren es für wünschenswert halten, dass alle Synoden der Synodalkonferenz ein Remein schaftliches englisches Gesangbuch haben, so sollte das genannte Komitee beauftragt werden, mit etwaigen von anderen Synoden zur Herstellung eines solches Gesangbuchs ernannten Komiteen Verbindung zu suchen, um ein solches Herzustellen; jedoch nur unter der Bedingung, dass unsrerer Buchhandlung ein Set Platten gegen Entrichtung der Herstellungskosten zu freier Verfügung gestellt werde</i></p>	<p>Many of our pastors thought it desirable that all Synods of the Synodical Conference should have a common hymnal. So. the aforementioned committee was commissioned to speak with other synods about the possibility of assisting us with the production of such a hymnbook. If such a venture were to take place, one condition was to be stipulated: our printer was to set the printing plates.</p>
<p><i>Der Meinung der beiden Konferenzen, dass unsere Synode eine eigene grosse englische Kirchen agenda herausgeben solle, vermögen wir aus finanziellen Gründen nicht beizustimmen</i></p>	<p>The opinion of both conventions was that our Synod was financially unable to publish a large English language church agenda (and hymnal).</p>
<p><i>Im Namen und Auftrag des Buchkomitees,</i></p>	<p>On behalf of the book committee,</p>
<p>Aug. Pieper Otto Schmeling</p>	<p>Aug. Pieper Otto Schmeling</p>

Though the final point lent a negative impact to the whole report, it is noteworthy that at this early date, 1925, significant, serious thought, originating from the Wisconsin Synod, was being given to

an inter-Synodical hymnbook for the member Synods of the Synodical Conference. The condition concerning the printing plates, as set forth in point three, is interesting. Perhaps the Wisconsin Synod desired to securely maintain a prominent place with regard to the new hymnal. Nevertheless, this report shows that there were forces at work within the Wisconsin Synod who were vitally interested in compiling a major inter-Synodical hymnal.

#### **E. The hymnal published by the Synodical Conference**

Two years later, in 1927, the Wisconsin Synod published a letter in its annual book of reports from three representatives of the Norwegian Synod. These three men, C. A. Molstad, H. H. Ebert, and P. E. Kretzmann, called upon the Wisconsin Synod to join with their Synod (the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods were two of four Synodical Conference members) in formulation of an inter-Synodical hymnbook. The three Norwegian representatives noted that "the present hymnals do not fill the need" for they have problems "particularly of a linguistic nature." In closing, the letter asks the Wisconsin Synod "to discuss the feasibility...and take the necessary steps in arranging for the compilation and publication of such a hymnal." The Synod resolved to participate in this significant matter, delegating all power in this matter to the Book Commission.

The impetus for the inter-Synodical hymnbook was next carried a step further by the Missouri Synod. As reported in the Wisconsin Synod's *Synodal-Bericht* of 1929:

*Nun hat die Missouri-Synode ehrw. auf ihrer letzten Versammlung ein Komitee eingesetzt, das sich innerhalb der nächsten neuen Jahre mit der Herausgabe eines neuen englischen Gesangbuchs abgeben soll. Dies Komitee wurde instruiert, sich mit den anderen Schwester-synoden zwecks Herstellung eines einheitlichen englischen Gesangbuchs für die Synodalkonferenz in Verbindung zu setzen.*

At its last convention, the honorable Missouri Synod established a committee that will, within the next year, examine the possibility of producing a new English hymnal. This committee will meet with representatives of its sister Synods of the Synodical Conference for the purpose of producing a uniform English hymnbook for the alliance.

The Synod decided to hold in abeyance the revision of the *Book of Hymns* on the basis of these reports. In fact, the Synod empowered the Book Commission to work with the Synodical Conference Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics to select, at its own discretion, the hymns and other materials for the new hymnbook.

In a letter to the Wisconsin Synod published in the *Northwestern Lutheran* of February 16th, 1930, O. Hagedorn exhorts his readers to be patient for "it (the new intersynodical hymnal) will not be introduced overnight." Hagedorn states plenty of time must be given for thorough work on the hymnal project so as to insure the superiority of the final product.

The inter-Synodical committee did indeed take its time in researching, constructing, and publishing the hymnal. In fact, from the date of the first meeting, the committee worked slightly over ten years. However, this period does not represent time wasted. Rather, it was an era of careful work, checking of that work, and rechecking of the same material. W. Gustav Polack pointed out the care exhibited in compilation of the new hymnbook:

Their task is not merely to select the best of old English hymns, which, in turn, must be looked up in their original form, tested for doctrinal correctness and true Scripturalness, and examined to see whether possibly a later version was an improvement; but, in addition, hymns must be translated from German, Norwegian, Slovak, French and other languages.

To further emphasize the cautious approach of the committee Polack notes: "In one session, forty-three minutes were spent upon one word."

Official Wisconsin Synod chronicles remained virtually silent on the new hymnal throughout the



1930's. It was not until late in 1940 that the Synod's official publication, the *Northwestern Lutheran* broke the silence. W. Gustav Polack, organizer and a member of the inter-Synodical hymnbook committee, wrote:

We fully realize that our people are impatiently awaiting the new hymnal's appearance as the books they now have are frayed and worn. We are happy, however, that many have written to us cautioning against haste at this state, lest the mechanical perfection of the book be jeopardized.

In this same article, Polack revealed that the first edition of this hymnbook had been nearly sold out through advanced orders. He also cautioned the congregations who had planned to cut costs by mixing the new hymnal with their old versions. He wrote, "There are entirely too many changes, both as to texts and tunes, to make this feasible.

In the following year, 1941, when *The Lutheran Hymnal* was published, a flurry of informational articles appeared in the *Northwestern Lutheran* concerning the new hymnbook. One of the most informative was a ten-part serial entitled "Introducing the Liturgical Part of the New Hymnal." It was written by Pastor Gervasius Fischer of Peshtigo, Wisconsin, and appeared in ten consecutive issues of the *Northwestern Lutheran* from 1941-1942. The purpose of these articles was to explain the principles of Christian worship and how the liturgy of the new hymnbook tied into this foundation.

In comparison with the manner in which Synod congregations switched over to other Wisconsin Synod hymnbooks, the transitional speed to *The Lutheran Hymnal* was truly exceptional. Various reports and articles seem to indicate that such a change was accomplished in a maximum of two or maybe three years in most congregations. This is not to say that other hymnbooks, particularly those of the German language, were immediately and entirely discarded by the member churches of the Wisconsin Synod. No, to this day, a small number of Synod churches still periodically hold German-language services, in which a book, other than *The Lutheran Hymnal* is used. However, the use of any English-language hymnbook, other than the officially endorsed one, is virtually nonexistent.

#### **F. Planned revisions for *The Lutheran Hymnal***

*The Lutheran Hymnal* served the Synodical Conference members well for nearly twenty years before any organized thought was given to supplementation or revision. It was not until 1959 that the Hymnal Committee of the Wisconsin Synod filed a report indicating that primary work had begun on such a change.

The two members of the Hymnal Committee have met with the corresponding committees of the Synodical Conference in five meetings to date. The work of the committee has divided itself into two areas; hymnal revision and revision of the Agenda.

The contemplated hymnal is threefold:

A smaller text-tune edition, for the congregation. This book is to appear in ten to twelve years

A choir edition (similar to the present hymnal), also to appear in ten to twelve years

An organists' hymnal, to be ready in about two years

The text-tune edition will include only the melody of each hymn and the thoroughly revised text. The book should be somewhat smaller and thinner than the present hymnal. The choir edition will be a revision of harmonies, using about the same format as in the present hymnal, with the revised texts used in the text-tune edition. The organists' hymnal, which will be the first to appear, should be of great help to the organists in that the arrangements will be made especially for organ. To lend desirable variety, several arrangements will be included for many or most of the hymns...

The Hymnal Committee  
Kurt Eggert  
Martin Albrecht

The impetus for this action had more than likely come from other bodies within the Synodical Conference, most likely from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The Hymnal Committee's report at the next Synod convention made it apparent that there had been virtually no progress on the new hymnal. The standstill was due, in part, to the plan to prepare the organist's hymnal first. Since Professor Bunjes of River Forest, Illinois, had not yet been given a leave of absence to devote full-time to arranging organ accompaniments, progress had virtually ceased. Nevertheless, the Synod convention instructed the representatives to "continue to participate in the work of this committee."

The year of the Synod's Thirty-Seventh Convention, 1963, marked a change for the Wisconsin Synod's Hymnal Committee. First of all, the Wisconsin Synod withdrew from the Synodical Conference. This relegated the status of Wisconsin's Hymnal Committee representatives to that of merely being observers. Now the Wisconsin Synod would have no official input on the new hymnal. They could only monitor the results of the meetings of the Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics of the Synodical Conference, and, in turn, report these to the Synod. Secondly, the Wisconsin Synod took the necessary steps to create its own independent worship commission. A movement, headed by Synod President Oscar J. Naumann, established the Committee on Liturgy, Hymnody, and Worship. This commission was to be made up of six men—three pastors or professors, two male teachers, and one lay man. Its specific duties were:

To engage in an ongoing study of Liturgy, Hymnody and Worship as it relates to the worship life of our members

To produce studies, hymnals, liturgical books and related materials as requested by the Synod

Thus, the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Liturgy, Hymnody, and Worship came into being.

The Commission's report at the Thirty-Eighth Convention in 1965 revealed that although Wisconsin stood independently from the Synodical Conference's work, it (Wisconsin) still hoped that the new hymnal would be acceptable for use.

If the final form of revisions fulfills present expectations, its use in our circles could prove beneficial and would obviate the great expenditure of money and time that would be entailed in producing a new hymnal of our own.

By the next Synod convention, however, the mood had changed. The Wisconsin Synod realized that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had decidedly changed its course. In its 1965 convention, the Missouri Synod resolved "to pursue a cooperative venture with other Lutheran bodies as soon as possible in working toward" a common hymnal and worship materials. The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America quickly accepted Missouri's overtures. In the following year, the Inter-Lutheran Commission of Worship (ILCW), a combination of the worship committees of these three bodies, was formed.

The goal the ILCW set for itself was the completion of a "pan-Lutheran hymnal" by 1980. The earlier project of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the "Interim Supplement" (as the Wisconsin Synod labeled it), was now set aside. Although it would be completed within three years, it would not be the book for which the Wisconsin Synod had hoped. Rather, Wisconsin now looked forward for the production of the ILCW's hymnbook.

Recent history of Wisconsin Synod hymnody will be covered in the final chapter.

### **CHAPTER THREE: BRIEF ANALYSES OF LITURGY AND HYMNS IN THE MAJOR HYMNALS USED IN THE WISCONSIN SYNOD**

In selecting the major hymnals used within the Wisconsin Synod for analysis, I referred to the results of the survey I had taken in May of 1979. The results of this survey, which can be found in Chapter Two, revealed that among the Synod congregations responding, six hymnals were commonly used. Four of these hymnals were publications of or were officially approved by the Wisconsin Synod. They are *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, *Church Hymnal*, *Book of Hymns*, and *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Their dates of publication are respectively 1872, 1911, 1916, and 1941. The two remaining major hymnbooks are *Kirchen Gesangbuch für*

*Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinden* and *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*. Both of these hymnbooks were products of the Missouri Synod. Respectively, their first-edition publication dates were 1847 and 1912.

There follows a brief analysis of the liturgy and hymns of each of these hymnbooks, working through the list chronologically.

***Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch***

The contents of this hymnbook are as follows:

Twenty-two antiphons and a short Communion service

695 hymns, texts only

Assorted prayers

The Epistles and Gospels for all Sundays and festival days of the Church Year

The Passion History

Luther's *Small Catechism*

The Common Confession

Formulas for Baptism

The Augsburg Confession

The Destruction of Jerusalem

Not to be overlooked in the front of this hymnal is an impressive set of *Verzeichnisse* (indexes). The different indexes include:

A table of contents according to *hymn* subjects

A list of supplements found after the hymns

An alphabetical listing of the first line of each hymn

An index of melodies

A cross-index showing each melody number with all possible texts that may be sung with it

An index of hymns for each Sunday and festival day of the Church Year according to that day's Epistle and Gospel

In spite of the completeness of this hymnal in an area like the Sunday and festival day readings, liturgically it was void except for the antiphons and a short Communion service. There was not even a "basic" order of worship. Koehler speaks on this matter.

The order of service at the beginning was very simple. Responses were seldom if at all used, and when they were used, the pastors seldom chanted the versicle. They opened the service by speaking the entire *Adjutorium* ("Our help" etc.), without congregational response. Then followed the Hymn, Collect, Scripture Lesson, and Creed, possibly responded to by the congregation with Amen or Hallelujah. After another hymn (*Predigtlied*) followed the Sermon, with the General Prayer and Special Supplications, then a closing Hymn, the Benediction, and *Schlussvers* (closing verse). The Communion Service was distinguished by the Agnus Dei ('Christ, Thou Lamb of God') and the Sanctus ('Holy, holy, holy').

Since the service was marked by such simplicity and virtually no corporate responses, the matter of there being no printed order of worship in this hymnbook is not really significant. It appears that the choice of incorporating congregational responses was entirely that of the pastor's. There also exists the possibility that the responses of 'Amen' or 'Hallelujah,' if used, were made even more uncomplicated by sneaking them. Therefore, the absence of some standard liturgical portions from the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* was not really such a catastrophe in light of the worship practices of those times.

Table Two, which follows, shows a grouping of the hymnbook's 695 hymn texts according to source.

Table Two		
<i>Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch</i> (Texts)		
Source	Frequency	Percentage

Germany	632	91.5%
Unassignable	63	8.5%
Totals	695	100.0%

The most striking feature in examining the origin of the texts is that the overwhelming majority of them came from Germany. But, considering the roots and make-up of the Wisconsin Synod, this seems natural. The unassignable texts were those of an unknown author or texts whose author's background was uncertain. Nevertheless, many of these texts may well be of German origin.

A breakdown of German texts in the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, by century, appears as such:  
 Graph One - *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* (German texts)

In examining this breakdown, one immediately notices the vast superiority, in number, of the hymns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Pietistic Movement was quite strong during the last portion of the former century and the first half of the latter one. Therefore, did many texts in the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* suffer from Pietism's sentimental, subjective sway?

To gain additional understanding of the possible effect of the Pietistic Movement upon the body of hymnody in the Synod's first official hymnal, it is necessary to know who the chief authors of this hymnbook are. Following is a list of authors who had seven (equivalent to slightly more than one percent) or more hymns used in the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. Behind the author's name will be found his birth and death dates and the number of his hymns which were incorporated into the hymnbook.

- Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) 41
- Benjamin Schmolck (1672-1737) 38
- Martin Luther (1483-1546) 25
- Johannes Olearius (1611-1684) 22
- Johann Heermann (1585-1647) 20
- Johann Rist (1607-1667) 14
- Johann Scheffler (1624-1677) 12
- Johann Rambach (1693-1735) 11
- David Denicke (1603-1680) 10
- Laurentius Laurenti (1660-1722) 9
- Salomo Franck (1659-1725) 8
- Ludwig Helmhold (1532-1598) 7

Of a total of 217 hymns listed here, nearly one-third, sixty-six to be exact, came from authors cast as "pietists." If this rate continued throughout the entire *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, it may well be that pietism had a reasonably strong effect on its body of hymnody.

The 695 hymns of the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* were arranged into twenty-seven categories.

Seven categories deal directly with the Church Year. These seven categories contain some 115 hymns, many of which would be found in later Wisconsin Synod hymnbooks. The remaining twenty categories deal with nearly every other Christian subject imaginable. These range from "Sunday songs" (*Sonntagslieder*) to hymns dealing with "sin and redemption," (*Sünde und Erlösung*). There even was a category of "comfort, songs" (*Trostlieder*). All in all, there is a hymn in this hymnbook for nearly any church-related activity imaginable. Selection of topical hymns was aided by utilization of the *Verzeichnis von Liedern für die Sonn- und Festtage durch das ganze Kirchen-jahr*.

There is nothing recorded in official Wisconsin publications indicating which *Choralbuch* was to be used for the texts of the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. Above each text, however, is the name of the melody to be used with it, along with its respective number from a *Choralbuch*. Nevertheless, the hymnbook does not indicate which *Choralbuch* to use.

As with anything else, there were bad and good points in respect to the Wisconsin Synod's *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. On the negative side, it can be said that this hymnbook was not constructed from a musician's point of view for it lacked any printed tunes with the hymn texts. Yet, a cursory examination of other hymnals of this era reveals that very few hymnbooks put even the melody, let alone a four-part setting, with the text. Perhaps this was a reflection of the musical ignorance of nineteenth-century, American society. It must also be admitted that the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* employed a narrow scope of hymnody for its contents. However, in understanding the background of the Wisconsin Synod and its constituents, the choice of exclusively German hymns is not surprising.

On the other hand, the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* did exhibit several positive points. First of all, it was a practical hymnal. It contained only what was liturgically necessary for the austere, nineteenth-century Wisconsin Synod divine service. Its choice of hymns, though primitive by some standards, was broad enough to satisfy virtually every need. The inclusion of the standard Epistle and Gospel reading, as was done in other hymnbooks of the era, was a stroke of genius that eliminated the need of carrying a Bible to services. Secondly, the hymnal was doctrinally well-prepared. This was evidenced in the desire of the committee at the 1870 Wisconsin Synod Convention to purge the *Gesangbuch* of all hymns containing false teachings. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* was a means by which the Synod eradicated its past connections with groups which it viewed as unionistic and/or unorthodox. For these reasons, the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* was perhaps the most significant of the three hymnbooks produced solely by the Wisconsin Synod.

#### **B. Kirchen-Gesangbuch für Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinden**

Several congregations of the Wisconsin Synod never used the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. For them, the Missouri Synod's *Kirchen-Gesangbuch für Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinden* was the first, American-printed hymnbook used in their divine services (hereinafter referred to as *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*).

The *Kirchen-Gesangbuch* spoken of here was the edition of 1892, not to be confused with the 1847 or 1865 editions.

The contents of this hymnbook included:

- Seventeen antiphons and a short Communion service with eight seasonal Prefaces
- 443 hymns with texts only
- Twenty-five assorted prayers and confessions
- Two formulas for Baptism

With regard to indexes, the following are found in the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*:

- A table of contents listing the thirty-two categories of hymn subjects
- An alphabetical index of the hymns, also showing the page numbers
- A melody index showing which texts could be sung with each of the 108 melodies
- An index of the items found in the book's appendix

The contents of the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*, outside of the hymns, were strikingly similar to the Wisconsin Synod's *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. Upon opening the two hymnbooks, one notices that the first two sections, antiphons (*Antiphonen*) and the Communion service (*Präfationen*), were labeled identically. In fact,

the wording in these two parts is nearly the same. However, in comparison with the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch* excels in that it offers more variety with additional sections to each antiphon and with seasonal prayers in the Communion service.

In examining the major text contributors of the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*, the resulting list exhibits some interesting differences from that of the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*.

1. Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) 39
2. Martin Luther (1483-1546) 31
3. Johann Heermann (1585-1647) 29
4. Johann Rist (1607-1667) 12
5. Johannes Olearius (1611-1684) 11
6. Nikolaus Hermann (c. 1480-1561) 9
7. Nikolaus Selnecker (1532-1592) 7
8. Justus Gesenius (1601-1673) 6
9. Gottfried Sacer (1635-1699) 5

The first observable fact is that many authors whose works were quite numerous in the Wisconsin Synod's *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* were barely represented in the Missouri Synod's *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*. The best example of this contrast occurs with Benjamin Schmolck whose thirty-eight hymns are found in the former hymnbook, but has only four in the latter. Other hymnwriters who undergo this same type of exclusion are Johann Scheffler, Johann Rambach, David Denicke, Laurentius Laurenti, Salomo Franck, and Ludwig Helmhold.

Along these same lines, it may also be observed that in the list of major authors for the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*, there are no writers associated with the Pietistic Movement. This is in contrast to the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* where of the major contributors, four may be labeled as "pietists."

There are 301 hymns in common between *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* and *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*.

Regarding the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch*, there are positive and negative things to say about it. On the side of liabilities, this hymnal lacks a text-tune format. This, however, is not necessarily bad considering the musical aptitude of America then. Also, all editions of the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch* could well have incorporated the Epistle and Gospel readings, the Passion History, the Augsburg Confession, and other items that other Lutheran hymnbooks did include.

On the other hand, the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch* was wisely constructed from the viewpoint of its hymn choices. As was previously mentioned, the qualities of the major contributors proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that these men were solid, confessional Lutheran hymnwriters whose works are a clear enunciation of the faith. The distribution of the hymns for this *Gesangbuch* also was very good. The hymns are spread among many different writers. This, in contrast to the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, was a plus in the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch's* favor for it meant that there was more of a variety to the hymns themselves. This variety, in turn, appealed to a larger range of people.

So, in spite of some insignificant drawbacks, the *Kirchen-Gesangbuch* was a very good hymnal, especially regarding its choice of hymns.

### **C. Church Hymnal for Lutheran Services**

The second official hymnbook of the Wisconsin Synod, the third to be considered in this chapter, was the *Church Hymnal*. Its contents include 115 hymns with only texts. There is no liturgy at all.

Among the various indexes found in this hymnbook are:

A table of contents showing the hymns arranged according to certain portions of the Church Year and certain liturgical acts

A table of classification arranging the hymns with regard to important truths of faith and other portions of the Church Year

An alphabetical index of the hymn texts

The fact that the *Church Hymnal* contained no liturgy, just as the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* had had a very limited liturgy, further reinforces the fact that early Wisconsin Synod services were extremely

simple. This, however, is not a claim that congregations who used the *Church Hymnal* used no liturgy at all. These congregations may have well used the German-language liturgy from the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* in their services.

The major authors of the *Church Hymnal* are shown here.

- Martin Luther (1483-1546) 11
- Isaac Watts (1674-1748) 9
- Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) 6
- Charles Wesley (1707-1788) 5
- John Newton (1725-1807) 3

It is an interesting observation that in this first English-language hymnal of the Wisconsin Synod, three of the top five authors are English. It is just as interesting to note that among these same five authors, seventeen of the hymns were written by the Germans and seventeen by the English. However, this even split between hymns of German origin and English origin does not continue throughout the entire hymnbook as evidenced by Table Three.

Table Three		
<i>Church Hymnal</i> (Texts)		
<u>Source</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Medieval	1	0.9%
Germany	67	58.3%
England	35	30.4%
Miscellaneous	9	7.8%
Unassignable	3	2.6%
Totals	115	100.0%

The breakdown, by century, of the sixty-seven German texts of the *Church Hymnal* reveals only one great change from the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. The circle graph appears on the next page.

With one exception, the percentages of German hymns remained relatively the same. The big change was in the eighteenth-century hymns. In the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, the percentage of eighteenth-century, German texts (in relation to all German texts) was 32.9%. With the *Church Hymnal* this percentage was drastically cut to 9.1%. This sharp decrease may well have been a conscious attempt to diminish the number of hymns from the ages of pietism and rationalism. On the other hand, it may have been entirely an unconscious matter.

Graph Two - *Church Hymnal for Lutheran Services*, (German texts)

By century, the breakdown of the thirty-five English texts appears on the next page.

Regarding the English texts, it may be said that they were quite well-balanced among three time periods.

There was an organist's edition printed for the *Church Hymnal*. It contained eighty-one four-part settings. Appearing above each setting were its number, title, and meter. The *Choralbuch for the Church Hymnal* was printed by the Northwestern Publishing House in 1911, the same year as the first printing of the *Church Hymnal*.

Graph Three - *Church Hymnal for Lutheran Services* (English texts)

In evaluation of the *Church Hymnal*, negative and positive things can be found. First, on the negative side, the *Church Hymnal* again, did not contain any tunes with the texts. This, however, was the case with the pew edition of its predecessor, the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*, and even with the hymnbook to follow, the *Book of Hymns*. Perhaps since the *Church Hymnal* was to serve only a temporary need, it was hastily printed with only texts in order to fill the urgent need for an English-language hymnbook in the Wisconsin Synod. Secondly, the *Church Hymnal* contained no liturgy. Yet, in consideration of the stark simplicity of the typical Wisconsin Synod service, printed liturgy was not an essential. The *Church Hymnal* seems, in this instance, to

have been only a "hymn book." Any liturgy used at this time may have come from the *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch*. Finally, it must be said that the *Church Hymnal* had only a limited choice of hymns. In defense of this, though, one must realize the marked urgency of the need for an English-language hymnbook in the Wisconsin Synod. -In order to fill this void, a small hymnbook had to be printed rapidly.

On the other side of the issue, the *Church Hymnal*, despite its small size, contained a relatively good balance of German and English hymnody. More importantly, this hymnbook marked the first attempt by the Wisconsin Synod to utilize the English language in its worship materials. For this reason alone, the *Church Hymnal* was an important milestone in Wisconsin Synod history, let alone in the history of the Synod's hymnody.

**D. Book of Hymns**

The third official hymnal of the Wisconsin Synod was the *Book of Hymns*. Its contents included:

- Two "Orders of Morning Worship"
- A Communion insertion that would fit into either morning service
- An "Order of Evening Service"
- 320 hymns with only texts
- A listing of the immovable festivals of the Church Year
- A set of rules and two tables for establishing the movable festivals of the Church Year
- A table showing the Scripture Lessons, Epistles and Gospels, and Psalms for Sundays and festival days of the Church Year
- A table showing Scripture Lessons for Matins and Vespers for the whole year
- Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers
- An emergency form of Baptism

The various indexes of this hymnal are:

- A classification of hymns-according to various Christi-an usages and the Church Year
- An alphabetical index of the hymns that also listed the number of stanzas

An organist's edition of the *Book of Hymns* contains these additional indexes:

- An alphabetical index of tunes
- A metrical index of tunes

With reference to the liturgy of the *Book of Hymns*, the forms listed are much like the rites employed later in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. A comparison of the non-Communion liturgies of these two hymnbooks follows.

Book of Hymns Liturgy Without Communion	The Lutheran Hymnal Liturgy Without Communion
Hymn	Hymn
Altar Service	Altar Service
Confession of sins	Confession of sins
Absolution	Absolution
Gloria in Excelsis	Introit
Salutation	Gloria Patri – Kyrie – Gloria in Excelsis
Collect	Salutation
Scripture lesson	Collect
Creed	Scripture lessons
	Creed
Hymn	Hymn
Sermon	Sermon – Offertory
Hymn	General Prayer – Lord's Prayer
Altar Service	Hymn (Optional)



Collect	
Benediction	
Hymn or doxology	Altar Service
	Collect for the Word/Church
	Benediction

The only variance of Form II from Form I occurred in the last two sections. At point six, Form II proceeded to the "Announcements and General Prayer," followed by a "Closing hymn" and the "Benediction." Not only the texts of these sections, but the musical settings as well, were the same as those used later in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, all reflecting the gravitation toward the "Common Service" of 1888.

The Communion Service, whose printed contents appeared entirely apart from either "Order of Morning Service," displayed this structure:

- Hymn or offertory
- Consecration
  - Preface
  - Sanctus
  - The Lord's Prayer
  - Words of Institution
  - Agnus Dei
- Distribution and Hymn
- Nunc Dimittis and Thanksgiving
- Benediction

The instructions preceding the Communion service told the Pastor that the Communion insert should be begun in Morning Service, Form I, after iv, or Form II, after v. Again, the texts and musical settings are identical to their corresponding parts in *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

The "Order of Evening Service," subtitled "Vesper," is the last order shown in the *Book of Hymns*. An outline of its structure follows:

- Hymn
- Altar Service
  - Versicles
  - Gloria Patri
  - Scripture Lesson
- Hymn
- Sermon
- Hymn
- Altar Service
  - Versicle
  - Collect
  - Benediction

All of the "Vesper" texts are identical to *The Lutheran Hymnal's* "Vesper" texts. With one exception, the musical settings are also the same. The exception, the "Gloria Patri," has a chant-like setting in which the melodic or harmonic movements still occur at the same points as in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. The shape of the *Book of Hymns's* melody, however, was much more plain as the following example demonstrates.

Table Four shows the origins of the hymn texts in the *Book of Hymns*.

Table Four		
<i>Book of Hymns</i> (Texts)		
Source	Frequency	Percentage
Greek-Latin	7	2.2%
Medieval	3	0.9%
Germany	105	32.9%
England	143	44.8%
Miscellaneous	34	10.6%
Unassignable	28	8.6%
Totals	320	100.0%

Quite clearly, the proportions of hymns in the *Book of Hymns* had changed from those in the *Church Hymnal*. Most notably, the percentage of English hymns was now one and one-half times greater than what it had been in the earlier book. To make room for these new hymns the percentage of German hymns had been nearly cut in half. Perhaps these changes had come about in an attempt to bring more English hymns into the Wisconsin Synod hymnbook. Perhaps the Revs. O. Hagedorn and H. K. Moussa, chief editors of the *Book of Hymns*, felt that the English hymn could be sung more smoothly and understood more readily because it required no translation in order to be used. On the other hand, many early translations of German hymns into English were not poetical, but were rather linguistically cumbersome,

An examination of the chief authors found in the *Book of Hymns*, furnishes strong evidence of the manner in which the Wisconsin Synod turned to the voluminous body of English hymnody.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) 21  
 Martin Luther (1483-1546) 12  
 Charles Wesley (1707-1788) 12  
 Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) 11  
 Horatius Bonar (1808-1899) 7  
 Thomas Kelly (1769-1854) 7  
 James Montgomery (1771-1854) 5  
 John Newton (1725-1807) 5  
 Anna Steele (1716-1778) 5  
 Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) 4  
 Johann Heermann (1585-1647) 4  
 William How (1823-1897) 4

In striking contrast to the list of major authors of the *Church Hymnal*, the list for the *Book of Hymns* features a strong contingent of English writers. Out of the group of ninety-seven hymns listed here, seventy are of English origin. Also, there is a list of well over sixty other Englishmen who made lesser contributions to the *Book of Hymns*. Another item of interest is that one of the major authors in a Wisconsin Synod hymnbook, for the first time, was a woman.

A categorization of the German texts in the *Book of Hymns*, reveals only miniscule changes from the *Church Hymnal* in the representation of the various centuries.

Graph Four – *Book of Hymns* (German texts)

With regard to the texts of English origin in the *Book of Hymns*, a more drastic realignment becomes evident.

Graph Five - *Book of Hymns* (English texts)

A shift had taken place that emphasized the texts of nineteenth-century English authors. To make room for these hymns, the percentage of hymns taken from the Watts (seventeenth century) and the Wesley-Newton (eighteenth century) eras was diminished by over one-third from the earlier *Church Hymnal*.

Since an organist's edition of the *Book of Hymns* was available, an additional study was made to determine the origin of its tunes. Table Five indicates the findings.

Table Five		
<i>Book of Hymns</i> (Tunes)		
Source	Frequency	Percentage
Greek-Latin	1	0.3%
Medieval	3	1.1%
Germany	108	37.6%
England	106	36.9%
America	24	8.4%
Miscellaneous	19	6.6%
Unassignable	26	9.1%
Totals	287	100.0%

This reveals that the division of tunes was quite even between the German chorale and the English hymn tune. It is also noteworthy that the third largest percentage of assignable hymn tunes came from American composers, such as Lowell Mason, William Bradbury, Bernhard Schumacher, Fritz Reuter, and others making lesser contributions.

A breakdown of the German chorale tunes reveals a relatively well-balanced representation from the Reformation, as well as later eras. The graph showing the German chorales is found next.

On the other hand, the clear majority of English hymn tunes came from the nineteenth century, with other time periods receiving only fractional representation as a result. The graph showing the English hymn

tunes follows.

Graph Six - *Book of Hymns* (German tunes)

Graph Seven – *Book of Hymns* (English tunes)

In examining the *Book of Hymns* as a whole, its good and bad features crystallize. In the negative view, the *Book of Hymns* did not fulfill the desire of many members of the Wisconsin Synod because of the large number of standard German chorales that were left out. As proof of this was the effort (mentioned in Chapter Two) which sought to create a hymnbook supplement containing many more of the standard Lutheran chorales than found in the *Book of Hymns*.

However, the *Book of Hymns* was a hymnbook that demonstrated positive growth with regard to Wisconsin Synod hymnody. In the first place, this hymnbook, in comparison to its predecessors, contained the first formal outlines of service orders for the congregation to follow in divine services. While these outlines were not totally as lucid as they could have been, they were more than sufficient for the twenty-five years during which the *Book of Hymns* was the official Wisconsin Synod hymnbook. In addition, this hymnbook represented an improvement in the field of English-language hymnals over what the *Church Hymnal* had been. The *Book of Hymns* was a complete service book that featured a wide variety of English-language hymns. In spite of its faults, it represented progress in the hymnody of the Wisconsin Synod.

**E. *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book***

Some synod congregations never used the *Book of Hymns*. Rather, for them, the book preceding *The Lutheran Hymnal* was the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*. This hymnbook was published by the Concordia Publishing House in various editions, although of the congregations in my survey who indicated that they used it, one of the later printings of the edition of 1912 was most commonly used. A printing of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*, edition of 1912, contained these items:

A table of immovable festivals of the Church Year

A set of rules and tables of movable festivals of the Church Year

A table of Epistle and Gospel readings for the Church Year  
 A table of Scripture Lessons for the Church Year  
 A table of morning and evening lessons for the whole year  
 An "Order of Morning Service" with additions included for the Communion service  
 An "Order of Evening Service"  
 An "Order of Morning Service"  
 An "Order of Early Service"  
 The Introits and Collects for the Church Year  
 The Invitatories, Antiphons, Responsories, and Versicles for the Church Year  
 A section of Collects and Prayers  
 A section of General Prayers  
 A section of select Psalms prepared for responsive reading  
 450 hymns plus eighteen doxologies  
 The *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* also contained the following indexes:  
 A table of contents for the entire book  
 An arrangement of hymns according to twenty-five categories  
 An index of first lines of all the hymns, naming the author or translator as well  
 An index of hymns translated from the German, indicating their author or source

In speaking of the three orders of service in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*, they are generally more complete and spelled out than those orders found in the Wisconsin Synod's *Book of Hymns*. At no point is this more clear than in the orders of Matins and Vespers. In the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*, each step in these two services is clearly displayed with the Versicles and Responses being printed out. On the other hand, the *Book of Hymns* "Order of Evening Service" is a one page, skeleton outline that is devoid of responsive Psalmody or "The Magnificat" (or "Nunc Dimittis"). The *Book of Hymns* does not even contain a morning service with the component parts of Matins.

The hymns of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* were a balanced selection of English-language hymns. The following list demonstrates this.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) 38  
 Martin Luther (1483-1546) 30  
 Charles Wesley (1707-1788) 20  
 Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) 18  
 James Montgomery (1771-1854) 10  
 John Newton (1725-1807) 9  
 Anna Steele (1716-1778) 9  
 Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) 7  
 Johann Heermann (1585-1647) 7  
 Thomas Kelly (1769-1854) 7  
 Johann Olearius (1635-1711) 6  
 Nikolaus Selnecker (1532-1592) 6  
 Horatius Bonar (1808-1899) 5  
 Nikolaus Hermann (c. 1480-1561) 5  
 Johann Scheffler (1624-1677) 5

This list seems quite weak in the quantity of German when comparing them to the number of English writers. For the entire *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*, however, there are 210 German chorales out of 450 hymns. In addition, the quality of the German writers shown here far surpasses the authors of any other Lutheran hymnal discussed thus far. With the possible exception of Johann Scheffler, these Germans, as a group, are noted for writing solidly confessional, Lutheran hymns. For this reason alone, this hymnbook is very good.

Definitely, the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* exhibited many good traits. To be sure, its best feature

was an elaborated liturgy based upon the "Common Service" of 1888. Also, the addition of many prayers and Psalms benefitted the typical parishoner who could use these items in his own private and family devotions. Last, but not least, the careful selection of hymns in this hymnal is to be complimented. Particularly, in the area of German hymnody is the care to be noted. The editors of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* studiously avoided hymns of sentiment and emotion, and chose the well-written works of the sixteenth and seventeenth century German masters. Certainly, these good ideas, and many more, from the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* were important components that the inter-Synodical committee employed in constructing *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

#### **F. *The Lutheran Hymnal***

The fourth (and still) official hymnal of the Wisconsin Synod is *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Published in 1941 as the effort of an inter-Synodical hymnal committee of the Synodical Conference, *The Lutheran Hymnal* represented the largest effort, by Lutherans, to unify the forms and materials of worship until the later part of the 1950's. Also, *The Lutheran Hymnal* has enjoyed the longest reign as "the official hymnal" of any of the four hymnals the Wisconsin Synod has thus far produced and endorsed.

The following items are found in *The Lutheran Hymnal*:

The calendar of the Church Year

Four short prayers

General rubrics

The "Order of Morning Service without Communion"

The "Order of Morning Service with Communion"

The "Order of Matins"

The "Order of Vespers"

The "Order of the Confessional Service"

A "Form for Opening and Closing Christian Day Schools"

The Athanasian Creed

The Introits, Collects, and Graduals for the Church Year

The Invitatories, Responsories, and Versicles for the Church Year

Various prayers

Canticles

Selected Psalms for responsive reading

Miscellaneous

    An explanation of and tables on the movable festivals of the Church Year

    A table of lessons for the Church Year

    A table of lessons for the year

    Psalms for the Church Year

    A glossary of liturgical terms

    An explanation of terms and abbreviations used in connection with the hymns

660 hymns with four-part settings

The Litany and seven additional chants

An emergency form for Baptism

The various indexes of *The Lutheran Hymnal* include:

    A table of contents of the liturgical portion of the hymnal

    A table of contents of the hymns listing them according to the Church Year and various Christian usages

    An index of general doxologies

    An alphabetical index of tunes

    A metrical index of tunes

    An index of the first lines of the hymns

- An alphabetical index of authors
- An alphabetical index of composers
- An alphabetical index of translators

Basically, the morning liturgies in the *Book of Hymns* and its successor, *The Lutheran Hymnal*, were the same. The only immediately discernible change was that the new hymnal carried matters into much greater detail. This refers not only to the fact that the prayers were written out, but also that four-part musical settings were shown, chants were added to existing material, and the rubrics were given. The fact that these preceding items were not found at all (or in part) within the *Book of Hymns*, does not condemn it. Rather, the absence from the *Book of Hymns* of these things made *The Lutheran Hymnal* so much more practical from the laymen's view.

The inclusion of Matins, the Confessional Service, and the service for opening and closing a Christian Day School gave *The Lutheran Hymnal* an added appeal that had heretofore been absent from previous Wisconsin Synod hymnbooks.

From the view point of Wisconsin Synod hymnody, *The Lutheran Hymnal* represented a major renewal in the use of the German hymn text. Table Six, which follows, shows this trend.

Table Six		
<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i> (Texts)		
Source	Frequency	Percentage
Greek-Latin	27	4.1%
Medieval	15	2.3%
Germany	255	38.6%
England	258	39.1%
America	36	5.4%
Miscellaneous	57	8.7%
Unassignable	12	1.8%
Totals	660	100.0%

*The Lutheran Hymnal* made significant gains in using the German text in comparison with what the *Book of Hymns* had done. The latter book's percentage of texts of German origin was 32.9%, whereas the former's was 38.6%, a net gain of 5.7%. In the same vein, the transition from the *Book of Hymns* to *The Lutheran Hymnal* created a reduction of some 5.7% in the percentage of English hymn texts included. Also, *The Lutheran Hymnal* tapped some areas that had been virtually untouched by the three previous Wisconsin Synod hymnbooks. In particular, Greek-Latin and American texts became more viable forces within the hymnbook, accounting for 9.596 of the total number of hymns.

The categorization of the German texts, by century, reveals only slight fluctuations between the *Book of Hymns* and *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Graph Eight - *The Lutheran Hymnal* (German texts)

The greatest change, shown in this circle graph on the preceding page, was a 4.4% drop in the number of seventeenth century, German texts used in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Any other differences that occur in this vein were smaller.

Regarding the English hymnody of *The Lutheran Hymnal* it can be said that all centuries, except the nineteenth, lost a small share of hymns. These losses were made up by an increase in the number of nineteenth century, English hymns which made gains of 4.4%.

Graph Nine - *The Lutheran Hymnal* (English texts)

The musical settings of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, shown in Table Seven, reveal significant changes from tunes used in the *Book of Hymns*.

The largest percentage change had to do with the German chorale. Of the total body of tunes in the *Book of Hymns*, only 37.6% had Germanic origins, whereas, in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, a majority of 54.9% came from Germany.

Table Seven		
<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i> (Tunes)		
Source	Frequency	Percentage
Greek-Latin	2	0.5%
Medieval	8	2.1%
Germany	209	54.9%
England	85	22.3%
America	33	8.7%
Miscellaneous	41	10.7%
Unassignable	3	0.8%
Totals	381	100.0%

This represented a 17.3% increase. An accompanying decrease of 14.6% occurred with the number of English hymns, used in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. The other areas remained relatively stable in terms of percentages.

By century, the division of German chorales, indicated in the circle graph at the top of the next page, underwent disbursement. The percentage of chorales from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used in *The Lutheran Hymnal* decreased together a total. of 9.6% when compared with those chorales of the same eras from



the *Book of Hymns*. This, on the other hand, was accompanied by a rise of 5.5% in the number of eighteenth century chorales.

Graph Ten - *The Lutheran Hymnal* (German tunes)

The following circle graph shows the balance of English tunes according to century and displays a similar realignment of representation.

Graph Eleven - *The Lutheran Hymnal* (English tunes)

A strong decrease, from the *Book of Hymns* to *The Lutheran Hymnal*, in the percentage of nineteenth century, English hymns, amounting to 16.7%, was most striking. To fill this void, therefore, increases were made in sixteenth century hymns (6.8%) and eighteenth -century hymns (9.2%). The percentages of other centuries in these two hymnals fluctuated only slightly.

A true evaluation of *The Lutheran Hymnal* brings out the bad as well as the good things about it also. First, the negative view will be examined. In line with the doctrinal viewpoint of the Wisconsin Synod, certain hymns of *The Lutheran Hymnal* can be cited as containing unclear meanings. Consider these examples:

Hymn 40, a free Christian rendering of the Hebrew *Yigdal*, although not truly containing false doctrine, falls woefully short. In the third stanza at the end of the first line it reads, "I on His oath depend," which is a positive statement concerning God's promise to send the Savior. Yet, neither in the line following, nor anywhere else in the hymn, is found any statement about the atoning 'work of Jesus. In fact, the only reference made to the Savior at all comes in an addition of Thomas Olivers in stanza four, line two, "Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!" Again, I wish to reiterate that there is nothing doctrinally false about this hymn. However, it is theologically weak for it never progresses

out of Judaism because it does not show the love of God through Christ Jesus.

Hymn 234, "Holy Ghost, with light divine," conjures up the image of man cooperating in his salvation when, in stanza six, it opens with, "See, to Thee I yield my heart."

Charlotte Elliott's hymn "Just as I am, without one plea," Hymn 388, similarly suggests synergism with its closing refrain, "O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

Fortunately, other instances in *The Lutheran Hymnal* of unclear texts are virtually non-existent.

On the other hand, *The Lutheran Hymnal* has three very positive qualities to it. In the first place, it contains a liturgical section that is historically connected with the sixteenth century forms of Lutheran worship. The liturgical section is also to be highly commended for its rubrics allow each congregation freedom in developing the basic worship form. Secondly, *The Lutheran Hymnal* contains a broad selection of the finest Christian hymns. Altogether, there are twenty-two national groups represented in the body of hymn texts and tunes. Lastly, *The Lutheran Hymnal* brought the Wisconsin Synod out of an isolated position of hymnological development. The interaction with other orthodox Lutheran hymnologists, even though it eventually cost the Wisconsin Synod its identity as a hymnbook producer, broadened the view of the Synod's hymnologists. In turn, this broader view led people within the Wisconsin Synod to become active authors and composers of hymns and related liturgical materials.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: PORTENDS IN WISCONSIN SYNOD HYMNODY**

In order to predict the future prospects of Wisconsin Synod hymnody, it is necessary to examine the reports to the 1973 Synod convention. In that year, an important event in the Synod's hymnbook history occurred.

At the Forty-second Convention of the Wisconsin Synod in 1973, the Commission on Hymnody, Liturgy, and Worship reported that the Concordia Publishing House might soon discontinue the printing of *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Although the Northwestern Publishing House was attempting to obtain the printing plates to continue publication of the hymnbook, the Commission came up with several alternatives. One possibility was to prepare an entirely new hymnal. Another choice was 'to revise the liturgical and hymnological portions of the present hymnbook. The final alternative was to produce a hymnal supplement, not unlike the book that the Synodical Conference had been discussing since 1959. This last idea was transformed into a resolution and passed by the Synod in that convention.

The reports of the Commission on Hymnody, Liturgy, and Worship to the Wisconsin Synod Conventions of 1975 and 1977 revealed that much work had been accomplished on the "worship companion" to *The Lutheran Hymnal*. The report to the latter convention gives some specifics on the contents of the book.

The choice of approximately seventy hymns has been quite well finalized.... Besides the hymns, the booklet will contain *The Service of the Word*, a set of litanies, and baptismal, marriage, and burial rites.

The report of the Commission on Hymnody, Liturgy, and Worship to the Synod convention of 1979 was a reiteration of the reports it had made to the two previous conventions. Of much more interest, however, was the supplementary report filed by the Commission regarding development of an entirely new hymnal. This report traced the birth of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's *Worship Supplement*, the formation of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, and the subsequent publication of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. The report went on to tell how the Missouri Synod recommended adoption of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* with "specified modifications." The new hymnbook, to be called *Lutheran Worship*, was then being formulated by the Missouri Synod, with the Wisconsin Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Synod being offered advisory positions regarding the determination of content. The Commission urged the Wisconsin Synod to wait with any new hymnbook resolutions until reports on current hymnbook matters could be presented to the 1980 district conventions.

As of the time of the printing of the *Report to the Ten Districts*, May, 1980, the Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had yet not completed all of *Lutheran Worship*. Nevertheless, the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Worship offered a preliminary report on the matter. Basically, the report

covered the hymns, liturgy, Psalms, and tunes projected for *Lutheran Worship*. In its conclusion, the Commission on Hymnody, Liturgy, and Worship stated that more information would be forthcoming on *Lutheran Worship* as soon as additional material became available for study.

Currently (July, 1980), the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Hymnody, Liturgy, and Worship has virtually suspended its activities on the "worship companion." The reason for this is that the Commission is awaiting the results of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's work on *Lutheran Worship*.

The Wisconsin Synod holds high hopes for *Lutheran Worship* on the basis of its preliminary releases. One matter that pleases the Wisconsin Synod about this book is the planned inclusion of more German chorales than were contained in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Another item causing the Wisconsin Synod to look favorably toward *Lutheran Worship* is the careful way in which the modernization of the English language was handled by the Missouri Synod's Commission on Worship in the preliminary materials already released. However, the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Worship has noted that this modernization was not always done carefully. As an example, there are hymns in which the "Thees" and "Thous" were altered, thus affecting the entire hymn's word structure and resulting in a less-than-satisfactory grammatical product. Nevertheless, the prevailing attitude of the Wisconsin Synod's Commission toward *Lutheran Worship* may be termed as "cautious optimism."

In the event that the Wisconsin Synod elects not to utilize *Lutheran Worship* it is faced with two alternatives: revise *The Lutheran Hymnal* or design an entirely new hymnbook. In either event, the job will not be an easy one. If, however, the Wisconsin Synod must produce its own hymnal, it may well be that some of the items prepared for the "worship companion" will be used in the new book. Before work on the "worship companion" was suspended, nearly seventy hymns, a group of responsive prayers, and several new orders of worship were gathered together for it. Most notably among these previously mentioned items is the highly regarded "Service of the Word," a non-Communion order of service.

### **Conclusion**

It may well be that the member churches of the Wisconsin Synod will be using a new hymnal within the next several years. Whether the new hymnal will be *Lutheran Worship*, a revised *The Lutheran Hymnal*, or an entirely new hymnbook drawn up by the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Hymnody, Liturgy, and Worship, no one can say with absolute certainty.

However, realizing full well that the Lord has showered His blessings upon the hymnody of the Wisconsin Synod thus far, we may rest well-assured that He will not lead us wrong. Rather, God has promised: "So shall my word...not return unto me void..." Whether that Word is spoken or sung, matters not. The true importance of His promise means that we may trust in the Lord for His divine guidance to our worship leaders in producing God-pleasing materials to glorify His name. May God grant that His will be done.

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## Appendix A