

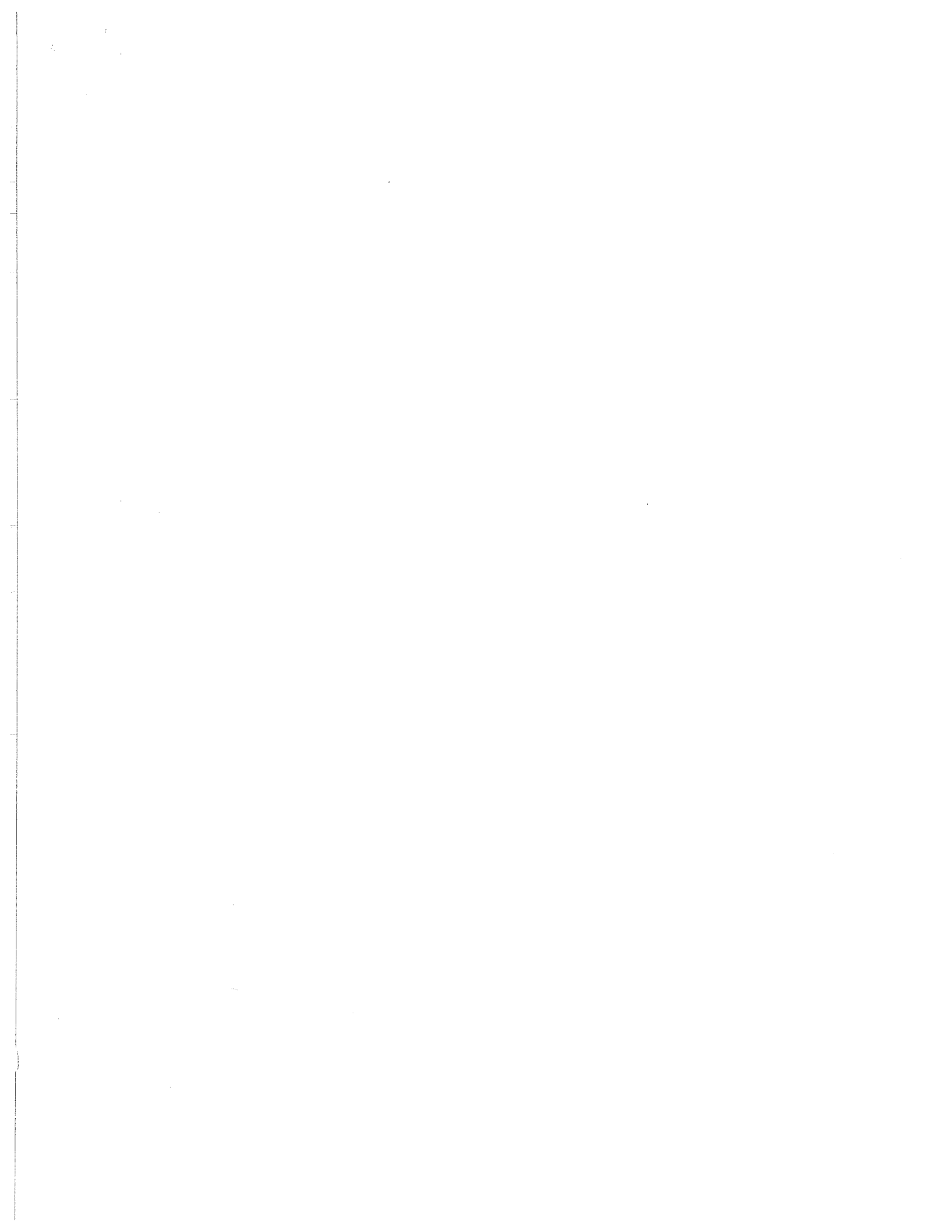
THE PURPOSES AND ATTITUDES

WHICH HELPED FORM

THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL

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The subject of new hymnals is something that many lay people, especially in the WELS, do not think about. In the recent past, one was blue, while one was red, but many never knew there was a difference between The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) and the Service Book and Hymnal (SBH). When TLH came out with a red cover, even that convenient distinction of color was taken away. Such indiscriminate comparisons could easily be corrected with even the least informed layman, however, through the briefest of instruction. Recently, there has been much comparison of TLH with the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW). This time, even the indiscriminate layman could tell the difference. Once again, the color of the cover is a clue. No one has seen a green Lutheran hymnal until now. But much more important is the content of the books. Just a glance at a few pages will reveal obvious and striking differences. It is not the purpose of this paper to point these out. This has been done repeatedly in the various periodicals of the Lutheran church and her church musicians. What is more the issue here is the attitude and the purposes which prompt the preparation of a new hymnal.

When one looks at the pertinent synodical resolutions, minutes of meetings, and evaluations of the books it is not difficult to see some of the motivating factors which lay behind The Lutheran Hymnal. It will of course be necessary at times to point to specific problems which beset the preparation process for this hymnal back in the 1930's. But this will be done only selectively, and only to illustrate some of the attitudes behind the project.

Such a comparison of purpose and attitude, if it stopped right there, might prove of interest to history buffs, and "high-church" proponents.

But hopefully, this comparison can offer more. With the rejection of LBW by the LC-MS, we are faced with the introduction of yet another hymnal and worship book called Lutheran Worship (LW). Moreover, WELS is in the process of the evaluation of its worship books in order to make its own revisions. If history can be of any use here, it can serve as a guide. By evaluating the purposes of past hymnals, we can better understand what should and should not be included in a new one. If we look initially at the methods of preparation in the past and how they were accepted, we can better judge how to proceed in subsequent endeavors. With this approach in mind, we then trace the development of The Lutheran Hymnal, to see if that project may guide our own attempts to provide meaningful worship.

I. The Purposes For a Change in Hymnals

Preparing a new hymnal is a time consuming, expensive process. In fact, considering all of the problems involved it is a wonder that we ever get any new worship books. Yet, statistics tell us that, on the average, a new hymnal comes out about every twenty-five years to replace its immediate predecessor. In every case someone must see compelling reasons for undertaking such a demanding project.

In the Synodical Conference, several reasons were brought forward to prove the need for a new, improved book for worship. All of these reasons centered around poverty.

If we consider the German ancestors of TLH, we get the feeling that the "European" branch of the family tree was not nearly as poverty stricken. The 1892 edition of the Missouri Lutherans' hymn book already had 443 hymns. Even earlier in 1873, the Wisconsin Lutherans had the greater figure of 695 German hymns, in a hymnal still in print in 1931. Unfortunately the riches of the European ancestors were not bequeathed to the English speaking descendants. By the time the 443 German hymns of the Missouri Lutherans reached the English speaking Wisconsin Lutherans, there were 123 missing. The undated Book of Hymns, published by Northwestern around 1920, contained only 320 hymns, although they had picked up the four part musical accompaniment in the process.

Even if it is granted that a congregation could worship quite well with 320 hymns, (and it might, at that!), there would still be a strain of poverty in our early worship books in connection with the liturgical service. In both of the German hymnals the liturgical orders consisted of the antiphons and proper prefaces for the seasons. Nothing else was printed to guide the worshipper through the service. A privately printed, word-only, liturgical guide was appended to the 1931 edition, locally,

courtesy of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Saginaw. Beyond this, the worshipper was left to separate books, oral tradition, or memory.

The early English hymnal, Book of Hymns, was in a completely different club. This contained three orders of worship; the second being almost identical to "The Order of Morning Service" found in TLH. While this must be classed as a major improvement over our earlier books, it can't begin to compare to the worship resources in TLH.

If such a quantitative poverty was the only perceived shortcoming, the proposed appendices of the two synods would have taken care of the problem. But the early worship resources of these synods displayed an even greater poverty qualitatively. Even though Synod had been instructed to prepare an appendix of twenty-five hymns in the 1920 Book of Hymns, it quickly decided that Missouri's invitation of 1929 to produce a new hymnal was a better solution.¹

There are several areas where the quality of available worship resources was lacking. Chief among these could be considered the quality of text translation. A major reason for this position, is that it is one of the main reasons the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church requested help from the Synodical Conference in preparing a new hymnal. The translations of the Norwegian Hymnary were renowned for their inferior poetry in the receptor language.² In the eyes of some, our own translations from the German were not much better. They were "heavy, wooden, lacking in smoothness, beauty, charm; prosy, unpoetic, common-place, unsingable."³ Besides needing fresh translation

1. Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, Proceedings 1937, pp 63-64.
2. der Ev.-Luth. Synodalkonferenz von Nordamerika, 1926, p 43.
3. Arthur F. Katt, Critical Comments on the Proposed New Hymnal, After Publication of the Committee's Final Report, (1939, private mimeo, Cleveland) page G.

work in such cases, there were many good hymns which had not been translated at all.

This was especially the case with hymns of non-germanic origin. Bohemian, French, and Scandinavian hymns were very poorly represented in our older hymnals.⁴ It was felt that materials from American Lutheran sources had also been underused. What good material was available in English from any language was often ruined when the old melody was not adjusted to fit the nuance of the English language. Naturally this only compounded the problem when the English was poor to begin with.⁵

Even when the hymns were written in English to begin with, the problem was not solved. Another objection raised by the committee was that too many hymns were of non-Lutheran sources. (Anglican mainly.)⁶ And then, no matter what the original language, the committee found that scholarship was consistently lacking when dealing with the background of the hymns, and the treatment of the text and tune. Adaptations and combinations abounded, leaving the final version a far cry from the original intent of the author or composer.⁷

The problems listed up to this point culminated in a single larger problem. Such poor quality severely restricted the usefulness of our English hymns. The poor translations often made it difficult to memorize and retain the treasures of our hymnal.⁸ It was feared by many that within a generation, this could result in an irretrievable loss of our

4. Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, Proc., 1929, p 131.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid, p 133.

7. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Reports and Memorials, 1935, p 203-204.

8. Katt, Critical Comments, page G.

choral heritage.⁹ Because most individuals were buying text only editions of the earlier hymnals due to lower cost, it was also feared that the situations at that time would eventually lead to a deterioration of hymn singing in our Lutheran homes. We shall see a response to the problem later in the form of a resolution to print only one edition of TLH: an edition with the tunes.

In the light of these facts and proposals, the Synodical Conference adopted the request of the Norwegian Synod at the 1926 meeting in which it was requested. By 1927, the request had been presented verbatim on the floor of the Wisconsin convention. The Synod assigned the "book committee" to study the request and write an appropriate response. By Nov. 20, 1929, the Missouri Lutherans had a committee at work on the new worship book. In less than three years all four participating synods responded by appointing men to work on the project.¹⁰ With these actions the machinery was set in motion to deal with the inadequacies of the older hymnals: one of the main reasons for change.

It was no accident that the machinery of this committee could also deal at the same time with the other major reason for a new hymnal: the lack of uniformity. According to the original request of the Norwegian Synod, this request for Synodical Conference assistance was of "great importance" and implied "far reaching consequences."¹¹ When one considers the precarious condition of the little Norwegian Synod at that time, combined with the intense nationalism of the Midwest Norwegians, we can see how easy it might have been to turn to their fellow Norwegians in

9. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc. 1929, p 311.

10. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc. 1932, p 189.

11. der Ev.-Luth. Synodalkonferenz von Nordamerika, 1926, p 43.

the old AELC. But to the credit of the Norwegians, they saw the importance and far reaching consequences of seeking uniformity within the confessional fellowship of the Synodical Conference.

At this point, it is necessary to consider the sentiment which was beginning to show at the time. A liturgical movement was gaining ever greater momentum not only among Lutherans, but within most Christian church bodies. As we shall see in this side track, the Lutherans of the Synodical Conference were not unaffected.

It is a good thing to have liturgical uniformity. There is something of confessional value in a uniform liturgy. Also away from home the worshipper feels himself spiritually akin to his brother of the faith where liturgy is familiar... Conversely, a lack of uniformity in liturgical forms is a cause of bewilderment in worship and a testimonial to a lack of brotherly consideration...¹²

Our people were not blind to the fact that such uniformity was lacking both in our worship books and in our practice. Prof. Gawrisch, reminiscing over our early worship in the Synod, stated that practically every congregation had a different order of service in these years. Our worship leaders were not blind to these conditions either. But in spite of the advantages of such uniformity, the worship experts also feared that suggesting a uniform order of service might be construed as an absolute command. This, of course, would not be in conformity with the confessions, which leave the form of worship as an adiaphoron. As we look back and see this struggle for both uniform worship practices and Christian freedom, we must sympathize with the men on the Inter-synodical Committee.

They felt compelled by Scripture and Confession to make it clear that uniformity is not an absolute requirement. Relying on articles VII and

12. R. C. Caemmerer, "On Liturgical Uniformity"; Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 9, No. 6, June 1938, p 432.

XV of the Augsburg Confession especially, most Synodical Conference pastors put the emphasis on the presentation of correct doctrine, with much less concern for the format in which it was presented. "Let us not be stampeded by the liberal Protestant Churches into a frenzied search for methods and forms of public worship."¹³ was the admonition of Martin Lehninger. As testimony to this, others asserted that what was needed was a better presentation of God's Word, not a more involved liturgy. "...Our own experience tends to show that, where church services are criticized, people, as a rule, do not wish to express dissatisfaction with the liturgy, but with the sermon."¹⁴ In fact, it was feared that a more complex liturgy would only take away needed time for that sermon.¹⁵

In spite of these apprehensions, it was still felt by many of these same men that liturgical changes could have a beneficial effect. Lehninger saw no biblical objection if a form could be proposed which would better present the Gospel and involve the congregation.¹⁶ Seltz went even further than removing objection. He actually encouraged a better understanding of liturgics through study. He admitted the possibility of change as a result of this study.

And now we venture also to give an answer to the question: Can Synod not do something in order that there be greater uniformity also in the externals of worship? Our answer: Yes, it can. It can encourage the study of liturgics. It can appoint

13. F. J. Seltz, "What Can Synod do in Order that There Be More Uniformity in the Externals of our Public Service?"; Theologische Quartalschrift, Vol. 34, No. 3, July 1937, p 211.
14. W. Arndt, "Do We Need a New Liturgy"; Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 9, No. 6, June, 1938, p 107.
15. Seltz, "What Can Synod do...", p 209.
16. M. Lehninger, "A Conservative Lutheran Order of Service and the Liturgical Movement of Today"; Theologische Quartalschrift, Vol. 34, No. 1, Jan. 1937, p 49.

a committee which shall acquaint itself with every phase of liturgics, past and present, with instructions to submit its findings to Synod and through Synod to every congregation for adoption. It can, through its officials, in public and in private remind pastors and congregations how desirable uniformity in the externals of worship is and that therefore changes in liturgy should not be made thoughtlessly, and without giving consideration to other congregations. It can through its visitors approach individual pastors, who either have or are considering such changes, which amount to a radical departure from those now generally in use...¹⁷

Such study was seen as necessary by Seltz because for over fifty years there had been a lamentable lack of uniformity, especially due to the introduction of English services. This lack of uniformity "has disturbed Christians, and...in many a congregation there are liturgical monstrosities which grate on one's nerves and certainly contribute nothing to the edifying of the worshippers."¹⁸

To a great extent, this problem did not require far reaching change. All that was needed was organization of what was useful into a single service.

Our fathers brought liturgies from their homeland into this country together with their Bibles, Hymn books and Catechisms... It is our task to build on these foundations.¹⁹

Several reasons were given why the Lutheran Church in America digressed from the standard Lutheran liturgy. Chief of these was the variety of Agendas used in the mid-nineteenth century and in the following decades. Because of the variety of Agendas, there was no uniform type of service practiced by the Lutherans of the Synodical Conference Churches, and no attempts were made to have all Lutheran congregations observe a uniform type of service. As a result many of the services were conducted in an almost non-liturgical manner. Local customs from Germany, provincialism, and even musical whims of pastors or musicians established the order of service and the music that was used by a congregation in its weekly church services.

Although the German Agendas published in America in the latter half of the nineteenth century did have service

17. Seltz, "What Can Synod do...", pp 206f.

18. Ibid, p 204.

19. Lehninger, "Conservative", p 57.

orders for worship services, these orders could be and were often changed to suit local needs or practices...even omitting some of the essentials of Luther's service, such as the Gospel. Missing were some of the musical portions such as the Introit, the Gloria in Excelsis by the congregation, and the Gradual.²⁰

The early hymnals which were mentioned earlier serve as an example of the liturgical poverty and confusion which prevailed in the Synodical Conference. The add-on service order from St. Paul's in Saginaw has already been mentioned. The English Book of Hymns, although it included three service orders with music, also had a privately appended order - text only - which followed the shorter German services. Something had to be done to bring order out of such chaos. The track taken can be seen in the report of the Wisconsin Committee. As the work progressed, a definite need was felt to straighten the liturgical problems out. This was done by appointing a special sub-committee in 1934 to prepare an acceptable order of service. Their response was a service based on the "Common Service" adopted between 1888-1892 by the ULCA. This service was comprehensive enough to pull together most of the diverse elements in the countless local liturgical variations.²¹

The fact that this new service was comprehensive also indicated a need and desire to enrich the liturgy. Prof. Lehmann's thesis has already served to indicate portions of the service which were often omitted in early practice. But the expanded liturgical elements which became common practice through TLH were usually nothing new. "In fact, in all changes or additions we have made use of the existing liturgical literature of our church, and have prepared new material only when nothing

20. A. O. Lehmann, The Music of the Lutheran Church, Synodical Conference, Chiefly the Areas of Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin and Neighboring States, 1839-1941, (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, Inc., 1967) p 76-77.

21. Ev. Luth. Joint Syn. of Wis. A.O.S. Proc., 1937, pp 64f.

suitable was available."²² As we have seen, even Pastor Lehninger, who was not enthused about expanding the liturgy, did advocate building on the foundation of liturgy which the fathers brought from Europe. Moderate forms of enrichment were in fact, encouraged from many quarters. In fact this was the heart of the directive given to the liturgical subcommittee: not to inject radical changes, but to provide alternatives within the accepted framework. These moderate alternatives were to include "possible alternatives in musical settings, additional prefaces, collects, introits, and other prayers."²³

We must at this point consider the modesty of the changes which were included in the liturgy in TLH. We must also briefly mention the reasons for such changes. The Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgies was working carefully to produce a liturgical tradition which could please four groups of Lutherans which were nationally diverse. The best way to reach a pleasing compromise which all would use was to include all of the liturgical elements which most people were using at the time. Fortunately most Synodical Conference members were using forms similar to the "Common Service". By employing the modest, enriching elements they did, the committee could unite diverse national groups with a single practice of worship. This uniformity in practice was the goal of the liturgies committee. This was not an attempt at theological union through liturgy. The theological union was already indicated by Synodical Conference membership.

22. Triennial Report of the Committee on Hymnology and Liturgies, 1944. Private copy of Pastor William J. Schaefer.
23. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Rep. & Mem., 1935, p 204-205; Proc., 1938, p 254.

II. The Attitude of the Men as Reflected
in the Form of the Committee

The reasons and purposes behind the changes which have been described above show that TLH was an important and worthy project. The purpose of this second part is to see how such an important undertaking was handled.

The importance of the project might be judged simply by the stature of the men who were appointed by the various Synods to work on the project. Both theological and liturgical expertise were made available for the work at hand. From the Missouri Synod came W. G. Polack, Prof. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Prof. L. Blankenbuehler, the Rev. O. Kaiser, and Mr. B. Schumacher. The Wisconsin Synod provided Prof. John Meyer and the Rev. O. Hagedorn. The Norwegian Synod sent the Rev. C. Anderson and the Rev. Norman A. Madson. The Slovak Synod provided the Rev. Jarislav Pelikan. Many of these names, published in this list in 1932, are still recognized today as the names of great theologians and scholars. The fact that they were published and made generally available also made it much easier for other pastors and lay people to communicate concerns and suggestions to the appropriate representatives from their own synods.²⁴

The Language and cultural backgrounds of these men were naturally diverse, since there were three distinct cultural groups within the Synodical Conference. These backgrounds likely came to the fore in the hymnological sub-committees, along with the linguistic training the men received in their seminary years.²⁵ As noted earlier, a sepa-

24. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc., 1932, p 189-190. Additional names of the men on sub-committees are: Professors Wm. Burhop, O. Hattstaetd, W. Buszin, E. Backer, M. Lochner, K. Haase, P. E. Kretzmann, R. W. Heintze, S. Ylvisaker, J. H. Ott; Pastors Wm. Lochner, A. Voss, J. H. Deckman, C. M. Waller, K. Ehlers, and Carl Hoffmann.

25. Ev. Luth. Joint Syn. of Wis. A.O.S., Proc., 1937. The sub-committees reflect the need for linguistic abilities, especially for analyzing translations. Committee on Hymns of English and American (Non-Luth.) Origin; Committee on Hymns of Ancient and Medieval Origin; Committee on Hymns of Scandanavian Origin; Committee on Hymns of American Luth. Origin; Committee on Hymns of German Origin; Music Committee.

rate committee was later added to work on liturgies. Overall, great care was taken to set up capable committees and sub-committees which could contribute to a quality book of worship.

Almost from the beginning, however it was evident that input was desired from more than just the committee members. Already in 1932, there were indications that much correspondence had been received and considered. At the same time, the synod resolved to encourage even more people "of their own initiative" to send valuable suggestions to the committee, care of Prof. Polack.²⁶

This request of course applied to all members of the synod. But the proceedings generally did not go out beyond the pastors. Because the Inter-synodical committee had the attitude that it wanted a diverse and rich hymnal for all of the church to use, they also published their reports and requests for suggestions in the Lutheran Witness and the Northwestern Lutheran.²⁷ In spite of the great volume of correspondence, assurance was given that all of it was considered, even if it wasn't personally acknowledged.²⁸ (Allegations to the contrary will be considered below.)

Even shortly before the actual publication, such input was still sought from the church at large. January 1st, 1939 was originally set as the deadline for any further suggestions or criticisms,²⁹ allowing about three months for any further input. But as reported to the Wisconsin Synod, this deadline was extended to August 1st, 1939; allowing

26. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc., 1932, p 191.

27. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Rep. and Mem., 1935, p 204.

28. Ibid
Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wis., A. O. S., Proc., 1937, p 65.

29. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A. O. S., Proc., 1938, p 256.

yet another six months to study the final proposals from the committee.³⁰ The people of the Synodical Conference took full advantage of the opportunity. Pastor Katt of Cleveland will be cited frequently as an example of this. According to the committee, all of the suggestions and criticisms proved to be very helpful. This displays yet another attitude of the committee: the feeling that this book of worship materials belonged to the whole church and, therefore, should be shaped by the whole church.

Not all people agreed that such an attitude actually existed, however. There were complaints by some that any criticism sent in was endured more than appreciated. At the outset, it should be noted that the full committee reports probably never saw print. Schaefer's private copy of the 1944 Triennial report of the Committee is much more detailed than anything which appeared in either the proceedings or the church periodicals. So when some people complained about the short and incomplete reports on the hymnal's progress, it is more likely the fault of the synod, rather than the synod's committee.

There are, however, some criticisms which are harder to defend. One of these is the ongoing refusal to listen to requests to make the committee heads full time workers on the committee. Considering the magnitude of the task, especially when the final criticisms were being evaluated, the chairmen, or even all of the committee members could have worked on the hymnal full time for a while.³¹ This was never allowed.

Pastor Katt also complained that the committee did not allow enough time to formulate accurate and adequate criticisms of the proposed hymnal. Of course, being removed by forty years, it is hard for us to know if there

30. Ev. Luth. Joint Syn. of Wis., A.O.S., Proc., 1939, p 74.

31. Katt, Critical Comments, p 1a.

were delays in postal deliveries or other problems. But considering the six month extension given by the committee for the reception of criticism, it is difficult to understand how Pastor Katt was forced to finish his suggestions in a period of a few weeks. If he knew what the original deadline was from his synod proceedings, he should have had a sudden windfall of six extra months by the time the original January 1st, 1939 deadline arrived. Considering the pressure the Synod was receiving to get the new hymnal out, it's amazing that even the six-month reprieve was granted.³² Knowing now that Prof. Meyer's formal criticism (which was ready before the deadline!) agreed with Pastor Katt about the need to take more time for evaluation, it could be that something was not revealed in the proceedings which would mitigate against the committee's apparent generosity with time.³³

Another associated problem alleged by Pastor Katt was the non-cooperation of the committee. It would seem that he had sufficient grounds for making this charge. In spite of the many overtures for criticism and suggestions, Katt wrote that "the Committee has given the impression of being quite self-sufficient, of being quite able and capable of doing its work without our help and aid."³⁴ This impression was given by the committee on several occasions. According to Katt, a large batch of suggestions submitted in 1937 went largely unheeded. Further oral suggestions made to the committee in a special meeting as delegates of the Northern Ohio Pastors and Teachers Conference met

32. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc., 1938, p 254. Among other reasons for hurrying, was the economic problem of not wanting to repair or replace a hymnal which would soon be replaced.

33. Katt, Critical Comments, p 20a.

34. Ibid, p 2a.

with reluctance and hostility. Further reports of the committee showed that these also were ignored. When this situation was brought before the review committee at the 1938 St. Louis Convention of the Missouri Synod, Pastor Katt was assured that the reports were only an indication of the committee's earlier work and did not in fact reflect the careful consideration of later comments. This satisfied Pastor Katt until the so-called "final" report of the committee still gave no indication that his criticisms had been considered. When the "final" report followed the same course as the earlier reports, Katt was convinced that his work had been for nothing.³⁵

In the light of the available facts, we can sympathize with Pastor Katt. At the time he wrote his final comments, the committee had not yet adopted his earlier criticisms and suggestions. But the committee was not yet done with its work, either. Through historical hindsight, it can now be said that Katt judged too soon. The fact is, many, in fact most of his suggestions were accepted. What he thought was the "final" form of the new hymnal, was yet to undergo numerous changes. Whatever had been in the "final" version Pastor Katt received was changed enormously in the new "final" version which Pastor Schaefer was working with. The fact that the printers proofs were not prepared for about a year after the August 1st, 1939 criticism deadline, shows that the committee did seriously consider the recommendations which were sent in. Thus the machinery which was set up to prepare the new hymnal did work, and it did provide a means for the entire church to contribute to the hymnal. Any breakdowns in the open preparation process were not in the process itself, but instead in the partial and outdated reporting of the committee's progress. It is still possible to say that there was an attitude which solicited the input of the people who would be using the new worship book.

35. Katt, Critical Comments, pages H-I.

III. The Attitude of the Committee
as Reflected in Specific Issues

All of the right men were put on all of the right committees. Or so it seemed in principal. But no matter how correct the machinery appeared in theory, the real test would be whether or not it produced a scholarly and doctrinally sound worship book. In order to discover the degree in which the committee succeeded, a brief survey of a few problem areas will be made. In this process, it will also be possible to evaluate Pastor Katt's allegations of non-cooperation, by using the problem areas he brings out for this evaluation.

The first hurdle to overcome was the problem of the proposed appendices. Both Missouri and Wisconsin worship leaders had been working on separate appendices of additional hymns for their respective English hymn books. There were people who hoped to publish these even if a new hymnal was contemplated. But in spite of a specific memorial requesting the publication of the Missouri appendix, the Synod decided to forget the proposed addition completely in favor of a new book.³⁶

With this last hint of opposition out of the way, the committee was free to pursue the goal of a new book of hymns and liturgy. The hymn selection process proceeded at a very deliberate pace. It seems fair to say that the overall result was worth the pace, and a result of the slow pace, even if it is possible to think of a few specific, poor choices in the hymns.

Three years after the project had been started, only sixty hymns had been approved for inclusion, although many more were already being worked on by the sub-committee.³⁷ This can hardly be considered a break-neck

36. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc., 1929, p 133. Especially memorial 508 and Committee 16 - resolution four.

37. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc., 1932, p 191.

or reckless pace. By 1938 this number was increased with 166 new additions which had not been in the former books, although 74 hymns had been dropped which were in the older books.³⁸ Again, the pace was deliberate. These widely scattered figures from Missouri can be put into better perspective, however, by comparing them to the report given to the Wisconsin Synod in 1937. Here we learn that overall, about 550 hymns had already been accepted (on a preliminary basis), with about 100 more under consideration. These figures tend to accelerate the perceived pace quite a bit. But that still comes to less than one hundred hymns per year for all five hymn sub-committees to work on. So it is safe to say that the committees had enough time to give each hymn adequate examination before deciding to include or exclude it from TLH.

The area which produced most of the debate during the formation of TLH was not in the immediate domain of the theologians. As in so many areas of life, TLH brought out the human desire to quibble about the unimportant and major in minors. That is, the format of the finished product brought out some of the most heated debate. In this general area there was not only disagreement between Katt and the committee, but even within the committee itself.

This was the case in the arrangement of text and music on the page. Pastor Katt proposed that the music and text always be printed separately on every page, as done in several fine English hymnals.⁴⁰ In this area he must have had some support on the committee, since his suggestion of separation (which dated from 1937) found a split decision

38. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc., 1938, p 255.

39. Ev. Luth. Joint Syn. of Wis., A.O.S., Proc., 1937, 64.

40. Katt, Critical Comments, p 6a.

in the committee report of 1938.⁴¹ Since the proceedings indicate that many requests asked for all stanzas between the staves, Katt's minority opinion must have carried some influence.

The matter of including an A-men with every hymn was just as confused. Early reports must have included it, since Katt was quite vehement in his opposition.⁴² But again, his 1937 critique must have borne fruit, because Pastor Schaefer's personal work copy of the proposed TLH, dated just before publication, did not originally include the A-mens. Unfortunately, the committee must have changed its mind again in the final criticisms, since the A-mens are penciled in or indicated with an X at the end of every hymn. Here again was a split decision by the committee. This time Pastor Katt's liturgical acumen was an accurate guide.

A similar triviality was raised by Pastor Katt regarding the use of Hallelujah. This time Katt was inconsistent with his own sense of liturgical property. Katt charged that a spelling which included an H and a J would cause an unesthetic pronunciation which would grate on the senses.⁴³ That may be true. Yet it is not consistent to plead for an inaccurate transliteration of the Hebrew הלל - הללה such as Alleluiah. English ears may not appreciate the rough Hebrew enunciation, but it reflects the accuracy Katt pleads for elsewhere. The Committee chose wisely this time by including the H and J in almost all instances.

There is no question that greater accuracy was needed in regard to the references for text, tune, author, composer, and meter. Blatant mistakes were common in the older Lutheran hymnals. This is "an unfailing

41. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc., 1938, p 255.

42. Katt, Critical Comments, p 59-69.

43. Ibid, p 7a.

earmark of a poor hymnal; and a lack of scholarliness in editing the same, is sloppiness and inaccuracy in editing these references."⁴⁴ This is a laudable concern, and one that was met fairly well in TLH. A check in the Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal will reveal the effort that went into making these correct. However, Pastor Katt suggested that the committee should go so far as to identify every translator who assisted on a given hymn, rather than identifying it as "composite".⁴⁵ This is an extreme which would only have cluttered the neat pages he so desired. Overall, Pastor Katt did get what he suggested for the TLH in this area, again showing that his input was not in vain.

The final order of all the hymns was also of concern to many people. It was argued that the minor festivals were being dropped from the hymnal.⁴⁶ If this were true, the suggestion was taken to heart. Many of the festivals appear at the end of the church year section, represented by at least one hymn. Another suggestion proposed that the rest of the hymns (non-church year) be left without subject headings and alphabetized in one, large, general section. Pastor Katt argued that many of the subject headings placed too severe a restriction on these rather general hymns, possibly limiting their use in the church.⁴⁷ After using the hymnal for a while, one could easily conclude that this is a valid argument. At any rate, the committee did not adopt it.

Pastor Katt also felt that many of the best available doxologies were integral parts of complete hymns. In order to gain ready access to these hymns of praise he suggested a separate index to list these "hidden"

44. Katt, Critical Comments, p 8a.

45. Ibid, p 14a-16a.

46. Ibid, p 15a-16a.

47. Ibid, p 7a.

doxologies.⁴⁸ Once again, a good suggestion was adopted by the committee. Just such an index appears in TLH. Other areas concerning the organization of material were also under discussion, of course. And as in those areas sampled here, some good suggestions were incorporated in order to make the worship experience more pleasant and more meaningful.

The final area of concern regarding format was whether or not to print different editions of TLH. According to custom, it was popular to print a "text only" edition of the hymnal - especially of the old German versions. There were several memorials in 1941 to continue this tradition with TLH.⁴⁹ The reasons given were generally: 1) Reduced expense; 2) Convenience of size; 3) Use as confirmation gifts. The Synod wisely resolved that the first reason was a false conclusion and that others did not merit the added expense and trouble.⁵⁰ In this, the committee proved to be prudent without in any way endangering the worship life of the church.

It seems incongruous that so much effort could be spent on these minor matters of format, without considering the more important items which effect our worship: text and music. Pastor Katt actually found little to criticize concerning the music committees. Generally they were very open to suggestion and willing to cooperate.⁵¹ The result in the hymns has been quite good overall. The "over-Anglicization" evident in the later Service Book and Hymnal was avoided at least in the hymn tunes, if not in the liturgy.

48. Katt, Critical Comments, p 16a-17a.

49. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Rep. and Mem., 1941, p 218-220; Proc. 1941, p 327.

50. Ev. Luth. Syn. of Mo., Ohio, A.O.S., Proc. 1941, p 327.

51. Katt, Critical Comments, p 2a.

Text changes were more apparently a concern though. Pastor Katt spent nearly 150 pages dealing with the texts of specific hymns. What was his main concern? Not a fear of false doctrine being present, but a constant clamor over poor translations and awkward poetry. In a sense this points to the excellence of the committee's work. Their first concern was no doubt to provide us with doctrinally sound hymns. Pastor Schaefer's personal work copy of TLH shows that minor changes were being made in the texts as late as March of 1940 to clear up the poetical shortcomings. Two hymns, chosen at random from Katt's list, will illustrate this type of problem.

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing" is the target of several linguistic criticisms. The final product reflects an adoption of all but one of Pastor Katt's suggestions. "With the angelic host proclaim" must have been rendered with the plural "hosts" in the early reports. The singular "host" is in the finished product as Katt suggested. A similar problem of plural/singular interchange occurred when "men" must have been exchanged for "man" in "Pleased as man with man to dwell." Again, the finished product used the suggested singular form. Could it be that such mistakes were simply typographical errors to begin with?

Early proposals must have replaced "Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the virgin's womb" with "Virgin's offspring now behold, By the prophet long foretold." Katt accuses the committee of prudery for removing the word womb. As to the phrase "Late in time", he first explains its meaning and then questions why this phrase from the original was changed. If he would have only considered that even he felt compelled to explain "Late in time" to a panel of hymn experts, he would have answered his own question. They changed it to make the meaning more clear to the average worshipper. Unfortunately the committee's final action brought the hymn back to conformity with Katt's suggestion.

The one suggestion for this hymn which was not adopted was Katt's request that "Hail the heavenly prince of peace" be changed to "Hail the heaven-born prince of peace." In view of Pastor Katt's preoccupation with using the author's exact words, this is understandable. But here, the change is most likely the work of a committee man who was concerned for proper doctrine. If Katt's suggested "heaven-born" was retained what would it mean? Was Christ born sometime in eternity in heaven? His only birth occurred on earth! In this case, Katt's criticism is just plain sloppy, and the committee had the wisdom not to adopt such a suggestion.⁵²

The other hymn to be used as an example, again reveals Pastor Katt's preoccupation with sticking to the original text. An early proposal by the committee pared down Wesley's "Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness". Katt spent nearly a page pointing out what the original was, and how the committee had ruined the logic and poetry of the hymn by cutting the stanzas down from seven to four and rearranging what material was left. The result can be put briefly. The committee restored the hymn to its original form.⁵³

Well thought out criticism like this seems incongruous when compared to the careless criticism on hymn deletions. The committee was criticized in the Critical Comments for dropping hymn 207. "Seven Times Our Blessed Savior Spoke." Actually it was there all along as hymn 177, "Our Blessed Savior Seven Times Spoke." In the same way hymn 65 was not deleted, it was to become hymn 25. Hymns 391 became hymn 287, and 148 became 104. With such sloppy criticism to offer some of the time, it's no wonder the committee was defensive when Pastor Katt came in person!⁵⁴

52. Katt, Critical Comments, p 135-136.

53. Ibid, p 137.

54. Ibid, p 18a.

In light of what has been seen, it seems fair to conclude that the committee was careful to remove any doctrinal aberration before the public ever saw it. Judging from the response to criticisms such as Pastor Katt's it seems that the committee was also eager to improve the accuracy and aesthetics of the new book wherever this was possible. The number of specific requests made by Pastor Katt which were adopted show how willing the committee was to change its work without actually making the hymnal a collection of personal opinion.

IV. Conclusions

A few general conclusions remain to be drawn from all that has been said. Above all, it can be seen how careful the Inter-Synodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgies was in its work. The material at hand was carefully considered for its value in Lutheran worship. The minor change in wording in "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" is just one example of the attempt to keep the material doctrinally pure, without making wholesale changes. The deliberate pace of the committee, especially in the early years is another indicator of the care they exercised.

The committee members were also aware of their own limitations, and the need for further input. To this end they wisely solicited the help of their Christian brethren. It was no doubt disappointing to see their early work sliced to ribbons with criticism at times. Yet, even Pastor Katt, in the end, could see that a high percentage of his suggestions were incorporated in TLH. In fact, just to be absolutely fair, the Committee extended the deadline for such criticism an extra six months, and extended the publication date even longer in order to consider the final suggestions. In no way whatever does it seem fair to charge the committee with undue haste just to get to press!

The area for which we can be most thankful today, however, is the area of confessionalism. The name of the committee in itself is an indication: Inter-synodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgies. TLH was produced by people who shared a common faith before they even met together in committee. It was assumed throughout the project that any material to be included could serve to nourish that common, orthodox faith. If anything slightly ambiguous was allowed to remain due to poetic license, it was assumed that our people would either know or learn to know the proper meaning. In the few areas where such ambiguities existed there was no fear that they were being used as an inroad

by the unscrupulous to undermine the synod.

The Lutheran Hymnal was not perfect when it came out. Forty years of use have not improved it either. "When in the sultry glebe I faint" (368:2) is no more understandable now than it was in 1941. But this is not to the point. The purpose of TLH was to give us a better worship tool than we had up to then. TLH succeeded by improving available materials and collecting them into a single source. The attitude of the men who overlooked the project saw to it that the project could succeed as well as their abilities, with God's help, would allow.

EPILOG

The material presented in the paper was intended to cover the antecedent events of TLH. It has proved to be an interesting aspect of American Lutheranism for the writer. But as the topic unfolded, the further possibility of comparing TLH with another hymnal suggested itself. Were the lessons learned with TLH applied to the writing of Lutheran Book of Worship? The best way to find out was to pursue a similar investigation of this latest Lutheran worship book. The results, as outlined by the author, would probably have taken up another twenty to thirty pages if written out. Because this comparison was not a part of the original topic, and also because of a lack of time, a detailed report is not included here. However, the results of the comparison are interesting, and deserve some brief comment.

In the conclusions concerning TLH, one item noted was the care taken in the preparation of materials. The committee for TLH probably pushed the limits in allowing for outside criticism. Its scanty reports in the periodicals were still enough to cause a response which led to "too much composite work." If this was the case with TLH, it was even more so with LBW. Even people involved with LBW on the committee felt that all the field testing and public scrutiny only led to a downgrading of the aesthetic aspects,¹ creating a mosaic of form and doctrine, rather than a unified masterpiece.²

This "mosaic" quality points out shortcomings in both the purposes and attitudes of the LBW writers. In their search for more adequate worship materials, these men were no longer looking for what was necessary

1. Edgar S. Brown, Jr., "The Lutheran Book of Worship: Where Do We Go From Here?", Church Music, 1979, p 95.
2. David P. Scaer, "The Great Thanksgiving of the ILCW", The Springfielder, Vol. 40, No. 1, June 1976, p 36.

for adequate worship, or an improved presentation of Law and Gospel.³ Instead, the test for adequacy was aesthetic fulfillment. If this were the test for good worship forms, we could declare them winners with no contest. But finally, that is only an art form, not a worship service.

The reason a book like this could be prepared and received with joy is because it was diverse enough to please some very different groups of people. This was intended from the beginning as a means of uniting people of diverse theological backgrounds. A survey of the Memorials to the 1965 convention of the Missouri Synod will reveal that this was the intent from the start.⁴ Missouri even went beyond its already flexible bounds of ALC fellowship to invite LCA participation.

The well publicized furor over Eucharistic prayer, creedal changes, "saints" commemorations, and poor hymn texts (doctrinally) are ample evidence that true unity cannot be won through uniform practice. In the case of TLH the unity was already there. Uniformity in practice was just icing on the cake. In the case of LBW, no amount of uniformity could bring about true unity where there was no agreement on the Word of God.

The story has now moved on to the writing of Lutheran Worship. LBW will probably fall by the wayside fairly soon because there is so little unified support for it. Unfortunately, LW seems headed for the same oblivion. A new service book will not help the problems of the Missouri Synod. In fact, it will probably tend to strengthen polarities. The writers of LBW at least learned the lesson of careful and painstaking work from TLH, even if their purpose of uniformity was for the wrong

3. Charles J. Evanson, "Theological Observer", Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 42, No. 3, July 1978, p 306.

4. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Convention Workbook, 1965, p 392-394.

reason. The writers of LW have apparently learned neither lesson. We can only hope that they can prove history wrong.

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