



Music Resources for Liturgy and Congregational Use

RICHARD WEBB

First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach, Seattle, Washington

How shall a congregation worship in such a way that the gospel is effectively proclaimed to those gathered together? This question has prompted many worship leaders to explore ways in which their present congregational worship practices might be enhanced. Often during this process congregations discover that their own hymnals offer many possibilities of which they were not aware. However, there are limits to what is possible with denominational hymnals. Congregations looking for contemporary and multicultural worship resources, for example, will not find much in either area in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *Lutheran Worship*. Hence, congregations with such needs will be forced to look for alternative worship resources which might assist them in effectively proclaiming the gospel within congregational worship life. While there are many new individual liturgies, hymns, and aids for singing the psalms available from numerous publishing houses, in this article we will examine collections of such resources from the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, evangelical-conservative, and mainline Protestant worship traditions.

I. ALTERNATIVE HYMNAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE LUTHERAN TRADITION

Until very recently most of the contemporary or alternative Lutheran worship tradition has been somewhat “underground.” Consequently it has been very difficult for congregations to find comprehensive access to these resources. However, in the last few years this tradition has been brought to the surface through the efforts of composers such as John Ylvisaker and Marty Haugen. As a result, hymnals and song books are beginning to appear which reflect the diversity of this material. The following few hymnals and song books represent this alternative Lutheran tradition.

***Hymnal Supplement 1991* (Chicago: G.I.A., 1991) pew edition, \$4.95; accompaniment edition, \$18.95.** Edited by a team of Lutheran and Catholic musicians and liturgists, this resource might best be described as a Lutheran version of the contemporary Roman Catholic hymnal *Gather*. Although a good deal of the liturgy, psalmody, and hymnody in *Hymnal Supplement 1991* was borrowed from *Gather*, it is not strictly a contemporary hymnal. There are, for example, many selections from early German reformation hymnody and twentieth-century English hymnody in addition to contemporary Lutheran composers such as Richard Hillert, Carl Schalk, and Jaroslav Vajda. Absent from this hymnal, however, are some well known Lutheran composers such as John Ylvisaker, Ray Makeever, and Jay Beech. *Hymnal Supplement 1991* contains Marty Haugen’s *Now the Feast and Celebration* (a setting of Holy Communion originally commissioned by the Campus Ministry Department of Pacific Lutheran

University), several individual portions of the communion liturgy (Holy, Holy; Lamb of God; etc.), 23 responsorial psalms, and 118 liturgically arranged hymns of various styles. While *Hymnal Supplement 1991* is by no means a weak hymnal, it is not as strong as *Gather*. There are no settings of either Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, the psalter is small (only 23 psalms), and it lacks much of what is good in contemporary Lutheran liturgical music.

Spirit Touching Spirit: A Contemporary Hymnal (Burnsville: Prince of Peace, 1987) \$6.00. This hymnal, published by the music ministry of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville, Minnesota, is an attempt to make use of the best of the evangelical-conservative worship tradition in a manner that is faithful to Lutheran worship practice. For the most part it succeeds. The songs and hymns of *Spirit Touching Spirit*, written predominantly by Handt Hanson, tend to focus more on what God has done for us rather than what we must do for God. Also there are several hymns for communion distribution which clearly reflect the Lutheran understanding of the Lord's supper. However, the worship patterns offered in the back of *Spirit Touching Spirit* seem to be influenced more by Reformed and evangelical-conservative worship traditions than by Lutheran worship tradition. Recently Prince of Peace has also published a new hymnal entitled *Spirit Calls...Rejoice!* and *Victory Feast*, a contemporary setting of Holy Communion.

Songs for a New Creation (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1982) \$6.50. This volume of contemporary songs, hymns, and liturgies offers congregations a wealth of psalm paraphrases and contemporary texts set to familiar American tunes, in addition to simple choruses and many old gospel favorites. *Songs for a New Creation* also contains a "folk" setting of the Holy Communion liturgy as well as Setting One from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Most of this contemporary hymnal has been either written, composed, or arranged by John Ylvisaker, who has also written numerous other songs, hymns, and liturgies available from his own publishing house (New Generation Publishers, Waverly, Iowa).

II. HYMNAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

Since 1963 there has been a virtual explosion of liturgical music written within the Roman Catholic tradition. As a result, Catholics have been simultaneously blessed and cursed with a host of new hymns, liturgies, psalmody, hymnals, and the like. At present there are at least three major publishing houses which

specialize in new liturgical music for the parish. Fortunately, through a combination of wise leadership on the part of many Catholic publishing houses, and the U.S. Conference of Bishops, much of what is good from this explosion of new music for worship has been collated into some very fine worship resources. Below is a partial list of some of the best.

Worship: A Hymnal and Service Book for Roman Catholics, 3rd edition (Chicago: G.I.A., 1986.) pew edition, \$11.00; choir edition, \$19.50; organ accompaniment edition, \$39.00. Although it probably would not be desirable to use this hymnal as a "second hymnal" (it contains many of the hymns found in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, *Lutheran Worship*, and many other denominational hymnals), *Worship* would be an exceedingly valuable resource for music contributing to a hymn supplement. *Worship* contains four complete settings and several other settings of individual portions of the Communion liturgy; simple hymn versions of

Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline; 55 psalms in responsorial style; and 67 simple psalm refrains (the lectionary accompaniment edition contains the psalms that go with the refrains and their accompaniments). *Worship* also has several new hymns with texts by such authors as Brian Wren and Fred Pratt Green which are not found in either major Lutheran hymnal. At the back of *Worship* are topical, liturgical, scriptural, tune title, and first line indices.

***Gather* (Chicago: G.I.A, 1988) pew edition: softcover, \$6.00, hardcover, \$8.00; keyboard edition, \$37.00; choral and guitar editions available.** This collection of liturgies, psalms, and hymns is the most comprehensive contemporary worship resource available to date. Although it represents the “most requested” contemporary worship music within Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions, it is easily adapted to Lutheran worship practice. Indeed, many Lutheran congregations and campus centers across the country and even a Lutheran seminary use *Gather* as their hymnal supplement.

The musical style of *Gather* is extremely flexible—most of the liturgies, psalms, and hymns in this resource can be performed well on instruments and ensembles as diverse as organ with brass choir to guitar with electric bass, flute, and synthesizer. That *Gather* reflects this style should come as no surprise since three of the five editors of this hymnal, Marty Haugen, David Haas, and Michael Joncas, are known for composing in this style.

In its liturgical section, *Gather* contains four complete settings and several individual portions of the Holy Communion liturgy, simple hymn versions of both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, and forty-five responsorial psalms. In addition to this rather large liturgical section, *Gather* also contains 221 liturgically arranged hymns and songs, about eighty percent of which are Scripture paraphrases. As with *Worship*, at the back of *Gather* there are topical, liturgical, scriptural, tune, and first line indices. If a congregation wanted to buy a contemporary hymnal (as opposed to compiling its own), *Gather* would make an excellent choice.

***Glory and Praise Comprehensive Edition* (Phoenix: Epoch/NALR, 1987) softcover congregational edition, \$5.95; keyboard accompaniment edition, \$59.95.** By far the largest of the *Glory and Praise* series, this edition contains songs and liturgies from popular Catholic composers such as the Saint Louis Jesuits, Marty Haugen, and Dan Schutte. This hymnal is definitely a Roman Catholic hymnal in that it presupposes a working knowledge of the Roman Mass rite in the

way it lays out its liturgical section. Several spoken sections of the liturgy, for example, are simply omitted. Even so, for congregations planning to compile their own hymnal supplements, this resource offers the best of the “folk” music of the Roman Catholic tradition from 1970-1987.

***Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal* (Chicago: G.I.A., 1987) pew edition, \$10.50; accompaniment edition for the rites, \$13.00.** While this hymnal is thoroughly African-American in its orientation, it is unique in that it has been designed to function as a worship resource within the historic liturgical tradition. Structured similarly to both *Worship* and *Gather*, *Lead Me, Guide Me* contains a preface tracing the structure of the mass rite and the history of African-American worship usage, five musical settings of Holy Communion, several individual portions of the Communion liturgy, a seasonal responsorial psalter, and 323 liturgically arranged songs and hymns reflecting predominantly the style of African-American gospel music.

III. HYMNAL RESOURCES OF THE EVANGELICAL-CONSERVATIVE TRADITION

Typically much of this music has been troublesome for those who plan and lead worship in the so-called historic liturgical tradition. Although it has been said that much of the music coming from the evangelical-conservative tradition is emotionally one-sided and reflects perhaps too much of the current commercial pop idiom, there is also much of this music that contains theologically sound lyrics and solid musical style. The chief problem with this music, however, is not its musical style or the content of its lyrics, but that it is difficult to place within the worship patterns of the historic liturgical tradition. One possible solution to this problem is to divide this music into three categories: songs for gathering, psalmody, and songs for meditation and reflection.

The songs and hymns written for gathering within this tradition are often called “praise music.” Often in evangelical-conservative congregations, at the beginning of their worship services, there will be a ten- to twenty-minute time of singing where this type of music is used. Thematically, these songs and hymns often give praise to God for the saving work of Jesus in our lives as well as praise for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. This “praise music” also could be adapted for use in the historic liturgical tradition by using it as an expansion upon the entrance hymn or as participatory pre-service music.

One of the hidden gifts of contemporary worship music from the evangelical-conservative tradition is the massive amount of psalmody that has been set to music. Almost half the songs within quality worship resources of this tradition are paraphrases of the psalms. In some of the larger collections one can find almost a complete psalter! However, because not all of the psalm paraphrases are of the same quality, some critical discernment is called for in adapting this music to Lutheran usage.

One of the most maligned forms of music that comes from this tradition is that which has been written for meditation or reflection, often called “Scripture choruses.” While it is true that some Scripture choruses are not at all from Scripture, and while some of this genre sounds a bit like Muzak or country-western music, other choruses employ very simple, straightforward melodies which use a single word, phrase, or sentence in very effective ways. The best of this genre is

page 265

quite similar to the music that comes from the Taizé community in France. Often this music, when employed during communion distribution, can help a congregation focus on what it has just received. The following are music resources that are representative of contemporary music within the evangelical-conservative tradition.

Praise Worship, 5 vols. (Mobile: Integrity Music, 1987-91). While all five volumes are good, volumes one and three appear to be the best of the series. A good deal of the music is simple and clean and the lyrics for the most part are sound. One of the strongest composer/writers in this series is Twila Paris. While she writes predominantly praise music, the lyrics are, for the most part, christocentric and her melodies are strong and easy to sing. As mentioned above, both volumes recommended have a large amount of psalmody. Volume three also has some excellent music for meditation and reflection. At the back of each volume are title, theme, and Scripture indices.

Maranatha! Music Praise and Worship Collection (Laguna Hills: Maranatha! Music,

1987). This collection represents not only a kind of “top forty” of the evangelical-conservative tradition but also some of the most complex music writing of that tradition. For that reason care must be taken that what is chosen from this volume is simple enough for the congregation to sing. The more difficult music from this resource can be used as choir anthems and solos where the congregation is invited to sing the refrain. As with the above collection, much of this resource is also paraphrased psalmody. In fact, the psalmody in this collection is its strongest point. As with *Praise Worship*, at the back of this book are title, theme, and Scripture indices.

Worship: Songs of the Vineyard, 2 vols. (Anaheim: Vineyard Ministries International, 1989). This series is the least eclectic collection of the three listed in this genre. The musical style of these two volumes is almost exclusively a mixture of jazz and pop. One might almost call this style “thirty-something” music. It is important to note that this style of music is not easy to perform or lead. If a congregation has among its ranks an individual or group that is able to play jazz or pop competently, this music can sound quite exciting and could be useful as part of an evangelism strategy. However, when this style is badly performed it tends to sound flat or even syrupy.

IV. HYMNAL AND WORSHIP RESOURCES WITHIN THE MAINLINE PROTESTANT TRADITION

Recently both the Anglican and Methodist traditions have published some excellent hymnals and alternative resources for worship. The following is a short list of what may be helpful to congregations wishing to compile a worship supplement.

The United Methodist Hymnal (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989). This hymnal offers a wealth of Wesleyan and other American hymnody not found in hymnals of the historic liturgical traditions. Also, similar to the Roman Catholic hymnals mentioned above, *The United Methodist Hymnal* contains 101 responsorial psalms which offer an excellent variation to simply chanting or speaking the psalms. Finally, in the back of this hymnal are excellent models of

a chorale or hymn version of Morning and Evening Prayer; these provide an excellent alternative to the Lutheran practice of using the Holy Communion liturgy without communion.

Songs of Zion (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981) \$6.00. Even though this hymnal is not new it still deserves mention in that it offers congregations an extensive collection of African-American hymnody. Although it is not liturgically arranged as is *Lead Me, Guide Me*, *Songs of Zion* contains many hymns, songs, and spirituals which are in the public domain (no copyright) in addition to several short articles and prefaces which explain the context of the African-American worship tradition. Also the musical arrangements of much of the hymnody in this resource are exceptional.

Songs for Celebration (New York: Church Hymnal, 1980) congregation edition, \$5.95. Again, this is not a new hymnal but it is important in that it represents the contemporary and “folk” liturgical music of the Anglican tradition. This music is unique in that it seeks to blend both the contemporary and the English folk song traditions. *Songs for Celebration* contains a setting of Holy Communion and hymns and songs which are primarily paraphrases of Scripture. Much of this music has been composed by Betty Carr Pulkingham who has also composed

several other songs, hymns, psalms, and mass settings published under Mel Bay Publications.

***A New Metrical Psalter* (New York: The Church Pension Fund, 1986) \$10.95.** This publication contains metrical (hymn-like) translations and paraphrases of all the psalms found in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and of the Holy Communion, Morning Prayer, and Evening Prayer liturgies as well. *A New Metrical Psalter* allows congregations to sing both the psalms and the liturgy to familiar hymn tunes, and its copyright arrangement permits congregations to copy the texts of this resource into worship bulletins with no expense other than the purchase of this book.

***Songs of the Psalms* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990) full music edition, \$19.95.** This hymnal offers contemporary settings of the majority of the psalter and of individual portions of the Holy Communion and Morning and Evening Prayer liturgies. As with *Songs for Celebration*, the general musical style of *Songs of the Psalms* is strongly influenced by the English folk song tradition. Much of the music in this hymnal is reminiscent of the compositional style of John Rutter. Because of the expense of this resource, congregations wishing to use *Songs of the Psalms* may want to inquire with the publishers about obtaining reprint permissions of selected songs and hymns.

V. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As congregations begin to search for alternative worship resources, questions about what is theologically, musically, and contextually appropriate begin to surface. Often the worship leader (be it the church musician or pastor) will be responsible for determining what is theologically and musically appropriate. One hopes that is what he or she has been trained to do. However, what worship leaders often have not been trained to do is to understand how individual components of the liturgy fit together.

One immediate solution to this problem, a solution which helps avoid inap-

propriate or confusing liturgies, is the practice of substituting the sung portions of the Holy Communion liturgy with alternative music that serves the same function. This practice, which Luther employed in his *Deutsche Messe*, produces what is often referred to as a chorale or hymn liturgy. Such liturgies have the advantage of anchoring what is musically new to familiar spoken texts. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* (p. 120) and *Lutheran Worship* (p. 197) provide models and some hymn suggestions for this practice. Other hymns of similar themes to those suggested may also be used. As mentioned above, *The United Methodist Hymnal* provides similar models for the services of Morning and Evening Prayer. For further reading on how to put together effective worship services, *Liturgy Made Simple* by Mark Searle (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981) and *Elements of Rite* by Aidan Kavanagh (New York: Pueblo, 1982) have proven to be quite helpful.