



What I Like and Why

PAUL MANZ

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

For many years I have been a professional church musician serving in the Midwest. During this time, I have seen many changes in the practice of worship in our churches. I grew up in a large parish in Cleveland, Ohio, where the parish had just begun using the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-book*.¹ It was a new form for a generally German congregation, and as I think back to those times, it caused more problems than it solved. It contained text only, no music. In 1924 a revised version of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* appeared.² In many respects, this was a great improvement. However, it had a limited hymnody, questionable meter notation, and measure mark ambiguity. It was not until seventeen years later that a new effort was made with *The Lutheran Hymnal*.³ For the most part this was a better book. New hymns were added, together with some doxologies, chants, and the Order of Matins and Vespers. Still, some of the original problems from the 1929 version carried over to the 1941 effort. All hymns were metered; as a result there was some awkward unrhythmic singing because of unwanted and unplanned rests and organists who gave literal interpretations of the note values.

In my younger days, the high point of the service was the homily; the Holy Eucharist was usually tacked on after the benediction. Sometimes, the Eucharist was moved to a separate service either before or after the main service. With *The Lutheran Hymnal*, the Eucharist appeared within the service itself, thus postponing the benediction until later. The idea of frequent participation in the Eucharist was still unpopular, however. Today, people rarely leave before the benediction and welcome the weekly Eucharist.

All this is by way of introduction to the patterns set in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.⁴ The previous technical problems were seemingly solved, and now

¹*Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1912).

²*Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1924).

³*The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1941).

⁴*Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg; Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978).

a newer age in worship was to begin for the majority of Lutherans. The traditional *Introitus* has been replaced by the Entrance Hymn, which serves as the Processional Hymn as well. The *Kyrie* (especially when it is sung *a cappella* together with cantor and congregation) is a very meaningful act of worship. Probably one of the greatest assets of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) is the variety it affords in worship patterns and forms. The *Kyrie* may be omitted on occasion, and the Hymn of Praise which follows has two alternate settings; furthermore a suitable

hymn may be substituted. With the singing of the Psalms, Lutheran congregations are finally getting acquainted with this great Old Testament opus! The Gospel acclamations together with their unfortunate musical introductions are best unplayed and unsung; rather they are to be spoken or even shouted! In many parishes today, the *Kyrie*, Prayers, and The Great Thanksgiving are sung *a cappella*, resulting in much more effective and meaningful worship. This variety of form gives me much satisfaction and joy.

With the advent of worship committees, hymns from other sources are often imported. Our people frequently visit other parishes where often a hymn new to them is sung. Formerly, it was common practice to restrict the choice of hymns to the accepted hymnbook currently in use. That was considered natural and expedient. Now, however, hymns from a variety of different hymnbooks are used in many of our services. Sometimes the LBW does not have the particular text which needs to be emphasized and another hymnbook does. More often, the text which we want is unfortunately married to a strange tune. This poses no problems as permissions are cheerfully granted by other copyright holders for a one-time use. The use of other tunes and texts together with the new materials already in the LBW make for an enlarged repertoire spanning many cultures and many generations.

The worship committee in my particular parish here in Chicago convenes approximately four times a year. The first meeting in June outlines in a general way the direction the services will take for the coming year from Advent to Christ the King Sunday. Hymn selections are made by the pastor, intern, choir directors, and cantor. In a subsequent gathering these hymn assignments together with the type of worship service planned are presented. Before printing *The Church Year from Advent to Advent*⁵ every attempt is made to be sure there is no duplication of hymns. Also, checks are made to be sure that no more than one new hymn is included in each service. The fact that different people represent different tastes is a plus for us and is appreciated. Incidentally, we try to watch the key relationships of hymns as well. Singing four different hymns all in the same key is not exactly exciting. Neither are three of four consecutive hymns in minor very uplifting!

The second worship meeting, usually held in September, reviews what has been done and plans in detail all of the services through Epiphany. The third meeting is held in January and does the same thing for the Lenten-Easter season. Finally, the post-Easter meeting carefully reviews the past year's services and plans the long Pentecost period. These are but a few of the items in Lutheran worship today which make my work as a professional church musician easier and much more enjoyable.

⁵*The Church Year from Advent to Advent* (Chicago: The Lutheran Church of Saint Luke, 1988).

There is yet one major area of joy for me which recent events have made possible. That joy has to do with the interrelationship of the ministry of the Word and the ministry of music. Putting it another way: it is the pastor-musician partnership in worship.

Webster defines "minister" as "an agent, or one officiating or assisting the officiant in church worship, a clergyman especially of a Protestant communion."⁶ The church musician is one who is called to minister to people as well, but in a unique way. Through music the church musician does preach and does teach. The church musician comforts the bereaved and helps to sustain the weak. Through his or her playing the musician counsels the troubled and distressed

and always assists at the distribution of the sacraments. All of this is done not from the altar, but from the organ loft, and always together with the minister of the Word. The language of the church musician is non-verbal, but it emphasizes and highlights the theology of the Word. The theological conviction and participation of the church musician transposes him or her into a minister of the church. A sensitive church musician can recognize the theological vibrations of prayer and exhortation, adoration and doxology, and develop these concepts into an exciting worship experience. In this process, the church musician is not merely playing in a church but is a ministering servant along with the pastor—a partner in ministry.

In Lutheran worship today, I especially enjoy the partnership that is beginning to develop between the minister of the Word and the minister of music. It is chiefly in the liturgy and in that great body of hymnody and chant where altar and organ loft unite into meaningful and/exciting worship. Both pastors and church musicians are servants of the Word. When these forces can cooperatively be focused in the parish, only the best results can accrue. There is no room for a jealous competitive spirit in proclaiming the gospel from either the chancel or the organ loft.

As I have the opportunity to play services and hymn festivals in other Protestant churches, I am immensely pleased to note the excitement with which these our sisters and brothers participate in their hymn singing. Many of these denominations have newly updated and greatly expanded hymnbooks. The Roman Catholics are represented with two extraordinary works: *The Summit Choirbook*,⁷ and *Worship, A Hymnal and Service Book for Roman Catholics*.⁸ Recently, the Reformed Church in America introduced *Rejoice in the Lord*,⁹ and the Episcopal Church introduced *The Hymnal, 1982*.¹⁰ Due to appear momentarily is the new *United Methodist Hymnal*.¹¹ The Presbyterian Church, too, is in the process of preparing its new hymnbook, thus hopefully replacing the two currently in use. I note with great joy similarities both in text and in liturgies. Almost always we find identical versions of the Our Father and the Creed. In many cases, the newer hymns included in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* are now also found in the later Protestant hymnbooks. In some cases, both the rhy-

⁶*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam Webster, 1984).

⁷*The Summit Choirbook* (Summit, NJ: The Dominican Nuns, Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary, 1983).

⁸*Worship, A Hymnal and Service Book for Roman Catholics* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1986).

⁹*Rejoice in the Lord* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985).

¹⁰*The Hymnal, 1982* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985).

¹¹*United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House).

mic as well as the isometric versions of some of the traditional Lutheran chorales are printed side by side. All of this is thrilling to me. It would appear as though the *Lutheran Book of Worship* led the procession back in 1978. We have come a long way in ten years! Perhaps it is not too early to urge the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to begin planning for an updated, enlarged, and re-edited *Lutheran Book of Worship*. After all, it is ten years old and halfway through its lifetime! In the meantime there is a need for hymn supplements, including newly commissioned hymns, hymns included in some of the newer hymnbooks which were unknown to the hymnbook committee in 1978, updated inclusive language, fresh liturgical music for the Psalms, and new and better hymn harmonizations so that on occasion people might sing in harmony.

As I look upon my experiences through the years, I see many changes having taken place.

Our hymnody is richer and broader, our liturgies are many and more diverse, many of our edifices are new and in many cases non-traditional, and our people are no longer entirely ethnic North Europeans. Furthermore, the musical instruments we bring into our churches (such as handbells, Orff instruments, small orchestras, fine choirs, and newer and better designed organs) make worship a joy and delight. There is much I like in Lutheran worship, and I am pleased and proud to be involved in exciting praise to God!