

Newsletter



April • The Year of our Lord 2010

Volume VI • Issue No. 1, Spring

FROM OUR PRESIDING MEMBER

Dear Friend of AR&LW,

We may be swathed in snow and ice, as I write these words, but we are already anticipating a warm and fruitful time in Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 26-29. This year, AR&LW's annual meeting will be held at Calvin College, where we will be treated to several special events hosted by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Highlights of the meeting include public lectures by nationally-known scholars John Witvliet, who will speak on what a Reformed liturgic looks like, and Leanne Van Dyk, who will share her wisdom on doing liturgical catechesis in congregations. We will also be led in worship by a number of gifted folks including Sally Brown, professor of preaching at Princeton Theological Seminary, and Cláudio Carvalhaes, professor of worship at Louisville Seminary. They will be joined by Martin Tel and a cast of fine musicians.

This year's meeting also will include a new component. We will have a chance to be led in intentional reflection on worship by David Batchelder and Sheri Curry, both of whom are experienced and skilled at leading this sort of conversation. This is a unique opportunity to follow the guidance Jane Rogers Vann gave us last year to ask "what happened?" in worship and to deepen our understanding of liturgy.

In addition, we will be continuing our discussion about forming liturgical leaders, once again gathering folks from congregations, seminaries, and judicatories for rich conversation. These conversations have been enlightening and fruitful; in this third year we will be tracing some trajectories for future work in this area.

And, we will begin a new conversation that asks, "how do we imagine a Reformed liturgic?" and "how do we embody a Reformed liturgic?"

On behalf of the AR&LW Steering Committee, I invite you to join us this summer for learning, creating, forging new relationships, and nurturing long-time friendships. And bring a friend! Below you will find some talking points for describing who we are and what we're about.

Exciting things are beginning to happen in various places around the country because of the seeds that AR&LW is planting—come be a part of the community garden that is the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship!

Grace and Peace,

Kimberly Bracken Long
 Presiding Member
longk@ctsnet.edu



✠ Liturgical Worship

Who we are?

An association of ministers, musicians, scholars, congregational members, seminary professors and staff who care about the worship life of Reformed churches. We are committed to the formation and ongoing training and support of those who prepare and lead worship. We care about worship that is sacramental, incarnational, Trinitarian, ecumenically informed and rooted in the Reformed tradition. We are convinced that worship can be faithful and creative, local and global, and is central to the church's participation in the coming reign of Christ.

2010 ANNUAL MEETING

"Strong, Loving and Wise: Forming and Reforming Leaders for Vital, Faithful, Creative Worship" — Year 3

**Prince Conference Center—Calvin College
 Grand Rapids, Michigan**

**Monday—Thursday, July 26-29, 2010
 Register Now! See enclosed brochure.**

PLENARY SPEAKERS

- **John Witvliet**

Director, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, and Professor of Music and Worship, Calvin College & Calvin Seminary

- **Leanne van Dyk**

Dean, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Professor of Reformed Theology, Western Theological Seminary

PREACHING AND PRESIDING

- **Sally A. Brown**

Elizabeth M. Engle Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship at Princeton Theological Seminary.

- **Cláudio Carvalhaes**

Assistant Professor of Worship and Preaching, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

What we can do for you?

Churches are constantly seeking ministers who are skilled in worship leadership.

Judicatories are charged with preparing women and men for ministry—and are also the ones called in when problems arise.

Judicatories often do not have the time or personnel to actively support the ongoing training and formation of quality worship leaders.

The central mission of AR&LW is just that—the forming and reforming of liturgical leaders for the church, in an environment that is broadly inclusive, rooted in the rich traditions of the church, and open to where God is leading us.

Through annual meetings, local cluster groups, and emerging models for training, we can help you form, support, and encourage planners and leaders of worship.

Who wants you in the conversation (or, who's already there)?

Judicatories have expectations of seminaries to train people for the ministry—many of those seminary folk are around our table, and they want you in the conversation.

AR&LW members care deeply about how the church can form liturgical leaders in local contexts—in congregations and through judicatory networks.

This is a place for judicatory folk, seminary faculty and staff, pastors, church members, and musicians to share in the same conversations about forming worship leaders of all kinds.

How can you join in the conversation?

ABOVE ALL, ATTEND THE CONFERENCE JULY 26-29, AT CALVIN COLLEGE, IN GRAND RAPIDS, MI. PLENARY SPEAKERS WILL BE JOHN WITVLIET AND LEANNE VAN DYK.

Excellent worship and preaching led by Sally Brown and Cláudio Carvalhaes, followed by professionally-guided conversation about what we experienced.

Additional workshops and/or conversations with scholars-in-residence Nicholas Woltersdorff and Miroslav Volf, and possibly others.

Formal and informal conversations about liturgical formation of leaders and congregations.

Visit our website at www.arlw.org

See you in Grand Rapids in July!

Kimberly Bracken Long
AR&LW Presiding Member
longk@ctsnet.edu



FROM THE SECRETARY/TREASURER



Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report to the membership of AR&LW that the checking account balance as of January 30, 2010, was \$20,088.66. However, a majority of that amount is unavailable for the on-

going business expenses of the organization.

On October 23, 2009, we received a check in the amount of \$4,616.48 from Wells Fargo Financial Advisors, representing proceeds from the sale of stock donated to the Association by

Fritz West. The purpose of his gift is to fund scholarships for congregational representatives to our 2008, 2009, and 2010 annual meetings and to pay for distribution to our members of an issue of *Liturgy*.

Our change from a membership period based on the calendar year to one running from the annual meeting to the next annual meeting created an 18-month transitional membership year during which two issues of *Liturgy* were mailed to our members. The West gift paid for the February 2009 issue of *Liturgy*. The current balance of the West grant is \$3,596.48, but we have not yet received an invoice from Taylor & Francis, the publishers of *Liturgy*, for mailing the February 2009 issue, which should be in the neighborhood of \$1,200.00.

In November, the Association received a grant in the amount of \$1,500.00 from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship to reimburse cluster group expenses during the current membership year (which began July 2009). As of January 31, I had received and paid invoices for \$110.89 to reimburse cluster group expenses during the current membership year, leaving \$1,389.15 available from 2009-2010 Calvin Grant.

The contract with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship has now been fulfilled, with a balance of \$382.67 remaining unvoiced. The purpose of the contract was to provide reports of our 2008 and 2009 meetings; the proceeds funded the services of writer Tom Dipko and the attendance of three ecumenical guests. The Myers Foundation Grant to underwrite expenses of seminary representatives for the 2009 annual meeting (\$10,000 for scholarships up to \$500 each) has a balance remaining of \$3,093.12. The Myers Foundation Grant to underwrite expenses of seminary representatives for the 2008 annual meeting (also \$10,000 for scholarships up to \$500 each) has a balance remaining of \$3,576.01. The gift from Association member Vicki Mackey in the amount of \$500 to provide scholarships for young seminarians to attend our meetings has not been used, although the availability of scholarships has been publicized annually.

Thus, the amount of unrestricted funds in our checking account, available for the regular business of the Association, is \$7,551.23. I am still awaiting invoices from Columbia Theological Seminary for the cost of meals that were included in the 2009 annual meeting registration fee, and we will also have the expense of the February 2010 issue of *Liturgy* yet to be mailed to our members. Together, I anticipate that those expenses will bring our checking account balance down to about \$4,750.00.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the organization as your treasurer.



Secretary's Report

On November 12 and 13, the Steering Committee met at Calvin College to continue planning for the 2010 annual meeting. You will find more about the program and details for registration in this issue of the Association's newsletter, and I encourage members to consider attending the meeting and consider your own role in the promotion of worship that is both Reformed and liturgical, and how you can encourage the formation of faithful worship leaders at the congregational, seminary, and judicatory levels.

The membership of the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship for the membership year ending in July 2010 stands at 48, which includes four institutional members. One of these, Phillips Theological Seminary, is new to our organization this year.

Phillips is a seminary of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and is located in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Also new to our membership this year are Edna Jacobs Banes, Jacob Gordon, Britton Johnston, Michael Lindvall, Cheri Roth, Phillip Shultz, Timothy Matthew Slemmons, Donald Stake, John Stevens, and Charles Webster.

Please remember that your own recommendation is our most effective recruiting method. The need for a thoughtful, theological, and hospitable witness to worship that is Trinitarian, ecumenical, incarnational, and sacramental, is critical. I hope to see you in Grand Rapids the last week of July.

*Bruce L. Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer, AR&LW
Pastor, Spanish Springs Presbyterian Church
Sparks, Nevada
church@spanishspringspres.org*



ANNUAL MEETING SCHOLARSHIPS



Scholarships are available to help meet expenses for attendance of various categories of non-AR&LW members at the 2010 annual meeting of the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship in Grand Rapids, Michigan, this summer.

- **Worship Faculty, Field Placement Coordinators, and Administrative Staff.** Through a generous grant from the Myers Foundation, persons working in the area of worship at a seminary identified with the Reformed tradition can receive a scholarship in an amount up to \$500 to cover the registration fee and expenses of transportation, lodging, and meals (maximum of two scholarships per institution). The deadline for application for this scholarship is **April 15**. Applications received after that date will be considered on an as-available basis.
- **Representatives from Congregations in the Reformed Church Tradition.** By way of a gift from Fritz West, scholarships are available for persons in congregations with an interest in worship—clergy or laity, including church musicians—to cover the registration fee and expenses up to a total of **\$250**. Interested persons should make application by **June 1**.
- **Young Seminarians.** In an effort to encourage the study and practice of Reformed and liturgical worship by seminary students who anticipate a long career in the professional ministry, Vicki Mackey has made available funds to provide scholarships (amount depends upon the number of applicants accepted) for young seminarians from or attending seminaries representing the Reformed church tradition. Applicants should make application by **June 1**.

All applicants should include contact information and identify their seminary or church. Applicants for the West and Mackey scholarships should include a statement on why they wish to attend the meeting, and how they anticipate that attendance will assist them in forming worship leaders or their own preparation for leading worship faithfully.

Applications for all scholarships should be addressed to:
Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship
c/o Spanish Springs Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 51176
Sparks, NV 89435
church@spanishspringspres.org



CLUSTER GROUPS



Attendees at the 2009 annual meeting of the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship in Decatur, GA, walked away with two assignments: 1) Give input on two proposed models for training worship leaders and 2) Discuss six Generative Questions that emerged from the August 2009 Conference. To date, three Cluster Groups have responded to the call—New Jersey, Plano/Dallas, and Church Music Institute/Dallas.

Regarding the first assignment, the New Jersey and Plano/Dallas groups who submitted the proposed models, continue to work diligently on developing a model, or models, to be implemented in either 2011 or 2012. The ideas are flowing and growing with synergy emerging from what the Dallas/Plano Cluster Group calls a Gospel model of “Come and See.”

The model, however it evolves, acknowledges and values

- diversity among Christians of the Reformed Tradition as well as diversity in our contemporary environment,
- the organic nature of worship and its liturgy,
- and the limits of time and resources, both in seminaries and in local parishes, to teach and learn skills for worship leadership.

Regarding the second assignment to respond to six Generative Questions, Church Music Institute/Dallas engaged 40 participants in the quest. The comments that emerged from that conversation are compelling. Following are some excerpts.

Congregations need/expect leaders to . . .

Lead. Congregations want to be led, taught, encouraged; e.g., the psalms were meant to be sung Teach us how!

Model Spiritual Disciplines that lead leaders and participants into worship, e.g., pray, read and study the texts, sing the psalms, listen.

Model Effective Communication Skills that enable collaborative planning.

Utilize the gifts and graces of staff and lay leaders. Clergy are trained leaders, so are musicians, so are lay people—each with their own gifts and graces to be utilized to the glory of God.

Take seriously the faith of congregants by planning worship well and planning ahead.

Recognize that ordained clergy and professional musicians are transient in the life of a congregation, thus making imperative a collaborative approach to worship that creates continuity amongst worship leadership.

Be trained theologically, liturgically, and musically.

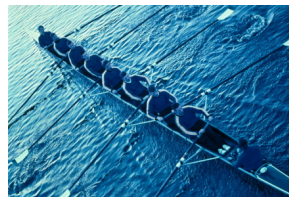
Be aware of individuals who make up a congregation: Diversity of race, culture, age, gender, faith journeys, talents, and musics (refers to the various styles of music that lift people beyond normalcy and into the sacred).

Trust the gifts and graces of others.

Congregations nurture and demonstrate shared liturgical leadership through . . .

Lay leaders who read scripture, lead calls to worship and confessions, write liturgy; e.g., call to worship, confession, prayers, segues from one part of service to the other; serve communion.

Worship Teams (with representation from three or more entities; e.g., pastor/s, director of music, lay, youth, chair of Worship Committee) that talk about worship and plan worship.



Children and youth serving as lay readers, Communion servers, acolytes, children's time leaders, ushers.

Music that incorporates choirs of all ages; congregational singing of responses, prayers, Calls to Worship, psalms; vocal and instrumental music.

Congregations that have helped to shape good liturgical leadership . . .

Offer classes several times a year for people who want to learn more about worship and/or people who want to serve as lay leaders.

Seek out seminary students to serve as liturgical leaders.

Use Confirmation classes as a place for teaching about worship, liturgy, and leading liturgy.

Are open to training and encouraging lay liturgical leaders—even in a church with multiple clergy.

Proactive liturgical leadership training results in . . .

A pool of experience to draw upon rather than frantically searching for worship leaders.

More savvy congregants who are invested in vital worship.

A congregation sensitive to hearing and supporting each other's callings.

These excerpts from the Cluster Groups mirror **a desire to make worship more than just the bulletin and to reclaim liturgy as "the work of the people."** It is the kind of critical thinking we must have to make worship vital.

"Come and See" in 2011!

Sheri L. Curry
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Tulsa, Oklahoma
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WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

AR&LW is pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since our annual meeting in July:

Edna Banes is on the faculty of Union Theological Seminary-PSCE in Richmond, Virginia. We were pleased to welcome her as a seminary representative at our 2009 annual meeting. Email: ebanes@union-psce.edu.

Jacob Gordon lives in Export, Pennsylvania, and is director of music and organist for Poke Run Presbyterian Church. He brings interests in sacramental and liturgical theology as well as metrical psalmody, and is experienced in organ and choral music, hymnody, and liturgical planning. Email: jacobgordon@windstream.net

Story-telling and healing ministry are the particular expertise of **Britton Johnston**, a Presbyterian minister who lives in Pasadena, California, and is currently serving as a temporary supply pastor. Email: britt75@att.net.

Michael Lindvall is Pastor of Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City. His special interests in the area of worship are liturgical reform and the sacraments. Email: mlindvall@brickchurch.org.

We also welcome **Cheri Roth** to our membership. Cheri, a church member from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania,

was a first-time participant this year at our annual meeting in Decatur, Georgia. Cheri's e-mail address is jcroth@innernet.net.

Phillip Shoultz also attended the 2009 meeting at Columbia Seminary, and has since become a member of the Association. A professional church musician, Phillip serves the Druid Hills Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. E-mail: pshoultz@dhpc.org.

Preaching, lectionary studies, and Reformed liturgies are the particular expertise of **Timothy Matthew Slemmons**, who serves on the faculty of the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. He is also interested in expanding the lectionary. Email: tslemmons@dbq.edu.

A retired Presbyterian minister living in Schenectady, New York, **Donald Stake** writes that he is interested in "most everything about worship," and has special experience in daily prayer, eucharist, and baptism. He maintains a blog entitled "[Twenty-first Century Liturgy](#)." Email: dwestake@aol.com.

John Stevens is also a retired Presbyterian minister who recently moved to West Sacramento, California, and has particular experience in the areas of baptism, Easter Vigil, liturgical theology, and worship education. His liturgical interests include the catechumenate and the liturgy as a living expression of our faith. His email address: stevens6695@sbcglobal.net.

We now have a member in Connecticut! **Charles Webster**, a Presbyterian minister who is serving as an interim pastor, lives in New Canaan, and has particular experience in Lord's Day worship and baptism. He is among the graduates of the PCUSA's "Pastor as Liturgical Theologian" program. His email address is: cmwebster3@aol.com.

Welcome all!



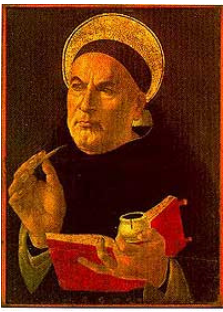
SAINT THOMAS MASS: PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION



It is Maundy Thursday at Lake Chapel of Union Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (Union-PSCE) in Richmond, Virginia, and students, faculty, and staff are gathering for weekly worship, to be followed by a community lunch. As worshipers enter the gathering space and make their way to the open chapel doors, they know something is different. There are several eye-catching prayer stations in the gathering space and in the chapel. Both spaces are candle-lit and other lighting is dim. Seminary musician Doug Brown plays quietly as people gather. The bulletin announces the Saint Thomas Mass as the format for the day's worship.¹ As the time for worship draws near, Dean of Students Edna Banes gives worshipers some orientation to the service and asks that prayerful silence be kept.

The service begins much like other worship services, with a call to worship, confession of sin and assurance of pardon at the font, the reading of scripture appropriate for Maundy Thursday, and a thoughtful homily by Professor Rebecca Weaver. The homily draws attention to the embodied reality of all of our worship and makes reference to some of the activities included in the prayer stations. Then worshipers are invited to respond to the Word by exploring one or more of the prayer stations set up in the chapel and the gathering





space. Most worshipers move quietly around both spaces and pray through foot washing, Psalm prayers with icons, embodying the Lord's Prayer, meditation while kneading bread dough, and praying with prayer beads that they make. Dean Edna Banes and Professor Paul Galbreath greet worshipers at the font for anointing and prayers for wholeness. A few worshipers enter into contemplative prayer throughout the chapel. All of this takes place in complete silence.² After almost half an hour a small procession of the eucharistic gifts, led by a resonant bell, makes its way throughout the gathering space and chapel, calling worshipers to the Lord's Table. The eucharist is celebrated with delicious homemade bread and the fruit of the vine. Worshipers are sent on their way with the invitation to return on Good Friday and Easter Monday.

We find the origins of the Saint Thomas Mass in Helsinki, Finland in 1988. This Lutheran service is named for Saint Thomas who is noted for having more questions than answers, and is aimed at those who are spiritually seeking. One of the originators, Pastor Ollie Valtonen, says "The trouble with the church in Finland is that everybody loves it and nobody goes there."³ According to John P. Wesley, pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Bowling Green, Kentucky, who has led his church to regularly offer Saint Thomas Mass, people "longed for something able to penetrate . . . the very core of one's life, the very breath that we breathe."⁴

Planning for the service at Union-PSCE began early in Spring semester in the course "Worship, Sacraments, and Education." In this course students study the history, theology, and practices of Christian worship in the Reformed tradition and the relationships between worship and education. The culminating assignment for this course is to design a congregational event or set of events that has a worship component and an educational component. Students were offered the choice of fulfilling this assignment using the seminary's planned Maundy Thursday service to organize a Saint Thomas Mass. Almost half the class agreed to undertake the planning of the service as part of their course assignment.

The planning group began by gathering to read the scripture passages recommended in the lectionary for Maundy Thursday. We spent time identifying references to embodiment and naming embodied practices that might be included in the Saint Thomas Mass. The group eventually settled on foot washing as a primary practice for Maundy Thursday and selected other practices that suited the somber mood of the occasion. Students chose prayer stations for which they had a particular interest and agreed to be responsible for that station's design, set-up, staffing, and clean-up. Groups collaborated to find or purchase needed materials such as candles, tablecloths, pictures, icon images, basins, pitchers, etc. Students outside the class were recruited where additional staffing was needed.

For the education component of their assignment, students were asked to imagine that the Saint Thomas Mass would be held in their home congregation and would be preceded by a weekly study of Christian prayer practices, practices that would be included in the Saint Thomas Mass. Each student researched the scriptural, historical, and theological background for his or her practice, and prepared a lesson plan for a two-hour youth/adult educational event. At the end of the term students shared these materials so that each student had a full set of lesson plans and an outline for the Saint Thomas Mass as presented at Union-PSCE.

Response to the Maundy Thursday service was positive, with many students, professors, and staff sending email notes of appreciation to the class. Members of the community valued the contemplative silence and inviting practices of the service. It was especially notable that anointing and prayers for wholeness at the font drew many participants, with queues of waiting worshipers extending out into the gathering space. The class had planned for musicians to play meditative music during the exploration of the prayer stations, but musician Doug Brown said that when the time came, silence seemed more appropriate, and he was exactly right! The deep silence enhanced the community's participation in prayer.

Planners of the Saint Thomas Mass at the Cathedral in Copenhagen report that fifty to seventy people participate in the planning and leadership of the mass. We at Union-PSCE found that a group of about twenty was needed to plan, prepare, and guide the service, including musicians, preacher, presider, and prayer station staff. All of the students in the planning group were pleased with the result and now regard the Saint Thomas Mass as a valuable approach to worship renewal as they move toward new ministries.

Jane Rogers Vann
Professor of Christian Education Emerita
Union-PSCE
jvann@union-psce.edu

¹"The Saint Thomas Mass is a service designed to draw persons into the presence of Christ through embodied worship practices. Patterned after services held in Europe, the Saint Thomas Mass provides a time for personal prayer and reflection, holds up the Word of God, and culminates with celebration around the Lord's Table. Please maintain a prayerful atmosphere while exploring these prayer stations."

²The original Saint Thomas Mass places the time of prayer station participation between the confession/assurance and the reading of scripture. In order to make the Maundy Thursday emphasis clear, we decided to use the prayer stations as a response to the Word.

³Lueking, F. Dean, "The Finnish Experiment," *The Christian Century*, June 2006.

⁴Rev. John P. Wesley, www.emergingworship.org/st-thomas-mass.htm.



CHOOSING HYMNS WISELY

Music has been a part of the church's worship since the very beginning, as music has been a part of human life from the very beginning. The first sound from the human voice is the sound of song—the cry of a baby – and I think it may also be one of the last sounds we make – the lament of pain, or the hopeful song of death. Melody hummed, whistled, or "la, la, la'ed" gives expression to emotions so deep within us that there are no words adequate to express them.

Through song, great sadness as well as great joy find expression. Song has the power to spur us on to action, draw us



together in common cause, embolden and encourage us, comfort and console us, and give expression to our deepest yearnings and highest hopes.

Music is a gracious gift which, over time, has the power to shape what we believe and consequently, who we are and how we live. Someone has said

that “no one ever leaves church humming the sermon” and it is true. Far more than the spoken word alone, what we sing stays with us, lodging in our hearts and minds to be retrieved consciously and sometimes quite unconsciously when needed.

John Calvin, our forbear in the Reformed tradition, wrote in his *Preface to the Psalter, 1543*: “We know by experience that singing has great force and vigor to move and inflame the hearts of men to invoke and praise God with a more vehement and ardent zeal.” But by the same token, music has the power to sway the minds of men and women in other ways as well. He warns “It is true that every bad word (as St. Paul has said) perverts good manner, but when the melody is with it, it pierces the heart much more strongly, and enters into it; in a like manner as through a funnel, the wine is poured into the vessel; so also the venom and the corruption is distilled to the depths of the heart by melody.”

Because it is such a powerful gift, the texts of the songs, hymns, and anthems which we choose for worship demand our most careful scrutiny. For, quoting Calvin once again: “If we really wish to honor the holy ordinances of our Lord, which we use in the Church, the primary thing is to know what they contain, what they mean to say, and to what end they tend, in order that their usage may be useful and salutary, and consequently rightly ruled” (*Preface to the Psalter, 1543*). “Useful” and “salutary” music may at times be a challenge these days, not because it is unavailable, but rather because there is so much inferior music being marketed to churches. Careful scrutiny of texts is especially incumbent upon pastors and musicians. For the sake of the church, choose wisely.

The first measure of worth for a musical text for worship—hymn or anthem—is its relation to the biblical text. Is it grounded in scripture? “Scripture is the basic raw material from which hymns are produced,” write Hugh McElrath and Harry Eskew. “A hymn cannot be useful unless and until it relates closely to the revealed truth about God and his mighty acts as written in the Scriptures. Therefore, the effectiveness of any hymn is measurable in large part by the extent to which it functions as a vehicle for spiritual truth.” (*Sing with Understanding*, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1980, 45).

Scripture is not only the “basic raw material” for musical texts, it is also the foundation upon which the Lord’s Day Service is constructed. When pastor and musician begin with the biblical texts for the day, even if there is not the opportunity to plan face-to-face, the probability of the music and the liturgy fitting with one another is far more likely than if each prepare for worship independently of one another. Fitting music and liturgy together is much more easily done when the pastor preaches from the lectionary. The musician then can look months, even a year ahead, in choosing anthems and service music.

In choosing hymns, first read the lessons for the day. Review the indices found in your hymnal, such as the Index of Scriptural Allusions and the Topical Index offered by the *Presbyterian Hymnal*. If the season is one other than Ordinary Time, flip through the hymns found in the appropriate section. Look for hymns that are familiar to the congregation, but don’t shy away from unfamiliar

ones. Singing what the congregation likes to sing is an important consideration, but not the most important one. Indeed, we do our people a disservice when we do not take the lead in introducing them to new texts and new musical arrangements.

While music in worship serves to edify, educate, inspire, and touch our hearts and spirits, its primary function in the liturgy is prayer. “From the first origin of the Church, this has been so, as appears from the histories. And even St. Paul speaks not only of praying by mouth; but also of singing,” writes Calvin. Remember that these are not merely songs that you are choosing; they are the prayers of God’s people. Choose with care and faith and love.

J. Dudley Weaver

Pastor, Memorial Presbyterian Church

St. Augustine, FL

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PREPARING NEW HYMNALS: A CHALLENGING ACT OF FAITH

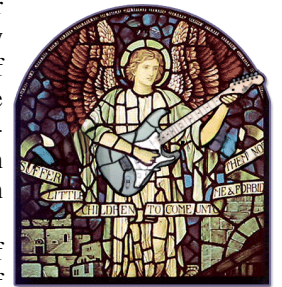
Three denominations in the Reformed tradition are currently in the process of preparing new hymnals for their churches, each hoping for release in 2013. Their previous hymnals were produced within six years of each other: the Reformed Church in America (RCA) produced *Rejoice in the Lord* in 1985; the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) the *Psalter Hymnal* in 1987; and the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) the *Presbyterian Hymnal* in 1990.

Like many other hymnals of that generation, they all benefited from the influence of the *Common Lectionary*, one of the fruits of liturgical reform coming out of the Second Vatican Council, now morphed into the *Revised Common Lectionary*. Many hymn writers connected their texts directly to Scriptures chosen for preaching. Many congregations (re-)discovered psalm singing, aided by enlarged psalter sections. Hymnals started including Scripture indexes. This was a significant new generation of hymnals.

However, there was another “explosion” of worship songs virtually ignored in denominational hymnals of the past generation: songs that arose from Western popular culture, embraced especially among youth. In addition, few songs from non-Western cultures were included.

As a way of testing the waters of these additional song sources, each of the above three denominations published supplements, incorporating new hymns in traditional metrical forms, a maturing body of songs rooted in popular culture, and songs from around the world. The CRC and RCA co-published *Sing! A New Creation* in 2001, concentrating on songs composed since 1950. In 2003 PCUSA produced *Sing the Faith* in 2003, adapting *The Faith We Sing* produced by the United Methodist Church in 2000. Leaders’ editions helped address issues of accompaniment, since many of the contemporary songs assumed accompaniment not by organ, but by keyboard, guitar, and percussion, and many songs from around the world use a whole range of instruments native to their cultures.

The Reformed tradition has always welcomed full engage-



BAPTISM IN THE REFORMED TRADITION

ment with culture. Some congregations have been slow to engage contemporary culture in their song and liturgical life. Others have left their heritage behind, opting for the immediacy of new songs that can be composed, recorded, downloaded, and projected within a matter of days or weeks. Hymnal committees must address the same cultural issues of balance facing every congregation, both those which use their denominational resources exclusively (increasingly rare) and those who have moved to a wide range of resources, both in print and on-line. With those complex cultural and technical considerations, in today's economic climate, preparing a hard-bound denominational hymnal today is an act of faith!

Hymnal committees will, of course, need to assess what to keep and what to drop from their previous hymnals and supplements. How will the psalms fare? And how will the committees determine the balance of hymn-like forms with the diversity of forms in global songs and popular contemporary genres? Is the word "hymnal" even adequate to cover the diverse ground that the committees are studying? The CRC and RCA committee working on a bi-denominational hymnal recently announced the name: *Lift*

Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs (see *Reformed Worship* 94 for the announcement, also available at www.reformedworship.org). The word "hymnal" is not there.

The PC(USA) has not yet named their forthcoming collection, but in October 2009, the Presbyterian Hymnal Committee renamed itself the Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song, "forming the cheerful acronym PCOCS (pronounced 'peacocks')," commenting that "Just as medieval painters saw in the peacock's plumage a blending of all the colors of the rainbow, so does PCOCS aim to incorporate a full spectrum of worship styles and genres into the resources it provides for the church" (www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09379.htm). At its October meeting, the committee divided into three groups in order to explore contemporary song, global song, and songs from the traditional hymnic genre.

Whatever these new collections will include or be named, there is yet one more challenge to consider: What confessional and liturgical documents will be found in these new collections? Denominational hymnals have always included more than hymns. Hymns embraced ecumenical diversity; confessional and liturgical documents addressed theological and liturgical identity. In the last generation, many excellent worship books were published separately by all three denominations, but they are rarely found in the pews. What is most needed—theologically, musically, liturgically—to provide both depth and breadth?

Ending on a personal note: My time spent as a committee member, then editor, of the 1987 *Psalter Hymnal* was one of the most educationally and spiritually rich and formative periods of my life. I hope current committee members find their work similarly rich and formative. May the resulting publications enable God's people to worship together in congregations deeply connected to their theological and liturgical roots as well as hospitably open to the diverse body of Christ today, young and old, at home and around the world.

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We arrive at an adequate understanding of Reformed baptism most easily by starting with the late medieval church and the Protestant reformation. Late medieval Christians experienced two principle dissatisfactions with the church: a wide range of church corruptions and failures, and the inability of the church to communicate directly to people how the relationship stood between themselves and God. The context for the second was the peculiar Western, medieval piety that for centuries had been penitential in the extreme, focusing on the wrath of God and the desire to avoid hell and go to heaven. Medieval theologians believed that baptism restored to us the original righteousness lost at the Fall, thus capacitating us for faith and our pilgrimage toward Paradise.



But how could anyone know whether they truly had avoided all mortal sin? How could they know they were not destined for purgatory, where souls were cleansed by the "pain of a thousand childbirths" (leave it to male theologians to conjure up that one) hoping someday to attain to heaven? No one *truly knew* how it stood between them and the wrathful God who had sent devastating pestilence, such as the Black Death (bubonic plague) of the fourteenth century, to wipe sinners from the earth.

The Protestant Reformers had a religious answer for people's anxious piety that was as powerful as it was simple: God is omni-beneficent towards us ("grace") and always acts first to accept us in Jesus Christ ("prevenient grace"). So, if we want to know how the relationship stands between God and ourselves, then we need simply trust God ("faith") and we will experience God's beneficence.

Protestant Reformers typically had three ways to express doctrinally that God's prevenient grace secures our faith: justification by faith through grace, eternal election unto salvation, and covenant. Naturally some variations occurred among Protestant theologians in all three of these doctrines, and just as naturally these doctrines were combined in various ways by different theologians. Luther tended toward justification by faith, and Reformed theologians tended toward election or covenant, or a blend of both.

When it came to thinking about the church, which continues the presence of Jesus Christ in the world, Luther, Calvin, and most Reformed traditions, believed that, strictly speaking, the church had two "marks": the Word properly proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered.

Although Christian confession and faithful living ("church discipline") appeared sometimes as another mark of the church, upon reflection even the prince of the Reformed tradition, John Calvin, known for his interest in church discipline, refused to make it a mark. Why? The church needs to be founded upon that which is absolutely unailing—the grace of God—and human faith not only waivers but, strictly speaking, cannot be seen by human eyes. None but God can see the human heart; and so, only Word and sacrament mark the church because they unflinchingly offer Christ to us. They are the "means of grace."

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are God's immediate communication of Christ; they are primarily God's action toward us. Only secondarily, as a response, does human faith evoked by God's grace play a role in the sacraments. Beginning in the 1536 edition of his *Institutes*, and consistently through the many editions of the *Institutes*, Calvin made exactly this point when he

criticized Zwingli. (Whether he correctly understood Zwingli is, of course, quite another matter.) The sacraments are primarily God's promise of grace towards us, attested to us by an external sign, and secondarily our confession made in response to such grace (*Inst.* 4.14.1). We ought not take what is secondary (our human response of faith) and make it primary (*Inst.* 4.14.13).

From this survey of church history and Reformation sacramental theology, I want now to critique the currently popular idea of baptism as initiation into the covenant community. The impulse for baptism as initiation has several sources. Protestant scholars were influenced most proximately by the Roman Catholic liturgical renewal efforts that culminated at the Second Vatican Council and in the 1972 mandating of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The RCIA, however, does not mean initiation into a covenant community but initiation ultimately into Christ himself ("the paschal mystery"), whereby the one baptized literally ("ontologically") becomes a changed person. No Protestant has ever thought that.

Added force for this mistaken borrowing from Roman Catholicism was drawn from two impulses within the Reformed tradition itself. The oldest is the Congregational tradition, which has always been (as P.T. Forsyth once commented) a blend of Reformed and Baptist traditions. Recall the theological schizophrenia that led to the 1662 "Half-Way Covenant": Children are born elect members of the covenant church by virtue of their Christian parents (Reformed idea), yet they need to have a born-again experience to become members of the church (Baptist idea) in which they are already members.

In the mid-twentieth century, the idea of adult initiation into the covenant community was taken up by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth. By late career, when he wrote the last section of his *Church Dogmatics* (IV/4), Barth had abandoned Reformed baptismal theology and avowedly taken up a Baptist perspective: He denied that baptism was a means of grace; rather, water baptism was our adult initiation into the church, *after* we had already undergone baptism by the Spirit.

Finally, from a Reformed standpoint, think for a moment about election into the covenant: If such election is eternal, then baptism cannot be initiation into that covenant since the one being baptized has always been a member of the covenant community. As we have seen, this prevenient gracious activity of God was precisely the religious point of the Protestant Reformation. We could say that baptism fundamentally means taking responsibility for covenant membership that by divine gift is already ours, but in so doing we make the mistake of which Calvin accused Zwingli: making what is secondary into what is primary.

So, here is a small—but important—liturgical suggestion. The sacrament of baptism might begin not with a description of the covenant community, nor our responsibilities for the covenant—although such conversation is crucial within the church—but with a sign-act of God's grace: Begin with Mark's narrative of the baptism of Jesus and simply say to the one about to be baptized, "From the Gospel of Mark, 'N. you are my beloved child in whom I am well-pleased.'" The minister here surrenders to the Word and through the Word becomes God's voice preveniently claiming the one about to be baptized.

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He is risen! Alleluia!

FUTURE ANNUAL MEETINGS

Make Plans now for summer 2011! Once again we will have our annual meeting on the beautiful campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dates and program information will be announced in the next edition of this *Newsletter*.

A WORD FROM THE WEB



The AR&LW Website is www.arlw.org. Be sure to visit it for the latest in our organization's information, as well as for its wonderful archive of liturgical articles.

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