

Touchstone

Volume 33

February 2015

Number 1

WHEN IN OUR MUSIC GOD IS GLORIFIED . . .

CONTENTS

Editorial	3
Articles	
Why Bach Still Matters to the Church John Derksen	11
The Symphonic Soul: Re-Engaging Hildegard of Bingen’s Theology of Liturgical Song Christina Labriola	19
“Practical” and “Experimental”: A Survey of English Language Hymnody in the Modern Age Fred Kimball Graham	26
Music in Worship: Supporting Orientation, Disorientation and Reorientation Michelle Robinson	40
Congregational Singing in the Medieval Church Nancy E. Hardy	46
From the Heart Becca Whitla	53

Profile

Sacred Feathers, or the Rev. Peter Jones (1802-1856)

Donald Smith 59

Reviews*The End of Hope — The Beginning: Narratives of Hope
in the Face of Death and Trauma*

by Pamela R. McCarroll

Harold Wells..... 67

*A Good Ending: A Compassionate Guide to Funerals,
Pastoral Care and Life Celebrations*

by David Sparks

Michael Brooks 69

Bless Her Heart: Life as a Young Clergy Woman

by Ashley-Anne Masters and Stacy Smith

Erin McIntyre Garrick 71

EDITORIAL

Sacred Music in my Life

Frequently attributed to St. Augustine is the statement that “Who sings [God’s praise] prays twice (*qui canit bis orat*).” Regrettably, this encouraging expression of the importance of sung praise cannot be found in the Augustinian corpus. What can be found in his commentary on the Psalms is this: “Who sings praise not only sings but also loves the One about whom he sings.” Perhaps this statement is even more encouraging for hymn-lovers than the one erroneously attributed! Sung praise is an indisputable song of love.

Poetry and impassioned preaching demonstrate that the spoken word can carry with it great aesthetic and affective power. But the addition of music to verbal text deepens the affective impact of the text upon the whole person. Moreover, when we are not only listening to a sung text but ourselves singing it, the symbiosis of word and music is magnified. For then the praise is the praise of our own souls and bodies. I include “bodies” because hymn-singing may be the one assured time in Protestant worship when our bodies are involved—as diaphragms expand and contract, vocal chords vibrate and heads ring with resonance. If one’s heart is in it, sung praise engages the whole person, and indeed can be an expression of love for God.

Early Influence

Aware of the shameless self-indulgence involved, yet inspired by the former CBC radio show, “Music in My Life,” this editorial is dedicated to personal reflections on the journey that has been mine with sacred music in the service of the church. Sacred music, of course, cannot be separated from faith, and my faith was early shaped by the ethos of Zion United Church in Brantford, Ontario. This church context likely reflected the faith of the United Church given expression in the 1940 Statement of Faith. The Catechism based on it was the main text of the communicants’ class that I attended in 1957. We were not expected to memorize it, but to read it and understand it. What we did memorize were Bible passages such as the Ten Commandments, the Twenty-third

Psalm, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. The main preparation for my profession of faith and reception into communicant membership, of course, was years of Sunday school classes and also the implicit instruction of the hymns we learned at the beginning of worship and in the opening exercises of Sunday school. These hymns breathed an air congenial to the generous orthodoxy of the 1940 Statement.

My earliest remembrances of hymn-singing come from the Beginner Department of the Zion Church School. There we learned to sing "Jesus loves me" and "Hear the pennies dropping." Is it too much to say that in these two hymns one can find a solid foundation, respectively, for Christian faith and for committed financial stewardship?

Sacred song is more than hymn-singing—of course. I remember, as a teenager at Zion, the ringing voice of Alice Ference, a student at the Ontario School for the Blind, as she sang "I know that my Redeemer liveth" on Easter Day. Annually at Christmas our family looked forward to bass soloist Fred Lewis singing "Sweet little Jesus boy." We call them section leads now, but the soloists of those days were raising the bar for someone whose musical appreciation was focused on Broadway musicals like "My Fair Lady" and "South Pacific," and on the Everly Brothers, the Kingston Trio and Fats Domino.

At university in Toronto, I began to listen to CBC radio, especially Bob Kerr's "Off the Record." His annual celebration of Christmas music included his comparison of the Harold Darke and Gustav Holst settings for Christina Rossetti's "In the Bleak Mid-winter." Alas, now classical music host Julie Nasrallah tells us to find all the Christmas music we want on the CBC website. Fie!

Theological study took me to Union Seminary in New York where one could tune in to "DeKoven Presents," an evening radio show recorded at Fordham University. Seymour DeKoven was a classical music evangelist, who proudly played nothing but baroque music. The splendour and scope of the world of baroque music brought astonishment and delight. Field education at Riverside Church and then at East Northport Methodist Church, as well as weekly worship in Union's James Chapel, offered an introduction to hymns like "Once to

every man and nation,” “On this day earth shall ring” (*Personent hodie*) and “Blessed Assurance.” New tunes of the U.S. context, set to texts already known, included “Nettleton,” “Azmon” and “Beecher.”

On arriving at my first pastorate in St. Paul, Alberta (1969-74), a high school student was the keyboard player for services. It was a little miracle that, after he left for university, three very able musicians appeared to enrich congregational worship. One of them directed the senior choir and led us in performing the cantatas of John W. Peterson at Christmas and Easter. Another started a junior choir and introduced us to the compositions of Natalie Sleeth (“Oh, Jonah!”). A local school teacher gave us occasional violin preludes, and a young soloist sang “I wonder as I wander” on Christmas Eve. We heard organ voluntaries (electric organ) on such pieces as Handel’s Largo. Halcyon days!

After a return to Ontario, the story has continued—in Whitevale, Port Hope, Hamilton and Toronto. I have been privileged to serve with two exceptional music directors during the course of full-time ministry. One, Brad Ratzlaff, still serving at Trinity-St. Paul’s Church in Toronto, has been exemplary in demonstrating that one can make an offering of excellence to God across a broad spectrum of musical genres. Along the way, the three official hymn books of the United Church have shaped my experience and understanding not only of congregational song but also of faith.

The Hymnary

The 1930 *Hymnary* (the dark blue book) was the source of the hymns of my childhood, youth and early adulthood. (The copy given to me by Zion Church School on the occasion of ordination still is among the books in my study.) Now almost forgotten in the church are songs learned in Sunday school opening exercises, songs that taught me trust in God and devotion to Jesus Christ: “When he cometh,” “When mothers of Salem,” “Saviour, teach me day by day,” “God sees the little sparrow fall,” and a number of others. The *Hymnary* section titled, “For Little Children” is solid evidence of the Church’s intention to care for the young by nurturing faith in them. Each Sunday, before we children left for our classes, the congregation recited the Apostles’ Creed.

As a teen I learned, and learned to love, “adult” hymns of praise like “Holy, holy, holy,” “Come thou almighty King” and “Praise to the holiest in the height,” as well as hymns that more directly warmed the heart—“Love divine,” “Make me a captive, Lord” and “O Master, let me walk with thee.” We did not turn often to “The Gospel Call” section of the *Hymnary*, and “There is a fountain filled with blood” cannot have been an appealing image to very many. However, I happily sang “Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,” “More love to thee, O Christ,” and “What a friend we have in Jesus.” Lest I forget, “muscular” hymns like “Onward Christian soldiers,” “Stand up, stand up for Jesus” and “Rise up, O men of God” were part of my nurture in the faith. One can see that the language of “marching as to war” is certainly ill advised today, but do not our human hearts yearn for a challenge to risk greatly for a great cause? At least for boys and men, this is part of the appeal of a robust faith. Lamentable extremist expression of this “masculine” trait, such as seen in Jihadist warriors, does not cancel out its importance in spiritual aspiration.

The Hymn Book

One aspect of the early years of ordained ministry in St. Paul was participation in the local Committee of Ten, studying and discussing the Anglican-United Plan of Union. In prospect of union, the two churches published jointly *The Hymn Book* in 1971. This exercise in collaboration with a church more liturgically and traditionally oriented resulted in a broadened United Church hymn repertoire. Among the enriching additions that have stuck with us through to *Voices United* are: “O come, O come Emmanuel,” “See amid the winter’s snow,” “Lift high the cross” and “I bind unto myself the strong name of the Trinity.” In contrast, hymn texts leaning too closely toward the concept of transubstantiation, such as “Now, my tongue, the mystery telling” (Thomas Aquinas!) and “Once, only once and once for all” (William Bright), may have served some Anglican congregations well, but not many United ones.

In the gap between 1930 and 1971 many new hymns were written for congregational use. *The Hymn Book* included the work of more recent and, indeed, contemporary authors. “God of grace and God of

glory” (Harry Fosdick), “I feel the winds of God” (Jessie Adams), “God who hast caused to be written” (Herbert O’Driscoll) and “Thine is the glory” are four of my favourites. *The Hymn Book* also included some calculated overtures to the then contemporary moment. Do you recall them? —“Jesus is the man,” “Sing we of the modern city,” “God of the eternal now” and “Man is now a race of travellers.” Those were the days, of course, when a camp leader might open a prayer with “Good morning, God!” Now these intentionally “relevant” hymns seem dated and have been dropped from our repertoire. Even the rousing “Sons of God” failed to gain a place in our current canon, perhaps because of aspects of exclusivity in the text. Other lively hymns like “I danced in the morning” and “The church is wherever God’s people are praising” have had enough enduring merit to be included in it.

Many congregations and worship leaders found *The Hymn Book*, with its inevitable compromises in selection, too staid and limiting. Moreover, new hymns kept appearing, and a supplemental hymnal, *Songs for a Gospel People*, was published in 1987. Indicative of the vitality of the hymnody in it are Ron Klusmeier’s “Praise to the Lord,” Gordon Light’s “She Flies on,” Walter Farquharson’s “Walls that Divide,” Fred Kaan’s “Worship the Lord,” the Strathdees’ “God, we praise you for the morning” and Jim Manley’s “Part of the Family.” Two encouraging new hymns celebrating the journey of faith were included—“We are pilgrims” and “Lord Jesus, of you I will sing.” Old chestnuts, heretofore not included in official United Church hymn collections, are present for the first time, including “How Great Thou Art” and “Great Is thy Faithfulness.” This collection, intended by its compilers to reflect the diversity of the faith community, proved extremely useful in broadening the scope of our hymn repertoire. Perhaps no United Church hymn resource has had a greater percentage of its included hymns actually used in congregational praise.

Voices United

With the failed project of church union behind us—and almost forgotten—the current hymnal of the United Church, *Voices United (VU)*, appeared in 1996. Its virtues are many. It has restored the Psalms

to an identifiable and integral place in what is assuredly the people's worship book. It adopts the precedent of *Songs for a Gospel People* in setting texts within the music staves. This not only makes the singing of harmony more practicable, but also symbolizes the coupling of word and music that defines hymnody. *VU* also provides worship planners with a good selection of affirmations of faith and Communion settings, and a fulsome and very helpful set of indices.

As is the case with any new hymn book, *VU*'s most important contribution may be that it updates the repertoire, making the latest generation of hymns widely available. Among the new inclusions are hymns from around the globe; among my favourites are those from Latin America, such as "Jesus, you have come to the lakeshore" and "*Santo, santo, santo.*" While subjectivity certainly is involved and while each of us will have his or her own list of favourites, some of the new songs that I list as "keepers" are: "You, Lord, are both lamb and shepherd" "I am the light of the world," "On eagle's wings," "We are pilgrims," "One bread, one body," "God the Spirit, Guide and Guardian," "In the bulb there is a flower," and "God is my shepherd."

I do regret the loss of some hymns from previous repertoire. On my "missing" list are: "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (a brilliant Epiphany hymn—left out, I have heard, through oversight); Samuel Johnson's "City of God" and John Newton's "Glorious things of thee are spoken" (hymns of the church triumphant); "Thy kingdom come" and Chesterton's "O God of earth and altar" (hymns of the church militant); and "Hark a herald voice is sounding" and "A stable lamp is lighted" (Advent/Christmas hymns). Is it mere nostalgia, or is there enduring significance in the witness of such hymns?

More Voices

Already meeting the challenge of the continuing evolution of hymnody and the composition of new hymns is a supplement to *VU*, cleverly titled *More Voices*. In it are moving invitations to communion with God, such as those coming from Taize ("*Ubi caritas,*" "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*") and the Iona Community ("Take, O take me as I am"). Strong evocations of the Kingdom are found in "My soul cries out" (Canticle of the Turning)

and “Draw the circle wide.” On the other hand, there are inclusions like “Deep in our hearts” where the focus seems to shift from praise of God and of God’s work in and through the community of faith to praise of the spirit of the community itself.

The Ordering of Hymn Collections

In a signal departure from past practice, both in the United Church and its antecedent denominations, *VU* orders its collection by placing hymns of “The Christian Year” first. *The Hymnary* and *The Hymn Book*, as well as the *Methodist Hymn Book* (1917) and the *Presbyterian Book of Praise* (1918), put the praise of God first, beginning with hymns to the Holy Trinity, followed (for example in the *Hymnary*) by “God in Creation, Providence and Redemption,” “Jesus Christ” and “The Holy Spirit.” While hymns found under the heading of the Christian Year all may resound with praise of God, including with reference to the trinitarian Persons, this ordering seems odd in a Protestant book of praise. Perhaps it is a result of the shaping influence of the Revised Common Lectionary with its thorough-going observance of the Christian Year.

Changing patterns of worship also had an effect on *The Hymn Book* of 1971. Its ordering principle reflects the shift in what was then becoming the standard order of worship in the United Church. *The Book of Common Order* (1936) had just been replaced by *The Service Book for the Use of Ministers* (1969). The new *Service Book* reversed the order of precedence in *Common Order* by making the primary order of service one in which the sermon was placed, not last in the service, but earlier, to be followed by the offering and the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession as responses to the proclamation of the Word. The emerging new liturgical pattern of Approach, Word and Response is reflected in the title of the first half of the *The Hymn Book* collection, “Hymns in the Order of Worship.” Then follow the sub-headings, “Drawing Near to God,” “Learning about God,” and “Responding to God.” “Drawing Near to God” of course was constituted by hymns of praise to the triune God. The remainder of *The Hymn Book* collects hymns under the titles, “Sacraments and Other Acts,” “Times of Worship” and—last—“The Christian Year.”

In consulting a number of hymnals for this editorial, I was intrigued to find a difference between the 1918 *Book of Praise (BOP)* and the 1917 *Methodist Hymn Book (MHB)* that reflects some stereotypical images that we still may carry of Presbyterian and Methodist approaches to sung praise. Above each hymn in the *BOP* is a Scripture quotation from which the hymn takes its warrant and that it presumably exegetes. Above each hymn in the *MHB* is the name of a tune and the hymn's metre. As well, in the left-hand margin of the hymn text are musical signs of guidance (such as *mf* or *mp*, *dim* or *cr*) indicating how the sound of the singing was to be shaped. Clearly, scriptural warrant was the more important criterion for Presbyterians, while the singing itself was for Methodists. Perhaps today's almost unfettered freedom of composition renders the matter irrelevant, but it appears that *VU* reflects the relative ascendancy of the Methodist approach to hymnody in the United Church. In any event,

When in our music God is glorified,
and adoration leaves no room for pride,
it is as if the whole creation cried
Hallelujah!

If you hadn't guessed, this number of *Touchstone* is dedicated to the theme of sacred music. It includes stimulating accounts of the continuing importance of two musical theologians—J.S. Bach and Hildegard of Bingen—as well as an instructive overview of English-language hymnody in the modern era, an assessment of congregational song in the middle ages and an exposition of the transformative influence of music in worship. The complementary character of artistry and calling are explored in "From the Heart." The profile is on Peter Jones, the first person of Aboriginal blood to be ordained in the Methodist Churches in Canada. Three reviews complete the number. To all the authors who have thus contributed to our theme I extend my thanks.

Peter Wyatt

WHY BACH STILL MATTERS TO THE CHURCH

by John Derksen

When I was an undergraduate, I discovered the world of Johann Sebastian Bach's church cantatas. I was hooked, and directed a classmate to a particularly stirring recording. After listening to the entire cantata, he removed his earphones and said, "That's enough to make a God-fearing Christian out of you!"

Bach might have been pleased with that response. When he moved to Leipzig in 1723, one of his many duties was to provide a cantata for most Sundays in the church year. These compositions, roughly twenty to thirty minutes in length, comprised a series of solos, ensembles, recitatives and choruses for voices and instruments, with texts based on the eighteenth century Lutheran lectionary. In Bach's hands, the cantata became a persuasive musical sermon. Based on themes from the Scripture readings, Bach's cantatas were in fact enhanced preaching; the music gave life, power and theological perspective to the text. Its placement in the St. Thomas liturgy underscored the important role of the cantata in proclamation; the gospel reading was followed immediately by the cantata, the creed and the sermon.¹

Bach was remarkably well equipped for the task. This consummate musician was not only biblically literate; he also was thoroughly acquainted with the theological writings of Martin Luther, whose understanding of music as the handmaid of theology undoubtedly informed Bach's understanding of his own vocation.

In the foreword to Georg Rhau's 1538 *Symphoniae iucundae*, a collection of polyphonic vocal music, Luther made some far-reaching and influential observations about music and its relationship to the Word of God:

I truly desire that all Christians would love and regard as worthy the lovely gift of music, which is a precious, worthy, and costly treasure given to humankind by God.

The riches of music are so excellent and so precious that words

¹ Robin Leaver, "The Mature Vocal Works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, ed. John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 88.

fail me whenever I attempt to discuss and describe them. In short, next to the Word of God itself, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our thoughts, minds, hearts, and spirits.

When human natural musical ability is whetted and polished to the extent that it becomes an art, then do we note with delight the great and perfect wisdom of God in music, which is, after all, God's product and God's gift; we marvel when we hear music in which one voice sings a simple melody, while three, four or five other voices play and trip lustily around that voice and adorn it wonderfully with artistic musical effects, thus reminding us of a heavenly dance, where all meet in a spirit of friendliness, caress, and embrace.²

For Luther, theology and music were closely linked. Especially striking in this passage is the place of honour he reserved for music as a sophisticated, polished art. These views decisively influenced the course of Lutheran church music for centuries, and they provided the context in which Bach and his predecessors developed their own theological approaches to musical composition.

Because Luther was both a theologian and a fine composer, he was able to draw analogies from both disciplines that are illuminating and memorable. For example, he used music to explain the relationship between law and gospel. The notes on the page, he said, are law; the performance is gospel.³ This comparison invites further reflection. We might observe that music does not exist apart from its performance. The printed notes are not music, but a set of instructions, which, if followed, result in a musical performance with all the potential for grace and beauty that the composer, the maker of the instructions, envisioned. Further, not all necessary information is conveyed in the score; much is left to the insight and inspiration of the performer, and, just as a performance will sometimes depart in some details from the printed

² Martin Luther, "Preface to Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae Iucundae*," in *Liturgy and Hymns*, Vol. 53 of *Luther's Works*, ed. Pelikan et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 320.

³ Robin Leaver, "Music and Lutheranism," in *Cambridge Companion to Bach*, 41.

score for artistic reasons, or because of human fallibility, so too there is freedom, but not licence, in the gospel.

By the eighteenth century, when Bach went to Leipzig, it had become customary for preachers to have thorough training in music, and for musicians to be trained in theology. Cantors such as Bach would have been expected to teach not only music, but also catechism and foundational theology to their young students. How theologically informed was Bach? Two examples of his dealings with core Lutheran doctrines suggest that he was knowledgeable indeed.

In the *Kyrie* movement of the F major *Missa Brevis*, Bach provides us with an astonishing interpretation of trinitarian theology. The music, following the text, is divided into three sections, and is scored for three vocal parts and orchestra. Each section is a fugue, a compositional technique where all the voices are equal, distinct in function and profoundly interdependent. Moreover, the melodic material for each voice is derived from the same theme or subject. One might say that all three voices are of one substance.

The fugue in the second section, *Christe eleison*, is one whose subject is a mirror inversion of the first fugue subject. Where the melody of the first fugue went up, this one goes down, and vice versa, rather like the relationship of trees to their reflection in a lake. This musical construction, the second subject begotten of the first, and a perfect image or mirror reflection of the first, is itself a reflection of Colossians 1:15: Christ is begotten of the Creator and is the very image of God.

In the final section, both the original and the inverted versions of the fugue subject appear in what turns out to be a double fugue, and we are reminded of the Nicene Creed's formulation: the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. All three voices participate in all three fugues and their distinctive subject material. It is an astonishing representation of the profoundly mysterious dynamic and economy of the Trinity.

We might wonder what Bach's congregation thought about music such as this. Were they perceptive enough to make these theological connections? Bach enriches the texture further by introducing a tune which his congregation would have been sure to recognize. Interjected into each fugue, the horns sound a section of Luther's tripartite German

Agnus Dei: Christe du Lamm Gottes. We are reminded that Christ, the Lamb of God, gives us the most complete idea we can have of who God is and what God is like. The plea for mercy in the chorale resonates with the petition in the Kyrie, but now it also looks forward to Communion when the congregation will sing the hymn together as part of the liturgy.

At the heart of Luther's understanding of God's dealings with humanity is the theology of the cross, a theology that also informs Bach's musical/theological thinking.⁴ For Luther, the Creator is revealed most fully and graciously not through outward blessings, but in the lowliness of suffering. God becomes known to us and blesses us through our sharing in the sufferings of Christ. It follows that, if the cross, the most evil act in the world, can be subverted to good, then other evil can be subverted to good also.

In the context of Luther's theology of the cross, Bach's treatment of death in the cantatas becomes explicable. If suffering and death are subverted by Christ's death and resurrection, then death becomes life, sunset becomes sunrise, endings become beginnings, what is dreaded becomes welcomed. Bach's Cantata 161, "Come, sweet hour of death" is a meditation on these very reversals and paradoxes.

The cantata begins with an alto aria, accompanied by gentle recorders playing in reassuring and comforting parallel thirds and sixths: "Come, sweet hour of death, in which my spirit dines on honey out of the lion's mouth. Make my departure sweet; do not delay, final light, so that I may kiss my Saviour" (my translation).

The text references Samson's riddle, "Out of the eater came something to eat; out of the strong came something sweet."⁵ The answer to the riddle is that Samson, having killed a lion with his bare hands, returns to the carcass some time later and discovers a honeycomb, which he eats. In the same way, the cantata text implies, death, the feared and final enemy, is vanquished in Christ's resurrection, and now yields blessing. From the mouth of death and fear, we taste the sweetness of the beatific vision. This is faith looking steadfastly past the final terror.

⁴ Heino O. Kadai, "Luther's Theology of the Cross," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 63, no.3 (1999):177-183.

⁵ Judges 14:14, NEB.

The aria begins as a conversation between the gentle recorder duet and the bass line, soon joined by the contralto. Inserted into this texture, the organ plays the tune Bach uses repeatedly in his Passion settings; in our tradition, we associate it with the text, "O sacred head, now wounded," a meditation on Christ's passion. By incorporating this melody Bach fleshes out the theology of the cross, making explicit the reference to Christ's suffering as a way of understanding our own. Christ has been this way before us. Out of the terror and evil of his death came salvation for the world. If this is the way God works, how can we doubt that God also will bring blessing out of our own pain?

Bach came to Leipzig in the aftermath of a religious awakening.⁶ This awakening resulted in the re-opening of disused churches, increased numbers of services at each church and flourishing expressions of personal piety. In the midst of these developments, the people of St Thomas' mourned the death of their elegant, learned, but old-fashioned cantor, Johann Kuhnau. Church authorities made it clear that they wanted up-to-date music from a famous, modern musician such as Telemann, whom they knew from his student days in Leipzig.⁷

When Telemann turned them down, and their second choice, Christoph Graupner, was vetoed, the position went to J.S. Bach. Not only was the music he subsequently provided for the Leipzig churches contemporary and engaging, but it was also theologically and biblically well informed. Bach engaged his listeners with music that powerfully projected the text, full of delight for their ears and challenge for their intellect. He often quoted Lutheran hymns, which the congregation would have known well, and frequently brought the congregation into the action by inserting congregational hymns into larger works.

It is not surprising that when we hear Bach's church music, we think of its creator as a man of deep religious faith, totally committed to his vocation. Such assumptions are documented already in the mid-nineteenth century. Bach was seen as the genius who laid his great art at the altar of God, and dutifully and steadily produced cantatas throughout

⁶ Günter Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig*, tr. Bouman et al. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 39-48.

⁷ Stiller, 195.

the whole of his twenty-seven years in Leipzig.

This widely accepted view was seriously undermined in the mid-twentieth century. The 200th anniversary of Bach's death, marked in 1950, gave impetus to a great wave of Bach research. The application of scientific criteria to the dating of Bach's church cantatas led to the astonishing conclusion that Bach wrote the bulk of his 200-plus cantatas in the first five years of his residency at Leipzig. Friedrich Blume provoked a storm by suggesting that Bach, perhaps as a result of conflict with church authorities, lost his sense of vocation, and thereafter regarded the job in Leipzig from a more strictly professional point of view.⁸ Blume, along with other scholars, also suggested that perhaps Bach was not an exceptionally religious man, and that he regarded cantata composition as one of the more onerous parts of his job, therefore putting forth a great effort to get it out of the way so that he could devote himself to more rewarding professional interests.

Then in 1969 the world became aware of the existence of Bach's personal copy of the Bible, three volumes containing over 400 marginal notes, emendations and underlinings in Bach's own hand.⁹ Clearly, Bach knew the Bible extremely well. There are corrections of printing errors, as well as marginal comments. This marginalia makes clear that Bach was indeed a man of religious faith. Robin Leaver suggests that what Bach lost was not his faith in God, but his faith in the Leipzig officials who neither understood nor appreciated him.¹⁰

In reading about this momentous discovery, I noticed that a number of Bach's notations were in the Old Testament books of First and Second Chronicles, and I wondered what could possibly have attracted Bach's interest. To me, the books of Chronicles had always seemed a sanitized version of stories told better by other writers.

What particularly drew Bach's attention, however, were the accounts of David's organization of temple worship, in which musicians

⁸ Gerhard Herz, *Essays on J.S. Bach*, Vol. 73 of *Studies in Musicology*, ed. George Buelow (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 151, 163.

⁹ Herz, *Essays*, 158-163.

¹⁰ Robin Leaver, ed., *J.S. Bach and Scripture: Glosses from the Calov Bible Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 15.

played an extremely important part. We learn that the musicians were both priests and Levites (both clergy and musicians, if you like); the priests played the trumpets while the Levites sang and played other instruments. The temple choir, numbering 288 singers, was both mixed and intergenerational.¹¹ The instrumental musicians, reputedly numbering four thousand, had status; like the priests, they were dressed in ceremonial linen. They lived at the temple, free of menial duties of any kind, because they worked in shifts; musicians needed to be available for liturgical duty night and day. Clearly, music was considered essential for worship.

Musicians were even deemed to have political and military influence. In one astonishing story from Second Chronicles, we are told that an alliance of foreign armies had breached Judah's borders and were about to attack. After prayer and fasting, Judah's king sent out the army—preceded by the temple choir! Inexplicably, the foreigners, in mass confusion, disposed of one another, leaving Judah's army to mop up and collect the spoils.¹²

The central account of music's power in the service of worship comes in the description of the dedication of Solomon's temple, a passage that attracted Bach's particular attention.

Now when the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had hallowed themselves without keeping to their division), all the levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and their kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, stood with cymbals, lutes, and harps, to the east of the altar, together with a hundred and twenty priests who blew trumpets. Now the trumpeters and the singers joined in unison to sound forth praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and the song was raised with trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise of the Lord, because "that is good, for his love endures for ever"; and the house was filled with the cloud of the glory of the Lord. The priests could not continue to minister because of the cloud, for the

¹¹ Heman's fourteen sons and three daughters all sang with their father in the choir (1 Chron. 25:6).

¹² 2 Chronicles 20:21-30.

glory of the Lord filled the house of God.¹³

In this remarkable passage, we see a perfect unanimity between musicians and clergy. The priests and the musicians were all alike dressed in linen—the clothing of liturgy and service. Together they played and sang as one, and in this united, perfect, liturgical moment, the presence of God was made manifest. In the margin beside this account, Bach wrote, “When devotional music is heard, God is always present with his grace.”¹⁴

Now this is not history as we understand it. The books of First and Second Chronicles were written long after Solomon’s temple had been destroyed, and the people carried away into captivity. These narratives were written after the exiles had returned to rebuild the temple and reclaim the land. Perhaps this account represents a vision of the ideal, a vision of integrated worship that may never have been realized, in a temple existing only in the imagination and the hearts of the faithful.

Still, my thoughts return to Bach as the hero and the model of church musicians. Struggling with a lack of official support, there could never have been enough time, or resources, or musicians with the talent to realize what he regarded as a “well-appointed church music.” But the music he provided for his modest performers and his intermittently attentive congregations never lost that vision of the ideal—of the perfect union of music and theology, singing and preaching, in service to God’s people, and for God’s glory.

In the same way, we church musicians and clergy seek to remain alert to the Spirit in the everyday realities of our life in the church. Amidst the disheartening grubbiness of out-of-tune reeds, absent singers, miserly budgets, distracted colleagues, unprepared instrumentalists, pathetic misunderstandings and ungracious human encounters, we stand together in our linen, among God’s people, focusing to hear in our hearts and our minds, and then striving to make real, that perfect harmony that fills the house with a cloud of glory and brings heaven to earth.

¹³ 2 Chronicles 5:11-14.

¹⁴ Leaver, *J.S. Bach and Scripture*, 97n42.

THE SYMPHONIC SOUL: RE-ENGAGING HILDEGARD OF BINGEN'S THEOLOGY OF LITURGICAL SONG

by Christina Labriola

Symphonialis est anima. The soul is symphonic. (Hildegard of Bingen)

The legacy of the twelfth-century saint, Hildegard of Bingen, known as the Sibyl of the Rhine, continues to inspire admiration and awe in those who encounter her today. Whether one first meets her as Hildegard the mystic (who experienced and documented visions from God), Hildegard the abbess (leader of her Benedictine community and founder of new convents), Hildegard the poet and composer (whose ethereal chants and compelling texts are being rediscovered and performed anew), Hildegard the theologian (among whose key concepts are *viriditas*, the greening power of creation, and *sapientia*, feminine Divine Wisdom), Hildegard the natural healer (skilled in medieval science and natural medicine), Hildegard the political advisor (who corresponded with religious and secular leaders of her day) or Hildegard the inventor of her own symbolic language (used by herself and her community of nuns, the *lingua ignota*), she seldom fails to arouse our curiosity and fascination.

Today, Hildegard's music is the gift for which she is perhaps best known and loved. She is remarkable as the first composer to whom we can securely attribute a body of work, and the composer of the first liturgical morality play. Steeped in the practice of the daily liturgical office, she composed and sang in the context of the communal prayer and worship of her community. She regarded music to be absolutely central to worship—the pinnacle of prayer, capable of uniting heaven and earth, inspiring moral conversion and lifting the soul up to contemplation of the divine. By engaging Hildegard's music and the theology undergirding it, we can challenge and broaden our own concepts of the place and potentiality of music in Christian liturgy and life.

Hildegard's Music as Prophetic Voice

Hildegard's liturgical chants are gathered into two large-scale collections: the *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* (*Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*), a cycle of antiphons, sequences, responsories and hymns, and the *Ordo virtutum* (*Order of the Virtues*), her liturgical morality play. As in all of her theological writings, Hildegard understands her music to have a prophetic or teaching function, arising from her multi-sensory visionary experiences and embodying her mystical sensibility. She appeals to God's inspiration, often stressing that she is unschooled as a composer of chant, and calling her compositions "revelations." Her texts are highly imagistic and metaphorical, composed in what might be called "free verse" Latin, freely alluding to ecclesiastical and biblical symbols and images. Like her texts, her musical style is idiosyncratic—melodically free and florid, employing a very wide vocal range and re-using motifs in ingenious ways.

Hildegard's musical corpus is itself a testament to the central place that music holds for her in a life truly centred on God. For Hildegard, praise is musical by its very nature, and the eternal life Christ offers is, so to speak, one of unending harmony. Her sacred songs often employ musical metaphors, which in themselves reveal what music embodies in her theological outlook. For instance, her *Laus Trinitati* (*Praise to the Trinity*) (No. 26)¹ depicts the triune God as the source of all music and life, into the resounding symphony of whose life all beings are caught up. The music of the Trinity is echoed back by the praise of the angelic host. The song itself joins its singers with that praise:

To the Trinity be praise!
God is music, God is life
that nurtures every creature in its kind.

¹ These examples are drawn from Barbara Newman's excellent and thorough edition of the *Symphonia*, complete with introduction, translations and commentary: *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* [*Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*] (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 142-3; 122-5. I have used Newman's poetic (rather than her literal) translations, which beautifully capture the spirit of Hildegard's words.

Our God is the song of the angel throng
and the splendor of secret ways hid from all humankind,
but God our life is the life of all.

Again in *Ave Generosa (Hail, High-born)* (No. 17), Hildegard references music twice. The first instance, an address to Mary, refers to Christ's incarnation and birth as the birth of all heavenly harmony, recalling the song of the angels in Luke's nativity. The second assigns to the church the privilege and responsibility of joyfully proclaiming this mystery through a resounding harmony.

And your womb held joy when heaven's
harmonies rang from you,
a maiden with child by God,
for in God your chastity blazed.

...

Ecclesia, flush with rapture! Sing
for Mary's sake, sing
for the maiden, sing
for God's mother. Sing!

In Defence of Liturgical Song

The theology manifest in Hildegard's musical compositions resonates in her prose writings. One sees this, in particular, in a letter composed by Hildegard in correspondence with the prelates of Mainz. She wrote as the result of a bitter controversy in the last year of her life over an apparently excommunicated man whose body had been buried at her convent at Rupertsberg. When Hildegard refused to exhume the remains, the ecclesiastical authorities placed an interdict on the convent. In effect, the nuns were forbidden to receive the sacraments or to sing the divine office, which now would have to be merely recited aloud.

Hildegard was horrified. To be deprived of the life-giving sacraments and of musical praise, so central to monastic life, was devastating. Never one to give up without a fight, however, Hildegard sprang into action. She wrote her impassioned letter, begging the authorities in Mainz to reconsider. In arguing for the necessity of music

in the specific circumstance of a monastic community, she speaks to the universal significance of the mystical nature of music and its centrality to a life of prayer and virtue. In particular, the letter attests the ways in which liturgical music is related to *paradise*, *prophecy* and *praise*.

1. *Music reminds us of paradise.* For Hildegard, music is equated with the celestial songs of the angels, whose entire existence is devoted to the praise of the Almighty. She re-imagines the story of the Fall in musical terms:

[W]e recall that [humankind] needed the voice of the living Spirit, but Adam lost this divine voice through disobedience. For, while he was still innocent, before his transgression, his voice blended fully with the voices of the angels in their praise of God. Angels are called spirits from that Spirit which is God, and thus they have such voices by virtue of their spiritual nature. But Adam lost that angelic voice which he had in paradise, for he fell asleep to that knowledge which he possessed before his sin, just as a person on waking up only dimly remembers what he had seen in his dreams . . . For before he sinned, his voice had the sweetness of all musical harmony. Indeed if he had remained in his original state, the weakness of mortal [humankind] would not have been able to endure the power and the resonance of his voice.²

Singing is proper to human beings, an innate and sublime gift suitable for praising the Creator. Though through dissonance of sin we have lost “the angelic voice,” we can retain some measure of the intimacy with God our first parents enjoyed when we make music to God, and so participate once again in the song that unites heaven and earth. Hildegard recognizes that the “soul is symphonic”—musical according to its nature. This explains why music of great beauty inspires in us a

² Joseph L. Baird, *The Personal Correspondence of Hildegard of Bingen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 158-9.

profound longing. “Sometimes a person sighs and groans at the sound of singing, remembering, as it were, the nature of celestial harmony.”³

2. *Music is associated with prophecy.* As a visionary and a prophet, Hildegard understands her music and teaching to have their source in God. Like the biblical prophets, she is chosen to be God's mouthpiece, conveying God's words to educate and to bring about conversion. God's truth is communicated to humanity in a particularly powerful way through the medium of music. Hildegard regards the gift of music in human life as an inspiration of the Spirit, who seeks to draw us back and teach us about divine, inward mysteries through outward things we can hear, see and touch. Music is a prophetic gift, in word and tone alike speaking to our hearts:

And so the holy prophets, inspired by the Spirit which they had received, were called for this purpose: not only to compose psalms and canticles (by which the hearts of listeners would be inflamed) but also to construct various kinds of musical instruments to enhance these songs of praise with melodic strains. Thereby, both through the form and quality of the instruments, as well as through the meaning of the words which accompany them, those who hear might be taught . . . about inward things, since they have been admonished and aroused by outward things. In such a way, these holy prophets get beyond the music of this exile and recall to mind that divine melody of praise which Adam, in company with the angels, enjoyed in God before his fall.⁴

While the texts of a musical composition address us on an intellectual level, the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic elements of the music communicate to us on emotional and spiritual levels, in mysterious and transformative ways. The Spirit uses music as a conduit to teach the whole person.

³ Baird, 161.

⁴ Baird, 159.

3. *Music is the perfection of praise, the rightful duty of the church.* As we saw in the *Symphonia*, Hildegard likens the incarnation of Christ to the birth of all celestial harmony. Here, she takes up this image once again to draw a compelling parallel: just as the Spirit planted Jesus in the womb of Mary, so the Spirit also rooted the seed of all musical praise in the womb of the church:

Consider too that just as the body of Jesus Christ was born of the purity of the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Spirit, so too the canticle of praise, reflecting celestial harmony, is rooted in the church through the Holy Spirit.⁵

In this sense, musical praise is the church's birthright, God-given. She goes on to explain the kind of musical praise to which we are called—one of a rich and all-embracing harmony that unites body and soul, joining inward devotion and outward expression:

The body is the vestment of the spirit, which has a living voice, and so it is proper for the body, in harmony with the soul, to use its voice to sing praises to God. Whence, in metaphor, the prophetic spirit commands us to praise God with clashing cymbals and cymbals of jubilation [cf. Ps. 150.5], as well as other musical instruments . . . because all arts pertaining to things useful and necessary for [humankind] have been created by the breath that God sent into [the human] body. For this reason it is proper that God be praised in all things.⁶

For God to be praised in all things requires a harmonious balance of prayer and righteous living, if we are to follow the injunction of the psalmist and let our lives be musical: “Praise [God] with sound of trumpet: praise [God] with psaltery and harp . . . Let every spirit praise

⁵ Baird, 160.

⁶ Baird, 160-1.

the Lord [Ps. 150:3-5].”⁷ This music should be an expression of the music of “the living voice” of our spirits.

Hildegard's Wisdom for Today

The song of rejoicing softens hard hearts. It makes tears of godly sorrow flow from them. Singing summons the Holy Spirit. Happy praises offered in simplicity and love lead the faithful to complete harmony, without discord. Don't stop singing.⁸

Hildegard of Bingen reminds us that music *belongs* at the heart of the liturgy—not as fulfilment of a merely decorative function, but as a reflection of the “symphonic” nature of the soul itself, and as a perfection of the praise due to the Creating, Redeeming and Sanctifying God. The music of our liturgies should arouse us from sluggishness and complacency, and reorient us, body and soul, towards God. As the Body of Christ, we are graced and charged with mirroring and re-echoing the celestial harmony here on Earth. Furthermore, the embodiment of the musical principle of harmony in the Christian life is not only a metaphor, but also a practice of the power of the music we hear, sing and play to mould us and redirect us; to body forth into the present a measure of the divine music we recall and anticipate. In embracing Hildegard's theology of music, we can learn more and more to cherish music as a precious gift in our lives and liturgies, profoundly connecting us to *paradise, prophecy and praise*.

⁷ Baird, 158.

⁸ From Hildegard's *Scivias*, quoted in Carmen Acevedo Butcher, *St. Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor of the Church: A Spiritual Reader* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2013), vi.

“PRACTICAL” AND “EXPERIMENTAL”: A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE HYMNODY IN THE MODERN AGE

by Fred Kimball Graham

When introducing his “Large Hymn Book,” John Wesley described *A Collection of Hymns* (1780)¹ as “a little body of experimental and practical divinity.” For our ears today, *experimental* means *experiential*. The songs he offered were for those who *experience* a spiritual awakening, and who *practise* Christian living. Hymns used by worshipers who followed the writings of Martin Luther, John Calvin, as well as John and Charles Wesley and their successors, provided then, and still provide, opportunity for all members of the church to practise the “priesthood of all believers.” Hymns enable the faithful to enunciate Good News both personally and memorably, responding with body and soul to the words of poetry wedded to melody. In the act of hymn singing, congregations “do theology.”

Reformation Foundations

In sixteenth-century Germany, the Reformation was soon characterized by the singing of “chorales,” a term derived from the Latin for “chant.” Fuelled by the authorship and leadership of Luther himself, a small hymn collection was available within seven years of the posting of the 95 Theses. Some chorales adapted the movements of the Mass; the *Gloria in Excelsis*, for example, put on the vernacular to become *Allein Gott in der Hoh’ sei Ehr* (“To God on high be all glory and honour”). Similar chorales accommodated and exegeted the theological tenets inherent in the *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*. In the usual German pattern, the tune name replicated the first line of the song’s text. A different and freer genre emerged for the Proper of the Mass, Daily Prayer and the Psalms. Of the latter, Psalm 46, rendered as *Ein’ feste Burg* (“A mighty fortress”), was indicative of Luther’s efforts to make the Psalter accessible to the people.² A third category was related to the

¹ *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist* (London, 1780).

² Paul Westermeyer, *Let All the People Sing* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2000), 58.

church year. The Latin Advent hymn, *Veni Redemptor Gentium*, was translated (and paired with a simplified tune) as *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* ("Now come, Redeemer of the world"). Hymns also were created for use with the catechism and the Lord's Prayer. These oft-repeated and thorough recitations of beliefs and theologies strengthened the knowledge and convictions of those who sang them. The strands of faith were woven through daily life, even to the extent that, until the nineteenth century, those performing the midnight watch on the walls of medieval towns sang chorales as a sign of civic well-being.

The Reformation in Switzerland in the sixteenth century produced the churches known as "Reformed." In terms of music, the reform in Geneva saw the development and regular use of metrical psalms in worship. Rejecting much of Roman Catholic worship as idolatrous, John Calvin, the chief reformer in Geneva, and earlier a colleague of Martin Bucer in Strasbourg, held that only Scripture, mainly drawn from the Book of Psalms, was worthy to be sung in worship. From the *Strasbourg Psalter* of 1539 through to the *Genevan Psalter* of 1562, worshipers had access to all 150 psalms in metrical verse. To these were added the Ten Commandments and biblical canticles such as the Song of Simeon. The French translations were supplied mainly by Clément Marot (d. 1544) and Calvin's successor, Théodore de Bèze (d. 1608). Their musical collaborator was Louis Bourgeois (d. ca. 1561). Use of these settings spread to the Netherlands, Great Britain and elsewhere in Europe. Many reformers had spent time as refugees in Geneva during times of severe repression (such as during the reign of England's Roman Catholic Queen Mary, 1553-58); when they returned home they took with them not only Calvin's theology but also Geneva's metrical psalms. In England, the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* came into widespread use among Puritans following the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558.

With Protestantism relatively secure, 1562 became a signal year in Britain for metrical psalmody; in that year what was commonly called the *Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter* was published. Its full title is revelatory of the Puritan spirit: *The Whole Book of Psalms Collected into English Metre by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins and Others. Conferred with the Hebrew; Set forth and Allowed to be Sung in all*

Churches, of all the People together, before and after Morning and Evening Prayer; and also before and after the Sermon; and moreover in private Houses, for their godly Solace and Comfort: laying apart all ungodly Songs and Ballads, which tend only to the nourishing of Vice, and corrupting of Youth.

In the following century, the Sternhold and Hopkins collection became known as the “Old Version” when it was superseded by the collection edited by Nahum Tate (d. 1715) and Nicholas Brady (d. 1726), whose publication of 1696 became known as the “New Version.” It contained freer paraphrases of the Psalms, an approach that did not receive universal acceptance, especially in the established Church of England. From this collection, we in the twenty-first century recognize titles such as “As pants the hart” and “Through all the changing scenes of life.” The edition of 1708 included tunes at last, most memorably St. Anne for Watts’ paraphrase of Psalm 90, “O God, our help in ages past,” as well as Hanover for “Ye servants of God.”

Continental Pietism

Meanwhile on the continent, as the seventeenth century unfolded, Lutheran hymn poetry began to reflect the personal as well as the doctrinal and theological. Pietist authors countered formality and ecclesiastical control in worship with hymns recounting and cultivating personal religious experience.

Paul Gerhardt’s text, “Jesus, thy boundless love to me,” later translated from the German by John Wesley,³ is a prime example of this more evangelical piety, eighty years ahead of the Evangelical Revival in Britain and the efforts of the Wesley brothers. Another example of poetic evolution in this century is the text of the Passion Chorale, “O sacred Head, sore wounded,” again from Gerhardt (d. 1676). Here, the affective impact of aspects of the crucifixion are highlighted: “thorns” and “crown,” “abuse” and “scorn,” “pain” and “dying.” Those who sing the text are not mere onlookers but participants in the drama, feeling their

³ See *Voices United: The Hymn and Worship Book of The United Church of Canada* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1996), 631. Hereafter *VU*.

own “transgression,” imploring Jesus to embrace them as his forever. In the final stanza, there is a transfer of the identification with the crucifixion scene to the hour of one’s own death in the request, “Be near when I am dying.”

In 1641, Georg Neumark (d. 1681) wrote in this same style of personalized and intimate reflection. After experiencing a rash of deaths in his family he expressed a continuing theology of hope, “. . . God will give strength, whate’er betide you,” found in the hymn, “If you will trust in God to guide you.”⁴ He supplied his own tune a few years later, which J.S. Bach used a half century later for a full cantata.

The Emergence of Hymns Freely Composed

After the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, the spiritual descendants of the Puritans and all who resisted the re-establishment of a state church governed by bishops became known as Dissenters. These included Presbyterians, Independents (Congregationalists), Baptists and Quakers. Eminent among the Dissenting hymn-writers was Independent Isaac Watts (1674–1748). Watts challenged the sole use of metrical psalmody, advocating newly composed but scripturally inspired hymns, as well as paraphrases that were freed from the strictures of the original psalm.⁵ He also placed a devotional emphasis upon sacramental life, as revealed in his third volume of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, under the sub-title, “Hymns Prepared for the Lord’s Supper.”

Watts writes with clear images, while balancing rhetoric and theological views,⁶ his style marked by an economy of words. For him, faith was a matter of clear vision, as found in “Give me the wings of faith to rise within the veil, and see the saints above.” He also wrote specifically under the title *Hymns and Spiritual Songs to be used in Worship*, indicating his goal of re-invigorating congregational life. His collection, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*, is regarded as a turning point in the development of English-

⁴ See *VU* 286.

⁵ See J. Richard Watson. *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 133ff.

⁶ Watson, 141.

language congregational song. Previously, authors had been meticulous in keeping the paraphrases of biblical texts as literal as possible. Compare, then, the paraphrase of Psalm 98 in the Tate and Brady “New Version” of 1696, “Let therefore earth’s inhabitants their cheerful voices raise,” with Watts’ version, “Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth receive her king.” He also transformed Psalm 72 into “Jesus shall reign.” For Watts, Christ’s incarnation was the golden thread running through all biblical interpretation and theology. He was intentional about “accommodat[ing] the book of Psalms to Christian Worship.”⁷

Watts, of course, was author of what is arguably one of the greatest hymns ever written, “When I survey the wondrous cross.” Based on Galatians 6.14,⁸ these verses trace the events of the crucifixion and the profound emotive response of the Christian to it. Poetic skill is evident in memorable images and in the placement in close proximity of contrasting images like “gain” and “loss,” “contempt” and pride.”⁹ In the years following the breakthrough of Watts, other Dissenters took up the task of writing new texts, including Joseph Addison with “The spacious firmament on high” (turning Isaac Newton’s science into poesy), and Philip Doddridge with “Hark the glad sound!”—one of the first hymns to mention “the humble poor.”

The Wesleys and the Eighteenth Century

Both ordained in the Church of England, John and Charles Wesley had intended to set the practices of their church on a firmer evangelical basis, not to found a new church. During their missionary voyage in 1735 to the Carolinas, they had formative contact with Moravians from Herrnhut, and developed a sympathy for Pietist thought. This is reflected particularly in John’s translations of 35 German hymns learned on the trip, including “*O Gott du Tiefe sonder Grund*” (“O God, thou bottomless abyss”). In contrast to Luther’s setting of law and gospel in tension, if not opposition, the Moravians espoused an appreciation of

⁷ George Burder, ed., *The Works of the Reverend and Learned Isaac Watts, D.D.* (London, 1810), iv. 118, quoted in Watson, *The English Hymn*, 154.

⁸ “But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross.”

⁹ See Watson, 167.

“law and works” alongside gospel salvation. The Wesleys were to adopt this theological perspective in contradistinction to Luther’s.

Wesleyan hymn poetry is characterized by an understanding and appreciation of the great poetic works of Herbert and Milton in the previous century. Younger brother Charles wrote poetry long before his conversion experience; his early verse was usually intended for the devotional use of individuals, rather than as hymns to be sung. Later in life he was to speak only of “hymns.” The Wesleys also had a thorough familiarity with the ancient biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek, not to mention the content of the Bible. It has been suggested that, should the Bible ever be lost, it could be reconstructed from the corpus of the Wesley hymns! Their hymns reveal gospel in every text, treating the events of the Old Testament as adumbrations of the Christ event, providing a christological interpretation of the First Testament.

In phrases like “all-atoning Lamb,” “all-redeeming Lord” and “Lover of all souls,” as employed by Charles Wesley, we encounter the Wesleyan understanding that salvation is available not simply to an elect circle, but to all humankind. The couplet, “Come sinners to the gospel feast. Let every soul be Jesu’s guest,” indicates their view of God’s will for the salvation of every soul. God’s unceasing love for all humanity is sometimes contrasted with the struggles of the faithful follower to know God even through life’s adversity. “Come, O thou Traveller unknown” (1742) so treats the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel. Phrases such as “With thee all night I mean to stay, And wrestle till the break of day . . . through all eternity to prove Thy nature, and Thy name is Love . . .” point to Wesley’s attempt to reflect “on how we all struggle to know the name and essence of the one previously unknown: God.”¹⁰

The evangelical spirit continued to spread in the eighteenth century, emphasizing grace and personal salvation, and aided by hymns that were popularized as “forms of new worship.” Instead of the controlled renditions available in the “Old Version” or the “New Version” paraphrases of the Psalms, the new bywords became

¹⁰ See Teresa Berger, *Theology in Hymns? A Study of the Relationship of Doxology and Theology according to A Collection of Hymns for the People Called Methodist, 1780* (Nashville: Kingswood Books/Abingdon Press, 1995), 95ff.

enthusiasm, devotion and biblical awareness.¹¹ Augustus Toplady's "Rock of Ages, cleft for me" juxtaposes the saving power of God with the utter weakness of humans. The narrative from Exodus 33 is linked to the rock that is Christ himself, issuing forth water and blood. The same story of the rock, foreshadowing the freeing of Christians through the Christ-event, is also found in William Williams' "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah." Here the typologies are understated, encouraging the singer to make the links: "bread of heaven" with both manna in the wilderness and the living bread (John 6); "crystal fountain" with both the striking of the rock by Moses and the healing stream in Christ.

The Nineteenth Century

As the nineteenth century dawned, hymn singing was becoming more generally accepted in Britain, and hymn-writing became less specific in describing personal feelings and biblical references. In "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty," Anglican Bishop Reginald Heber (1783-1826) directed the imagination of worshippers to a vision of transcendent Majesty. The focus of hymns was no longer simply on human sin and salvation, but also on adoration of God and God's providence.¹² Hymn texts clearly show religious inspiration leading to an offering of praise, and that experience leading to a life of prayer.

James Montgomery, "the Christian psalmist,"¹³ contributed significantly during this era; in his paraphrase of Psalm 72, we find David's prayer for Solomon transformed into "Hail to the Lord's anointed."¹⁴ Montgomery links God's work in creation and redemption together in lines such as "Angels from the realms of glory . . . ye who sang Creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth." He invites us to see the Incarnation as both a pivotal historical event and a contemporary encounter. "God with man is now residing, yonder shines the infant's Light."¹⁵ *Emmanuel*. Elements of romanticism are woven through his

¹¹ Watson, *The English Hymn*, 265.

¹² Watson, 303.

¹³ Watson, 305.

¹⁴ See *VU* 30.

¹⁵ See *VU* 36.

poetry, as seen in “Go to dark Gethsemane,” where, in an intimate vision, the singer is invited to “view the Lord of life” and “watch with him one bitter hour.” Moral imperatives relating to human experience take their place in the religious poetry of the era, and the dutiful response implied assumes a spiritual dimension.

John Keble (d.1866), well known for his leading role in the Oxford Movement, published *The Christian Year* in 1827, a collection of hymns organized on the basis, and celebrating the events, of the church year. He considered “the glorious art of Poetry” as “a kind of medicine divinely bestowed upon man.”¹⁶ We see signs of this medicine in hymn phrases like “Blest are the pure in heart,” with its calm reverence and quiet; and, in sentiments such as “new mercies each returning day/hover around us as we pray” in “New every morning.” As a leader of the Anglo-catholic reforming movement, Keble also turned to ancient hymns, translating one from St. Basil as “Hail gladdening light of his pure glory.” Other ancient hymns were reclaimed through the work of John Mason Neale, who published his own set of translated hymns in the 1850s, and contributed more than sixty pieces to the collection found in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (hereafter *Hymns A&M*) of 1861.

The Victorian Hymn

Since the mid-1700s hymn-singing had been viewed as an indicator of Dissent,¹⁷ but the practice was creeping rapidly into every worship gathering. The religious presses were humming, the Methodists leading the way. In 1780, Wesley’s *Collection of Hymns* contained 525 hymns; the 1804 edition with supplement had 551; the 1831 version had 769. In 1833 alone, ten new hymnals and supplements appeared in England.¹⁸

The productivity of writers, the foment of the Oxford Movement, the reclaiming of ancient hymns (see below) and the spread of education

¹⁶ See Keble’s *Lectures on Poetry, 1832-41* (Oxford, 1922), i. 22, quoted in Watson, *The English Hymn*, 327.

¹⁷ See Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn* (Philadelphia: the Presbyterian Board of Education, 1915), 497.

¹⁸ A range of Methodist hymn books, for example, may be viewed at www.hymns.faithweb.com/methodist.

and schools all combined to set the stage for the publication of *Hymns A&M* (1861), the most comprehensive hymn collection in the English language to this date and “indisputably the representative book of Victorian hymnody.”¹⁹ Scholars and worshippers began to place high value on ancient and medieval practices and texts, and J. M. Neale excelled at mining the hymns of both the Latin and Eastern Churches. Numerous translations admitted the singer to the progression of the church year, and deepened appreciation of the communion of saints, the vision of the heavenly city and a well-defined christology.

Coming into use after 1865, and sung to this day, are hymns such as “Jerusalem the golden” (*Hora novissima*), “O what their joy” (*O quanta qualia*), “Of the Father’s love begotten” (*Corde ex natus*), “Sing my tongue” (*Pange lingua*), “Come, Holy Spirit” (*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*) and “Christ is made the sure foundation” (*Angularis fundamentum*). Neale’s goal was to counter hymns of personal piety with hymns bearing the stamp of the church’s authority. He allowed that “collections with no authority” had come into use, whereas the ancient hymns “have a depth and fullness of meaning which cannot be expected in other hymns.”²⁰ The spirituality in these revived texts was clear: pray; honour the Trinity; offer praise; retell the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; anticipate joy in heaven.

These principles overflowed into the eruption of composition that led to the publication of *Hymns A&M*. It contained inspired pairing of tunes with texts, such as Eventide for “Abide with me” and Nicaea for “Holy, holy, holy.” The enlarged edition of 1868 contained fifty additional general hymns, as well as hymns for Evening, Easter, Holy Communion and For the Young. The Church of England was discovering hymns and hymn singing! It witnessed the rise of the “triumph hymn” with themes as seen in “Soldiers of Christ arise” and “Onward, Christian Soldiers,” in no small part promoted to encourage support for the established church and the influence of the British Empire in the world. In 1863 *The Chorale Book for England* had

¹⁹ See Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), I, 301.

²⁰ J.M. Neale, *A Short Commentary on the Hymnal Noted* (London: J. Masters, 1852), iv-v.

appeared, edited by W. S. Bennett and Otto Goldschmidt, containing great German hymns from the time of the Reformation. It had followed the publication of *Lyra Germanica*, Catherine Winkworth's translation of hymns by Paul Gerhardt, Joachim Neander, Philip Nicolai and others into nicely cadenced English. *Hymns A&M* won out in appeal and popularity, however. Other churches hastened to produce their own collections: the Baptists in 1879, Congregationalists in 1887, Primitive Methodists in 1886, and so on.

During this first hymn explosion female writers were accepted as contributors, making lasting additions to the repertoire. Cecil Frances Alexander was prolific, with "All things bright and beautiful" (as a reflection on the first article of the Apostles' Creed), "Once in royal David's city" and dozens more. Some of the poetry contained unfortunate expressions of class distinction and dismissal of the place of children, resulting in the omission of such verses in today's hymnals. "Christ is pure and holy; little children must be holy too" did not long survive scrutiny. Frances Havergal, an early supporter of the Y.W.C.A. movement, wrote now familiar texts such as "Lord, speak to me" and "Take my life," revealing enthusiasm for the Christian life and commitment to the evangelical mandate of the church.

Elsewhere in the English-speaking World

The same tensions experienced in the seventeenth century in the U.K. occurred in North America in the eighteenth, namely, struggles between singing metrical Psalms only and also singing hymns. The *Bay Psalm Book* dominated song selection in the eastern U.S.A. until the arrival of Watts' *Psalms of David* and his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. Following the American Revolution, new denominations sprang up, and each soon had its own hymnal to convey its doctrine, song heritage and theological approach. The Methodist Episcopal Church alone had more than a dozen hymn collections published between the death of Wesley in 1791 and the appearance of its first comprehensive collection with music in 1876.²¹

²¹ See Carlton Young, ed., *Companion to the United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), for an overview of the succession of hymn collections.

The American moral high ground was expressed in poetry treating the Moral Law, Freedom, Truth and Faith in God. “It came upon a midnight clear,” published in 1849 and presenting the message of the angels, was a clear call for social cohesion in a time of unrest. Its author, E.H. Sears, saw the Incarnation as the starting point of peace “o’er all the earth.” Also mirroring the Christmas story as a message of peace was “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” by Phillips Brooks (1868), written for children in his parish in Philadelphia. Hymns in the U.S.A. began to address the evils of slavery and the mandate of freedom for all. James R. Lowell²² wrote “Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide” in 1849; however, it was published only in 1905. Its lines summon worshippers to trust in God’s decisive action in history and to commit themselves to God’s liberating work. In 1861, Julia Ward Howe penned “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” as part of the struggle for the abolition of slavery and as assurance of God’s truth marching with the armies of the Northern States.

Meantime, the missions of Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey advanced a new evangelicalism, and their followers purchased *Sacred Songs and Solos* in the thousands. The writings of Fanny Crosby (Frances Jane van Alstyne, 1820-1915) were popularized through this revival movement, and remained in the hearts of North American Christians through much of the twentieth century as they sang “All the way my Saviour leads me” and “Blessed Assurance.”

The Twentieth Century and Growing Social Conviction

In the decades leading up to the turn of the century, the repertoire as presented in *Hymns A&M* formed the core of English language hymnals. However, in 1903, the Methodist Frank Mason North published “Where cross the crowded ways of life,” reflecting his experience in the restless and needy city of New York, a pioneer effort in spreading concern about cities, and a yearning for the new Jerusalem. In 1906, the *English Hymnal* appeared, sweeping away Victorian favourites and personalized hymns, turning to multiple social concerns, indigenous poetry and

²² Watson, *The English Hymn*, 476.

religious expression, and re-examining the tenets of Eastern and medieval ideas of heaven. “Be thou my vision” appeared in translation by Mary Byrne, outlining the strength of Christ (as armour, shelter, tower) and the inner qualities of life in Christ (wisdom, light, heart).²³ Edmond L. Budry’s text, “Thine is the glory/*À toi la gloire,*” was published in 1884 but not translated until 1924 for English use, providing an anthem for celebration of the resurrection of Christ. However, during the chaotic 1930s and the war-torn 1940s, hymn writing reached a comparatively low ebb.

By the 1960s, several new translations of the Bible were available, old social and economic patterns were disappearing, world travel was changing and many new hymn writers entered the scene. Around 1945 G. B. Caird wrote “Not far beyond the sea” (unpublished until 1962) as a reflection on what had been said in 1620 to the Pilgrim Fathers prior to sailing, and imprinting the message that “you have more truth and light to break forth from your holy word.”²⁴ In 1961, Sydney Carter wrote “I danced in the morning when the world was begun,” describing the presence of Christ in the creation of the world, and imaging his ministry through to his resurrection as dance. “We turn to you”²⁵ was written by Fred Kaan, a Congregationalist minister, in honour of United Nations Sunday, calling for peace with justice, wisdom in government and more international understanding.

Still on a note of social concern, Fred Pratt Green wrote “For the fruit of all creation”²⁶ not only to mark harvest thanksgiving, but also to invite worshippers to recognize that after successful harvest there needs to be provision for the “hungry and despairing.” He also is author of “When in our music God is glorified,” based on both Psalm 150 and Mark 14.26, inviting all the faithful to join in a united “Hallelujah!” Brian Wren, a minister of the United Reformed Church in the U.K., but resident for many years in the U.S.A., wrote “I come with joy” as a

²³ J. Richard Watson, ed., *An Annotated Anthology of Hymns* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 382. (Hereafter *AH*.)

²⁴ See *VU* 281.

²⁵ See *VU* 685.

²⁶ See *VU* 227.

communion hymn in 1968, tracing one's coming to Christ for forgiveness, and joining together in a shared meal before returning to the world in service. In a world of changing uses of theology and language, Wren has twice revised his poetry.²⁷

Into a New Century

The Two-Thirds World has begun to share songs with the West, reversing the historic “missionary flow” of hymns. Faith strengthened by the light of justice features in *Siyahamba* (“We are marching”) from South Africa. John Bell and the Community of Iona have mediated the publication of songs new to the Western world: *Uyai mose, tinamate Mwari* (“Come, all you people”) from the pen of I-to Loh is regularly published and sung. As the list of writers in our day grows ever longer, the list of topics addressed—political, social and theological—extends far beyond what was previously known. The song of the people is being returned to the people.²⁸

To lead current worshippers to sing in “practical” and “experimental” ways, contemporary minds are creating texts that may enter the core repertory for the decades to come: from the Community of Taizé, short songs such as “Wait for the Lord”; from Mary Louise Bringle, “Sharing Paschal bread and wine” and “When memory fades and recognition falters”; from Carl Daw, “O day of peace that dimly shines through all our hopes” and “We have come at Christ’s own bidding”; from Ruth Duck, “Spirit, open my heart” and “Wash, O God, your sons and daughters”; from Sylvia Dunstan, “Go to the world” and “You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd”; from Walter Farquharson, “Though ancient walls” and “Homeless people, will you listen?”; from Shirley Erena Murray, “God of freedom, God of justice” and “Come and find the quiet centre”; and from Jaroslav Vajda, “Before the marvel of this night.”

Just as did the great hymn writers of centuries past, so the theological poets and poetic theologians in the late twentieth century and

²⁷ Watson, *AH*, 381- 417 passim.

²⁸ See Michael Hawn, *Gather into One* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 221f.

Do You Want to Write for *Touchstone*?

Touchstone welcomes submissions from new authors. Articles should be approximately 3000 words in length and should be submitted at least two months before publication. Each issue includes a feature with fresh themes. The themes of the upcoming numbers are:

June 2015: Theological Foundations for the Social Good²⁹

(marking the 90th anniversary of The United Church of Canada)

October 2015: The Sacramental Life

February 2016: The Image of God in Humanity (Christian Anthropology)

2017: 500th Anniversary of Luther's 95 Theses

A profile of important United Church figures, or of figures influencing United Church people and ministries, is included in each number. Profiles also usually are approximately 3000 words in length. The profile editor is Prof. Sandra Beardsall, who can be reached via sandra.beardsall@usask.ca. Each number also contains book reviews, normally no more than 800 words each. The book review editor is Prof. Donald Schweitzer, who can be reached via don.schweitzer@usask.ca.

Touchstone uses the Chicago Manual Style, Canadian spelling and footnotes. A summary style sheet is available on the *Touchstone* websites, www.touchstonejournal.ca, www.touchstonecanada.ca or from the editor.

Please let the appropriate editor know that you are interested in writing an article, profile or review.

²⁹ John Wesley's "Directions for Singing," quoted in *VU*, 720.

MUSIC IN WORSHIP: SUPPORTING ORIENTATION, DISORIENTATION AND REORIENTATION

by Michelle Robinson

Before entering ordered ministry I was a music therapist. Part of my work involved leading group sessions with individuals whose lives had been disrupted in some way. They had been on a particular course with lives moving in a continuous line, the kind of line you might draw on a piece of paper with a felt-tipped marker, when an unexpected jolt forced the marker right off the page. It was the moment when the chair tipped over, the vase broke, the façade cracked; when all pretenses, coping mechanisms and insulation were stripped away, leaving the person bare to the bone. Physically, emotionally and spiritually dislocated, they were no longer certain if, or where, they belonged.

These “exiles” came together in a music therapy group. They wrote songs about their experiences and courageously sang them. In the music they found something of a common language and emotional space that was able to hold them and their experiences. Music making became an act that named their despair and embodied a future hope. It gave flesh to feelings and thoughts, and individuals started to imagine how it might be possible to walk through a boneyard and still find life.

My previous work as a music therapist has remained influential as I serve a United Church congregation and plan weekly worship, especially as I consider the use of music. Both music therapy sessions and worship services follow a particular format or pattern. In music therapy the pattern involves: i) the establishment of rapport (using familiar music and matched energy levels), ii) a musical encounter (challenging and encouraging change), and iii) a closing (preparing to leave the musical space and integrate the experience). The structure of a worship service is not dissimilar: i) Gathering, ii) Confession¹ and the Word, and iii)

¹ Confession is included here as part of the second movement of worship because it most authentically and safely takes place (in my opinion) *after* a time of gathering (building rapport). Confession is part of the journey of lament (cf Psalm 38:14-20), an admission of our common humanity and of the chaos and grief we feel due, in part, to our own actions or inaction. In hearing the Word, we are invited to recognize ourselves *and* the movement of God’s grace. This second movement of worship is deep work that holds out the possibility of transformation.

Response in thanksgiving, commissioning and benediction. While these two contexts are very different—worship is not therapy—both use music to facilitate relationship and transformation.

Walter Brueggemann has observed that “each of God’s children is in transit along the flow of orientation, disorientation and reorientation.”² The people who come to worship on any given Sunday will include those whose lives are in balance, those who have had the marker knocked off the page and those who are finding their way back again. Orientation, disorientation and reorientation make up the pattern of our lives. This threefold hermeneutic also describes the movement of the biblical narrative. Where our lives and the biblical narrative interact—in worship—the same threefold movement exists. From prelude to postlude, music plays a particular role in establishing rapport (orientation), giving voice to questions, confusion, even despair (disorientation), and proclaiming hope for the future (reorientation).

A Relational View of Music

The nature of music in worship is relational, not performance-oriented. In a worship service, music offers a deeper dimension of participation to the worshiping community³ and facilitates dialogue.⁴ Voices and hearts are lifted to God in praise and lament, and the community listens to what the Spirit resonates back. It is a dialogue of sounding and receiving.

Music is used well in worship when there is no distinction between “performer” and “congregation,” but where all join together in a relational dynamic of give and take, vocalization and response. For it to be any other way is to amplify spurious divisions between participants and bystanders, between those with musical expertise and those without, between those whose sacred songs reach God’s ears and the realm of angels, and those whose untrained squawks cause God’s eyes to roll. Music fulfills part of its function in worship when it enacts the belief that all “are one in Christ Jesus.”

Nicholas Wolterstorff maintains that almost all music serves a social

² Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms: Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit*, Second Edition (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2007), 3.

³ James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 112.

⁴ Gary A. Furr and Milburn Price, *The Dialogue of Worship: Creating Space for Revelation and Response* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 1998), 42.

function and that church music functions to serve the liturgy.⁵ In worship, music does not stand alone, but is used to enhance the various actions of liturgy, fitting appropriately with the emotional tone and theological understanding of each action. Music serves the liturgy by supporting the movement of the worship service. Viewing that movement in terms of orientation, disorientation and reorientation, I wish to briefly examine the role of music in each situation.

Orientation

Orientation is about being “well-settled.”⁶ At the beginning of worship people seek rapport, a sense of safety and reassurance that makes them feel “at home.” Familiar moments are what enable people to feel included in an event as part of a whole.⁷ Worship is no exception. Before any words are spoken, music can create a “containing space.”⁸ In the context of music therapy, a containing space refers to a metaphorical-interpersonal-musical space where one feels safe enough to engage in meaningful experiences. In worship, I consider the containing space to exist as a type of sanctuary-inside-the-sanctuary that provides a sense of safety and familiarity for those gathered. Music helps build this at the outset of worship through the prelude, introit and opening hymn.

Recently, a visitor attended Sunday worship at our church and following the visit, much to my surprise, sent an e-mailed report of his experience. His correspondence included notes about the prelude: “No pipe organ here, but the top of the line electric, and the woman organist a well-known local musician . . . She played improvisations of familiar nature hymns. One could see some of those who were gathered lip-synching the words as she played.”⁹ The “familiar” hymns of the prelude

⁵ Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, “Thinking about Church Music,” in *Music in Christian Worship*, ed. Charlotte Kroeker (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 8.

⁶ Brueggemann, 3. Brueggemann describes the qualities of orientation, disorientation and reorientation as they are encountered in the Psalms.

⁷ Mercédès Pavlicevic, *Groups in Music: Strategies from Music Therapy* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 75.

⁸ Deborah Salmon, “Music Therapy as Psychospiritual Process in Palliative Care,” *Journal of Palliative Care*, 17, No. 3 (2001):142. Salmon describes the containing or sacred space in the music therapy context as the interrelationship among therapist, patient and music. It is a safe space that music helps create, allowing for meaningful experience, transformation and self-transcendence.

⁹ Personal communication, August 2014.

engaged people in worship before the service proper had begun.

Of course, choosing music for any group is a complicated process because of the various social, cultural, historical and personal associations of music.¹⁰ This is where knowing the context of the congregation and worship environment is important. Music that might be familiar in one context could be brand new in another (something that many ministers doing pulpit supply have discovered after choosing unfamiliar hymns for a congregation.) Additionally, it is unavoidable that, within a particular congregation, a piece of music might be well known to one person and completely unknown to another. The consideration of familiarity is not about catering to preference, but discerning what music will best establish rapport; i.e., does the music “bring the worshiper comfortably into the worshipping experience?”¹¹

Finally, at the risk of pointing out the obvious, communal singing is itself an orienting act that connects us with our neighbours and turns us toward God in heart-felt praise. Congregational singing is aptly placed at the very beginning of worship. Singing unites individuals, through beat and breath, into one body “filled with the Spirit . . . singing and making melody to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18b-19).

Disorientation

Predictability and familiarity make us feel comfortable; yet most of us live a good part of our lives in circumstances that are anything but. One has only to turn on the news to find evidence: war, acts of terror, illness and disease, economic uncertainty. As well, we have our own private losses, failed relationships, disturbing diagnoses and recurring fears with which to contend. Worship invites us to express these realities, voicing our sadness, anger and questions to God. Not articulating them overlooks our humanity and provides an insincere worship experience that risks being monotone in mood and emotion, devoid of authentic relationship.

Because music contains within it a “morphology of feelings,”¹² with its tensions and resolutions, crescendos and diminuendos, harmony and

¹⁰ Pavlicevic, 71.

¹¹ Charlotte Kroeker, “Choosing Music for Worship” in *Music in Christian Worship*, ed. Charlotte Kroeker (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 200.

¹² Quote attributed to Suzanne Langer in Mercédès Pavlicevic, *Music Therapy in Context: Music, Meaning and Relationship* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1997), 30.

dissonance, it naturally lends itself to the gamut of human experience that includes disorientation. Disorientation is confession and lament; a plea for mercy and a demand for divine response; an experience of both our wound-making and wounded-ness. In disorientation, we are in the wilderness, shedding tears by the rivers of Babylon and near the cross: “O God, why are you silent?”¹³

Scholars of church music have commented that much of our hymnody lacks songs that express grief, anger or lament. Hymnologist Bert Polman writes, “If you look at an average modern hymnbook, that whole important phenomenon of lamenting before God in faith is largely missing.”¹⁴ Hymn writer John Bell reflects, “There is a true sense in which we are in danger of seeing the depths of sorrow, anger and confusion lost from our singing.”¹⁵

In our own hymnal, *Voices United*, lament is not a category in the index of topics (though it does list discouragement and doubt as themes). *More Voices*, a supplementary resource published later, links confession and lament in a section titled “Confession, Lament, and Healing.” Even so, hymns of lament and confession (disorientation) remain limited in our hymnbooks as a whole. This has implications for our theology since it is shaped by what we sing. Singing solely in the “major key” can teach the gathered community unintentionally that discourse with God is one-dimensional—which, needless to say, is not substantiated by the biblical witness. The music of the church must express, regularly and thoughtfully, a broad and true-to-experience range of testimony.

Whether through a minor key, blue note, tri-tone or descending chord progression, music has the ability to mirror our disorientation and disrupt our security. In artful form it turns us toward the pain as well as the joy of the world. It reverberates within us (privately and collectively) in those places that hold our deepest sighs, where the Spirit intercedes and breaks open our hearts.

Lament is needed. John Bell observes, “There is a very true sense in which, if we are not enabled to cry, ‘How long?’ we may never be able to

¹³ Hymn #73, *More Voices*. Words by Marty Haugen.

¹⁴ Bert F. Polman, “Forward Steps and Side Steps in a Walk-Through of Christian Hymnody,” in *Music in Christian Worship*, ed. Charlotte Kroeker (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 62.

¹⁵ John Bell, *The Singing Thing* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2000), 26.

shout ‘Hallelujah.’”¹⁶ Like the disciples who expressed their grief to the Stranger on the road to Emmaus, we too express our lament to God who at times feels strange to us, and with that articulation—recognition!—something happens to our disorientation.¹⁷

Reorientation

We sing our laments on the long walk of our journey but we do not make them our home. After the deep work of encounter in a music therapy session we would use music to “put people back together” before they entered the world again. It was not to return to life as usual, but with a new perspective in light of what had been expressed and received together. Music in worship can function similarly. As the worship service comes to a close, music can reorient the congregation anew to God’s hopeful presence and activity in the world. Reorientation is orientation in a modulated key.

Sonorous sound, confident chords and a steady tempo that neither rushes nor drags send people out into the world with a sense of possibility, even if what is possible does not yet feel at hand. No timidity here. With our songs of praise and thanksgiving we sound aloud how God does not leave us in chaos and despair. God hears our cries and makes all things new (cf. Psalm 30:1-2). We sing, proclaiming with all the saints what God through Christ is doing. It is the tune of hope that we continue to hum all the way to the parking lot and into our week.

Conclusion

Music is profoundly personal and interpersonal as it gives voice to celebration and suffering, able both to lift and to break our hearts. As we, the worshiping community, engage in musical dialogue and sing in faith, we are united as pilgrims on a journey of orientation, disorientation and reorientation. Thoughtful use of music in worship offers the opportunity (and responsibility!) of establishing rapport, giving voice to despair and proclaiming a future hope even though, in the end, it is not what we do, but what God does through us that reverberates authentically.

¹⁶ Bell, 28.

¹⁷ Walter Brueggemann makes the point that expressing disorientation is a way of “putting off the old humanity so that the new may come” (Eph. 4:22-24); and that in voicing our complaint to God and expecting a response, “something happens to the disorientation.” Brueggemann, 11.

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

by Nancy E. Hardy

Music, especially singing, has long been associated with people's deepest aspirations and feelings, and this has been evident from the earliest days of the church. When the disciples gathered in the upper room for a last meal with Jesus, they sang a hymn before going out to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30, Mark 14:26). Since singing was common at meals in ancient cultures, hymns were probably sung at meetings of house churches as the early Christians ate together, or met for prayer and praise. In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul tells the new Christians: "Be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts" (Eph. 5: 18b, 19). The Letter of James advises, "Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise" (James 5:13).

Early Centuries

In the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the Christian Church flourished and enjoyed a golden age of worship. The diary of Spanish nun Egeria, who travelled to and stayed in Jerusalem between 381 and 384, makes it clear that the liturgy for services was well established, and that congregational singing was an important part of the liturgy. She records her delight with the Easter vigil, in which the "bishop and all the people entered with hymns," and mentions congregational singing that was "very pleasant and admirable"¹ during the vigil itself.

This important period in the history of the church is represented by hymns still in use today. From Prudentius (348-413), comes *Corde Natus ex Parentis* ("Of the Father's love begotten"), while from Ambrose of Milan (340-397), we have *Veni Redemptor Gentium* ("Saviour of the nations, come"), hymns sung in both Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches.

The Medieval Church

The medieval church was not a uniform entity that presented one face and

¹ Louis Duchesme, "Egeria's Description of the Liturgical Year in Jerusalem," in *Christian Worship* (London, 1923). <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~mikef/durham/egetra.html>.

one viewpoint to the world. It was set in an era that encompassed about one thousand years (from 500 to 1500 CE), and lived its calling in a huge geographical area (mainly what is now continental Europe) that was the scene of wars, plagues, chaos and confusion, and of a desire to find order in the midst of upheaval. The church was in turn a place of devotion, superstition, political intrigue, excess, corruption and reform. Music in the medieval era was intrinsically bound up with the development of the liturgy within the church and of secular song outside the church.

As someone with a particular interest in church music and congregational song, I find the medieval church intriguing. How did the use of music in that church help people draw closer to God's mystery, or hinder them from doing so? Was its primary purpose only to support the liturgy? Or could music, especially hymnody, also be a vehicle for Christian formation, devotion and theology?

The Chant: Liturgical Foundation of the Medieval Church

We begin with the humble chant. With the ascension of Gregory I to the papal throne in 590, control of liturgical music was taken over by Roman authority; the use of Roman chant in worship became the standard. (Later, the chants became known as Gregorian chants.) The chant, a single, unaccompanied line of melody with a Latin text, became a symbol of the unity of believers. Its melodies had a limited range, rarely exceeding an octave, and were accessible for any voice, trained or untrained. It provided, in other words, not only a perfect symbol of Christian unity, but also a perfect opportunity for congregational participation. In addition, the custom of antiphonal singing arose, in which a leader would sing a verse (later two), and the congregation a refrain.

The singing of psalms in worship was primary. Hymnologist Paul Westermeyer has remarked that "the Psalms are the womb of church music. They are not only the hymnal of the Old Testament and the songs of Israel . . . [for] the Church has continually gravitated to the Psalms for the ground of its song."² The use of psalms set to Gregorian chants seemed to have assured congregational participation in the liturgy and elsewhere, as people sang psalms and canticles in church, and then often carried the memory of the melodies outside the services, frequently

² Westermeyer, *Te Deum*, 23.

transforming them into secular songs, particularly love songs.

What happened, then, to discourage the laity from singing in church?

From Elaboration to Exclusion

What happened was that the simple, singable chants changed. This, of course, didn't happen overnight, but over the course of five hundred years or more. The simple, homophonic (one line), unaccompanied chant became a complex, polyphonic composition, sung by choirs, leaving the average worshipper listening rather than singing.

The changes began with *tropes*, written in great numbers between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries. These were amplifying or explanatory phrases inserted into the liturgical text. So the chant, "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us," became "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world [*Who art made holy, that Thou mayest purify the acts of humankind*], have mercy on us." At first, the new words were made to fit the notes of a section of the original chant, but later tropes were set to newly composed music.

The most important type of trope was the *sequence*, which began as an insertion of text and music into an existing piece and then developed independently; it was often used as an extended reflection on a feast or season of the church year, and set between readings of the epistle and the gospel. In addition to the newly composed tunes and interpolation of texts, the desire to adorn the chants led inevitably to the introduction of polyphony. This was soon accompanied by the development of parallel *organum* and the beginning of harmony, with different melodies sung simultaneously, moving from unison to intervals of octaves, fifths, fourths and fifths.

Chants became more melismatic (longer groups of notes to one syllable) and complex; the congregation's singing was thus devalued and the choir's accentuated. Music during the mass (e.g., *Gloria Patri*, *Kyrie*) was still sung by the congregation, but as the musical styles evolved, more and more was taken over by choirs, and *scholae cantorum* (singing schools) came into existence to furnish musical leadership for the church. By the middle of the twelfth century, the Notre Dame School, connected to the Parisian cathedral, had become the centre of musical development.

From the Notre Dame School came the *motet*, considered by some to be the greatest musical form of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. It was usually composed in three parts, each with its own melody line sung in strict rhythm, and was a musical form well beyond the skill of a congregation. Its inaccessibility is perhaps best illustrated by the way it was sometimes performed—by two or three skilled singers at a lectern in the middle of the choir, *facing the altar*. It was, perhaps, the supreme example of musical exclusion!

We should remember, however, that the congregation was excluded not only from musical participation; over the years the form of the mass had gradually changed to exclude the people from meaningful participation in the liturgy itself. It is interesting to note how the “development” of congregational song paralleled other liturgical developments.

In the early church, people were given a full part in worship: prayers, including the institution narrative of the eucharist, were spoken aloud; wine and bread were brought from home; psalms and other parts of the liturgy were chanted antiphonally. During the eighth and ninth centuries, when the music began to be more complicated, the mass also took a new direction. Loaves of bread and jugs of wine brought from home were replaced by the use of wafers and the occasional chalice of consecrated wine; the breaking of bread was replaced by a token fraction, and Communion was distributed by a wafer on the tongue. An offertory procession that at one time had involved the whole congregation and had included home-baked bread, wine, oil and other gifts (for charitable purposes and/or the clergy) was considered too time-consuming and gradually became an opportunity for collecting a “mass stipend.”

During Gregory VII’s tenure (1073-85), the elaboration of music continued, with proliferation of tropes and sequences, and further development of polyphony. As well, the liturgical gulf between clergy and lay people widened even more. Liturgy, both private and public, was spoken in Latin, and prayers changed from frequent participation by the people to inaudible whispers by the priest. The positioning of the altar against the wall meant that the priest’s back was to the people, further distancing the laity from the action and underscoring their dependence on the priests for grace.

By the twelfth century, the liturgy had become largely irrelevant to the devotional life of the faithful. While the celebrant read the mass at the altar, people were busy with other devotional exercises, reading mass devotions, praying the rosary and mostly observing rather than taking Communion. In the waning years of the Gothic Age (1100-1500), “seeing God” became a substitute for receiving the body of Christ.

At the same time, music became even more inaccessible to common people. “The texts that had at one time been opportunities for the expression of faith by the whole Christian community . . . were left more and more to the choir, who sang on behalf of those present (and perhaps even of those absent).”³

On the One Hand

From the beginning, the Christian church has appeared to be ambivalent about the role of music, especially congregational song. Was it to be merely a support for the liturgy, or was there another role? Was it to be formal or popular? Church historians and hymnologists give us tantalizing glimpses of this ambivalence and hints of a parallel development in congregational song, an almost subversive popular element running beneath the formal liturgy.

We have seen how musical participation waned within the church as the gulf between clergy and laity widened, and as the music itself became more professionally oriented. But there were other developments that had the potential of including the faithful. During the period of Franco-German reform (the “dark ages” of the eighth and ninth centuries) imaginative and dramatic elements were introduced into the liturgy, particularly during Holy Week and at Easter. The palm processional hymn *Gloria laus et honor* (“All glory, laud and honour”), composed by Bishop Theodulf of Orleans, is still sung today, as is the *Exultet* (“Exult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven”) at the Roman Catholic Easter vigil.

On the Other Hand

There is also evidence of the development of hymns in the ninth century, a kind of devotional literature of early Christendom. As well, insertions made into the tropes were increasingly made in the vernacular, as an aid

³ Andrew Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1992), 54.

to understanding the chanted Latin. And even as the liturgy was looked upon as the exclusive concern of the priest, who read the mass at the altar with his back to the people, “the faithful were busy with other devotional exercises . . . they sang hymns in the vernacular, whose content had little or even nothing at all to do with the liturgy.”⁴

There are other instances of the development of hymns, used at festivals or masses. A genre of Germanic vernacular folk hymn called the *leisen* came from the trope and sequence; *Christ Ist Erstanden*, an Easter hymn still used today, grew out of the sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*. In Italy, especially Sicily, *laud spirituali* were hymns in the vernacular associated with lay brotherhoods and often used in their processions.

Hymns and religious songs were also sung outside the church. From the time of Charlemagne (crowned emperor in 800 AD) to the thirteenth century, a considerable amount of Latin poetry was sung by wandering minstrels. For the most part, their songs were secular, but there were some religious songs mixed in. Other congregational songs included “macaronic” carols, which mix Latin and the vernacular. *In dulce iubilo* mixes Latin and the vernacular (originally German) to joyous effect.

Paul Westermeyer reminds us that even while we criticize the church for excluding people both liturgically and musically, “people did not stand around like lifeless dummies.” For medieval men and women, worship was integrated with life in a way that our regular Sunday observances may not be. “If people did not sing at Mass, they saw the architecture, art and pageantry, and smelled the incense in their cathedrals, then sang a carol on their way home . . . participation was not reduced to one single thing that many post-Reformation people reduce it to, namely, hymn singing.”⁵ In fact, if we look at Martin Luther, “father” of the Protestant reformation, we find that he did not so much break with his medieval past as build upon it.

Reformation Roots

Luther’s method of congregational singing became the foundation for the “new” church of his time, and since then has influenced churches around

⁴ Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflection* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 120.

⁵ Westermeyer, *Te Deum*, 126, citing Erik Routley, *The English Carol* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 113-116.

the world. His success was due not only to his passion and organizational skill: he was both a priest and a musician. He knew of the German *leisen*, associated with liturgy and the festivals of the church year, and his chorales continued that heritage of singing among the German people.

Luther's theological basis for congregational song came from his understanding of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. As well as believing that music provides support for the liturgy, Luther insisted on its instructional value. But even though he gave music a new task, Luther's innovations had deep roots. Latin hymns of the daily office were influential in the development of Luther's hymnody, as was the Psalter. (*Ein' feste Burg*, one of the most famous Luther chorales, is a paraphrase of Psalm 46.) Well-known Gregorian hymns were translated and arranged for German congregations, and many of the hymns were named for, and associated with, particular texts built on the church's long practice.

Conclusion

Through the years, music, especially congregational song, has been an important part of the Christian church, even though its influence may have waned during the medieval era. Yet, as we have seen, singing did not cease, though there was some ambivalence about who sang and why. Today, although the official stance of the Roman Catholic Church is that popular participation is essential to liturgical celebration, "one of the issues is what music will enable such participation."⁶ It is not my task to speculate on whether or not the Roman Catholic Church has solved this dilemma. But it is interesting to see that the challenge still exists and it will be equally interesting to observe future developments.

⁶ Frank C. Quinn, "Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 2: Problems of Hymnody in Catholic Worship," in *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning*, eds. Robin A. Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 312.

FROM THE HEART

FROM THE HEART OF SONG TO THE HEART OF SINGING

by Becca Whitla

When we sing in Christian contexts, we understand our voices to embody the Word as well as words, and to express theological meaning beyond the meaning of the words themselves—to encompass aesthetic, emotive and sensory expressions. Singing offers a different way of knowing, an epistemological window to the mystery of life. Through the physical experience of our singing together we understand something we are unable to put into words—we know it! We engage our whole being in a collective sung act which opens space for the Divine. For me, this experience is part of a praxis that embodies a vision of the reign of God: after all, when we sing together, we are able to both “speak” and “listen”; every voice matters and every voice has beauty. Together we can become eschatological co-workers, building and embodying God’s reign through the deepest kind of concrete engagement, feeling and breathing together, mutually attentive in the song and its singing.

I grew up in the bosom of a vibrant justice-seeking Anglican community in the heart of downtown Toronto, Holy Trinity Church, beside the Eaton Centre. Our eucharistic celebration aimed to embody a hospitable and liberative vision of a holy fiesta as we delighted in eating, talking, laughing, arguing, crying, grieving, struggling and singing together at an open table, which we hoped meant that all were welcome. At church and in my family, I learned to value relationship, to seek justice and to sing.

As my own sense of vocation developed—to build community through song (or, to put it in the scriptural language of Ecclesiastes, to “build up” (3:3) the reign of God)—I began to work with women in the Echo Women’s Choir and in the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (H.E.R.E.) Local 75 Choir (a choir of mostly Jamaican Canadian women), as well as at my home church as the music minister. Without truly understanding the scope of my calling, I started to articulate my working as “healing,” especially when people told stories of their suffering and healing through singing and music. I came to believe that empowering the God-given voice of every person is an ethical imperative

enabling single voices to join together in the beautiful task of passionate and transformative expression—expressions of both suffering and hope, the already and the not-yet. I believe that music can (and ought to) be a critically-engaged, vibrant and healing part of community life. Then, in our singing together, we may experience the movement of the Holy Spirit, the irruption of the Divine.

I also worked simultaneously as a musician in a number of creative collaborations with other artists, sustaining and nurturing myself as an artist, exploring contemporary issues through the arts and integrating the work of creative professionals with my work as a community music animator. These two vocational threads, as community singing animator and as artist-musician, had a profound impact on me as a person, giving me the gift of self-expression and shaping me for what I have come to understand as a prophetic ministry in music. About five years ago I began a spiritual journey to make meaning of this double-vocation and to try to put into words the “knowing” I experienced and witnessed in community singing and in my artistic collaborations. It took me to Emmanuel College where I completed a Master of Sacred Music degree and where I am now pursuing doctoral studies in congregational singing.

Yet my call to lead the people’s song is riddled with doubt. At the same time I can say with some certainty that I’ve never felt more called—called to engage doubt, even to embrace it, as I mix together the ingredients of my faith. I am called to scrutinize myself to make sure my relationships and actions are filled with right relationships, justice-seeking, and love for humankind and the wider creation. I am called to discern the place of song in a church that may be dying. Whether the church crashes and burns, or rises from the ashes, I want to be there to help lead the people’s song. Our world is in trouble and I believe that the church (still) has something good to offer to the world. It is a call to love and to hope, even amidst fear, doubt and suffering. In this context, I want to help lead the people’s song of faith, in all its ambiguity and messiness, in the mingling of suffering and hope, as we express our lamentation, our longing and our joy. Though there may be doubt about how to lead song or what to sing, there is no doubt for me that singing is an essential part of community life both inside and outside the church.

Recently, I’ve been reflecting on my place in the Canadian cultural

landscape, especially as I struggle to articulate my social location for academic work that involves a postcolonial analysis of congregational singing. Usually, social location refers to markers that include gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation and geographic location; so I name myself as a white, educated, abled, middle-class, heterosexual Anglo woman from Toronto. But my involvement in the arts as a culture worker, both in creating art and in animating it, also has had a profound impact on forming me as a person. This formation is rooted in my relationships with a wide range of artist collaborators, my conspirators. Though my academic study comes out of my passion for animating community song in particular, I never stop being an artist as well. It is an important part of my identity and it has profoundly shaped me and the way I think about all the issues I engage academically.

Experiences have ranged from performing with *LifeShapes Trio* (with poet Joy Kogawa and dancer Janice Parker), to musical-coaching for *Theatre Gargantua*, to classical music performances, to singing Georgian women's music in a quartet, to a Jamaican-Canadian collaboration called *Maple Dub*, to sitting on the Toronto Arts Council helping to shape the city's policy in support of community music making. I recall working on a fundraising performance called *Dub for Darfur* with colleagues—dubbist and reggae artist Michael St. George, actor-poet Blakka Ellis and singer Alan Gasser—when Blakka coined the phrase “intercultural” and we thought we were making it up! The themes I now try to understand and articulate in scholarly language have been present in these artistic relationships, and were given voice and expressed through the arts, among them themes as raw as childhood sexual abuse, sexual violence and racism. Though my formation as an artist doesn't particularly bear directly on my current project, it is part of who I am and how I have been engaging issues of Canadian identity and culture-making. Being “artist” is part of my particular social location. I carry these (intercultural) relationships with me everywhere I go, and get great pleasure when I am able to integrate them with my work in community arts.

When it comes to community arts, the transformative power of singing in people's lives has been evident in a variety of settings. In singing workshops I recently led for the Canadian Automobile Workers

(now UNIFOR), members publicly expressed their gratitude for my leadership. One reluctant singer named Rusty had written on his name tag, below his name, “I can’t sing.” When he thanked me at our final performance and gathering, he declared that I had erased the letter “t”. Another man spoke about how the experience of singing together with twenty co-workers had been transformative—he had never sung before, not even in the shower. These big, burly men embraced me after we sang, with tears in their eyes.

Similarly, the women of the Echo Women’s Choir speak about transformation. After the choir’s concert on December 8, 2013, choir member Rachel Boukhout commented, “Every time we sang ‘rise,’ [in the title song of the concert] I felt like we were on the brink of a revolution.” As choir member Hindy Bradley introduced guest artist Annabelle Chvostek, she articulated the counter-hegemonic values of this alternative community as resistance, empowerment, relationality and radical sharing:

Two things make up the vocal community that is Echo. The first is the values embedded in the music. Gathered from across the world, we sing stories of the dislocated, their lives, their struggle, their survival. The second part of community is the significance of this shared experience in one’s own life. Singing the words makes them ours. The responsibility becomes ours. Annabelle moves us forward, telling us to Occupy! to Rise! By coming here tonight to listen, and, I hope, sing along, you’ve become part of our community.

Clearly Rusty, Rachel and Hindy have experienced the transformative power of community singing. You could say that they have been converted to singing! But I venture to suggest that my own conversion is equally profound. I believe that we can experience our calling in a thousand conversations and countless moments in which we catch a glimpse of the Divine. So, out of tiny epiphanies enfolded in my relationships with singers and artists, the fabric of my conversion is woven. I am humbled through deep listening and learning; by the uncomfortable dislocation I experience at times; in witnessing people’s empowerment through song; and by the glorious sound we make together. These factors together map my *metanoia* of living into my vocation.

Though frequently working in the community beyond the church,

my vocation is rooted and affirmed when I go “home” to my church communities. Whether at Holy Trinity, my family’s home church, or its Spanish-speaking sister congregation, San Estéban, whether at Emmanuel College or when working with Kairos, I return home to be nourished by others who understand the vocation of the whole community of God as plunging “itself into [the] love that builds up humanity in history” (Juan Luis Segundo, *The Sacraments Today*). In this work, the church can become a concrete communitarian sign of liberation, enacting the radical love that is at the heart of Christianity. I recall leading the assembly of the Kairos conference in 2009 in singing “Open My Heart” by Ana Hernández—I was filling in time because the morning keynote speaker, Inuit environmental activist, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, had been delayed. She arrived as we sang and then proceeded with her moving presentation. She concluded her talk by thanking us for singing, telling the gathering of about 350 people that our song was the best gift she had ever received for speaking. The gift of her gratitude in response to the gift of our singing astonished me. The power of our witness together in solidarity, expressed in the beauty and passion of our raised voices, moved her and moved *my* heart.

One of the profound experiences of conversion occurred in my work with the H.E.R.E. Local 75 Choir. After my work leading it for the city’s celebration of Hotel Worker’s Day in the fall of 1998, the group insisted I stay on despite my attempts to leave and make space for a “woman of colour” to lead the group. They declared that they had “broken me in”! Over the next number of years, we sang spirituals, church and union songs—on picket lines, at demonstrations, at trade union conferences and during a protest against the G8 in Windsor when the crowd was pepper-sprayed.

Witnessing to the vision of a better world and calling to a wider community, the choir would “raise up” songs in performative gestures that became liberating. Infused by what the members certainly would have called the Holy Spirit—even though it was a “secular” trade union choir—we voiced the reign of God’s justice and peace both in rehearsals and out *in* the world, enacting a liberative theology. Whenever and wherever we sang, we accompanied one another, and we accompanied fellow trade unionists, protesters, the homeless or the undocumented

victims and survivors of September 11, 2001 (members of the H.E.R.E. union).¹ As the dominant-culture leader of the choir, I constantly interrogated my methods and commitment, returning week after week even when my own life's circumstances made it a real challenge. Over time, I worked to cultivate leadership within the membership of the choir and partnered with a Jamaican-Canadian co-leader who became a fast friend. Together we all co-articulated a vision of the reign of God through our singing.

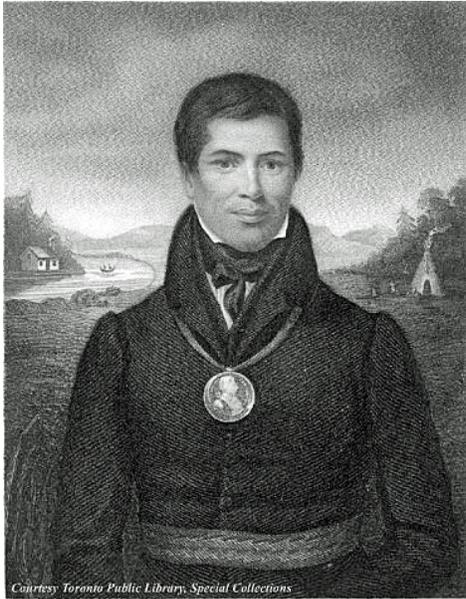
What I know from my experience singing with the H.E.R.E. Local 75 Choir is that our lived concrete realities were enfolded into our experience of singing. Every Wednesday our bodies vibrated with the shared task of intertwining identity, theology and ideology in a dynamic that invited the irruption of the Holy Spirit who sometimes startled me because of our secular trade union context. Empowered from their marginal location in society, choir members sang out, their singing, as well as the message of our songs, embodying defiance against the “patriarchal and racist social and ecclesial structures” of their daily lives (Loida Martell-Otero, *Latina Evangélicas*). As we taught and learned from one another, our singing *became* a social praxis of liberation. We welcomed the subversive, wild child Holy Spirit as she animated our lively and sometimes argumentative discussions; joined in our raw and boisterous singing together; and nudged us forward when our actions as a choir—and as a trade union—danced along the edges of what was permitted.² She joined us, in all our fragile human-ness to affirm the beauty of our beloved community, and to build and embody, however fleetingly, a weekly Wednesday glimpse of God's reign, slowly converting me, week after week to song, to singing and to a faith in the love at the heart of the gospel.

¹ Notions of accompaniment come from Roberto S. Goizueta's *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1995), and Néstor Medina's “Theological Musings Toward a Latina/o Pneumatology,” in *Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*, ed. Orlando Espín (New Jersey: Blackwell, forthcoming).

² The concept of the “wild child Holy Spirit” comes from Zaida Maldonado Pérez, Loida I. Martell-Otero and Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, *Latina Evangélicas: A Theological Survey from the Margins* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2013).

PROFILE

SACRED FEATHERS, OR THE REV. PETER JONES (1802-1856) by Donald Smith



Courtesy: Toronto Public Library, Special Collections

Peter Jones, known in Ojibwe as Kahkewaquonaby, meaning “Sacred Feathers” or “Sacred Waving Feathers,” was born on 1 January 1802 in a wigwam on Burlington Heights (Hamilton). His father was Augustus Jones, a retired surveyor of Welsh background, born and raised in what is now New York State. From the late 1780s to 1800 Jones completed surveys of many townships at the western end of Lake Ontario, as well as of the early roadways, Yonge and Dundas Streets in York. He worked well with First Nations people and

learned to speak both Ojibwe and Iroquois (Mohawk).

Peter’s mother was Tuhbenahneequay (Sarah Henry), a daughter of Wahbanosay, the Mississauga chief at the Head of the Lake (present-day Hamilton). The non-Aboriginal settlers in Upper Canada, as Ontario was then known, termed the Ojibwe First Nations on the north shore of Lake Ontario, “Mississauga.” In their own language the Ojibwe (Mississauga) called themselves “Anishinabeg,” or “human beings.” They had come south about three generations earlier from Lakes Huron and Superior. According to the Anishinabegs’ oral tradition, they militarily defeated the Iroquois, or Five Nations, about a century earlier, and forced them to leave. The Iroquois version of these same events denied a defeat. It held that they had voluntarily withdrawn to their ancient lands south of Lake Ontario. After the American Revolution, over two thousand Iroquois who had fought under the Crown migrated northward. The British made treaties with the Ojibwe (Mississauga) on the north shore of Lake Ontario from the 1780s to the 1810s, as they recognized them as the First Nations’ owners of this area.

Many of the first non-Aboriginal settlers were Loyalists, British Americans who had fought for the Crown in the American Revolution.

They arrived as political refugees after England's defeat. In contrast to other non-Aboriginal newcomers resident in Upper Canada, Augustus Jones had an interesting marital history. For several years around 1800 he had two wives, one on his farm, and the other in the bush. The surveyor was legally married to Sarah Tekarihogen, the daughter of a leading Iroquois chief. Augustus lived with Sarah and his Iroquois family on his farm, and left the upbringing of Peter and John, his Mississauga sons in the bush, to Tuhbenahneequay. She raised them, teaching them the religion and the customs of her people.

Sacred Feathers followed his people's seasonal round of spring salmon fishing and corn planting, summer hunting and gathering, fall wild rice gathering and winter hunting in the interior. The young Mississauga learned how to track animals, how to catch fish at all times of the year and how to make fire in any kinds of weather. He strove for excellence, and gained the reputation of being a very good hunter. But in one respect his boyhood was incomplete. Young men at puberty customarily went out on weeklong vision quests. They blackened their faces, and fasted alone in an isolated spot. Just before his voice began to change, Sacred Feathers went on a quest, but was not blessed with a vision from a non-human spiritual guardian.

The boys remained with Tuhbenahneequay until 1816. Once Augustus Jones learned that the Ojibwe community at the western end of Lake Ontario was disintegrating after the War of 1812, he intervened. He sent Kahkewaquonaby to a school near his farm at Stoney Creek. Sacred Feathers now became known in the non-Aboriginal world as Peter Jones, and learned to speak, read and write in English. When Augustus moved with his Iroquois family to his extensive lands on the Grand River in 1817, he took Peter, now fifteen and a strong youth, with him. On his farm Augustus taught him to care for poultry and livestock, and to farm.

At his father's request Peter accepted baptism in the Church of England in 1820. He later confessed that one of the reasons was the wish that "I might be entitled to all the privileges of the white inhabitants." By his own admission his baptism had no effect on his life, since he continued to be "the same wild Indian youth as before." At the age of twenty the ambitious Peter decided to return to school. Throughout the summer of 1822 he worked in a brickyard near Brantford to obtain the

money to pay his fees. After studying arithmetic and writing the following winter, he returned to his father's farm in the spring of 1823. Determined to succeed in the larger world, Peter hoped eventually to become a fur trade clerk, until a Methodist camp meeting completely transformed his life.

Purely out of curiosity, Peter, with his Iroquois sister, Polly, attended a camp meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church in June 1823. During the five-day gathering in Ancaster Township, Peter's soul was touched by the preaching of the evangelical Christians. At the end of the meeting, the Rev. William Case, seeing Peter rise to his feet to acknowledge that he accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour, cried out with joy: "Glory to God, there stands a son of Augustus Jones of the Grand River, amongst the converts; now is the door opened for the work of conversion among his nation!" Perhaps Peter saw Christ as his guardian spirit. After the camp meeting he joined the native congregation organized by Chief Thomas Davis, a recent Methodist Iroquois convert.

This was a time of uncertainty and confusion, insecurity and fear for the Mississauga at the western end of Lake Ontario. In one generation, from the 1780s to the 1820s, they had lost more than half of their population of five hundred. The Anishinabeg had no built-up immunity to infectious diseases such as smallpox, diphtheria or even measles with which Europeans had lived for centuries. Starvation also became a serious issue as they had lost much of their hunting and fishing grounds to the non-Aboriginal newcomers. Alcohol abuse contributed to serious malnutrition. The full horror is difficult to imagine. This is the context in which the young Mississauga convert returned to his people.

Peter's great asset was that he could both preach and give counsel in Ojibwe. Quickly he proved he was an effective preacher and could command an audience. He encouraged his mother's community to settle near the chief's home, which became known as Davisville, or Davis's Hamlet, on the Grand River near Brantford. Many of Peter's relatives came, including his mother and his uncle, Joseph Sawyer. By the end of the summer of 1825, the bilingual and bicultural Mississauga church worker had converted over half of the Mississauga at the western end of Lake Ontario to Christianity. The Methodists' abstinence from alcohol greatly pleased the community. Once it became known that a Methodist

mission station would be built on the Credit River just west of York (as Toronto was then known) the Mississauga Methodists at Davisville began to move there. In 1826 the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada had offered to build for the Methodist converts a village of twenty log houses on the west bank of the Credit River, in what is now the City of Mississauga. By late 1826 Peter had converted almost all the Mississauga at the western end of Lake Ontario. The Credit Mission was completed in the winter of 1826–27. Peter was received on trial for the Methodist itinerancy in 1827.

Peter translated additional hymns and Bible passages into Ojibwe in the mid- and late 1820s. Peter also translated the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments. He later claimed that he was the first "to reduce" Ojibwe "to a written form," in Roman characters. The grand old Methodist hymns provided comfort and strength. Many Mississauga found the heart of the Christian faith to be in harmony with the core of their ancient First Nations' spiritual beliefs.

The Mississauga looked to Jones for direction in their struggle to adjust to farming and a settled way of life. In January 1829 the Credit community selected Peter as one of its chiefs. His uncle, Joseph Sawyer, a veteran of the War of 1812, was named Head Chief. Progress was made. By the fall of 1827 each family in the village had begun to cultivate a quarter-acre plot around their home and shared in the cultivation of a thirty-acre field. Within ten years the community had cleared another 850 acres.

The news of the Credit Mission's success spread quickly through the Ojibwe world. Peter encouraged several very capable Ojibwe converts to spread the good news of the gospel, travelling by foot, by canoe and by snowshoe. In February 1826 Peter himself travelled eastward to the Bay of Quinte, attracting Ojibwe families from as far away as fifty kilometres. The stationing of capable non-Aboriginal missionaries at the Credit, such as Egerton Ryerson, later renowned as the founder of the modern Ontario school system, also assisted in allowing Jones to leave on lengthy missionary tours.

The phenomenal success of the Methodists among the Mississauga alarmed the colonial authorities. They hoped that the Ojibwe converts could eventually be won over to the Church of England. But Jones

refused to abandon the Methodists. He simply worked harder. Successfully he led into his church the Mississauga at Rice Lake, the majority of the Ojibwe at Lake Simcoe, many at the Muncey Mission (southwest of London) and several Ojibwe bands on the eastern shore of Lake Huron.

To raise money for the missions Peter accompanied William Case and several native converts in 1829 on a tour of the northeastern United States. His later missionary tour of Britain in 1831/32 proved a complete success. As he wrote back to his brother John, “When my Indian name, *Kahkewaquonaby*, is announced to attend any public meetings, so great is the curiosity, the place is sure to be filled.” During his year abroad, attired in his Anishinabeg costume, he gave more than 150 addresses and sermons, and collected over £1,000 for the Methodist Church’s mission-work. As well, he petitioned the Colonial Office concerning Ojibwe land interests. He attracted great attention and on 5 April 1832, shortly before his return to Upper Canada, he was granted a rare honour, a private audience with King William IV.

On his English tour the celebrated First Nations Methodist preacher met Eliza Field. This pious Englishwoman two years later became his wife. They married on 8 September 1833 in New York City. Five sons followed in their happy marriage. At the Credit Mission Eliza helped her husband copy out his translations of the Scriptures into Ojibwe, taught the Mississauga girls how to sew and instructed them in religion. Very supportive of her husband, who became an ordained Methodist minister on 6 October 1833, Eliza worked to bring about the Europeanization of the Credit Mission community, as well as her Mississauga husband. Her major complaint about her husband, whom otherwise she loved dearly, was his parenting style. She later wrote that “he ruled by love, perhaps too much like Eli: a little firmer rein might have been occasionally for the advantage of his sons.”

Peter went to England again in late 1837 to raise more money for the Methodist First Nations missions. He also argued for his community’s land rights, the legal recognition of their 4,000 or so acres around the Credit Mission as Mississauga territory. Impressed by the well-spoken Mississauga leader, Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, arranged a short audience for him with the young Queen Victoria in September 1838.

The Jones returned to Upper Canada late that year to find their church and the Credit Mission rent by dissension. In 1840 the fragile union of the Canadian Methodist Episcopalians and the British Wesleyans dissolved. Peter and the majority of the Ojibwe Christians remained with the Canadians, but William Case and several of the other communities sided with the Wesleyans. The split hampered the advance of the Methodists among the First Nations, for the two Methodist Churches remained apart until their reunion in 1847. As well, opposition to Jones' leadership at the Credit had arisen in the mid 1830s and continued throughout the following decade. Many Mississauga objected to what they regarded as excessive Europeanization. Jones' Mississauga opponents supported his efforts to protect their tiny remaining land base, but these Mississauga Christians resisted the harsh discipline imposed on the young. As a result of this internal strife, departures from the Credit Mission became a serious problem.

The 1840s proved a difficult decade for Peter. From 1841 to 1849 he was stationed near London, Upper Canada, at the Muncey Mission. It was a demanding post with three First Nations under his charge: Ojibwe, Munsee Delaware and Oneida, all speaking different languages. His health began to deteriorate, and he gained considerable weight. For months at a stretch the best-known Mississauga leader of the day made no entries in his diary. As a young man, Peter had spent a great deal of his time taking notes for a history of the Ojibwe, but now he devoted little time to his manuscript. Even his third missionary tour of Britain, in 1845, failed to revive his spirits. He again attracted huge crowds, particularly in Scotland, but the constant travelling began to depress him. On 23 October he wrote to Eliza from Glasgow, "I am getting heartily tired of begging." The British public was, it seemed to Peter, only interested in him as the exotic Kahkewaquonaby dressed out in his "odious" native custom, and not as Peter Jones, the "civilized" Indian that he had struggled so hard to become.

Despite his weakened physical state, Peter continued to work for his community. In 1840 the band council had begun to consider the relocation of the Credit village because of the increasing severity of problems later enumerated by Jones: the pressure of non-Aboriginal settlement, the scarcity of wood and, most important of all, the

uncertainty surrounding his people's claim to land at the Credit. They had done everything it seemed they could to adjust to the dominant settler culture. The Credit Mississauga had become Christians, taken up farming and settled in permanent homes, but this was not enough. The British would not give them title to their remaining lands at the mouth of the Credit River. Finally, in 1847, Jones led more than two hundred community members to the tract offered them by the Six Nations or Iroquois in their territory on the Grand River. Peter worked hard to ensure the early success of New Credit, as the reserve was named.

After his people's resettlement, Jones' health failed to improve. In 1850 his physician ordered him to retire, forbidding him to travel or "to perform his clerical duties." Despite this he continued to make long trips: in 1852 to the northern missions on the upper Great Lakes, the following year to a missionary meeting in New York City and in 1854 to a convention in Syracuse, N.Y., which, Jones reported, was attended by 300 to 400 Indians. In 1851, after a brief period of residence in London, Upper Canada, the Jones had moved into Echo Villa, a fine house they had built about thirty kilometres north of New Credit, near Brantford.

Born in a wigwam, Peter Jones, clearly a man of two worlds, spent his last years in Echo Villa, a Classical Revival style country home that might have been transplanted from England. His final illness began in December 1855 and was brought about by one of his frequent visits to New Credit. After completing the tiring journey in a lumber wagon, Peter felt unwell, but was determined to attend the council meeting the following day and refused to return to Brantford. When the meeting was over he rode home through a drizzling rain. As soon as he reached Echo Villa he collapsed.

Invited by his good friend, Egerton Ryerson, and his wife to consult medical specialists in Toronto, Peter and Eliza spent four weeks at the Ryerson home in Toronto, but there was no cure. In mid-June he returned to Echo Villa. The New Credit Mississauga suggested bringing in "a noted Indian doctor," from Rice Lake near Peterborough. But it was too late. Peter Jones died at age 54, on 29 June 1856.

The attendance of non-Aboriginals and First Nations at his funeral illustrates the respect in which both communities held him. In its obituary, the *Toronto Globe* noted that the funeral procession was the largest ever

witnessed in Brantford and included “upwards of eighty carriages besides a great number of white people and Indians on foot.” As Egerton Ryerson, his close friend for 30 years, stated in his funeral sermon, Jones had “enjoyed the esteem of, and had access to, every class of Canadian society.” The Ojibwe missionary’s diaries were edited by Eliza and the Rev. Enoch Wood, and published in 1860 as his *Life and Journals*. Eliza edited his historical notes, which appeared in 1861 as *History of the Ojibway Indians*, an invaluable source for an understanding of the early Ojibwe converts in Upper Canada. In 1874 his third son and namesake, Peter Edmund (Kahkewaquonaby), a medical doctor, became a chief at New Credit.

In his lifetime Peter Jones worked for a full and equal partnership between the non-Aboriginal settlers and the Mississauga. Before his conversion to Methodism, the Mississauga at the western end of Lake Ontario were on the verge of disintegration, weakened by disease and alcohol abuse, forced off their land by tens of thousands of non-Aboriginal settlers and neglected by the Indian Department. The non-Aboriginal invasion had knocked the Anishinabeg world on the north shore of Lake Ontario out of equilibrium. Peter Jones’ intervention helped the Mississauga to get back on their feet. Change came about due to their own initiatives and under their own leaders.

BOOK REVIEWS

The End of Hope – The Beginning: Narratives of Hope in the Face of Death and Trauma

Pamela McCarroll (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014). Pp. 149.

A professor of pastoral theology at Knox College in the University of Toronto, Pamela McCarroll has written a fine small volume that should be of great value to pastoral ministers caring for persons in extremely challenging circumstances. She explores the “possibility of hope in the face of endings, in the face of death and trauma, in the face of unalterable, unwanted crisis in life” (1).

McCarroll respectfully challenges those who prioritize the social sciences over theology in pastoral care. While affirming the value of social science methods, she bases her practice of ministry on a strong, clear “theology of the cross” (building upon her earlier work, *Waiting at the Foot of the Cross*, Wipf & Stock, 2014). Reflecting the theology of mentor Douglas John Hall, she is suspicious of all expressions of glory, triumphalism, unmitigated positivism, optimism and success.

The first chapter offers “A Brief History of Hope in the Modern West.” Ours is a time when false hope is coming to an end, she contends, when the optimistic metanarratives of modernity are collapsing, and when “the possibility of massive destruction is plausible every day” (7). In such a time, a space opens up for authentic hope. She eschews the modern dream that humans exist to master the world, asking: When hope is at an end, how do we hope? This large question about our context is then directed to the situation of individuals and families who face traumatic personal experiences, including the early death of loved ones, disasters leading to disability and the aftermath of sexual abuse—circumstances of persons for whom ministers regularly offer pastoral care. Reflecting postmodern thought, she speaks of “a shift from grand narratives of hope to the more tentative, humble, trust-based narratives” of very particular communities, families and individuals (15).

The second chapter reviews a broad range of social scientific and theological literature that points to the multivalent dimensions of human hope. She explores how hope takes many shapes for people in very different circumstances. She also offers her own working, descriptive

definition: *Hope is the experience of the opening of horizons of meaning and participation in relationship to time, other human and non-human being, and/or the transcendent.*

In chapters 3-7, we hear poignant stories from the author's hospital chaplaincy experiences, told respectfully and with permission, of individuals facing profound adversity and struggle. They reflect the diversity of ways in which hope is present in people's lives. We hear of "Hope as Fight," (chapter 3) in the story of a young woman who is severely disabled as the innocent victim of a car accident, caused by a drunk driver. We hear of her struggles with anger, with the possibility of forgiveness and the fight to live positively and hopefully in faith. In chapter 4, "Hope as Meaning," we learn of a beautiful, bright and beloved little boy, who develops an inoperable brain tumour, and the struggle of his single mother to cope with a sense of meaninglessness and grief at his death. Chapter 5, "Hope as Survival," tells the story of a woman who was sexually abused as a child, and exploited and betrayed by men later in life; we hear of her attempts at suicide and then her struggle to survive with faith and dignity. Chapter 6, "Hope as Lament," is about the struggle for faith and hope of the parents of a teenage boy who senselessly and innocently dies when attacked with a knife. "Hope as Surrender" (chapter 7) tells of the long suffering of a young minister, and finally of his death of ALS. All of these are stories of hope, but not easy, facile hope, not "prettying up" the harshness of life. Rather, we see hope anew in "the small steps, the daily interactions, decisions and relationships, and the way these participate in larger interconnectivities, all of which are saturated with the mostly hidden presence of divine possibility" (136).

McCarroll also speaks briefly of hope as lament, or as surrender, in a faith community in decline or facing an ending.

The book is beautifully, eloquently written. This is surely a "must read" for pastors, chaplains and students preparing for pastoral work.

Harold Wells,
Burlington, Ontario
harold.wells@utoronto.ca

A Good Ending: A Compassionate Guide to Funerals, Pastoral Care and Life Celebrations

David Sparks (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2014). Pp. 277.

In the last decade, a new generation of resources pertaining to variously named end-of-life observances has emerged. In this eminently practical contribution from the perspective of a United Church of Canada minister, David Sparks offers a fresh volume for anyone called upon to prepare and lead funeral, memorial and celebration-of-life services. While this book serves largely as an introductory primer for newly minted ministers, seasoned clergy will also find fresh resources for pastoral work prior to, amid and following a death. Throughout *A Good Ending*, Sparks draws deeply on his first-hand experience of accompanying the dying and their loved ones in the many facets of end-of-life care.

To guide his exploration, Sparks suggests a three-fold purpose for funeral and memorial services: celebrating, respecting and remembering the deceased (10). While most occasions would lift up these three hallmarks, for me, a fourth key element would be naming and lamenting the loss. Indeed, when listing important elements of any funeral or celebration of life occasion, Sparks suggests that pastors would do well to ask themselves what is important to include in these services, even in the face of resistance from family members (14). He cites the example of a minister believing it to be essential to speak of the loss at hand (14). Though not included in his three-fold schema, Sparks does include a section on Speaking to the Loss as part of a chapter titled “What Makes for a Good Funeral,” and he names it foundational to “acknowledge and speak to the loss” as one of the blocks on which a service is based (135).

Early on, Sparks addresses two seemingly growing realities in the North American context. The first is the increasing prevalence of “non-religious” services. Faced with requests to conduct such services (and not knowing how to respond), many Christian pastors either would refer the family elsewhere or, abiding by the family’s wishes, omit references to God and Jesus Christ in readings, prayers and meditations. However, Sparks suggests it is possible to offer a “non-religious” service without abandoning one’s Christian foundation. He says, “It may be helpful . . .

for the family to hear that the theme of loving kindness central to the Christian and Abrahamic traditions will form an integral part of your celebration or service and will be an often unspoken but essential part of the pastoral care” (16). Sparks strikes a balance between Christian theological integrity and expectations of “secularism.” Furthermore, he carries this concern throughout the book by including readings and prayers that might be appropriate for non-religious services.

The second contextual reality of contemporary end-of-life services that Sparks explores is the awkward situation in which the deceased has requested that no service of any kind take place, in contrast to the expressed wishes of the remaining family. Once again, rather than the pastor accepting the request at face value, he suggests exploring with the family the reasons for the instructions (59). Moderate and balanced on almost every issue upon which Sparks reflects, this reviewer was somewhat surprised to read his strong affirmation that “the family is not obligated to go without a service because their loved one has given these seemingly clear instructions” (59).

While appreciating his pastoral sensitivity, a theological critique of contemporary funeral practices might have enriched Sparks’ exploration. For example, in referring to traditional pre-funeral visitation with an open casket, Sparks states that sometimes “a public gathering is seen as an additional end-of-life cost with nothing achieved that cannot be achieved at the reception directly after the service” (102). Brief comment on the Christian understanding of an embodied faith might have shed some light on the historic reasons for open caskets.

On a practical level, this is a book to which one can return for guidance on very specific topics surrounding the preparation and delivery of funeral rites. From advice on navigating family disagreements to finding an appropriate prayer for the Death of a Young Person at New Year, the detailed Table of Contents and the Appendix will aid greatly in locating materials. A generous portion of the book is dedicated to providing examples of invitations to worship, prayers, readings and meditations. David Sparks’ strengths as a liturgist and preacher shine, as do the contributions of others who have granted readers permission to use their published work.

All in all, *A Good Ending* is a practical, enduring resource for anyone entrusted with the privilege of offering leadership in the care and the rites surrounding end-of-life.

Michael Brooks,
Port Nelson United Church, Burlington, Ontario
michaelbrooks@portnelsonunitedchurch.com

Bless Her Heart: Life as a Young Clergy Woman

Ashley-Anne Masters and Stacy Smith (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2011). Pp. 123.

Bless Her Heart is an excellent book using the long-standing tradition of women's truth-telling in order to discuss, compassionately and frankly, a number of issues pertaining to the lives of young clergy women. At the time of its publication it was unique in its focus: there was little, if any, literature directed to young clergy women. Now, a few books have been published in this genre; yet the selection is still limited.

The topics in this monograph range from the seemingly frivolous, but surprisingly troublesome, "Issues with Shoes and Sandals," to the perhaps more expected and weighty "Establishing Pastoral Identity." Some chapters include topics, such as staying grounded in a new call, that would apply to any pastoral minister, while others, such as pregnancy, are unique to young clergy women. Other concerns, such as fashion, romance and the role of emotions, may apply to any number of clergy, but the way the situations play out is particular to young women in ministry. Finally, the authors discuss gender balance and working with other women—a concern of professional women in general.

Each chapter begins with an introduction and a story or two in which the topic at hand is particularly problematic. Masters and Smith then seek to treat each issue theologically, drawing from a wide variety of Scriptures in which they ground their thinking. They offer a variety of responses to the topic and follow up with another story where the issue at hand either has brought about an unexpected blessing, or is on its way to resolution. The authors are clear that not every topic is pertinent to every young clergy woman. Some topics may be a complete non-issue for some, while others may experience them all. Still others may experience issues

not addressed in this book.

I found this book to be extremely useful. It has helped me to think through some of my experiences theologically, and helped me to explore a variety of responses. What is more, this book was a Godsend as it reminded me that I was/am not alone in experiencing these challenges. Some of my sisters in ministry face similar experiences every day, and there is hope for change. Reading through the stories, I found myself laughing, as I could easily relate to any number of situations; tearing up, as I found myself equally frustrated by familiar experiences; and inspired, as I delved into the depths of the authors' reflections.

My only negative critique of this book is that it errs in common with other literature about women: it does not address the situations of women who are doubly or trebly marginalized. Issues of race and sexual orientation, for instance, are ignored. While the authors acknowledge that there is a wide variety of experiences not covered in this book, these pertinent issues of identity should have been addressed, especially as they are so much a part of one's pastoral as well as personal identity.

On the whole, I found that Masters and Smith did an excellent job of addressing situations that young clergy women face, considering the rich variety of traditions, denominations and personalities they seek to include. This book treats many of the topics that give young clergy women grief, topics "that keep us up on Saturday night and make us think twice before stepping into the pulpit on Sunday morning." Moreover the authors deal with these topics from the perspective of faith, and of love of their calling. I would highly recommend this book to any young woman who is a member of the clergy, is considering becoming a member of the clergy or even who is highly involved in lay ministry within the church. Additionally, I would recommend this book to any who are involved in the formation or support of young clergy women. As for me, I know I will return to this book again and again, and remember that I am not the only woman facing the challenges and joys of ministry.

Erin McIntyre Garrick
Benito-Kenville Pastoral Charge, Manitoba
ejmcintyre@gmail.com