

# **"Divine Names (God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit) in Christian Hymnody"**

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**"The hymn is the ordinary man's theology," George Sampson once remarked. "The hymn echoes in the heart when the sermon is forgotten. Preachers may be feeble, and even foolish; but hymn does more than pulpit can to justify God's ways to man." <sup>1</sup>**

**A study of Divine Names (God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit) and hymns and Christian hymnody of necessity involves a study of contemporary culture and society.<sup>2</sup>**

**The Church in the United States of America exists in an increasingly secular culture and society, and the new cultural situation strategically places twenty-first century Protestant and Christian leaders in the middle of a cultural whirlwind.**

**Recovery of good hymns and appropriation of the heritage of Christian hymnody may serve the contemporary Church in two ways. First,**

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation taken from Timothy Dudley-Smith's Foreword to J.R. Watson, An Annotated Anthology of Hymns. London and New York: Oxford, 2002, viii. Hymns perform a service to the Church by teaching the laity its faith and belief system through singing the hymns. Hereafter cited as AAH.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Westermeyer explains why the issue of Church and culture matters when one discusses hymns and Christian hymnody. He has two theses regarding church and culture and hymns and sacred songs. "1. The church takes flesh in many different times and places and sings in the idioms of many different times and places (a global matter). 2. The church takes flesh in a specific time and place and sings in the idiom of a specific time and place (a local matter)."

Furthermore, in the context of any cultural situation, Westermeyer suggests, "The church takes flesh in many times and places and sings in the idioms of many different times and places. This is obvious if you look in virtually any hymnal. A hymnal is one of the most global, multi-cultural products of the human species. It brings together texts and music from many different times and places. This is not surprising since the church is universal or catholic. It is not only for one time, one place, or one people. It is for everybody of all times and places." Paul Westermeyer, "The Voice of the People: Now, Here, and Beyond," *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song*. 54:1 [January 2003], 15.

to recover her balance in a time of cultural upheaval; and second, to recover her verve and style by acknowledging the past and maintaining continuity with the past. The past provides a point of stability and perspective, reminding Christians that their spiritual ancestors met in a specific time and place for worship.

Paul Westermeyer, a Lutheran musician and music historian, introduces the idea of time and space when he thinks of hymns. A church sings hymns "in a specific time and place. [And a church] . . . sings in the idiom of a specific time and place," that is, a church or congregation gathers in a specific cultural and societal milieu and context, and sings hymns, gospel songs and worships through other musical offerings.<sup>3</sup>

When a congregation<sup>4</sup> sings in the idiom of a specific time and place, are there common characteristics one may use to identify good hymns that fit in any idiom? I believe there are.

### Twelve Characteristics of Good Hymns.<sup>5</sup>

First, good hymns typically include reference or offer an allusion to Divine Names (God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit), directly or indirectly, and interpret and inform the worshiper as to the meaning of Titles associated with Deity.

[If Titles associated with Deity are not familiar to most worshipers in a contemporary congregation, the preaching pastor and a congregation's teachers should address the lacuna with thoroughness and imagination in order to unleash the power of the Divine Name(s) in the lives of the worshipers.]

Second, good hymns were and are written for Christian worship.<sup>6</sup> If one understands implications of communication theory and applies theory

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<sup>3</sup> In Protestantism, hymns and music appropriate for a large church in the city or suburbs will likely differ from the music sung in a small town or rural church, unless there is uniformity expected by a denomination. Even then, there exists a hymnal within "the" hymnal.

<sup>4</sup> Terms like "church" in lower case type refers to a local congregation. The capitalized word "Church" refers to the Catholic or Universal Church, all Christians, or to a specific denomination.

<sup>5</sup> Readers are encouraged to think of additional characteristics of good hymns rather than accept this list. It will be obvious that some of the characteristics overlap.

<sup>6</sup> "The first hymns . . . date from soon after the time of the life of Christ. By AD 64 St Paul was writing to the Ephesians and to the Colossians urging them to be filled with the Spirit: 'speaking to yourselves in psalms and spiritual songs.' In about AD 105 Pliny the Younger (A.D. 62?-113) reported to the Emperor Trajan (ca. A.D. 53-117) that the Christians were meeting early in the morning and singing hymns. It seems that some kind of hymn-singing took place in Christian worship, and one of the earliest hymns was probably 'Hail, gladdening light', which was spoken of by St Basil as 'ancient' sometime around the year 370." AAH, 11.

Watson's judicious selection of hymns comprising this anthology encompasses the whole of Christian history. He selects hymns from these periods: ancient and medieval hymns, the Reformation in Germany and England, the seventeenth century Anglicans and Puritans, Isaac Watts, the early eighteenth century, Charles Wesley, the later eighteenth

to hymns in the context of worship, worship leaders will grasp the reason why the choice of good hymns and great music for worship are so important for the edification of the faithful. Quite simply, good hymns and great music are a means of communication.

In the case of hymns, communication involves a system of language symbols and vivid images that are associated with religious ideas, beliefs and convictions. The ideas, beliefs, convictions and emotions, a quartet, sustain or support a triad of religious ideas, beliefs and convictions, but also engage the emotions at a deep and persistent and penetrating level.

Good hymns act as signs and symbols that communicate more than words set to lively music (though lively tunes may indeed be employed). Good hymns ought not to be chosen to fill a line in an order of worship. Rather good hymns and great music should be carefully chosen in order to bring additional coherence to the service of worship and on behalf of the worshiper.

Good hymns and great music integrate the language and music and scripture and thereby lift the hearts and minds of worshipers.

Good hymns and great music contribute to whatever Manifestation or Epiphany the Divine One desires to reveal of the holiness of the Eternal Majesty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Thinking more deeply to learn why the choice of good hymns is important, one turns to the hypotheses of Marshall McLuhan. Though McLuhan's hypotheses about communication originally dealt with advertising and television, his seminal ideas remain relevant to Church as she prepares for any given Sunday morning's worship service:

In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, *the medium is the message.*<sup>7</sup>

Good hymns are media that contains the message.

Third, good hymns transmit a specific message by uniting music built on a biblical text or texts.

Fourth, good hymns advocate sound theology.

Fifth, good hymns are poetry and theology matched to a tune.

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century, the Romantic Movement and the early nineteenth century, the High Victorian Period, the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American hymns, the early twentieth century and the mid-twentieth century and the hymn explosion. Of the hymn anthologies I know, I commend this one as the best of the lot. It is comprehensive in scope and highly informative in detail. If you are interested in learning about hymns, this anthology is the place to begin.

<sup>7</sup> Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill, 1964, 7. Italics mine. McLuhan is speaking of radio, television and advertising. Nevertheless, his observation about the media is the message is easily convertible into the currency of music generally and hymns and churches music specifically.

Sixth, good hymns speak to the eight stages of life.<sup>8</sup> Worshipers are multigenerational. Children, youth and adults, all of varying ages, interests and perceptions about life gather for worship. Yet one size in worship does not necessarily fit all, for there exists an age deferential between and among worshipers and families and persons who are arriving at different stages in life, as Erik H. Erikson rightly suggests.

Indeed, good hymns may bridge the generation gap to a surprising degree and conserve the biblical and theological integrity and character of congregations by so doing, a concept that Luther would enthusiastically endorse.

Indeed, Christians of all age groups need a common vocabulary in order to speak meaningfully or carry on a conversation. Good hymns provide just that link between the generations.

In this context, one is not thinking of merely a set of code words, that is, biblical language without contemporary application, but a vocabulary that makes sense of life, consistent with the stage of life the child, the youth and the adults who are on different stages of the pilgrimage.

If this point is accurate, then, scripture, sermon or homily, good hymns, great music and prepared prayers (extemporary or read) promise and indeed to speak to and resonate with the deepest needs and aspirations of the human heart.

In the course of this paper and through countless angles of vision, time and time again, I reiterate good hymns and great music link heaven and earth and the Divine Gift with the greatest and most pronounced human needs, including our greatest sorrows and griefs.

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<sup>8</sup> In his important book, Childhood and Society, Erik H. Erikson identifies the Eight Stages of Man. He matches the eight stages with what he calls the "basic virtues" or strengths that guide the healthy person toward psychological coherence in living the human experience. The list of stages and matching basic virtues or strengths are shown on the following table.

**Eight Stages of Life**

1. Basic trust vs. Basic Mistrust
2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
3. Initiative vs. Guilt
4. Industry vs. Inferiority
5. Identity vs. Role Confusion
6. Intimacy vs. Isolation
7. Generatively vs. Stagnation
8. Ego Integrity vs. Despair

**Basic Virtues or Strengths**

1. Drive and *Hope*
2. Self-control and *Willpower*
3. Direction and *Purpose*
4. Method and *Competence*
5. Devotion and *Fidelity*
6. Affiliation and *Love*
7. Production and *Care*
8. Renunciation and *Wisdom*

Initially, either the language of Erikson's eight stages or his list of matching basic virtues or strength may put off readers. However, reflection and thinking constructively about the Bible and theology will lead sensitive readers to make the connection between the eight stages and the strengths and good hymns and great music. The music and language of good hymns opens a treasury of significant interpretative insight ("communicates") to the met or unmet psychological needs and strong or failed strengths of any and all persons who sit in the pew Sunday after Sunday. See Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1950, 1963 and reissued in 1993, 274.

Furthermore, good hymns take serious the human condition, with all of its myriad ramifications, and good hymns preserve the worship of the Church from falling prey to musical fads in which congregations may indiscriminately become addicted and thereby manipulate the emotions of congregants.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, a trendy congregation may tend and most probably will neglect children or youth or older congregants who are not "with it," and forfeit a golden opportunity to educate the young and minister to the older congregant. If our sole focus is on latest new generation of the continuum of life, that is, the Baby-Boomers or by whatever name sticks, our vision is too limited.<sup>10</sup>

In the case of the older congregant, often these members have a different memory of hymns and spiritual songs that originated in their childhood memories, and do not deserve to be neglected when it comes to good hymns and great music.

Yet good hymns (familiar to older members) just may provide balance across the generations and certainly offer substance to all generations if the minister and musicians make an effort, if necessary, to interpret the language of a particular hymn to the congregation. Not only does one want to build a common vocabulary among the faithful, regardless of the ages involved, but to offer a rich treasury of prayer and devotion that will serve a lifetime if given a place in memory. Good hymns, through language and tune, perform that function in an admirable fashion.

Seventh, good hymns are a marriage of language and tune. Composers, worth their salt, create hymns that transform the mind and move the heart.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gerrit Dawson, "Orphaned Children Sing Lonely Songs: Why We're Losing the Person of the Father," *Theology Matters*. 9:2 [March/April 2003], 1-11.

W.A. Visser 't Hooft addressed the theme of disappearance of God as Father nearly thirty years ago. Consult Visser 't Hooft's pioneering book, The Fatherhood of God in an Age of Emancipation. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982.

Visser 't Hooft rightly believes that "God transcends the difference of the sexes. We call him Father because Jesus has taught us to do so, and to cease so to call him is to cease to pray as Jesus enjoined us . . . The fatherhood of God is however not a close or exclusive symbolism. It is open to correction, enrichment, and completion from the other forms of symbol, such as 'mother,' 'brother,' 'sister,' and 'friend.'"

<sup>10</sup> In my estimation, though perhaps admirable, the attempt to bridge the generation gap requires more than holding both contemporary service and traditional services. Serious thought needs to be given on how to educate those participants in contemporary worship, acquainting them with the oral and literary images associated with historic Christianity. And that includes the language and images of good hymns and exploration of the range of Christian hymnody.

<sup>11</sup> In connection with this idea, two sources are cited. The phrase "to move the heart," so far as I can tell, originated with Philip (sometimes spelled Philipp) Melanchthon (1497- 1560). A fine study to introduce the reader to Melanchthon's concept is found in Michael B. Aune, "To Move the Heart: Rhetoric and Ritual in the Theology of Philipp Melanchthon and Its Implications for Contemporary Ritual Theory." San Francisco: Christian Universities Press, 1994.

**Eighth, good hymns challenge the mind and move the heart and resonate with some aspect of the Divine Imagination.**

**Nine, good hymns acknowledge the human condition and address some aspect of our human quest or journey.**

**In our time, the human condition challenges traditions and even the Christian Message. Indeed, good hymns and Christian hymnody fill a vacuum in modern life precisely because good hymns and great music contain in words and tune resources for living in a time of cultural and societal change. Pitirim Sorokin aptly describes our time as "the crisis of the age."<sup>12</sup>**

**In some sense, good hymns and classic Christian hymnody and great music may even check secular trends of thought of modern times and challenge the mentality of the age by simply being unique and dramatically different than the prevailing culture.**

**In a time when pluralism tends to deny uniqueness to any form or message, hymns defy the modern convention and proclaim a unique or a one-of-a-kind message of difference.**

**Indeed, good hymns and great music offers a glimpse of an attractive Christian alternative to secular culture and its music. Quality music may be enough to challenge moderns to think and act more deeply, because this style of music, steeped in history and tradition, commands**

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**See Watson, *op. cit.*, 4. "Hymns belong to the Church. They were given to the Church by those who wrote them, for the use of the faithful in worship. They encourage the practice of the presence of God, and the tricky business of human self-knowledge: they also help human beings to aspire to higher things. In the singing of hymns, men, women, and children give voice to the hopes and aspirations that they would never normally hope to achieve:**

**Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
To his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
Who like me his praise should sing?**

**"The four adjectival participles in the third line ring out with a confidence which drives the great hymn of praise. It is easy to doubt this unaccustomed assurance, for many people it represents" a self that is, for the moment, transformed in the singing of a hymn. The singers of hymns can, through their singing, may transcend an ordinary self by entering, however briefly through music, into the presence of God.**

**<sup>12</sup> Pitirim A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age*. Oxford: One World, 1992. This work was first published in 1941, but the content is more timely than the articles and editorials and columns one reads in any of today's newspapers or network television news. Even *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* merely illustrate what Sorokin anticipated over sixty years ago.**

**Harold O.J. Brown, *The Sensate Culture: Western Civilization Between Chaos and Transformation*. Dallas, London, Vancouver and Melbourne: Word, 1996. Professor Brown takes the Sorokin book as his guide and masterly illustrates the trends and issues Sorokin foresaw would unfold in due course and in time in the West and in the United States. The trends and consequences Sorokin expected are now bearing fruit. Church leaders would do well to put a mind around and come to grips with the cultural shift and drift of our time.**

the soul to aspire to greater heights and better deeds than are ordinarily expected in a culture that can become monotonous and predictable.

Furthermore, Christian leaders should guard against the natural tendency to mimic the trends of the age in music and art, and especially in hymns and music, simply in order to fill sanctuaries and auditoriums.

Unfortunately, keeping up with the latest trends in pop music may fill sanctuaries with a throbbing beat and monotonous words, but one asks, What enduring structures of faith do the words and the beat imprint on the minds and hearts of those who hear or sing the songs?"<sup>13</sup>

Tenth, good hymns may be understood as a creative response that begins in a witnessed or understood sense of adoration or praise or abject human need and evolves in the mind and heart of the composer.

Eleventh, a good hymn has merit if the hymn as poetry demonstrates sufficient evidence that the composer's original design includes singable tune, a biblically reliable text, and a theologically alert choice of language and possesses memorable metaphor and simile for ease of memorization.

Twelfth, often one characteristic of good hymns is they reach an international audience. This is not always true but appears to be the case in a large number of beloved hymns.

### Preparation of the Composer.

It is worth remembering that throughout Christian history, significant composers and hymn writers were trained in either one or both classical languages, i.e., Greek and Latin, and had studied rhetoric and poetry in the classical tradition. Academic preparation equipped these composers to aspire to the craft of hymn writing.

Furthermore, the Protestant musical tradition inspired the fugue [1590-1600],<sup>14</sup> an innovation in form. Also the compositions of Bach's

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<sup>13</sup>Simon Gonzalez, "Songs that Move the Heart: Exploring the Power of Music in Evangelism," and "Pastors find music to be a powerful tool for evangelism," and "Pointing People to Jesus," Decision Magazine. (September 2003), 6-7, 8-9 and 10-13. While one deeply appreciates the role of emotion to move the heart in evangelism, one asks that attention be given to complex issues that caused Philip Melancthon to speak in terms of rhetoric, in the classical tradition, as a means of engaging the mind in order "to move the heart."

The use of music in evangelism or worship should inform the mind about the Divine Names and not merely touch emotion. To move the emotions without engaging the mind often produces temporary converts or disciples, a practice to be avoided.

For a discussion of the relationship of emotion and worship and on ways of engaging the mind and moving the heart, consult Michael B. Aune, "To Move the Heart: Rhetoric and Ritual in the Theology of Philip Melancthon and Its Implications for Contemporary Ritual Theory." San Francisco: Christian Universities Press, 1994.

<sup>14</sup>"J.S. Bach is regarded as the greatest master of the fugue. The fugue consists of one movement, divided into connected sections. The theme is usually two to four measures in length and contains a striking contour or rhythmic feature that allows it to be recognized on each appearance. In the first section of the fugue, the *exposition*, the theme is introduced, heard alone in one voice and then repeated or imitated in turn by the

**"Mass in B Minor" or Bach's "Magnificat"<sup>15</sup> have not lost their appeal to modern congregations and are appreciated as music fit for worship, not simply as performance-based presentations or as a concert.<sup>16</sup>**

**We should never forget that since the earliest days of The Way, hymns were included in Christian worship.**

**There many models for worship but the one I think is highly appropriate includes music (hymns, opening and the closing voluntary and offertory and anthem), Old and New Testaments lessons, thoughtful prayers from the pulpit or lectern or altar or Lord's Table and a sermon<sup>17</sup> or homily.<sup>18</sup> Worship done "decently and in order" also teaches catechism,<sup>19</sup> or offers instruction in faith (Calvin).**

**It appears likely that Christians do not appreciate the relationship between hymns and catechism that Luther rightly understood and**

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other verses, each with a different pitch. After each voice has made its thematic statement, it may continue with a counter subject or drop out of the texture temporarily.

"Following the exposition is a brief section known as the *episode*, derived from developments of the theme but in which the them as a whole does not appear." Homer Ulrich, "Fugue," The Encyclopedia Americana: International Edition, Volume 12. Danbury: Grolier Inc., 1972, 151.

<sup>15</sup> "'Roman Catholic piety,' writes Oswald Spengler in The Decline of the West, 'expresses itself in the altarpiece, while Protestant piety is represented by the oratorio. The Isenheim Altar and Bach's St. Matthew's Passion are high lights of these two evolutionary phases.' As Thode, in the Munich edition of Luther, says: 'The primary role formerly played by painting was not taken over by music.'" Paul Nettl, Luther and Music. Translated by Frida Best and Ralph Wood. Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1948, 1.

For a thoughtful explanation of the role of Johann Sebastian Bach and his powerful music, see Jaroslav Pelikan, Bach Among the Theologians. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

<sup>16</sup> The term "concert" is a public performance of music or dancing. To speak of a religious gathering and to call it a concert rather than worship, which includes more than listening to music needs rethinking. A concert draws an audience but a congregation should not observe worship as performance. Worship is not theater or simply another secular setting. The same can be said of the Icon of the Greek and Eastern Churches when removed from a sanctuary does not automatically become "art." The modern world expects Christians to handle sacred things in a careless manner, and we oblige.

<sup>17</sup> A sermon is based on a specific scriptural text and expounded on that basis. Relevant illustration to illuminate the text and make it understandable in a parish is expected.

<sup>18</sup> Historically, a homily was a moral exhortation to the congregation. However, in due course, the sermon and the homily became interchangeable and the difference negated.

<sup>19</sup> Baptist congregations have a unique opportunity to make a statement of faith. I have worshiped in Baptist Churches that display a written covenant in sight of all. Without exception, each of these covenant statements is biblical sound and theologically grounded. These expressions of covenant provide a marvelous statement of faith though which children and youth could be instructed in faith.

For potential examples of Baptist creedal statements, Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with Translations. Volume III. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877, 738-756.

expected of the congregations he served and of the families under his pastoral supervision.<sup>20</sup>

People sing what they believe, and people learn what they believe by what they sing. Human beings, as we know, are by nature music loving creatures, so good hymns and suitable music for the worship to the Glory of God have the power to carry over into the week what is said, sung, preached and prayed on Sunday morning.

### Transition

Unfortunately, practical considerations arise and deterrents surface when one speaks of hymns or church music.<sup>21</sup>

Paul Westermeyer, a Lutheran musician and teacher and music historian mentioned at the outset of this paper, notes how seriously we take church music. He anticipates the reasons we care deeply about what we sing or hear in congregations, so worship leaders must think clearly about the role of church music in general and of the good hymns in particular when ministering through worship and in specific congregations.

Church music is conflict -- [an indication] that music means much to Christian people, because it is a primary place where the where the faith of a community takes flesh and comes to life. The stakes are high. A church that may be apathetic about many things is seldom apathetic about music - - about a new hymnal, for example. In this view, though the conflict point to how important music is to the Christian

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<sup>20</sup> "When the catechism was taught daily in the home, the fundamental theology was not be relegated to a mere intellectual process of learning a series of theological propositions. The context of this catechesis, teaching and learning, was worship in which faith, prayer and hymnody were component parts. In this Short Preface to the Large Catechism, Luther charges the head of each household to teach the catechism and says that this teaching should be accompanied by singing of catechism hymns." Robin A. Leaver, "Luther's Catechism Hymns 2. Ten Commandments," Lutheran Quarterly, XI (1997), 419. Entire article is found on 411-421.

It can be argue also that a gospel song may more than adequately serve as a part of the catechism of the church, however informal that may be.

In congregations that do not have any catechism or do not subscribe to any formal confessional standards (Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed, for example), one may rightly argue that along side scripture, sermon and prayers, singing (of hymns, gospel songs or praise music) becomes de facto the catechism of the congregation. If indeed singing is a major feature of worship in a non-confessional church, the selection of hymns and other music is too important to leave to whim.

But if, on the other hand, one belongs or attends a congregation that adheres to a confessional tradition, the role of the hymn may serve as an exquisite handmaiden to creed, sermon, scripture and prayers. In those places where worship is a seamless garment and not an afterthought, worship becomes more than the sum of individual parts.

<sup>21</sup>In a regional ETS meeting in Dallas some years ago, I attempted to raise the issue of the theology of hymns but quickly learned this topic was too hot to handle.

church, we in our moment are seen as one more conflict in a series and more connected to the previous one that we dare to admit. We would like to believe that we inhabit a new 'paradigm' or a world we describe with the prefix 'post' (post-Christian, post-modern, post-Puritan, postdenominational, post patriarchal, etc.). We are right when those designation suggest that our age, like very other age, faces new challenges that are not to be evaded. We are wrong when they deny our biblical roots and our common bond with and debt to the early church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and what followed right up to the present. We delude ourselves when we act as if the recent artificial bubble of church attendance after World War II does not loom over us or when we shut out a broader historical vision that would free us from our myopia.<sup>22</sup>

The myopia of which Westermeyer speaks is the assumption that contemporary church music is an option that can be divorced from the long history of Christian tradition and hymnody, and a divorce, at that, that can obtained without consequences.

#### **Four Practical Consequences of the Loss of Memory of the Tradition.**

Four practical consequences of the loss of memory of the tradition of Christian hymnody include:

1. One consequence of the divorce of modern church music from its historic tradition is the disappearance of hymnbooks from in pew racks of thousands of churches.

In a significant numbers of congregations, song sheets are now projected on a large screen in the auditorium or sanctuary, thus effectively eliminating hymnals or hymnbooks as a source for Christian edification and communication of the timeless truths of the Eternal God.<sup>23</sup>

While there may be assumed temporary advantages of taking the hymnal from the hands of worshipers, the casualty is not the loss of the hymnbook. Rather the casualty is loss of two thousand years of Christian hymnody, effectively denying worshippers access to one of the Church's greatest musical treasures and a treasury of prayer and devotion.

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Westermeyer, Te Deum: The Church and Music. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, 319-320.

<sup>23</sup> "The hymnal is a kind of response to the Bible, an echo and an extension thereof. In the Bible one perceives how the Lord communicates with mankind; and in the hymnal, how mankind communicates with the Lord." - Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Hymnal and Liturgies of the Moravian Church. Printed by Walter M. Carqueville, Elk Grove, Illinois, and published by the Authority of the Provincial Synods of the Moravian Church in America, 1969. Copyright page.

2. Furthermore, unthinking removal of the hymnal or hymnbook from the hands of the laity denies them the birth right of Protestantism, which reintroduced congregational singing on a scale not experienced before.

Also laying aside the hymnal teaches this lesson: We assume church music today is as church music has always been. That is a fraud perpetuated on the faithful.<sup>24</sup>

3. Some pastors, though highly critical of cultural and societal influences on members of the flock, appear to have forgotten that singing Church music that mimics the beat and content typically associated with pop culture may not be congenial to promoting the Christian message.

While admittedly the tunes of pop culture music may be catchy and even enjoyable, unless the language of hymns is saturated in the scripture and theology and marinated in fine poetic form, congregations are not served well.

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<sup>24</sup> Forgetting the tradition and heritage of worship and the long tradition of Christian hymnody appears to be the case when it comes to the Prestonwood Baptist Church, a 21,000 member congregation, located in Collin County, Texas. Jim Atkinson files this report.

"Prestonwood Baptist Church presents a 'more casual sort of religion that is practiced out here [in Frisco], but there is no questioning the enthusiasm for it. On entering the foyer of Prestonwood - - which reminded me very much of entering the American Airlines Center for [Dallas] a Mavericks playoff game - - I was immediately accosted by one of the greeters, who squealed, 'We have just found out! Right over there, on that side of the building, we're going to have Starbucks!'

"Inside the seven-thousand seat theater, my wife and I listened to an eight-piece, eight-voice ensemble grind out a couple of rap-metered tunes. Pastor Jack Graham then celebrated his fourteenth year as head of the operation with a preachment on 'Discerning Your Culture.' It was obvious that Graham and his staff were trying hard to be hip. The contemporary music and choreography, the big screens on each side of the dais, the casual, vernacular tone of Graham's sermon - - soon, a caffe latte afterward! - - all seemed calculated to give this church service an ambience basically indistinguishable from the average well-behaved rock concert.

"Graham's message tracked the sort of practical and populist Christianity the [President] Bush has referred to when speaking of his faith. It was a plainspoken rumination on 'Judge not lest ye be judged,' in which the pastor - - who, with his deep tan, white teeth, and short-sleeved shirt looked like an assistant golf pro from the nearby Stonebriar Country Club - - warned his congregants to not ever believe that they 'have the gift of criticism' and to leave the big judgments to God." Jim Atkinson, "Brave New 'Burbs," *Texas Monthly*, (September 2003), 58.

Atkinson's sweeping generalizations may be inaccurate. However, one who is concerned about the long-term effects of "worship lite" must question the value of hymns set to a rap-meter. If indeed the medium is the message, then, one asks to what extent does the beat overwhelm the message of the hymn or the sermon?

Also, judging from the squandering of the biblical text on judgment, as reported by Atkinson, one wonders about the wisdom of using the modern beat to sell the music, or going easy on the biblical doctrine of judgment?

On the other hand, it is commendable that Prestonwood originates a significant number of social ministries that are truly worthy of notice and approbation.

4. Uncritical acceptance of music, largely devoid of biblical and theological categories, is puzzling given the fact that many congregations think of themselves at least as Bible-believing congregations.

It seems, however, that when it comes to music for Sunday worship, the influence of the secular world and the entertainment culture easily seduces those who claim the Bible is "The Word of God."

The seduction occurs through the unwitting tripartite division of the spoken word (prayers and sermon), from the sung and played word (hymns and Church music) and from the written Word (the Bible) is an undetected irony that exists in some evangelical congregations.

Where a tripartite division exists at the heart of the worship service, the influence of contemporary culture and society is more likely and silently infiltrate the life of the congregation.

#### I. Influence of Cultural Trends on Church Music and Worship.

The influence of culture and society on the church's music in today's Protestant churches is evident if one participates in worship in a variety of worship setting and orders of service.<sup>25</sup> I observe few parishes or churches escape the influence of culture and society on the language and style of worship or in the selection of music. Some are more successful than other congregations but all of us can profit from Martin Marty's specific

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<sup>25</sup> "An observer of the American church scene of today can hardly fail to note that theology is not in the center of concern among Protestants. In the main the laity of the churches is unconcerned about theological questions, and few ministers appear compelled to orient their work to clear theological principles.

"To be sure, many laymen are preoccupied with the question of the meaning of the Christian faith. They inquire eagerly how the tenets of the Christian gospel can be validated over against the secularist opinions and attitudes that determine the everyday life of Americans. But they are unable to really deep their understanding of the Christian gospel.

"The ministers cannot be but aware of the fact that today Christian truth goes nowhere unchallenged, indeed, that Christianity is actively being opposed by rival 'secular faiths' of scientism, humanism, nationalism, socialism, and even the democratic faith. They therefore know that without an examination of the implications of the Christian gospel (and such an examination is inevitably theological) the gospel's relevance to the human situation of our times cannot be demonstrated. Nevertheless, they do not exhibit a theological responsibility in their professional work. The method and substance of their sermons lead one to suspect that they do not care to think theologically and that they are not interested to find the theological criteria of truth. And their other ministerial activities likewise do not appear to be guided by a theological awareness of the specific nature of Christianity.

"American Protestantism thus impresses one as being fundamentally untheological." Wilhelm Pauck, "Theology in the Life of Contemporary American Protestantism," Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich, edited by Walter Leibrecht. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1965, 270-271.

observations about the pervasive influence of culture and society on churches.

Martin Marty, a professor emeritus of the University of Chicago, challenges churches to maintain cultural relevance and distinction by being faithful to the Christian tradition. One avenue of faithfulness to the Christian tradition is in worship and through music.

### Marty

suggests that in our "postmodern utterly relativist market-oriented world," if Christians agree there is a God and that we are to bring our best gifts of response, then it follows that there are intrinsic "betters" and "worses" within "the standards and traditions of culture." The church at the twentieth century's end has not sorted out well and has tended to define everything, including its music, like the market-driven world around it rather than respond to its best instincts and treat people well. In the place of *Te Deum*<sup>26</sup> and the long strand of the church's song which it represents, the temptation has been to substitute superficial praise choruses or poorly crafted attempts to tell God how we feel. That the church might have a message and a schooling responsibility [of laity in worship] has often escaped its recent gaze. As Marty notes, people get hooked on all sorts of things and work hard at them - - "community college, bridge-playing, bowling, hairstyling, fishfly-tying, YMCA, fitness training, Tae kwon do, T'ai Chi, woodworking, barbershop-quartetting, bass-guitar playing, scouting, etc.," but the church at many points appears to have lost its nerve and the sense that its message is worth a comparable effort or that people deserve what is worth the effort, assuming that only what sells immediately has any value.<sup>27</sup>

Marty's warning about the dangers of cultural syncretism inside the Christian Churches is a timely one. An illustration of cultural syncretism inside the Church includes an easy and an uncritical acceptance of hymns or music devoid of substantive biblical and theological reflection.

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<sup>26</sup>Westermeyer quotes personal correspondence from Martin Marty, July 23, 1997. See Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum: The Church and Music*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, 318. *Te Deum*, taken from the Latin, means a hymn to the Father and the Son. Since the ninth century, tradition has assigned its original composition to Ambrose and Augustine.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 318-319. See also Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Singapore: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Readers will profit greatly from reading Putnam's book and will come to appreciate the complex cultural forces at work in contemporary American society, forces that affect the church and its mission and its life and ultimately its growth.

Or, removal or substitution of older language in familiar hymns or gospel songs and omission of an offending stanza one may think unacceptable to modern sensibilities or the aging of the congregation is an example of "sensitivity" is bowing to cultural norms, also a form of cultural syncretism.

Years ago, my spouse and I attended in worship in a large United Methodist Church in Dallas. The congregation had a lot of gray hair showing that day. The young music director informed the congregation that the last stanza<sup>28</sup> of "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"<sup>29</sup> was not to be sung that Sunday.

The omitted stanza, highly appropriate given the age of the congregation of those sitting in the pews that Sunday morning, would not have likely taken offense to the promised Christian hope one could read in the omitted stanza.

When ends life's transient dream  
When death's cold sullen stream shall o'er me roll;  
Blest Savior, then in love, fear and distrust remove;  
O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul.

As Martin Marty has rightly said we "sell" our churches short on music and theology and preaching and deny the Christians in our care and who "deserve [a more thoughtful] effort"<sup>30</sup> than uncritical acceptance of cultural standards for church music.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The word "stanza" is defined in Schirmer Pronouncing Pocket Manual of Musical Terms as "a symmetric unit of a song." See this manual. Edited by Theodore Baker and revised by Nicholas Slonimsky. New York: Schirmer Books and London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1905 and 1973 [revised edition], p. 208.

<sup>29</sup> The United Methodist Hymnal, Hymn Number 452. Nashville: The United Methodist Church Publishing House, 1989.

In calling attention to this lapse, the gospel song, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," though not an example of great hymnody I learned to love as a child. The hymns and gospel songs of our childhood and youth, whether good or bad examples of biblically sound and theologically responsible, remain embedded in memory for a lifetime and ultimately shape our belief system.

<sup>30</sup> Most evangelical congregations, I assume, do not offer classes in worship or catechism. It is tacitly assumed, perhaps, that if one worships in a congregation, one gets "the idea" of what worship is. I think not.

Worship and catechism are essential to the life of any congregation worth its salt if a church wishes to stay in business. Denominations without a formal catechism may teach their children and youth and even adults about the meaning and purpose of worship though music. If congregational leadership understands their responsibility for teaching the young in their care about the meaning of language of hymns, prayers, scripture, and the sermon, leadership understands its role rightly and assumes a heavy but important mantle of responsibility for educating the young in the rubrics of the Christian Faith.

<sup>31</sup> "The [Christian] faith does not change but expression of it does. In our frenetic world we need to sing such expressions of theological praise that are more concerned with the timelessness of the substance of what we believe, instead of singing only in a currently fashionable style that will also go out-of-date. Further, our contemporary popular culture is not as monolithic and all-pervasive as some would have us believe." On the

My assumption in whoever made the decision to omit the stanza was attempting to be sensitive to the elderly members of the congregation. Those of us who shave or brush teeth or comb our hair each morning are not likely to take offense when a hymn speaks of "life's transient dream" and almost pray "O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul."

The illustrations in this section draw our attention to the fact there is a lot of work to be done in order to reclaim the rich tradition of good hymns and Christian hymnody. To assist us in the task, however, requires that our contemporary position be placed in the broad sweep of historical perspective. In order to orient the reader to that perspective, a brief survey the history of Christian hymnody is in order.

## II. The Hymn in Christian Worship.<sup>32</sup>

Augustine (354-430) in his commentary on "Psalm 148:14 describes the hymn as the praise of God in song."<sup>33</sup> Another early church father Ambrose (340- 397) adds, "praise to God that is not sung is not a hymn."<sup>34</sup> Ambrose, generally acknowledged as the Father of Latin hymnody, gave his flock hymns that were easily understood, easily sung and thus easily remembered.

One of Ambrose's hymns is reproduced for illustrative purposes: easily understood, easily sung and easily remembered.

"O Splendor of God's Bright Glory"<sup>35</sup>

1. O Splendor of God's glory bright,  
From light eternal bringing light;  
Thou Light of life, light's living Spring,  
True Day, all days illuminating.

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point of the non-monolithic and all-pervasive culture, the author quotes Barbara J. Resch, "Adolescents' Attitudes Toward the Appropriateness of Religious Music," DME dissertation, Indiana University, 1996. For the full article from which the quotation was taken, consult Robin J. Leaver, "Luther's Catechism Hymns 3. Creed," Lutheran Quarterly. XII [1998], 86, 88.

<sup>32</sup> The history of Christian hymnody begins with the Psalms of the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible. For purposes of this essay and to keep the text to a manageable length, however, the story rightly begins with St. Augustine and his writings.

<sup>33</sup> The next several quoted citations may be found in Alec Robertson's article on "Hymns," cited in The Westminster Dictionary of Worship. Edited by J.G. Davies. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972, p. 194. Hereafter cited as WDW.

<sup>34</sup> Ambrose once observed that the Psalms is the hymnbook of the Old Testament, and with the songs of Israel, they are the singing "voice of the church." Westermeyer, op. cit., p. 23. The Psalms were regarded as hymns and traditional links to the great Hallel group (113-118, Hebrew Bible), and were the songs sung or recited or sung at the major Jewish festivals, e.g., Passover, and presumably the hymn that was sung at the Last Supper by Jesus and his disciples (Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26). For a substantive summary of hymns in the Latin Church, consult WDW, p. 194.

<sup>35</sup> The Hymnbook. Richmond, Philadelphia and New York, 1954, p. 51, hymn number 46.

2. Confirm our will to do the right,  
And keep our hearts from envy's blight;  
Let faith her eager fires renew,  
And hate the false, and love the true.

3. O joyful be the passing day  
With thought as clear as morning's ray,  
With faith like noontide shining bright,  
Our souls unshadowed by the night.

4. Dawn's glory gilds the earth and skies;  
Do Thou, our perfect Morn, arise;  
The Father's help His children claim,  
And sing the Father's glorious name.

Though singing good hymns of the Early and Ancient Church became a staple in the monastic tradition, especially those monasteries following the Rule of St. Benedict (c. 480-c.550), the Roman Catholic Church did not

include them in the secular office until the twelfth century on account of prejudice against importing other than biblical words into the liturgy, and even more because the form was used by heretics for propaganda purposes.<sup>36</sup>

Appearance and introduction of vernacular hymns in liturgical practice appears quietly in the Middle Ages. Presumably vernacular hymns are a part of the Franciscan movement of the thirteen-century, a movement that introduced singing as part of its revival apparatus.

Consequently, with the accustomed habit of including singing in the liturgy, the idea of singing also grew in popularity over the next centuries. It is not surprising, however, but naturally an outcome of that earlier model of the Middle Ages that lead directly to the hymn singing of the Bohemian Brethren.

In the early Fifteen Century, the Bohemian Brethren, under the leadership of John Huss (c. 1369-1415), prepared the way for wider acceptance of congregational singing during the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. The Lutherans introduced reforms in worship and congregational singing, though many Calvinists limited congregational singing to the Metrical Psalms. Also translation of the liturgy from Latin into the language of the common man was undertaken in the German and the Swiss Reformation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> **WBW**, p. 194.

<sup>37</sup> **Liturgies of the Western Church**. Edited by Bard Thompson. Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1961. The complete removal of Latin services from

During the time of change from Latin to German, vernacular songs were adopted in Lutheran circles and the language of the hymn was outfitted in new words. One should remember that not only were vernacular songs called to serve the Worship of God, but also hymns composed by the Early Church Fathers and even remarkable hymns of the Middle Ages were naturally incorporated into Lutheran worship practice.

The Lutherans, who were guided initially by Luther's example in composing hymns and serving as an capable musician (lute) and composer and singer, and some Calvinists who introduced the metrical psalm, produced a quality of hymn and song that remains with us yet.

Subsequent developments in hymnody and congregational singing not only owe much to the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, however, but they brought us to where we are today when it comes to church music and hymn singing.<sup>38</sup>

This concludes a short history of the hymn. From a short history of the hymn, it is appropriate now to meet the hymn as a form of religious poetry, poetry, based on biblical language and rooted in theological ideas, doctrines, words and themes. The hymns chosen for this paper not only provide perspective of how biblical and theological language and ideas may be incorporated creatively, but these hymns are a measuring-rod by which to judge and evaluate contemporary church music and all hymns.

However, I will not attempt to evaluate contemporary church music in light of the older hymns' s strengths. Rather I leave that matter to be decided by readers who are in regular attendance as members of congregations. Hopefully, the music of their congregations consists of enduring hymns and great music of the Church.

### III. Case Studies: Divine Names in Christian hymnody.

Unfortunately, contemporary American Protestants and the society in general do not find poetry too exciting or too readable. Perhaps that is one explanation why Christian hymnody is neglected.

If, however, one remembers the Old Testament and certainly parts of the New Testament were written in the form of poetry and often to be sung, good hymns and good gospel songs are indeed sung theology.

Poetry becomes art in service of humanity, and poetry, as a hymn, becomes a hymn that is offered to the Glory of God and for worship of the Church.<sup>39</sup>

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Wittenberg did not commence immediately but some services were said in Latin after German language services were introduced by Luther and others.

<sup>38</sup> WDW, pp. 194-195.

<sup>39</sup> "A poem . . . if it is rightly understood to be interpolated into the Office [of the Liturgy] must be in accord with the linguistic tone of scripture and liturgy. Secular poems with a human interest may fall short of this ideal, but where they are yoked to tune suitable for congregational singing they may be suitable for use in public gatherings of an undenominational character." Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. Edited by

Hymns, richly clothed in scripture and resplendent in the full dress of theological language, are a creation of poetic imagination and, some would say, almost hint of the origin of Divine Inspiration. Good hymns, based on scripture in the best sense of the term and grounded in sound theology, serve the Church not only in the conduct of worship, but also serve the faithful as major source of devotion.<sup>40</sup>

#### A. Case Study: Isaac Watts and "Joy to the World."

Isaac Watts's hymn, "Joy to the World," is a joyous work, and the hymn is a fulsome example of biblical and theological poetry.<sup>41</sup> In addition to "Joy to the World," Watts also managed to produce a prodigious number of hymns and paraphrase the Psalms of David, some of the former we sing and love today.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was the creator of the modern English hymn in which singleness of theme is combined with brevity and songfulness. O God, our help in ages past, in C.M., with much use of metaphor and simile, is perhaps the greatest hymn in the language, while When I survey the wondrous Cross may be the most moving. After Watts we enter upon the great age of evangelical hymnody -- a century of divine songs. William Cowper (1731-1807), one of the few great poets to write hymns, collaborated with [John] Newton (1725-1807); his brilliant lyric Sometimes a light surprises is an example of the truth that all good hymns begin well.<sup>42</sup>

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Alex Preminger, Frank J. Warnke and O.B. Hardison, Jr. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1965) enlarged edition, 1974, p. 374. Hereafter cited as Princeton.

Albert Thompson Shaw, former director of Music and Art Master, The Royal Grammar School, Worcester, England, reminds readers of the origin of the hymn in antiquity, beginning with the Greeks.

The early Christians adapted the Greek poetic forms and developed a few primitive Greek hymns. Earliest among these is probably Phos hilaron hagian dexes, probably from the 3rd century or earlier.

"Scriptural texts appointed to be said or sung at a very early date include the Angelic song at the nativity Gloria in excelsis [Luke 2:14] and the three Gospel canticles: Magnificat [Luke 1:46-55], the song of Mary, the mother of Jesus; Nunc dimittis [Luke 2:29-32], the song of Simeon; and Benedictus [Luke 1:68-79], the song of Zacharias. The Tersanctus (the L. title of the triumphal hymn in all the early liturgies of the Eastern and Western churches) is probably the most ancient and universal Christian hymns of praise." P. 357.

<sup>40</sup> In addition to serving as aids to memory and devotion, hymns are an important teaching tool in order to educate laity in the substance and faith of the Christian Church. Considerable mastery of the rudimentary facts of Christian faith and practice are first learned through the hymns we sing.

<sup>41</sup> Speaking of poetry in general, "One says 'Poetry is a conservative art, that often serves revolutionary purposes'; the other 'Poetry is a radical art, and its deepest power is its power to conserve'. There is no need to choose between these two accounts; each poet will do that for himself." Vincent Buckley, Poetry and the Sacred. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968, frontispiece.

<sup>42</sup> Princeton, op. cit., p. 358.

Watts's career as a composer of hymns illustrates how interests in philology and scripture and theology precede composition of hymns.<sup>43</sup> Selma Bishop, who taught at McMurry University, Abilene, Texas, characterizes Watts' method of hymn composition this way.

Watts clarified his method as one by which he omitted parts of the Scriptures with little bearing upon the life of the masses; as one by which he lowered the language, by which he called 'sunk expression.' By contrast his way of paraphrase for the upper classes was to 'use words of greater Latitude and Comprehension suited to the general Circumstances of Men'. The actual process of paraphrase of Hymns and Psalms was in general the same: omission, abridging, transposing, and expanding. He explained that Hymns were 'suited to the most common Affairs of Christians.' In other words, he believed they should represent man's natural joys and sorrows.<sup>44</sup>

Though Watts lived over three centuries ago, his conviction about the words of hymns still holds. Our hymns "should represent man's natural joys and sorrows."

Instead of denying or disengaging ourselves from the emotional lostness of the modern world,<sup>45</sup> which is obviously too realistic, it makes sense to adopt Watts's ever timely suggestion that hymns should "represent man's natural joys and sorrows."<sup>46</sup>

I attended a worship service earlier this year where the congregation sang "Joy to the World." But the hymnal omitted the third stanza. Yet the third stanza of four stanzas explains why Jesus came to earth.<sup>47</sup> The omitted stanza would have caused Watts to turnover in his grave, because the third stanza reads:

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<sup>43</sup> Selma L. Bishop, Isaac Watts Hymns and Spiritual Songs [1707-1748]: A Study in Early Eighteenth Century Language Changes. London: The Faith Press, 1962. Readers are reminded of the relevance of Erikson's Eight Stages of Man. See Footnote 8, page 4 of this paper.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. xxi.

<sup>45</sup> Francis Bridger, The Diana Phenomenon. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 1998.

<sup>46</sup> Earlier in this paper, reference was made to the Gospel song, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee." This is what I believe Watts's means by "man's natural joys and sorrows." Unlike many of later hymns, Watts expected to take the human experience seriously and to place that experience under the light of God's revelation. It seems that the omitted stanza accepts at face value the joys and sorrows of human existence, and simply acknowledges their existence.

<sup>47</sup> If one remembers Genesis 3:17b-19, where the curse is explained in graphic detail, and naturally explains why Jesus was born, then, to drop the stanza renders the hymn sterile.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found.

Whatever else can be said of the pivotal third stanza of the hymn, one can say without equivocation that the third stanza pulls together the other stanzas into a whole and gives the hymn its meaning. Without the third stanza, "Joy to the World" is less useful, because Jesus did not come into the world to be a representative of the eternal chamber of commerce of heaven, but the Savior came to overthrow the power of sin and to bring redemption to mankind, female and male alike.

In this and other instances one may cite, it seems Martin Marty makes a case that we "sell" short or deliver a contemporary message that is short-sighted if we are not consciously aware of exactly what we intend in hymn editing, worship or in singing church music. Christians under our care "deserve [a more thoughtful] effort"<sup>48</sup> in worship and in the hymns we sing together as Christian people.

Of course, Watts based his hymn "Joy to the World" on a rather fluid paraphrase of the second part of Psalm 98.<sup>49</sup> In spite of a fluid paraphrase, however, he organizes the poetry of the stanzas of this hymn-poem in such a way that a wealth of biblical and theological allusion and metaphor and simile are woven into the text.

The composer's handiwork becomes more readily apparent if we join together and read aloud the four stanzas of the hymn, which are printed below.

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King.  
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing.

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<sup>48</sup> Most congregations, I assume, do not offer classes in worship. It is tacitly and generally assumed, however, that if one participates in worship in a congregation, one gets "the idea" of what worship is and knows worship is directed to the Glory of God. Based on exposure to worship services in a variety of religious settings, I think not. Worship and catechism are essential to the life of any congregation worth its salt, or if the Church wishes to stay in business. Even denominations without a formal catechism can teach their children and youth and even adults about the meaning and purpose of worship if no other way than a conscious choice of hymns to be sung. But more than hymns is required in the modern world. A conscious effort must be undertaken to train and educate children and youth and even adults in the meaning and purpose of the Christian faith.

"If traditional Christianity must really be abandoned, let it not be so nearly by default as it has been in the recent past." Albert C. Outler, Who Trusts in God: Musings on the Meaning of Providence. New York: Oxford, 1968, 30.

<sup>49</sup> The Psalms and Hymns of Isaac Watts. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997, p. 173. The publishers stated is declared with these words ". . . for instruction in righteousness . . ." The phrase is part of the publisher's title.

2. Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
While field and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness,  
And wonders of his love.<sup>50</sup>

"Joy to the World" is a hymn or carol, often associated with Advent and Christmas or perhaps Epiphany. The hymn achieves in language what is mirrored in the Divine Names of the Christian faith. The hymn weaves metaphor and simile and develops a series of biblical and theological concentric circles that move toward a singular theme, "Joy to the World."

Also one observes the "Joy to the World" illustrates the finer qualities of a hymn-poem. From internal evidence, what can we learn about the use of Divine Names, Divine attributes or theology in this hymn?

1. How does the composer incorporate the Divine Name(s) (God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit) in the hymn-poem?

2. What specific attributes are ascribed to the Divine Name(s) in the words of the hymn?

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<sup>50</sup> Psalm 98 as it appears in translation in NET (New English Translation) Bible. Biblical Studies Press, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2001, pp. 1013-1014.

- 98:1 Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he performs amazing deeds!  
His right hand and his mighty arm  
Accomplish deliverance.
- 98:2 The Lord demonstrates his power to deliver,  
in the sight of the nations he reveals his justice.
- 98:3 He remains loyal and faithful to the family of Israel.  
All the ends of the earth see our God deliver us.
- 98:4 Shout out praises to the Lord, all the earth!  
Break out in a joyful shout and sing!
- 98:5 Sing to the Lord accompanied by the harp,  
accompanied by the harp and the sound of music!
- 98:6 With trumpets and the blaring of the ram's horn,  
shout out praises before the king, the Lord!
- 98:7 Let the sea and everything in it shout,  
along with the world and those who live in it!
- 98:8 Let the rivers clap their hands!  
Let the mountains sing in unison
- 98:9 before the Lord!  
For he comes to judge the earth!  
He judges the earth fairly,  
And the nations in just manner.

3. What Divine action may resonate in the mind and hearts<sup>51</sup> of the singing congregation as a result of singing of this poem-hymn?

4. What does the congregation learn of its faith in the singing of this particular hymn?

A worship leader or worshipper who asks these and other questions is more likely to be in an advantageous position to evaluate the substance of the faith that is sung Sunday by Sunday in worship.<sup>52</sup>

Worship leadership can add immeasurably to the worship of the congregation in which he or she serves if he or she will think carefully about the language of a hymn and its potential contribution to the faithful after formal worship ends with a postlude or closing voluntary.

**B. Case Study: Charles Wesley and "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing."<sup>53</sup>**

1. O for a thousand tongues to sing  
My great Redeemer's praise,  
The glories of my God and King,  
The triumphs of his grace!

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<sup>51</sup> Though I quoted this source earlier in the paper, it bears mention again and with full citation to assist readers. See Michael B. Aune, "'A Heart Moved': Philip Melancthon's Forgotten Truth about Worship," Lutheran Quarterly. XII:4 [Winter 1998], 395-418. Melancthon understood that worship moved the heart after the mind has been instructed and edified. The movement of worship through mind to heart certainly includes the singing of hymns and incorporation of other sacred music that offer yet one more way of entering the mind and instruction the heart in the way of God.

<sup>52</sup> From John Wesley's preface to Sacred Melody, 1761.

I. Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.

II. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering and mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.

III. Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up; and you will find it a blessing.

IV. Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

V. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

VI. Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow. This drawling may naturally steal on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

VII. Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your hearts is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve her, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven. Quoted from The Methodist Hymnal. Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1905, vii.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Hymn number 1, page 1.

- 2. My gracious Master and my God,  
Assist me to proclaim,  
To spread through all the earth abroad,  
The honors of thy name.**
- 3. Jesus! The name that charms our fears,  
That bids our sorrows cease;  
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'Tis life, and health, and peace.**
- 4. He breaks the power of cancelled sin,<sup>54</sup>  
He sets the prisoner free;  
His blood can make the foulest clean;  
His blood availed for me.**
- 5. He speaks, and, listening to his voice,  
New life the dead receive;  
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice;  
The humble poor believe.**

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<sup>54</sup> J. Ernest Rattenbury, The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns. London: The Epworth Press, 1941, 213-214. Rattenbury, an English Methodist scholar of the first half of the twentieth century, reminds readers of the Evangelical importance of this hymn, especially the stanzas numbered 4 and 5. In the quoted material below, I retain the distinctive English spelling of words as they appear in the original text.

"The successful appeal of the Wesleys to England was made by men who had a dynamic gospel message to proclaim to the people. What was vital to that message was their belief in the potent love of God manifested in Christ on the Cross for every man. The rationale on which they depended for the defence of their teaching was undoubtedly that of the traditional doctrine of the Atonement which they had received from the past. This was the mountain of the Hinterland. They taught and sang of the blood of the covenant, which cancelled the debt of racial sin, but they equally taught and sang of the blood of Christ, which cleansed from all sin. The blood of Christ, it is true, was of no avail to individual men apart from their assent, but their assent would have been of no avail apart from the oblation once made on Calvary. This message has such dynamic power that one wonders whether the less effective appeals of our day may be of the consequences either or rejection of it or indifference to the doctrines which supported it. Is there anything in revised or new forms of those teachings which can be substituted for the doctrinal inspiration of Charles Wesley's hymns? Can we escape the conclusion that the very soul of the Evangelical Revival would have shrunk into nothing if we were unable to sing any longer:

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
He sets the prisoner free;  
His blood can make the foulest clean;  
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to his voice,  
New life the dead receive;  
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice;  
The humble poor believe.

6. Hear him, ye deaf; his praise ye dumb,  
You loosened tongues employ;  
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come;  
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

In The United Methodist Hymnal,<sup>55</sup> the editorial committee includes a seventh stanza.

7. In Christ, your head, you then shall know,  
shall feel your sins forgiven;  
anticipate your heaven below, and own that  
love in heaven.

On the facing page of this edition of "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," the editors include a charming brief history of the hymn.

Beginning with stanza 7, "O For a Thousand Tongues to sing" has traditionally been the opening hymn in Methodist hymnals through the world since the time of Wesley's *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist* (1780). The number of stanzas tends to vary, but the complete eighteen, seventeen of which are included in No. 58, seem never to have been used as a hymn, and much of the poem's original content is little known. It was written in 1739 by Charles Wesley to commemorate his conversion on May 21, 1738, and was published in *Hymns and Sacred Poem* (1740) with the title "For the Anniversary Day of One's Conversion." The first six stanzas deal with Charles Wesley's own emotions upon his spiritual transformation. The climatic stanza, however, is apparently an echo of an expression used by Peter Bohler: "Had I a thousand tongues, I would praise him with them all!" This itself may have been a reminiscence of a hymn by Johann Mentzer (1658-1734) which was published in Freylinghausen's *Gesangbuch* (1704), beginning with the same words in German: "O dass ich tausend Zungen hatte."<sup>56</sup>

In light of the claim that the first six stanzas record Charles Wesley's emotions on the occasion of his conversion, it is worthwhile to examine the stanzas to learn if there is biblical and theological content present.

1. Glory to God, and praise and love  
be ever, ever given,

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<sup>55</sup> The United Methodist Hymnal. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989, 1998 [14th printing], Hymn number 57.

<sup>56</sup> The United Methodist Hymnal, op. cit., 56.

by saints below and saints above,  
the church on earth and heaven.

2. On this glad day the glorious Sun  
of Righteousness arose;  
on my benighted soul he shone  
and filled it with respose.

3. Sudden expired the legal strife,  
'twas then I ceased to grieve;  
my second, real, living life  
I then began to live.

4. Then with my heart I first believed,  
believed with faith divine,  
power with the Holy Ghost received  
to call the Savior mine.

5. I felt my Lord's atoning blood  
close to my soul applied;  
me, me he love, the Son of God,  
for me, for me he died!

6. I found and owned his promise true,  
ascertained of my part,  
my pardon passed in heaven I knew  
when written on my heart.

Stanza seven in the original order is number seventeen, as printed below. A close examination of the full text of seventeen stanzas reveals that Charles Wesley incorporates a surprising and enormous amount of amount of biblical theology into the words of "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing."

13. Look unto him, ye nations, own  
your God, ye fallen race!  
Look, and be saved through faith alone,  
Be justified by grace!

14. See all your sins on Jesus laid;  
the Lamb of God was slain,  
his soul was once an offering made  
for every soul of man.

15. Harlots and publicans and thieves,  
in holy triumph join!

**Saved is the sinner that believes  
From crimes as great as mine.**

**16. Murderers and all ye hellish crew,  
ye sons of lust and pride,  
believe the Savior died for you;  
for me the Savior died.**

**17. With me, your chief, you then shall know,  
shall feel your sins forgiven;  
anticipate your heaven below  
and own that love in heaven.**

A reader, who is familiar with the Scriptures and of theology, recognizes the Evangelical message of the hymn. The clearest demonstration of this fact is found in the third and fourth lines of stanza number 13:

**Look, and be saved through faith alone,  
Be justified by grace!**

Clearly, these words echo of the Reformation preaching and teaching of Luther and other Reformers. The phrase "justification by faith alone" needs little explanation or interpretation in the context of this audience. But this illustration and others one might draw upon from the hymns composed by the Wesley brothers clearly show to what extent the English Evangelical revival gained immensely from Luther.<sup>57</sup>

**C. Case Study "Ein feste Burg" or "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."<sup>58</sup>  
- Martin Luther (1480-1546)**

**1. German version.**

**1. Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,  
Ein' gute Wehr und Waffern.  
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Noth,  
Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.  
Der alte böse Feind  
Mit Ernst er es jetzt meint;**

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<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, the Anglican Church veered toward the Calvinist tradition in worship, as Psalms constituted much of the hymnody in worship of churches in the Calvinist tradition. The Anglican tradition fell into line, and to this day a worshiper in the Anglican or Episcopal discovers psalmody is included in Anglican or Episcopal morning or evening prayer or the full liturgy.

<sup>58</sup> James F. Lambert, Luther's Hymns. Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1917, 40-41. The German and the English versions appear in columns in the Lambert's original text.

**Auf Erd'n ist nicht sein's Gleichen.  
Sein grausam Rueftung ist,  
Auf Erd ist nich seins Gleichen.**

**2. Mit unser Macht ist nichts getan,  
Wir sind gar bald verloren;  
Es streit's fur uns der rechte Mann,  
Den gott had selbst erkoren.  
Und fragst due Wer der ist?  
Er heisset Jesus Christ,  
Der Herr Zebaoth;  
Und is kein andrer Gott;  
Das Feld muss er behalten.**

**3. Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel war,  
Und wollt uns gar verschlingen,  
So fruchten wir uns nicht zu sehr,  
Es solluns doch gelingen.  
Der Furst von dieser Welt  
Wie sauer er sich stellt,  
Thut er uns doch nicht;  
Das macht, er is gericht't,  
Er Wortlein kann ihn fallen.**

**4. Das Wort Sie sollen lassen stahn,  
Und kein Dank dazu haben;  
Er is bei uns wol auf dem Plan  
Mit seinem Geist and Gaben.  
Nehmen sie uns den Leib,  
Gut, Ehre, Kind und Weib;  
Lass fahren nur dahin,  
Sie haben kein Gewinn;  
Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben.**

## **2. English translation**

**1. A mighty Fortress is our God,  
A trusty Shield and Weapon;  
He helps us free from every need.  
That hath us now o'ertaken.  
The old bitter foe  
Means us deadly woe;  
Deep guile and great might  
Are his dread arms in fight:  
On earth is not his equal.**

2. With might of ours can naught be  
 Soon were our loss effected; [done,  
 But for us fights the Valiant One  
 Whom God Himself elected.  
 Ask ye, Who is this?  
 Jesus Christ it is,  
 Of Saboath Lord,  
 And there's none other God;  
 He holds the field for ever.
  
3. Though devils all the world should fill,  
 All watching to devour us.  
 We tremble not, we fear no ill,  
 They cannot overpower us.  
 This world's prince may still  
 Scowl fierce as he will;  
 He can harm us none;  
 He's judged, the deed is done,  
 One little world o'erthrows him.
  
4. The Word they still shall let remain,  
 And not a thank have for it;  
 He's by our side upon the plain  
 With His good gifts and Spirit.  
 Take they then our life,  
 Goods, fame, child, and wife,  
 When their worst is done,  
 They yet have nothing won;  
 The Kingdom ours remaineth.

**B. Psalm 46 - Literature and Interpretation.<sup>59</sup>**

""Ein feste Berg" is a hymn that has been translated into English probably more than any other German hymn, according to Inge and Vernon Wicker."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>I acknowledge and discharge a debt of gratitude to Kate Skrebutenas, research librarian, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, for finding the literature that brings this section of the paper to life. Without her knowledge of sources and excellent research skills, Luther would not have been liberated from the literature in time to catch this paper as it left the computer station.

<sup>60</sup>Inge Mager, "Martin Luther's hymn "Ein feste Berg ist unser Gott" ("A Mighty Fortress is our God) and Psalm 46," *Hymnody annual*. Translated by Vernon and Jutta Wicker. Berrien Spring, Michigan: Vande Vere Publications, 1993, 42. Dr. Mager is Professor of Church History at the University of Goettingen, Germany, and the paper was originally published under the title "Martin Luthers Leid 'Ein feste Berg' und Psalm 46" in *Jahrbuch fur Liturgik and Hymnology* [JLH], XXVI (1986), 87-96 and delivered as Her Habilitationvortrag [qualifying address for lecturing] at the University of Goettingen, Germany on March 14, 1986.

The hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," has long been associated with Psalm 46. However, scholarly debate regarding Luther's use of Psalm 46 as the Psalm-hymn text for "Ein feste Berg" continues, and the debate has continued for decades. Did Luther use Psalm 46 as a basis for his hymn?

Mager's research and comparison of the biblical text with the hymn text leads her to conclude indeed the Luther text and Psalm 46 are closely linked. The text of "Ein feste Berg" and Psalm 46 are reproduced below.

Many translations of Psalm 46 could be used for comparative purposes with "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," but I have chosen the translation from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.<sup>61</sup>

### Psalm 46

1. God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble.
2. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.
3. though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains  
tremble at its swelling. *Selah.*
4. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
The holy habitation of the Most High.
5. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;  
God will help her when morning dawns.
6. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; He utters his voice,  
the earth melts.
7. The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our  
fortress.
8. Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought  
desolations on the earth. *Selah.*
9. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
He burns the chariots with fire.
10. Be still, and know that I am God.  
I will be exalted in the earth!
11. The Lord of hosts is with us;

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<sup>61</sup> Crossway Bibles: Wheaton, IL., 2001, 565-566.

The God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*.

With an English translation of Psalm 46 in hand, the next step is to make sense of Luther's understanding of hymns and Psalms and Psalm 46 in particular and his hymn, "Ein Feste Burg."

Mager explains:

My understanding of "A Mighty Fortress" follows the instruction of Luther regarding Psalm-hymns. They should be given sovereign development of the sensus psalmi.<sup>62</sup> I therefore regard the fourth stanza, especially because of its antithetical orientation, as clearest evidence for the connection of the hymn to Psalm 46 and as an additional argument for the homogeneity of the four-stanza version which interprets the Psalm by way of the theologia crucis.<sup>63</sup>

In large measure, Luther's approach to Psalms is attributable to his early theological training as an Augustinian monk.<sup>64</sup> Psalms played significant role in the worship and prayers of the Augustinian Order, so naturally, Luther was, in a large measure, following his early training in biblical and theological studies and through the worship and regular prayers of the Augustinian chapter in Wittenberg.

Indeed, Luther remained close to the piety of the devout monk he was and certainly long after he became a Reformer of the Church. Luther, the devout monk and theologian, in 1523, Mager suggests "became the 'inventor' of the German psalm-hymn. In 1542 he completed the Book of Psalms in German translation."<sup>65</sup>

However, after composing "Ein feste Berg," Luther never composed another hymn based on the Psalms. Why? Because his poetry, he claimed, was "loathsome and base poetry" and could not compete with that of the Holy Spirit who is indeed the best poet.<sup>66</sup>

Yet Luther developed the hymn text in a free manner, so Mager explains. "Nearly literal quotations are found only in stanza 1, 1-4 Psalm 46:1.

On the other hand, Mager suggests that

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<sup>62</sup> Disposition of a psalm.

<sup>63</sup> Theology of the Cross.

<sup>64</sup> As a lecturer in the University of Wittenberg, a continuing theme of Luther's life's work was Psalms. "Luther knew the Latin Psalms by memory through praying his breviary; apart from this, Psalm 46 was familiar to him as one in the category of 'Psalms in time of need.'" Mager, op. cit., 164.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 164. See Psalm 111 interpreted in Luther Works, 1530, (Weimar Aufgabe, 31, 1, 393.

every stanza has at least one direct reference to the Psalm, even if it is in a new textual sequence. Both psalm and hymn begin with the confession of God as helper in times of trouble. However, acknowledgement of fearlessness does not come until victory of Christ over Satan has been stated. At the center of the hymn Luther equates the term "Herr Zebaoth" from the refrain of the Psalm with "Christus", thereby declaring the one true God, while at the of the hymn the enduring of the city of God relates to the enduring of the kingdom of God. The reduction of the remaining statements in the Psalm to the contrast of God/Christ versus Satan results in the omission of a detailed description of cosmic disaster, the idyll of the city of God and the godly warfare. This reduction does not appear at all in this form in the Psalm, nor does an emphasis upon a [thought] of human helplessness. Instead we hear of the militant capabilities of the "right man."<sup>67</sup>

Enlarging the scriptural references possible, Mager cites the following biblical texts to make this point: Genesis 3:15 in connection with Genesis 4:1. Other biblical allusions are possible and include the David and Goliath struggle "in the name of Lord Sabaoth" (I Samuel 17:45), as a precursor to Christ's battle against Satan and death, which then could possibly explain the rhetorical question of stanza 2,5. "Fragst du wer der ist?" ["Ask who this may be?"] in reminiscence of Saul's question regarding David's identity in I Samuel 17:55.

Luther's expansion of the text to include other biblical references gives the hymn a framework relating to the history of salvation. *The history of salvation, as understood by Luther, begins with the fall of man and concludes with the final overcoming of Satan. The eschatological perseverance of the kingdom of God is the final focus of the hymn.*

Based in part on the above considerations, Mager finally concludes that Luther by no means exclusively followed Psalm 46 in his hymn, but rather only took from it the unique confession of God as the warrior and victor, as only the only helpful refuge when "in greatest need."

Luther's prayerful sense of seeking God "in our greatest need" is not neither wholly this worldly in focus nor is it entirely otherworldly in expectation. Rather, Luther who does not hold in contempt "body, possessions, honor, child or spouse," writes with a clear eye that one may have to

Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also; The body they may kill:

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 166.

God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.<sup>68</sup>

In the midst of an uncertain and troubled world of the Sixteenth century, Luther and the other Reformers confronted extreme situations and dire conditions that indeed may force one to forsake all earthly ties and be willing to suffer when no escape appears possible or rescue likely.<sup>69</sup> In such treacherous times and during unrelenting ages of anxiety, God can be trusted to keep his promises, as Calvin so wonderfully explains.<sup>70</sup> Our hope lies in the "One man" who is on God's side.

For sure if Christ must be victorious on the field of battle against the Ancient Foe, and triumph over him, then Christ in order to accomplish that godly deed ["for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven . . ."]<sup>71</sup> voluntarily surrenders to the Cross and becomes *Christus Victor*.<sup>72</sup>

*Christus Victor* expects his followers can do no other in their lives too.

Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also; The body they may kill:  
God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.<sup>73</sup>

Mager reasons, "To take part in Christ's victory is indeed not possible without the Cross or through bypassing the Cross. Since the first three stanzas do not express this truth, [Luther] recovers it at the end. Having become a theologian under principles of *oratio*, *meditatio* and *tenatio*,"<sup>74</sup> these three terms - - *oratio*, *meditatio* and *tenatio* - - shaped and sharpened Luther's understanding of the rigors of the Christian life.

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<sup>68</sup> From the translation by Frederick H. Hedge (1853). The Hymnbook. Richmond, Philadelphia, New York: Published by the Presbyterian Church in the United States, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and Reformed Church in America, 1964. Hymn Number 91, page 87.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 166.

<sup>70</sup> John Calvin, Instruction in Faith (1537). Translated by Paul T. Fuhrmann. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 55-56. Note appreciatively Calvin's marvelous juxtaposition of Faith and Hope.

<sup>71</sup> Phrase appears in The Nicene Creed.

<sup>72</sup> Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor: A Historical Study of the Three Types of the Idea of the Atonement. Translated by A.C. Herbert. London: SPCK, 1931, 1969.

<sup>73</sup> From the translation by Frederick H. Hedge (1853). The Hymnbook. Richmond, Philadelphia, New York: Published by the Presbyterian Church in the United States, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and Reformed Church in America, 1964. Hymn Number 91, page 87.

<sup>74</sup> *Oratio*, prayer.

*Meditatio*, meditation, which links it with *Oratio*, *meditatio*, *tenatio faciunt theologum*: Prayer, meditation, and trial make the theologian - a maxim from Luther. Ibid. 166.

**Magers suggests that under the principles enunciated of *oratio*, *meditatio* and *tenatio*, Luther**

**contradicts the Old Testament and Jewish and [a] truncated Christian psalm interpretation from [within] a large New Testament perspective. Thus the character [of God] that by its language and images suggest a militant (military) interpretation moves into the direction of comfort. Stanza four relates to an aggressive confidence in the God who in his word is near and supportive precisely in the cross and suffering.**

**It is surely no coincidence that Luther understood Psalm 46 in this way in the fortress at Coburg.<sup>75</sup> It was here that that which was previously conceived poetically became concrete and real.<sup>76</sup>**

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*Tenatio* is defined, in part, as trial, affliction, temptation; distinguished into (1) *tenatio seductionis*; seductive temptation, or trial of seduction, behind which lies the purpose of Satan or another evil agent to draw an individual to sin, and (2) *tenatio probationis*, probative temptation, or affliction of probation, also called *dokimasia*, which comes from God and has as its intention the testing and strengthening of an individual believer's faith and obedience. *Tenatio probationis* is distinguished also from the *castigationes paternae* and *paideia*, which teach believers the true path in life through the cross and suffering. Quoted from Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek. Drawn from Protestant Scholastic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 188, 214, 295.

<sup>75</sup> Roland Bainton explains Colburg this way. Philip of Hesse convened the Marburg Colloquy (1529) with the view of achieving unity between the Saxon and Swiss Reformers. Meeting in the castle Marburg-on-the-Lahn on 1-3 October 1529, Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon represented the Germans, and H. Zwingli, J. Oecolampadius and M. Bucer represented the Swiss.

Zwingli's refused to agree to Luther's understanding of the Eucharist ("Consubstantiation"). Consequently, the colloquy ended in failure and the resolution of Protestant differences continued. In retrospect, however, the failure of Marburg the resolve Protestant differences paved the way for the Articles of Schwabach (1529), based largely on the Articles presented to the Marburg Colloquy. The Lutherans incorporated the Articles of Schwabach in the Augsburg Confession of 1530.

In 1531, Zwingli was killed on the field of battle during the Second Kappel War in 1531. With the failure of the Marburg Colloquy, the Lutherans were left to take care of themselves.

By 1530, free of the Pope and having humbled France, Emperor Charles V was ready to tackle the Protestant rebellion. The Emperor, offering an olive branch in one hand and holding severe measures in the other hand, was prepared to act if his entreaty to the Protestants failed. To his despair, Luther was not permitted to attend the diet the Emperor called, so once again, as in the Wartburg, Luther was "in the wilderness. This time the exile was in yet another castle-fortress, Feste Coburg. Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1950, 322. See "Marburg, Colloquy of (1529) in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Edited by F.L. Cross. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford, 1958, 852, 1228 for information on the Articles of Schwabach.

<sup>76</sup> Mager, *op. cit.*, 166-167.

## **Summary and Conclusions.**

**This paper is a study of Divine Names (God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit) and suggests hymns and Christian hymnody illustrate the biblical truths of the Bible and offers examples of good theology may become a sung theology.**

**However, research on the topic reveals that in order to speak of Divine Names and the nature of the Trinity and how Divine Names related to doctrine requires knowledge of the influences of culture and society. The influences of culture and society and knowledge and shifts in the theological paradigm also impact what hymns are chosen for worship and what music is offered to the congregation.**

**Furthermore, historically, good hymns appear to share twelve (12) common characteristics. On the other hand, failure to appreciate the strengths of good hymns leads to a loss of memory and an unwitting forfeiture of tradition. A lost and forfeited inheritance results in practical considerations that goes far beyond the hymn or Christian hymnody. The greater loss is to congregants are not given a superb book of prayers and devotions when a fine hymnal or hymnbook is placed in their hands during worship, or permitted to sing the great hymns or even good hymns of the historical Church.**

**Another identified liability is the distractions within congregations. Congregations may fight over music (and other things of lesser importance) and occasionally against and with the prevailing culture (Martin Marty's observations). Some music leadership or worship leadership may eliminate or restrain the lyrics and eliminate stanzas in good hymns, because these stanzas are thought offensive to modern sensibilities or do not express the latest theological position of the denomination.**

**Three hymns are studied in sufficient detail to discover the various ways hymns treat Divine Names, Titles of the Trinity and good theology and make the hymns memorable and singable for all ages.**

**Finally and ultimately, the purpose of this paper is to stimulate thinking about hymns, Christian hymnody and worship. Most especially, the intention of the author is to stimulate thinking as one participates in worship.**