

The Formation and Function of WELS Hymnals

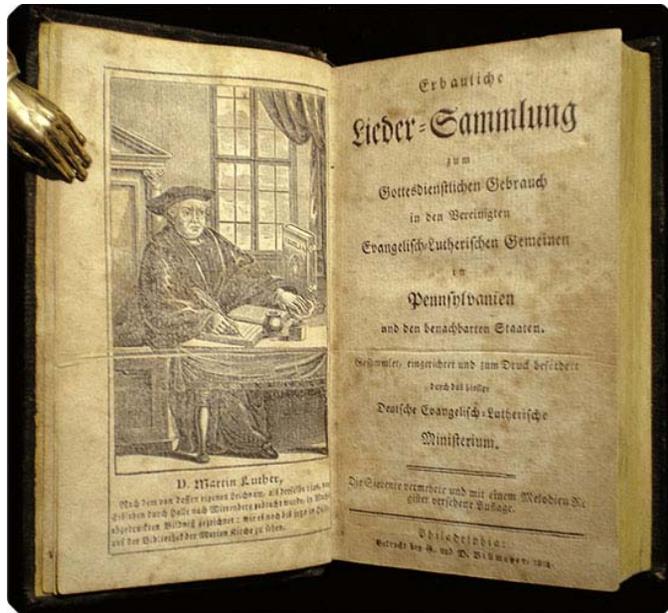
Further Conversation

National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts – July 2008

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Hymnal Highlights

The “Pennsylvania Hymnal,” (1786)



“For many years after 1850, the most widely used hymnal in the Wisconsin Synod was the hymnal of the Pennsylvania Synod, recognized by more confessional Lutherans (and eventually also by Wisconsin) to include more than one hundred hymns of dubious Lutheran integrity” (Tiefel, James, “The Formation and Flow of Worship Attitudes in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod,” *Logia*, Vol. XIV, Number 3, p.32).

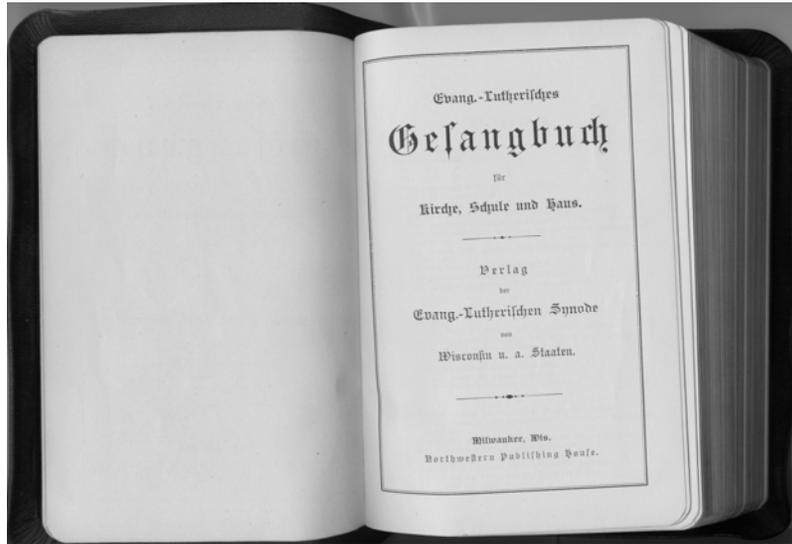
From our 1863 synod convention:

“Pastor J. Hoffmann from Racine inadvertently added some spice to the discussion when he reported that he owned two good Lutheran Agendas besides the Pennsylvania Agenda, but that he could not use either of the two good ones without causing offense in his congregation. This sparked further discussion in which the Pennsylvania Synod Agenda was accused of being unLutheran and even rationalistic in many items, and ought not to be used by any Wisconsin Synod congregation” (Lehmann, Arnold, “Wisconsin Synod Hymnals and Agendas 1850-1950,” *WELS Historical Institute Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 2, p.5).

- What are some of the ways pietism and rationalism still influence worship in Christian churches?
- What can happen if we overreact in our defense against these false approaches?

The Evang. Luth. Gesangbuch (1870)

695 hymns, 1 page of liturgy



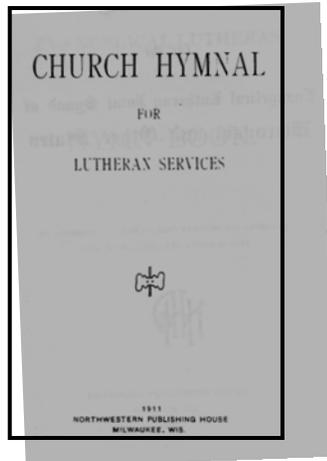
“Regardless of its positive impact on the future of the Synod, these moves to the right brought about a practical problem: if the Synod were to eradicate its seemingly unionistic past stance, all vestiges of old relationships had to be dropped. It was felt that by utilizing German-language hymnbooks from either Germany or one of the lax Lutheran Synods, the clarity of doctrinal purpose that the Wisconsin Synod sought to achieve would be only further muddled...It was resolved in [1865] that the Wisconsin Synod should proceed with the final steps to print its own hymnbook” (Grasby, James, “A Historical Survey and Brief Examination of the Hymnbooks used within the WELS,” p.25-26)

- Principled worship choices often introduce practical difficulties. Can you think of some examples of this truth?

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her
 von Gnad und lauter Güten,
 die Werke helfen nimmermehr,
 sie mögen nicht behüten;
 der Glaub sieht Jesum Christum an,
 der hat gnug für uns all gethan,
 er ist der Mittler worden.

Eigene Melodie. 44.
372. * **E**s ist das Heil uns
 kommen her von
 Gnad und lauter Güten, die
 Werke helfen nimmermehr, sie
 mögen nicht behüten; der Glaub
 sieht Jesum Christum an, der
 hat gnug für uns all gethan, er
 ist der Mittler worden.
 2. Was Gott im Gesez gebo-
 ten hat, da man es nicht konnt
 halten, erhob sich Zorn und
 große Not vor Gott so mannig-
 faltig; vom Fleisch wollt nicht
 heraus der Geist, vom Gesez er-
 fordert allermeist, es war mit
 uns verloren.

Salvation unto us has come,
 By God's free grace and favor.
 Good works cannot avert our doom;
 They help and save us never.
 Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
 Who did for all the world atone;
 He is the one Redeemer.



The Church Hymnal (1911)

115 hymns, 4 pages of liturgy

“With less than 125 hymns, its scope of choices was limited and maybe wearisome. Nevertheless, it served the Wisconsin Synod well by introducing the English-language hymnal to a number of congregations” (Grasby, *ibid*, p.31).

- Put yourself in the cobbler-made shoes of our synod forefathers. Name some of the challenges involved in moving from a German to an English hymnal.

Book of Hymns (1916)

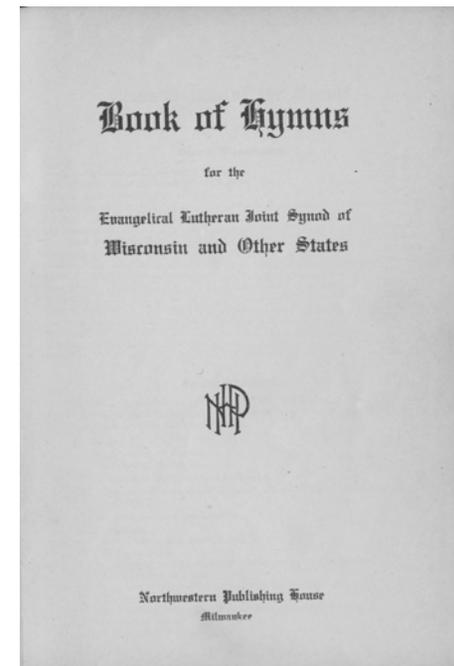
320 hymns, 16 pages of liturgy

A comment from the *Book of Hymns* editors, *Northwestern Lutheran*, May, 1918:

“We believe the average churchgoer will thank us for not putting in more than one Scripture lesson.”

“Already by 1925, WELS convention resolutions were looking for something better: an appendix to the *Book of Hymns* containing more and better hymns, or perhaps a completely new book, maybe even a joint effort with Missouri and the other synods of the Synodical Conference” (Tiefel, *ibid*, p.34).

- Whenever we make a move toward new worship materials, we struggle to decide which old things to save, and which to discard. What’s the difference between church tradition, and Church tradition? How can the answer to this question help guide our discussion?



Miscellaneous Hymns

158

Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr 8,8,7, etc.

Matthias Gastritz, 1571

1 O Lord, I love Thee from my heart; I pray Thee ne'er from
me de-part, With ten-der mer-cy cheer me; I scorn the
rich-est earth-ly lot, E'en heav'n and earth at-tract me not,
If on-ly Thou be near me. Yea, tho' my heart be
like to break, Thou shalt my Trust, that naught can shake,

Miscellaneous Hymns

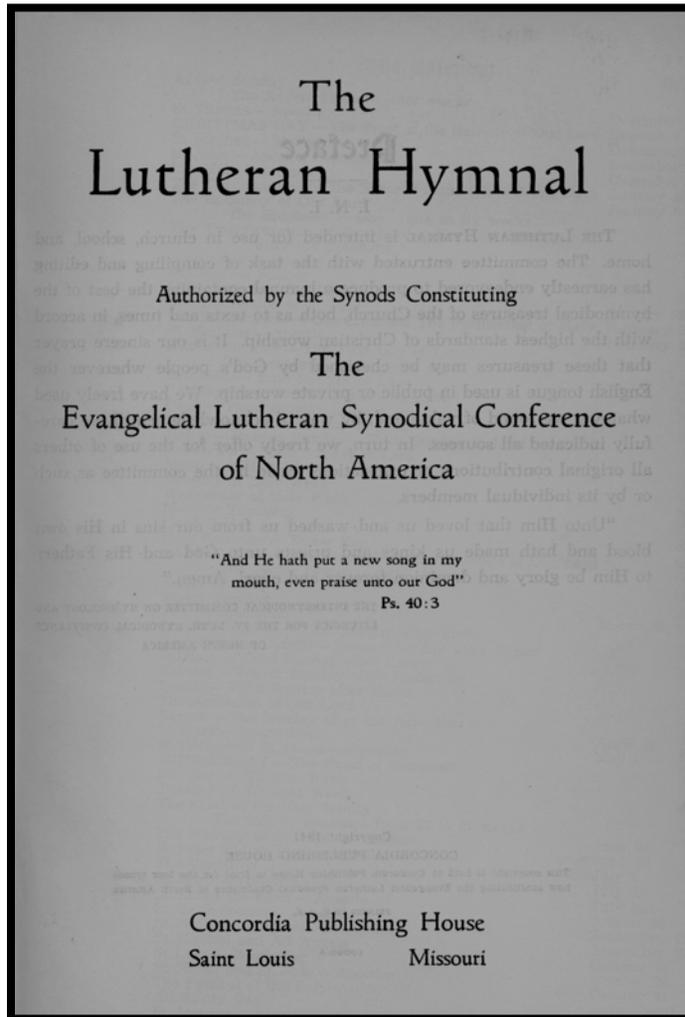
My Por-tion and my Com-fort be, Who by Thy
blood hast pur-chased me: Lord, Je-sus Christ! My God and
Lord! my God and Lord! For-sake me not who trust Thy Word.

2 Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy free bounty gave
My body, soul, and what I have
In this poor life of labor;
O grant that I may through Thy grace
Use all my powers to show Thy praise,
And serve and help my neighbor.
From all false doctrine keep me, Lord,
From Satan's lies and malice ward,
In every cross uphold Thou me,
That I may bear it patiently,
Lord Jesus Christ!
My God and Lord! my God and Lord!
In death Thy comfort still afford.

3 Ah! Lord, let Thy dear angels come
At my last end to bear me home,
That I may die unfearing;
And in its narrow chamber keep
My body safe in painless sleep
Until Thy reappearing;
And then from death awaken me,
That these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, Thy glorious face,
My Savior and my Fount of grace!
Lord Jesus Christ!
My prayer attend, my prayer attend,
And I will praise Thee without end.

The Lutheran Hymnal (1941)

660 hymns, 168 pages of liturgy



“A significant number of WELS congregations,... usually pastored by synodical veterans, still felt uncomfortable and put off by the new order of service” (Tiefel, *ibid*, p.35).

One pastor wrote this about the conclusion of the Vesper Service in TLH: “This long post-sermon drag merits a short German epithet ‘*Sopf*’ (pigtail)! Not only good liturgical principle, but plain common sense dictates the shears for it” (Tiefel, *ibid*).

“Younger pastors took to the new hymnal with more enthusiasm, perhaps more out of pragmatism than on principle. The *Lutheran Hymnal* had arrived on the WELS worship scene with auspicious timing. The years after World War II were good years in the synod. The war economy had allowed the synodical debt, so crippling during the 1930s, to be finally retired. Discussions about mission expansion, on both the home and world fronts, highlighted conferences and conventions. English was replacing German at the main Sunday service in most congregations. Elementary schools were growing, and their success soon encouraged the birth of a dozen or more Lutheran high schools. Wherever the Wisconsin Synod went, *The Lutheran Hymnal* went along. Converts, children, and even old-line Germans learned its hymns and liturgy, and various tracts and booklets helped make the hymnal’s contents understandable” (Tiefel, *ibid*).

- What’s the best way to get your people excited to come to church on Sunday?

463 For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest

COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Heb. 12: 1
William W. How, 1864, cento

10. 10. 10., with Alleluias

Sine nomine
R. Vaughan Williams, 1906, arr.

1 For all the saints who from their labors rest,
 2 Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might;
 3 Oh, may Thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
 4 O blest communion, fellowship in the vine,

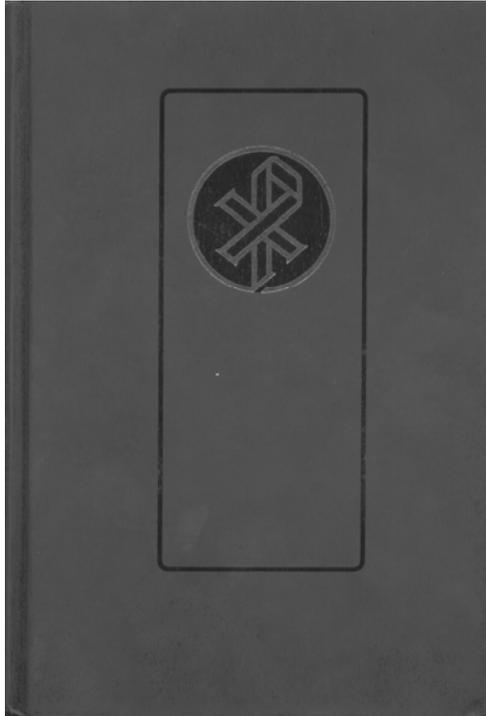
Who Thee by faith be - fore the world con - fest,
 Thou, Lord, their Cap - tain in the well-fought fight;
 Fight as the saints who no - bly fought of old
 We fee - bly struggle, they in glo - ry shine;

Thy name, O Je - sus, be for - ev - er blest.
 Thou, in the dark - ness drear, their one true Light.
 And win with them the vic - tor's crown of gold.
 Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 A - men.

Christian Worship (1993)

623 hymns, 166 pages of liturgy



“Quite a few worshipers had no use for *Christian Worship* when it came out. Some critics were very vocal. Pastors heard complaints from congregation members; letters were fired off to members of the JHC and synod officials. Most often *Christian Worship* was compared unfavorably with *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Some faulted the revision of the texts; others weren’t happy with things musical; a few didn’t like much of anything in the new book” (Prange, Victor, “The Shaping of *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*,” *Not Unto Us*, p. 251).

“By early 1999, Northwestern Publishing House reported that 325,711 pew edition copies and 7,209 keepsake edition copies of *Christian Worship* had been sold” (Prange, Victor, *ibid*, p.252).

How do you explain the broad acceptance of CW in our synod?

CW 219

Lord, when your glory I shall see And taste your kingdom’s pleasure,
 Your blood my royal robe shall be, My joy beyond all measure!
 When I appear before your throne, Your righteousness shall be my crown;
 With these I need not hide me.
 And there, in garments richly wrought, As your own bride I shall be brought
 To stand in joy beside you.

Text: Paul Gerhardt
 Tune: Kurt J. Eggert

Questions

- Some new worship songs are more easily learned. What's the downside?
Some new worship songs are more challenging to learn. What's the upside?

“As the influence of print wanes, the content of politics, religion, education, and anything else that comprises public business must change and be recast in terms that are most suitable to television” (Postman, Neil, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, p.8).

- Apply these words to mainstream Christianity in the United States of today.

“It is very hard to say nothing when employing a written English sentence. What else is exposition good for? Words have very little to recommend them except as carriers of meaning. The shapes of written words are not especially interesting to look at... A language-centered discourse such as was characteristic of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America tends to be both content-laden and serious, all the more so when it takes its form from print” (Ibid, p.50).

- What are some of the challenges and benefits to encouraging a “print culture” in church?

“Others suggest that with the rapid growth of publishing technology, church bodies will in the future no longer publish worship books like those of the past. That remains to be seen” (Prange, Victor, *ibid*, p.255).

- What are your thoughts on printing our next hymnal in book form?

Christian Worship Supplement (2008)

85 hymns, 74 pages of liturgy

CHURCH

775 For Builders Bold Whose Vision Pure

1 For build - ers bold whose vi - sion pure
 2 As here they raised a soar - ing spire
 3 Here saints new - born you gen - er - ate
 4 We come, O Lord, in her - i - tors

Saw more than brick or stone,
 Which thrusts toward worlds a - bove,
 Through wa - ter and the Word,
 From those whose work is done.

Who laid in hope foun - da - tions
 So may our prayers, like tongues of
 Through bread and cup com - mu - ni -
 Lord, make us now con - trib - u -

sure With Christ the cor - ner - stone;
 fire, Leap kin - dled by your love.
 cate The gift of Christ the Lord.
 tors To years be - yond our own.

CHURCH

For those who hon - ored your com -
 And let your liv - ing Word de -
 We gath - er, Christ's own fam - i -
 Let faith's en - dled flame not

mands And trust - ed your strong Word,
 scend As seed on wait - ing hearts
 ly, Christ's meal of love we share.
 fail; Let love's best gifts in - crease.

Who of - fered faith - ful hearts and hands,
 And, fruit - ful, there its grace ex - tend
 Come, help us live in u - ni - ty,
 Let hope in Christ's sure Word pre - vail

We give you thanks, O Lord.
 To earth's most dis - tant parts.
 Each oth - er's bur - dens bear.
 Till earth and time shall cease.

This hymn masterfully pictures God's guiding love as he gathers his people from every generation around his life-changing Word and sacraments.

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., 1923-2007 © 1993 GIA Publications, Inc.
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Tune: Traditional Irish

Setting: Kermit Moldenhauer, b. 1949 © 2006 Kermit Moldenhauer. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

FLIGHT OF THE EARLS
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Seven Colors

The hymnal is our resource and guide for [the] all-important activity of worship. Though we could of course worship without it, it is, practically speaking, indispensable. Our hymnal brings us God's Word and revelation and full opportunity for faith's response. Looked at more closely, however, the hymnal is more. I like to think of the hymnal as a "rainbow" book. Just as a beam of light passing through a prism reveals its seven component colors, so an examination of the hymnal reveals its seven "colors:"

- It is a treasury of God's Truth,
- A record of Christian faith and response in all kinds of circumstances,
- A representation of much of the best of poetry and hymnody down through the centuries,
- Music as it has related itself to liturgy and various types of hymn tunes,
- A history of theology as reflected in the worship materials of various centuries,
- The historic liturgies of the church in their Lutheran reformation and later restoration,
- And finally, a broad and rich resource for all the circumstances of Christian life, for education, private devotion, and all the various observances of corporate Lutheran worship"

Eggert, Kurt, "Enriching Our Worship Heritage," p. 1