

# Foreword

Throughout the history of the Christian church each period of spiritual renewal has been accompanied by an outburst of new Christian song. If we keep this fact in mind, a look at the contemporary scene is encouraging. The many new hymns in various styles that adorn today's burgeoning religious activity remind us that the church of Jesus Christ is indeed alive and thriving. The Hope Publishing Company, in keeping with its century-long tradition as a publisher of evangelical hymnbooks, is pleased to include many of these fresh expressions of our faith in this new collection, *Hymns for the Living Church*.

To meet present needs, a hymnal needs to be large and truly eclectic. While retaining a major part of the material that has characterized recent Hope hymnals, this book has added a great number of worship hymns from all periods as well as many songs by today's gifted writers. Included are new and historic sacred folk songs, hymns and spirituals of European and American heritage.

*Hymns for the Living Church* also reflects the theological thought of our day. We have tried to choose those hymns that support the preaching and teaching emphases of the "living church" in this last half of the 20th century. Of course, the central theme is the gospel and the believer's personal experience of salvation in Christ. There is also a strong emphasis on Christian growth and maturity. Current trends in evangelism and missions are supported by a number of new lyrics. Today's eschatological awareness is reflected in the many and varied selections about heaven, the coming kingdom, and Christ's second advent. Finally, the enlarged section under the caption "social concern" is indicative of the social conscience of God's people today.

In keeping with worship reform in our time, we have made an effort to update the words of hymns. Vague and obsolete imagery has been eliminated. Whenever possible, "thee" and "thine" (referring to human beings) have been changed to "you" and "yours." Since many older hymns have undergone frequent changes during their long usage, only major alterations are listed in the author credits.

From a musical point of view, we are convinced that *Hymns for the Living Church* is outstandingly singable. We have endeavored to select the best of the folk hymns and newer songs now in wide use. In choosing material from earlier periods, we have selected those tunes that are "strong" and "bright," which should be easily learned and long remembered. We have also considered the range of each melody, in order to encourage full participation in congregational singing. Many hymn tunes are offered in two or more keys, so that the director and organist will have a choice.

Our goal has been to maintain a strong biblical emphasis throughout the hymnal. The central message of each hymn is evident in the scripture passage quoted underneath the title line. In addition, we have provided a list of scriptural allusions and quotations in hymns. Ministers will find that this index can be of immense help in correlating the singing with other parts of the service.

Because we have shortened many of the traditional Scripture Readings (Nos. 592-671), it has been possible to include a larger number of selections, with several new topics. In a day when so many versions of the Bible are in vogue and no single one seems to be "authorized" or "standard," we have used a variety of translations and paraphrases. For each individual passage, we have selected the version we judge to be best for corporate reading in regular worship.

In editing this volume, we have tried to provide complete indexes with information that is accurate and up-to-date. In addition to listing birth and death dates of authors, translators, composers and arrangers, we have for the first time attempted to pinpoint the origin of each poem and hymn tune. The dates given above each hymn indicate the year of writing or of the first publishing of that particular text and musical setting. We have also endeavored to acknowledge the ownership of all copyrights, and to secure proper permission for their use. Any unintentional omission will be corrected in a subsequent edition.

The editorial committee expresses its thanks to the hundreds of ministers and musicians from leading churches who have helped us choose the contents of this hymnal. It is our hope that *Hymns for the Living Church* will make a significant contribution to the renewal and the growth of these churches, and of many others as well.

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*Editor*