

Foreword

Every hymnal may be expected to have a reasonable lifetime, during which it meets the needs of congregations, and after which it must be replaced by another book that has been designed to serve the next generation. At certain points in history there has been reason to produce a hymnbook that is both new and revolutionary. *THE WORSHIPING CHURCH: A HYMNAL* has been planned for such a time as this.

The last twenty years have witnessed a proliferation of new, significant hymnody in many different styles. The “hymn explosion” has given us hundreds of new hymns that are traditional in form and evangelical in theology, but fresh in their language. Their writers come from the United States, Canada, and Great Britain and include Fred Pratt Green, Margaret Clarkson, Timothy Dudley-Smith, Bryan Jeffery Leech, Brian Wren, Christopher Idle, Carl P. Daw, Jr., and many others. Future generations will no doubt agree that this was the most bountiful outpouring of English-language hymnody in the twentieth century!

In many of the historic denominational fellowships, congregations are returning to the psalms and canticles of the Bible for expressions of praise and prayer. We have also experienced a flood of popular congregational styles, including contemporary gospel songs and the short hymns—often scriptural—that are called “Praise and Worship Music.” By bringing together a generous amount of all these forms in one large volume, we offer congregations a broad spectrum of musical expression that is comparable to that of the first-century church, which sang “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:19).

This is also a time of growing interest in the structure and spirit of public worship. In many churches, formal design and traditional evangelical spontaneity often come together in the same service. For this reason, *THE WORSHIPING CHURCH: A HYMNAL* includes scripture readings, acts of worship, and prayers, side by side with the hymns, all grouped according to theological emphasis. Further, the Worship Leaders’ Edition offers suggestions for creative use of these materials in planning worship services.

In keeping with the 100-year history of Hope Publishing Company, this hymnal contains the important hymns of salvation and Christian experience that have been the hallmark of evangelicals during that time. At the same time, it offers more hymns of adoration, more hymns pertaining to Christ’s advent, incarnation, revealing, and resurrection, and more hymns on the Holy Spirit. There are also many more resources for Communion services, Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Dedication of Children, and other special occasions.

Throughout the book it will be evident that many musical selections, including those in a new section entitled “Psalms and Canticles,” are paraphrases of scripture. To match our growing understanding of the Christian’s responsibilities in the world, new categories of hymns and worship materials have been added—The Church: Ministry and Ministers; The

Church: Renewal; Sickness and Healing; Art, Science, Education; Work and Leisure; and Our Care of God's World.

We are convinced that the essential spiritual communication of a hymn is found mostly in its words. Consequently, we have emphasized the use of hymn texts that are understandable and acceptable to our generation, restating significant concepts in language which communicates effectively with those in and outside the church. We have also offered a number of hymns that appear as poems, and may be read in corporate, as well as in personal, worship. We believe that printing them without music, and with a new standard of capitalization and punctuation, directs attention to the words and clarifies their meaning. Most of these texts may also be sung to familiar tunes that have been suggested on the printed page.

Every church is made up of persons with differing tastes in music. For this reason, *THE WORSHIPING CHURCH: A HYMNAL* contains wide variety in melody, rhythm and harmony. In all types of hymns, there is a strong emphasis on music that is "folklike," with the potential to become accepted by a congregation; this has been a particular aim in selecting new tunes. A number of hymns supply descants which are traditionally sung by the choir to give a sense of climax to a concluding stanza.

"Hymn Services"—medleys of hymns, each with a special theme—have been made available by careful planning of the sequence of selections within the book; a Hymn Services Index will be found on page 787. The "Amens" traditionally placed at the conclusion of certain hymns have been omitted, because many leaders feel they are not appropriate in contemporary worship. However, they may be added to the hymns, if desired, with instrumentalists improvising the required harmonies, or using a special card of "Amens" (in all the keys of the hymnal) available from the publisher without charge.

In all our designing and editing, we have endeavored to help church musicians use this book as effectively as possible in planning and conducting worship. The indexes are more complete than those of our earlier hymnals. In addition we will offer a number of adjunct volumes: Accompaniment books (for keyboard instruments, brass instruments, and handbells); A Worship Leaders' Edition, containing a brief analysis of each hymn text, and suggestions for teaching and using the hymns in worship; A Concordance of hymn texts; and a Dictionary-Companion, with complete historical information about all texts and tunes.

THE WORSHIPING CHURCH: A HYMNAL has taken six years to prepare. An Advisory Committee, composed of ministers, church musicians, and educators, has been actively involved during that period, meeting at regular intervals for editorial conferences, and supplying other information by telephone and mail. On behalf of the entire Christian community, we express our appreciation to them, and to others who have used their unique talents in the preparation of this volume. They join with us in the prayer that God will use this hymnal in the renewing of the Church, in both its spiritual life and the expression of that life in worship.

HOPE PUBLISHING COMPANY
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