

5-1-1958

# A Historical Study of Church Music Reform

Glen M. Buffman

---

## Recommended Citation

Buffman, Glen M., "A Historical Study of Church Music Reform" (1958). *Western Evangelical Seminary Theses*. 118.  
[http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/wes\\_theses/118](http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/wes_theses/118)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Evangelical Seminary at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Western Evangelical Seminary Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following faculty committee:

First reader: Mildred Wynkoop Approved May 14, 1958

Second reader: Nobel V. Sack Approved May 14, 1958

Prof. of Thesis Form M. Wynkoop Approved \_\_\_\_\_

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF CHURCH MUSIC REFORM

by

Glen M. Buffam

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the

Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

Portland 22, Oregon

May, 1958

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .                               | 2    |
| The Research Problem . . . . .                          | 3    |
| Delimitation of the Study . . . . .                     | 3    |
| Justification of the Study . . . . .                    | 4    |
| Procedure . . . . .                                     | 4    |
| Source Material . . . . .                               | 5    |
| Definition of Terms . . . . .                           | 6    |
| II. PRE-REFORMATION MOVEMENTS OF CHURCH MUSIC . . . . . | 9    |
| The New Testament Church . . . . .                      | 9    |
| Eastern Reform Movements and the Greek Settlement . .   | 14   |
| Gnosticism . . . . .                                    | 15   |
| Arianism . . . . .                                      | 17   |
| Iconoclastic Reformers . . . . .                        | 18   |
| Western Reform Movements and the Latin Settlement . .   | 20   |
| Ambrosian Hymnody . . . . .                             | 21   |
| The Office Hymn . . . . .                               | 23   |
| Embellishments of Church Music . . . . .                | 25   |
| The Content of the Hymn . . . . .                       | 26   |
| III. PROTESTANT REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC . . . . .        | 35   |
| Protestant Church Music on the Continent . . . . .      | 35   |
| The Stage is Set for Revival of Music . . . . .         | 35   |

| CHAPTER  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| The Minnesingers . . . . .                             | 36   |
| The Bohemians . . . . .                                | 36   |
| The Flagellanti . . . . .                              | 36   |
| The Mystics . . . . .                                  | 37   |
| The Revival of Church Music in Germany . . . . .       | 38   |
| Luther Launches the Reform . . . . .                   | 38   |
| A Vernacular Hymnody . . . . .                         | 38   |
| Securing Hymns . . . . .                               | 39   |
| Characteristics . . . . .                              | 40   |
| Effects . . . . .                                      | 41   |
| The Thirty Years War - Hymnody in Transition . . .     | 42   |
| Paul Gerhardt . . . . .                                | 42   |
| Later German Developments . . . . .                    | 43   |
| The Moravians . . . . .                                | 43   |
| J. S. Bach . . . . .                                   | 43   |
| Music of the Reformed Church Under John Calvin . . .   | 47   |
| John Calvin and the Psalms . . . . .                   | 47   |
| France . . . . .                                       | 47   |
| Geneva . . . . .                                       | 48   |
| Organized Singing . . . . .                            | 49   |
| Reformation of Church Music in the British Isles . . . | 51   |
| Music of the Established Church . . . . .              | 51   |
| A Dull Imitation of Genevan Song . . . . .             | 52   |

| CHAPTER  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| The First English Psalter . . . . .                        | 52   |
| Singing Suffers Collapse . . . . .                         | 53   |
| A Dubious Revival . . . . .                                | 53   |
| The Reaction of Isaac Watts . . . . .                      | 54   |
| A Distinctive Christian Song . . . . .                     | 54   |
| Trojan Horse Technique . . . . .                           | 55   |
| Doggerel Style . . . . .                                   | 56   |
| The Wesleyan Revival in Song . . . . .                     | 58   |
| The Stimulus . . . . .                                     | 58   |
| The Wesley Family . . . . .                                | 59   |
| The Songs - Their Author . . . . .                         | 59   |
| The Songs - in Controversy . . . . .                       | 60   |
| The Songs - in Revival . . . . .                           | 61   |
| The Songs - Their Influence . . . . .                      | 62   |
| IV. RECENT ROMAN CATHOLIC REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC . . . . . | 67   |
| The Purpose of the Study . . . . .                         | 67   |
| History from the Roman Catholic View . . . . .             | 67   |
| Modern Moves Toward Reform . . . . .                       | 69   |
| A Roman Catholic Standard of Church Music . . . . .        | 72   |
| A Roman Catholic Hymnal . . . . .                          | 74   |
| Other Related Phases of the Reform . . . . .               | 77   |
| Intelligibility of the Liturgy . . . . .                   | 77   |
| Promotion and Publicity of the Movement . . . . .          | 78   |

| CHAPTER   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| The Future Prospect . . . . .                           | 79   |
| Summary . . . . .                                       | 81   |
| V. DEVELOPMENTS OF AMERICAN CHURCH MUSIC . . . . .      | 84   |
| The New England Pioneer Days of Confusion . . . . .     | 84   |
| The Bay Psalm Book . . . . .                            | 84   |
| Fuging Tunes . . . . .                                  | 85   |
| Influence of Hymnody . . . . .                          | 87   |
| Employment of Musical Instruments . . . . .             | 87   |
| Nineteenth Century Developments . . . . .               | 88   |
| Decadence of Psalmody . . . . .                         | 89   |
| The Hymnbook Era . . . . .                              | 89   |
| Mason Reaction . . . . .                                | 90   |
| The Gospel Song Innovation . . . . .                    | 90   |
| Other Nineteenth Century Developments . . . . .         | 94   |
| Secular Influences on Contemporary Church Music . . . . | 95   |
| Partitioning of Church and Secular Music . . . . .      | 96   |
| The Subtle Effects of Music on the Emotions . . . .     | 97   |
| Summary . . . . .                                       | 102  |
| VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .                    | 104  |

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Music has been and is an integral part of the life of the Christian Church. History reveals that from the very beginning of the Church, and on through the ensuing centuries, music has played a vital role in the worship of the Church, and has even had a part in the development of the expression of the Christian faith.

The contemporary Christian Church has evidences of producing a complex pattern of church music which is unprecedented in history. In the first place the church life of today has rapidly become decentralized, through the increasing emphasis on departmentalization of the Church into segregate parts. In many such instances the leadership has been left to individuals who were more concerned with the music of one particular department, than the well-being of the total music program. Other evidences of this complex picture may be noted in the type of music produced and used by the various Christian Youth Groups, and that characteristic of the Salvation Army and other Missions, the music used on various Gospel radio broadcasts, and the multiformity of religious songs gaining popularity in general church life. Included in this profusion of diverse types of church music have been multiplied invasions of modern secular influences.

In the light of this complex pattern of church music, it is evident that the church administrator should be responsibly aware of the total picture, and should seek to improve the situation in every possible way. Assuming that the need for such responsible leadership

is valid, a basic problem of importance arises: by what standard shall the music of the Church be judged and administered? It is to this problem that the present study is given.

#### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to investigate the developments of church music in its historical perspective, and to discover if possible, guiding principles which might form a basis of judgment for the understanding and direction of contemporary church music. The study proceeded on the assumption that there was benefit in recognizing a basic standard of principles which could serve in the proper evaluation and administration of the music of the Church. It was felt that the story of music, as it has unfolded through history, would have something objective to say to the present generation of Christians who are endeavoring to serve the Church in the ministry of music.

#### DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The inquiry relative to the discovery of guiding principles for church music suggested a scope of thought which should properly include the historical, psychological, philosophical, and practical elements of the subject. This study however is necessarily limited to the historical aspect of the subject, though the implications of the other elements cannot be excluded from the historical study.

The scope covered in the study was from the Apostolic period down to the recent present, but only those aspects of history were

studied in a detailed way which contributed to the general purpose of the study. It was not a study of the stable forms of music which characterized any period which seemed significant, but the periods of change from one form of music to another. The study of the Roman Catholic Church is important to the study because of its tie with the traditional Church, and even more because of the recent Liturgical Reform Movement which is greatly influencing the music of that Church, and which, by comparison, casts light on the shifting trends of contemporary Protestant music. The omission of an analysis of the contemporary Protestant church music was due in the first place to the scarcity of material written about it upon which to form a judgment; and secondly because this was the area of study which was intended to be the testing ground of the results of this thesis. The actual application of the test itself was beyond the limits of the thesis.

#### JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

There is not an abundance of material published on the subject of church musicology. During the course of research for this study no similar historical treatment of the subject of church music was found.

#### PROCEDURE

The study begins with the brief examination of the New Testament use of church music. It follows through the Early and Medieval periods of Church history, including the two ecclesiastical streams that formed

the Eastern and Western Churches. Then the use of music in the Protestant Reformation is traced with the consequent developments in the Church on the Continent and in the British Isles. Next is the study of the Roman Catholic liturgical reform with respect to music. The historical section closes with a chapter considering American church music and a special section on contemporary secular influences which has been included because of its peculiar significance to a proper evaluation of contemporary church music. Finally, a concluding chapter sets forth a summary and a statement of guiding principles of church music which arise from the study.

#### SOURCE MATERIAL

Because of the limited availability of sources, it was necessary to draw from secondary sources largely. Whatever historical information could be found in interpretative works was utilized. Those works that are listed in the bibliography were all that were accessible for the research. Works pertaining to this study which were unavailable to the author, but important as sources are: Edward Dickinson, Music in the History of the Western Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902); Edmund S. Lorenz, Church Music: What a Minister Should Know About It (F. H. Revell Co., 1923); Winfred Douglas, Church Music in History and Practice (New York, 1937); and Erik Routley, The Church and Music, An Enquiry into the History, the Nature and the scope of Christian Judgment on Music (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 1950).

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

The study under consideration is burdened with the problem of semantics, because there is considerable difference of opinion regarding the meaning of the terms which relate to the general field of musicology. Since it was beyond the scope of this study to consider the problem with particular reference to various linguistic interpretations, it was felt that a selected group of words which have been used frequently in this paper, should be set forth at the outset, with their respective meanings.

Musicology is a general term, which considers music as a branch of knowledge or field of investigation, and properly refers to all phases of the subject.

Hymnody has two meanings: the act or art of singing hymns, or hymns considered collectively. The context will determine the meaning in each instance.

A song is that sound which is uttered with musical modulations of the voice; especially the human voice.

A psalm is that form of Old Testament poetry which is used in sacred song either in its original form or as it is adapted to metrical form.

The word hymn has perhaps a greater number of connotations than any other term in the field of church musicology. For purposes of this study it has been used to mean - any song which uses for its text something more, or other than, the text of the Old Testament.

The term Gospel as it is used in Gospel song and Gospel hymn was coined in the Moody - Sankey revival of the nineteenth century, and simply means - the singing of the message of salvation. Other connotations have been added which suggest that this type of song usually has a chorus or refrain.

To chant means to sing or make melody with the voice. It is more frequently thought of as a short and simple melody or phrase characterized by the reciting of an indefinite number of syllables to one tone, used in public worship in singing unmetrical psalms and canticles, etc.

The words plain chant and plain song are used interchangeably and refer essentially to chant. (see above)

Liturgical is of the nature of liturgy, and in both Catholic and Protestant traditions has come to mean in ecclesiastical usage - the idea of a regulated ceremony in divine worship.

When the phrase human composure has been used it is meant to indicate whatever is a non-Biblical text.

Dynamic has been used in the sense of that which is moving and progressing; viz., non-static.

Reform has been used broadly to mean - any attempted change from a traditional pattern. The terms Protestant and Reformation are understood to refer simply, as an index, to the period of Church History which they commonly represent.

## CHAPTER II

### PRE-REFORMATION MOVEMENTS OF CHURCH MUSIC

## CHAPTER II

### PRE-REFORMATION MOVEMENTS OF CHURCH MUSIC

The great Protestant Reformation which occurred around the sixteenth century is commonly recognized as an important dividing line in church history. Hence, in this historical analysis of church music, the first chapter of the main body of the study has considered that period of development from the advent of Christ, up to the time of the Protestant Reformation. Three main lines of development are noted: first, the New Testament innovation of Spiritual Song; second, the reform movements of the Eastern Greek Church; and third, the Western reform movements of the Latin Church.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The earliest type of Christian song had its origin in the temple and synagogue services of the Jews, and used for its hymn-book, the Psalms. The present Hebrew name of the book is "Tehillim", but the Septuagint entitled them *ψαλμοί* or psalms, meaning "lyrical pieces to be sung to a musical instrument."<sup>1</sup> Many authorities agree that the teachings of Christ introduced no reforms as far as the mode of music or poetic expression, is concerned. It is likely that the hymn used at the institution of the Lord's Supper was simply a familiar psalm. The record does not convey any hint, "And when they had

---

<sup>1</sup>William Smith, A Dictionary of the Bible (Chicago: The John C. Winston Co., 1884), p. 539.



sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives". Perhaps the most that can be concluded from this occasion is the significance of Christ himself linking song with so solemn an event, which in the course of church life has remained one of the prominent features of Christian worship -- the Holy Communion. Some have concluded, questionably, that Christ here has sealed forever the Christian ideal of song, and that it cannot be other than the Psalms. But perhaps happily the opposite conclusion could be drawn--since the record is not explicit as to what was sung, the inference may be drawn that innovations are in order.

Whatever precedent may or may not have been suggested at this transition point of the Lord's Supper, early developments in the Apostolic church indicate that before long a new type of Christian song was being used.

The first indication is seen in the Gospel of Luke where three songs are recorded: the song of Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Magnificat), the song of Zachariah, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for He has visited and redeemed His people" (Benedictus), and the song of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word" (Nunc Dimittis). It is thought that Luke, in attributing these songs to Mary, Zachariah and Simeon, was employing poetry that formed part of the earliest treasury of Judaeo-Christian song.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Currie Martin, The Church and the Hymn Writers (London: James Clarke and Co., 1928), p. 27.

Another indication of new poetic expression is the frequent references in Paul's letters to what seem to be quotations from possible hymn-odes that were becoming known in Christian circles.

For example Ephesians 5:14, suggests a hymn pattern:

Wherefore He saith  
Awake thou that sleepest,  
And arise from the dead,  
And Christ shall give thee Light.

And again in I Timothy 3:16

And without controversy great is the mystery  
of godliness;  
He who was manifested in the flesh,  
Justified in the spirit,  
Seen of angels,  
Preached among nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up in glory.

So strikingly creedal is this latter reference that a recent English churchman has written a book on it.<sup>1</sup> Many other references could be cited, such as II Timothy 2:11, Revelation 4:8-11, 5:12-14, 21:6-8, to mention only a few, which may conceivably be fragments of early Christian songs.

Even more helpful to the historian or hymnologist than the afore-mentioned passages, are the references where advice concerning singing of the Christian is given. They reveal more of the dynamic character of the new development. Paul in writing to the Corinthians says,

How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath

---

<sup>1</sup>H. A. Blair, A Creed Before the Creeds (Longmans, Green and Co., 1955), p. 175.

a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation,  
hath an interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

Again in the same passage he had advised, "What is it then? . . . I will sing with the Spirit I will sing with the understanding also." The letter to the Ephesians and Colossians add to our understanding of this early singing.

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is  
debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,  
addressing one another in psalms and hymns  
and spiritual songs, singing and making  
melody to the Lord with all your heart, . . .<sup>2</sup>

and again,

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as  
you teach and admonish one another in all  
wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and  
spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts  
to God.<sup>3</sup>

Careful study of these passages of advice and exhortation reveal that the church music of Paul's day had characteristics which were distinctively new and Christian. For the sake of brevity these have been included in the summary below.

Not all of the hymnologists have been as open to admit the purely conjectural character of their conclusions on this phase of the subject, as the eminent Dr. Louis F. Benson,<sup>4</sup> who concludes his

---

<sup>1</sup>I Corinthians 14:26.

<sup>2</sup>Ephesians 5:19, R.S.V.

<sup>3</sup>Colossians 3:16, R.S.V.

<sup>4</sup>Dr. Robert Guy McCutchan heralds him as "our country's greatest hymnologist". Hymns in the Lives of Men (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), p. 103.

section by saying, "we have been reading between the lines."<sup>1</sup> It is hoped the following modest observations may be held in candour and fairness, without stepping beyond the bounds of the text.

Christ left no established pattern for music of the Church.

(Mark 4:26; Matthew 26:30)

Following Pentecost the dynamic movement of Christianity inspired a 'new song'.

This new song was a spontaneous expression, resulting from the indwelling "word of Christ", and from being "filled with the Spirit".

(Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)

This spontaneous singing which sprang from the heart required the discipline of the intellect or "understanding", as a guard against Corinthian confusion. (I Corinthians 14:15, 20, 26, 33)

Not only was the song, directed to God, vertically as it were, as all Judaistic song had been, but horizontally, "addressing one another", which suggests a sharing of individual experience.

(Ephesians 5:19, R.S.V.)

Teaching of doctrine was clearly a function of early Christian song. (Colossians 3:16)

The words "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" appear twice in Paul's letters in the same order. (Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16) It is not clear from the text just what distinction should be made between the meaning of the words. This problem is worthy of further study.

---

<sup>1</sup>Louis Fitzgerald Benson, The Hymnody of the Christian Church (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1956), p. 35.

The New Testament is completely silent on the use of musical instruments.

It is probably fair to assert that the New Testament ideal for Christian song was that it should always be spiritual singing, however that is understood.

There is no apparent indication that this new development of Christian song had reached an established pattern for all ages to come.

Since the New Testament does not hold to an exacting standard of judgment for church music, it follows that the development of the Church through history should be consulted to see what happened, and thus determine if possible some additional criteria. The early centuries provide us with some valuable information, especially in regards to the reform movements of the Church and the role which music played in them. It is to this consideration that the study proceeds.

#### EASTERN REFORM MOVEMENTS AND THE GREEK SETTLEMENT

The rapid growth of the Church during the first few centuries, occasioned the influx of new heretical forces in the Church which in turn created a heated climate of controversy, boiling out as will be seen in rivalry and defense of great doctrinal issues of the faith. This constant, violent atmosphere of reaction was not without its effect on the development of Christian hymnody.

### Gnosticism.

One of the earliest and strongest clashes came with the inroad of Gnosticism, a highly aggressive movement which for several centuries especially from the second to the fourth, threatened to stifle Christianity altogether.<sup>1</sup> One of the unique features of the Gnostics of this period was their employment of hymns to propagate doctrine. The Syrian scholar, Bardesanes (155-223) had actually composed a psalter of 150 psalms containing Gnostic effusions, "to rival the psalms of David". These were highly popular in Syriac churches for more than a century. But the orthodox replied with a counter hymnody of their own, such as the collection by one Ephraem Syrus (307-73?) who evidently recognized the power that Bardesanes had in his hymns. He wrote:

In the resorts of Bardesanes  
There are songs and melodies.  
For seeing that young persons  
Loved sweet music,  
By the harmony of his songs  
He corrupted their minds.<sup>2</sup>

It is rather significant to note in this appraisal, the mention of "young persons" and their love of a certain kind of "sweet music", and reference to "songs and melodies" or "harmony of his songs", which depicts something quite different than much of the "chants" and "liturgical plainsong" prevalent in the orthodox assemblies.

---

<sup>1</sup>Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942), p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Guy McCutchan, Hymns in the Lives of Men (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), p. 91.

Other Gnostic Hymn writers of the period include Valentine and Marcion who came to Rome about the middle of the second century to foster this heretical doctrine.

The reaction of the Greek "Catholic" church was not altogether consistent. Faced with the popularity of these heretical hymns, some parts of the church were stimulated to the production of hymns which were orthodox in expression. On the other hand there were some who were aroused with suspicion that the hymn of human composure, was becoming a menace, and therefore should be rejected for use in the church. This latter reaction came to a more formal settlement by action of the Synod that met at Laodicea about 363 A D. Its 59th canon, read in part:

Psalms composed by private men must not be read in the church nor uncanonical books, but only the canonical of the New and Old Testament.<sup>1</sup>

Not only were human compositions rejected, but congregational singing was to be forbidden also in the church. Another canon, the 15th, stated that, "besides the psalm singers appointed thereto, who mount the ambo and sing out of the book, no others shall sing in church".<sup>2</sup> As to the extent of this movement to silence the people, there are conflicting testimonies. Dr. Benson in his study concludes that these canons must have meant what they said, because of the fact that even to this day the congregation is silent in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Louis F. Benson, The Hymnody of the Christian Church (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1956), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Greek orthodox service.<sup>1</sup> Other students of this period however are careful to point out that about this same time the new Arian controversy emerged bringing another burst of song. Probably the dampening reaction at this stage of the development did not extend beyond the local synods who took the action.

#### Arianism.

Early in the fourth century Arianism emerged with great activity, involving the Eastern church in bitter controversy for nearly a century. Their claim was that Christ was a kind of "creature", neither true God nor true man, but more of a demi-god. Athanasius, the Father of Orthodoxy, was the great opponent of Arius, who led the ensuing battle through the terror and hideous confusions of war which followed. Athanasius was exiled five times; some enthusiasts died for it. But it seems when the battle was at its highest, both sides burst into song, and that the Arians, the unorthodox began it. When the Arians were forbidden by the orthodox Emperor Theodosius (378-96) to hold public worship in Constantinople (the political capitol), the Arians retorted by parading through the streets, singing hymns, and gathering at prominate points to herald their heretical refrains to all who would gather to hear. St. John Chrysostom, as bishop of Constantinople, replied to the Arian public singing there, by rival processions trained to sing orthodox hymns specially composed for them. Since these demonstrations were carried on at

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



sunset, the custom of evensong became firmly established in the church. But more than that, it illustrated once more the power of the hymn inculcating doctrine into the hearts of the public in a way that the creeds alone could not do.

#### Iconoclastic Reformers.

Henceforth hymn singing came more and more to form an integral part of christian worship in the eastern church. A rich classical hymnody gradually began to emerge, until by the eighth and ninth centuries the Greek service books, which contained the hymn liturgy, became increasingly elaborate. Unfortunately only scattered fragments of the hymns survive, as the Iconoclastic reformers of this period destroyed wholesale the service books in which they were contained. This dispute about the use of images, had far reaching effects even to the great Schism between the East and the West in 1054, a dispute which Dr. Lars Qualben says contributed more than any other single factor.<sup>1</sup> Out of the midst of this violence, at the peak of the controversy the anti-iconoclasts (led by the monks) retorted with a new hymnody designed to maintain and to propogate the orthodox views. These hymns or a refinement of them, are still found in the service books of the eastern church. But this marks another period of reform in the Greek church, illustrating the effect of controversy in a dynamic hymnody.

---

<sup>1</sup>Qualben, op. cit., p. 152.

The following observations may sum up this phase of the story, allowing that the summary statements represent wider research than was possible to include in the preceding text.

The history of hymnody in the Eastern Church shows that its widest influence was felt during the periods when controversy was raging.

In the promulgation of doctrine (pure or not), hymns proved useful.

The initiative in hymn singing was, it seemed, usually taken by the innovator, with the orthodox taking it up as a counter blast.

The songs that appealed were those of popular composition, and may have been largely leveled to the young people.

Because of the alleged unsuitability of these songs to worship, the Church largely rejected their use in the liturgy, and as a part of the reaction began limiting the function of song to the clergy or "officiants".

The eventual hymnody that formed the service-books of the Church, were hymns that followed the creeds and the elaborate order of service, and were characterized by the objectivity of dogma rather than the subjective feelings of experience. An example of this abiding Greek hymnody is a part of "The Ode from the Christmas Day Service":

The hour of thine appearing now was nigh,  
The summoned world around Thy cradle came;

The Roman power ordained the mystery,  
 And on the roll Thine was the first great name  
 Thy rule, still greater, thus began that day,  
 A rule that should the whole wide nations sway,  
 Our gift to Thee - the best - we joyful bring,<sup>1</sup>  
 True dogma for Thy praise - Thou Saviour King!<sup>1</sup>

By comparison, the dynamic hymnody of the Apostolic Church had been dominated by a spirit of subjective experience seeking expression, while that of the Eastern Church was motivated by a spirit of objective doctrine demanding defense. In both cases religious feelings ran high, but they had different sponsors.

#### WESTERN REFORM MOVEMENTS AND THE LATIN SETTLEMENT

Having considered briefly the trend of church music in The Eastern Church, the next task is to trace the movement through its various stages of development in the Western Church. The scope of the Latin settlement leads from the early beginnings of Ambrose of the fourth century, through the middle ages to the eve of the great Protestant Reformation. In this preliminary note it should be added that one of the significant features of the West was the new vehicle of Christian thought in the Latin language, a circumstance occasioned by the Latin translation of the Bible known as the Vulgate by Jerome. As F. J. E. Raby states in his work A History of the Christian Latin Poetry:

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Currie Martin, The Church and the Hymn Writers (London: James Clarke & Co., 1928), p. 61.

New rhythms appeared, and new and more romantic imagery. The mystical fervor of the prophets, the melancholy of the Penitential Psalms or of the Lamentations, could not be rendered in Latin without giving that severe and logical language a strange flexibility, an emotional and symbolical quality which had been foreign to its nature. The whole literary imagination of the West was to be fed on the sonorous sentences of the Latin Bible, and Christian poetry . . . <sup>1</sup>

### Ambrosian Hymnody.

It was St. Ambrose (340-97), the great bishop of Milan, who introduced new hymns into the Western church, which set the pattern of Latin hymnody of the future. He initiated his ideal in music in the midst of a very distressing but practical situation. St. Augustine tells us how in 386 Ambrose wrote hymns to be sung by the faithful of Milan as they guarded the church and their bishop, day and night, from the threatened seizure by the Arian empress Justina. As Augustine recounts,

It was at this time that the practice was instituted of singing hymns and psalms after the manner of the Eastern churches, to keep the people from being altogether worn out with anxiety and want of sleep. The custom has been retained from that day to this, and has been imitated by many, indeed in almost all congregations throughout the world.<sup>2</sup>

When charged by the Arians with using his hymns to evoke magic

---

<sup>1</sup>F. J. B. Raby, A History of Christian Latin Poetry, p. 10, as cited by Martin, Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Confessions IX, 7 as quoted by Erik Routley, Hymns and the Human Life, p. 23.

spells, Ambrose replied,

They allege the people are deceived with  
the magic spells of my hymns. I do not  
deny the fact. For what can be more  
powerful than a confession of the Trinity,  
daily sung by the mouths of a whole  
people.<sup>1</sup>

And so it may be concluded that in the West as it was in the East, the hymns for the people were being born and sung in the midst of theological controversy and political strife. But the story does not end there.

Meanwhile in the east at Antioch antiphonal singing had been introduced, and along with it came such a stimulus to the elaboration of the musical part of the Church's worship, that it was feared the private devotions of the church were endangered. Hence repressive measures were taken. At Milan, which was greatly influenced by the East, St. Ambrose organized a choir school, introduced antiphonal singing and made a first attempt to systematize the church hymnody. His efforts greatly encouraged the popular hymn-singing and it soon spread through Italy and even Gaul, with the result that congregational song became more general during the next two centuries.

But unfortunately it was destined to an early fate and the song passed from the lives of the congregation to the narrowness of monastic devotion, and the Ambrosian hymns became the exclusive possession of the clergy. How this happened is a subject of

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Guy McCutchan, Hymns in the Lives of Men (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), p. 101.

separate discussion and marks perhaps the most serious declension in the life of church music.

#### The Office Hymn.

Popular hymn singing came into vogue when the morning and evening "hours of prayer" were turning into a church service. New basilicas had been built and were being opened daily for the saying of devotions under the direction of the clergy. Devotional intensity increased and there arose groups of ascetics in the congregations, who began emphasizing the "hours" set apart from common day. These "hours" became many and soon special hymns and prayers were assigned to each, in order to systematize the daily office. However, along with the multiplication of services there came an unfortunate circumstance; most people could not attend them. Thus the daily office and the office hymns were left to the ascetics and the clergy. The chasm between the common people and the officary of the church continued to widen, when sometime later the ascetics left the congregations to enter a life of monasticism. They took the office hymns with them and left behind nothing but the daily recitations of the office by the clergy. What a far-cry from the musical ideal of Ambrose in which the whole congregation lifted heart and voice to almighty God. The office hymn which had started as a layman's movement, evolved into a professional affair confined to the monks and the choir.

#### Gregorian Chant.

Gregory the Great (540-604) is a name which must not be omitted in this account, though he is not consistently credited with

the tremendous reforms that some are sure he made.<sup>1</sup> It may be fairly asserted however that the work begun by Ambrose in systematizing the musical forms of the church, was after an interval developed under the leadership of Pope Gregory.<sup>2</sup> He differed from Ambrose in that he disapproved of metrical song, and by organizing a school of music was able to promote the singular use of unmetrical plainsong or plainchant. The music of Rome became famous, and through the graduates of the school, the theories and principles of Gregorian chant, later so-called, became widespread. This development, though it improved the general quality of church music, did not restore congregational singing, but rather removed it even more remotely as subsequent developments reveal.

---

<sup>1</sup>Protestant studies such as those by Benson, Martin and Routley, whose works have been frequently referred to in this paper, do not mention Gregory in connection with Church music, while others barely allude to him. On the other hand, Catholic writers ascribe outstanding importance to his work as an eminent reformer. The difference of opinion can be illustrated by reference to the two contemporary encyclopedias of renown, the "Britannica" and the "Americana". Under the heading Gregory the Great, the author of the first, obviously Protestant, suggests, "Gregory's work in connection with the liturgy and church music is a subject of dispute. A doubtful tradition ascribes to Gregory the compilation of an Antiphonary, the revision and rearrangement of the system of church music, and the foundation of the Roman schola-cantorum." (see Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago: 1951; Vol. 10, p. 870). While the Professor Hebrew F. Wright, of the Catholic University of America, contends, "The ancient tradition which reserves to Gregory the honor of having definitely fixed the liturgical chant 'Cantus Gregorianus', seems indisputable". (See Encyclopedia Americana, Volume 13, p. 451).

<sup>2</sup>See Oscar Hardman, A History of Christian Worship (London: University of London Press, 1948), p. 51.

Embellishments of Church Music.

The lyrical metre of Ambrosian hymnody were the kind that the common people could sing. And they did sing them, far and wide, until they finally died out with the decline of devotions to a strictly religious group. The plainsong of Rome, and even its increasing exclusive use would not have been an impossible opportunity for common song - but it was not encouraged. Eventually however, when the church began to cherish meticulous refinements and embellishments of the services, it became impossible for anything more than a passive participation of the congregation.

The first of these innovations appeared with the "Tropes", (turns). These were certain syllables of the non-scriptural parts of the text, sung to florid musical phrases which were admitted into the Mass as a novelty in the 8th century.<sup>1</sup> This custom died out in time, except in one place in the Mass. The last syllable of the word "alleluia", was on festive occasions extended over a long musical phrase, to allow time for the deacon to proceed to his position for the reading of the Gospel. The difficulty in memorizing the phrase led to words being set to it called "Sequences" (that which follows). Later the use of independent hymns evolved to take the same place in the mass. These also were called sequences and the earlier were distinguished as "Prose". Complexities of this kind in the services of the church, and in the forms of liturgical music were

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 90.



no doubt involved in the growing philosophy of worship of the middle ages, which was placing greater emphasis on perfection of form, than on genuineness of spirit. As a result the congregation became mere spectators of both the ceremonies and the singing.

In addition to the Tropes and Sequences, there came the development of polyphonic singing. It first appeared in the ninth century with the introduction of the 'organum' by which the melody was doubled at an interval of a fifth or a fourth. Although this added ornamentation was undoubtedly more appealing to both the choir and the people, the fact remains that the congregation were still silent listeners.

#### The Content of the Hymn.

Church music reform during the middle ages followed along two lines. One has already been dealt with which concerned mainly the form of church music. The other which now presents itself is the content of the hymn, or in other words, what was to be sung.

A problem of paramount concern throughout the entire period centered in the relation of the hymn to scripture. It was a question of whether the psalms alone should be sung, or if hymns of human composition should be admitted. In the sixth century Benedict of Nursia issued his famous "Rule", including in it the adoption of the Ambrosiana, to be used during the various "hours" in the daily life of the monks. In 567 a council at Tours went further, sanctioning hymns in addition to those of Ambrose. But this acceptance was not general; there was strong opposition. Rome stood solid for "the Bible

only" as church song, for centuries. In Spain there was hostility until the seventh century at least, when at the Council of Toledo it was declared:

We possess some hymns composed to the praise of God, the Apostles and the martyrs, such as those of the Blessed Doctors Hilary and Ambrose. And these are rejected by certain people on the pretext that nothing should be received into the liturgy except the text of Holy Scripture only. What do these people say of 'Gloria Patri'? And what of 'Gloria in excelsis'? And what of the lessons read in the Office? And of the prayers? There is no more ground for condemning the hymns than the prayers, and in this matter Gaul and Spain ought to observe the same custom.<sup>1</sup>

Thus by the seventh century the hymn was being used in some measure in all parts of the Western church, except at Rome where it was received some time after the tenth century.

A second concern of the study of the hymn content of this period is the peculiar characteristics of the humanly composed hymns. To adequately cover this would involve a long imposing list of writers and their hymns, a thing impossible to do here. However, a few who deserve suggestion would be Ambrose and Prudentius who were contemporaries, very much alike in that they were both lawyers and public officials; but very different in the hymns they composed. McCutchen points out that Ambrose wrote for official and congregational expression; Prudentius for personal domestic edification. Ambrose was a classicist; Prudentius a romanticist. Ambrose wrote in

---

<sup>1</sup>Louis F. Benson, The Hymnody of the Christian Church (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1956), p. 73.

but one metre, Prudentius in a variety of metres. Ambrose influenced form, Prudentius content; the one was a restraint, the other a stimulus.<sup>1</sup> Martin attributes Prudentius with writing many hymns on the martyrs, which "intensified the cult of worship at the graves of martyrs, the reverence for relics, and the practice of pilgrimages".<sup>2</sup> Another writer of the period is the famous Notker Balbulus (840-912) who was the leading poet and musician in the great monastery of St. Gall. His contribution was in composing materials for the sequences and popularizing them in ecclesiastical circles at least, during the ninth century. McCutchen claims,

In form, content, and musical phrasing, Notker's work was entirely original - a practical, musical, and liturgical innovation as great as had been that of Ambrose.<sup>3</sup>

Other writers of the time include Fortunatus, Bernard of Cluny, Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas Aquinas.

As for the subject matter of their hymns, Routley shows that by citing two advent hymns, one medieval and another modern,

you can see at a glance the difference between the almost threadbare sobriety of the office hymn and the more lyrical and rhetorical technique of the modern hymn.<sup>4</sup>

He chose two for an example from the English Hymnal, giving just two verses of each. Here is the medieval hymn, the author indicated:

---

<sup>1</sup>McCutchen, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>McCutchen, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Erik Routley, Hymns and Human Life (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), p. 26.

High Word of God, who once didst come,  
 Leaving thy Father and thy home,  
 To succour by thy birth our kind  
 When, towards thine advent, time declined,  
 Pour light upon us from above,  
 And fire our hearts with thy strong love,  
 That as we hear thy Gospel read,  
 All fond desires may flee in dread.<sup>1</sup>

This contrasts notably with the sacred rhetoric of Philip Doddridge which appears in the English Hymnal along side it.

Hark, the glad sound, the Saviour comes,  
 The Saviour promised long!  
 Let every heart prepare a throne,  
 And every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release,  
 In Satan's bondage held;  
 The gates of brass before him burst,  
 The iron fetters yield.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to give an appraisal of the characteristics of hymnody covering so vast a period, without giving attention to the more than five thousand at least, according to Julian, which were composed. Obviously the most that can be done in this study is simply to accept what others have concluded from such a study. McCutchen was content to quote Archbishop Trench who said that, "The christian poets were in holy earnest", and he implies that their real concern was for what they had to say rather than for the manner in which they might say it. No doubt this would account for their emphasis on quantity, rather than on accent and rhyme in the poetry of the time. It was Bernard of Cluny, for example of the twelfth century who wrote

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

a poem of some three thousand lines, which dealt chiefly with the evil conditions of his time. Martin, in his The Church and the Hymn Writers, says nothing of the form, but concludes the subject matter to be "objective and doctrinal", perhaps a natural thing for him to do since his work was particularly a doctrinal study. Routley, however, echoes a similar but more elaborate conclusion, when he describes the form of them in general as being "professional and serene", and the content as follows:

The subject matter of these office hymns and sequences was always objective and doctrinal. . . . the chief end of the office hymn is adoration and declaration of divine truth. The only personal element that ever appears is the prayer for deliverance from temptations and from the devices of the devil, against which monastic communities had need to be well armed. The Sequences, similarly, are declarations of doctrine and adoration.

This objectivity, after expressing itself through verse turned with extreme care and artistry (like Stephen Langtons' "Come, thou holy Paraclete") is characteristic of the atmosphere of serenity and security that pervades the Church of the Middle Ages at its best.<sup>1</sup>

Phil Kerr, in his brief chapter on the Development of Christian Hymnody, draws attention to the curious feature of the hymns of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in that nine out of ten were sung to the Virgin Mary, or to the saints, and only one-tenth to God. He cites as the reason:

. . . medieval hymnists made God the Father seem to be an angry, intolerant, unlovable kind of

deity, whom one could not truly worship;  
on the other hand, the Virgin Mary embodied  
the kind, humane, sympathetic idealism  
which could heartily be adored.<sup>1</sup>

Another feature of the Middle Ages was the growing conviction that Latin was the sacred, and thus the exclusive, language of the Liturgy. This fact together with the expansion of Christianity created a problem of intelligibility to many who did not understand it. But then - to understand the Liturgy was after all not the essential - if the performance was in accordance with the form and aesthetics of the Church, its value was sustained. A Protestant observer can perhaps better perceive the problem by reference to a modern situation. Paul Hume, Catholic musician and author, pleads with American Catholic choir leaders,

Please, please, try to convince your  
singers that they are not to sing Latin  
as though they were singing English with  
a mere difference in spelling.<sup>2</sup>

If Latin is a problem to the choir who sings it, imagine how utterly foreign it is to the common people who listen, or perhaps do not listen because of it. Undoubtedly this condition of isolation of the congregation from the sacred rites and services was true of a great portion of Christendom on the eve of the Reformation.

It is to this phase of the history that our attention turns next; but first a summary of the section just studied is in order.

---

<sup>1</sup>Phil Kerr, Music in Evangelism (Glendale, California: Gospel Music Publishers, c1939), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Hume, Catholic Church Music (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1956), p. 50.

The element of dynamic reform in the Medieval Church is less obvious, because of the vast period of time it embraces, covering as it does the history from the fourth to the sixteenth century.

In addition the development of church music was more gradual, and without the continuous heated controversy of doctrinal warfare.

The exception to this would include the Ambrosian settlement; but even this innovation, though in the midst of conflict, was intended as much for the strengthening of the Christians, as it was to combat heresy.

The decline of the devotional life of the people, from the home centred devotions which blossomed during the period of civil persecution, through the transition of public gatherings of devotion and worship, until finally the more religious departed to a life of monastic devotion, marks the most serious departure from the early Church principle of a people "filled with the spirit" and "singing and making melody in (their) hearts to the Lord."

Popular singing of the Ambrosian office hymn lost out when it became a feature of a multiplicity of Church services - too many for the average to attend. Thus the hymn became the exclusive possession of the clergy and choir. The spiritual life of the common man died, and with it - the song.

The work of Ambrose and Gregory in systematizing church music, each illustrates what organized reform can do. In the one case congregational hymnody became popular, and might have remained so

but for the aforementioned reason. In the other case purity of church music was promoted and achieved, but within boundaries that excluded the masses.

The embellishments of church music which appeared from the ninth century on, proved of value in the stimulation of new compositions of song. The tropes and sequences gave opportunity for new expression from the monks at least, even if it did not reach the hearts of the common people.

The supremacy of the scripture for the text of song was held by some during this period, and especially in Rome until the tenth century.

The characteristics of the content of the hymns varied with the different authors, but in general they probably were sober, objective, long and threadbare; the authors being more concerned with what was said than the manner of saying it.

The problem of intelligibility of the masses arose with the trend toward exclusive use of the Latin in the liturgy.

With all the efforts of the Church in reform and restraint, a period of Church history which began in a wave of congregational singing, was now drawing to a close, with the people having neither desire nor opportunity for song in the Church.



### CHAPTER III

#### PROTESTANT REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC

## CHAPTER III

### PROTESTANT REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC

As was mentioned earlier, the Protestant Reformation is commonly recognized as an important dividing line in church history. The reason for its importance of course is because of the great divide into what is now called the Roman Catholic and Protestant Church. Music played a significant role during this tremendous period of reform in the Church.

For purposes of this study, the present chapter has considered the Protestant Reformation in Europe, with special attention to the reforms on the Continent under Luther and Calvin, and the reforms in the British Isles under Watts and the Wesleys.

#### I. PROTESTANT CHURCH MUSIC ON THE CONTINENT

##### The Stage is Set for Revival of Music

As the Renaissance period in history awakened new ideals and expressions which prepared the way for the great Protestant Reformation, in a similar respect there were certain movements under way which made possible the revival of church music. While it remained for a great reformer, Martin Luther, to organize and launch the revival, it must be remembered that the ground had been made ready in the hearts of the people for such a revival. The sad decline of congregational singing during the middle ages in the Roman Catholic Church, was not without its counter-part among beginnings of reform movement outside the Church.

### The Minnesingers.

In Germany as early as 1100 there had appeared the Minnesingers, who flourished for about two centuries, singing in lyric fashion songs of love and beauty. Unlike their contemporaries, the Troupadours, the Minnesingers employed a vast variety of metre, as well as endless variety of tunes and melodies. After having allowed the clergy to do all the singing for many centuries, the common people were inspired to vocal efforts; and though the songs were not strictly religious, their singing awakened in the hearts of multitudes of Germans, aspirations of singing which prepared the way for greater use of Christian song by the congregation.

### The Bohemians.

John Huss, the leader of the Bohemian Brethren, had strongly encouraged his followers to sing, having "established a school for singers in connection with his Bethlehem Chapel."<sup>1</sup> Shortly before Huss was burned at the stake in 1415, he said, "We preach the gospel not only from the pulpit but also by hymns."<sup>2</sup> The Bohemians were responsible for circulating the first congregational song book in 1504.

### The Flagellanti.

Another group which contributed to the setting of the stage for the musical revival was the Flagellanti who roamed about Europe

---

<sup>1</sup>Earl Harper, Church Music and Worship (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

like gypsies, thus making their influence quite widely felt. They were non-Catholic Christians who travelled under torturous hardships, believing they must "suffer with Christ", and preached repentance from sins. They used singing a great deal and multitudes of their audiences learned their songs.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Mystics.

The last mentioned group before the reformers who were instrumental in stimulating mass-singing, are called the Mystics. They journeyed across Europe during the Black Plague declaring that the plague was God's method of manifesting his vengeance upon mankind for their sin. Singing was part of the program they used in getting their message across.<sup>2</sup>

The groundwork for Lutheran and all subsequent church music reform was thus laid in the area of congregational singing. The common people who had been silent for centuries, both in the churches and in secular gatherings, were now stimulated and enthused with the idea of singing. It remained for the reformers to capitalize on this opportunity which was wide open for Christian song.

---

<sup>1</sup>Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), VI, pp. 502-512.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 232-242.

## The Revival of Church Music in Germany

Perhaps no name surpasses in importance that of Martin Luther with regards to church music reform. It may be that no other people have burst into song so readily and profusely as the German people of Luther's day. Moreover, Luther and his colleagues may be credited with the organizing of a reform movement which has had a greater impact upon the stream of Christianity than any other singular reform.

### Luther Launches the Reform.

One of the unique features of the Protestant reform movement was the emphasis upon the active participation of those assembled for public worship. Another feature was the promotion of intelligibility of the Bible and Christian doctrine by the common people. This was due to the desire of the early reformers to bring Christianity within the reach of the individual experience of all. They wanted the people to understand it, to experience it, and then to express it freely.

A Vernacular Hymnody. In the Catholic Church, the ritual and singing had been confined to the Latin tongue entirely. No one was more familiar with it than Martin Luther, an Augustinian Monk; and it is true that he never really had the heart to depart from it altogether, because of "so much fine music and hymnody the Latin has."<sup>1</sup> However his great work in this connection was the freeing of the hymn from its Latin shackling, and in developing a vernacular hymnody that would

---

<sup>1</sup>Louis F. Benson, The Hymnody of the Christian Church (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1956), p. 75.

allow the German people common expression.

Securing Hymns. Luther's first task was to find hymns or else make them. He said,

We lack poets, or else they are not known, who  
can write for us godly spiritual songs, as  
Paul calls them. Should there be any German  
poet, I say this to stimulate them.<sup>1</sup>

His first booklet of 1524 had only eight hymns; his last hymnbook of 1545 had 101, thirty-five by himself. At this time he wrote, "What I wish, is to make hymns for the people, that the Word of God may dwell in their hearts by means of song also."<sup>2</sup> Among the hymns which Luther composed, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God", perhaps is the best known. Others of the same period though not Luther's are: "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty", and also, "Now Thank we all our God". Luther not only composed hymns himself and induced others to write, but he drew from the great hymnody of the middle ages. Unlike, some of his contemporaries such as Zwingli, Carlstadt, Farel, and Calvin, who opposed organ playing and polyphonic singing in church, Luther permitted it, thus maintaining a rare balance in emphasis between full-hearted congregational singing and the elaborate polyphonic music that only the trained choir can perform.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Phil Kerr, Music In Evangelism (Glendale, California: Gospel Music Publishers, 1954), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Stevenson, Patterns of Protestant Church Music (Duke University Press, c1953), p. 4.

Characteristics. Dr. Schaff, writing of the characteristics of German hymnody in Julian's Dictionary, holds that in a strict sense the Church hymn, "as a popular religious lyric in praise of God to be sung by the congregation in public worship was born with the German Reformation."<sup>1</sup> He reckons that the total number of German hymns cannot be less than 100,000, the largest number to be found in any language. He continues,

These hymns constitute a most graphic book of confession for German evangelical Christianity, a sacred band which enriches its various periods, an abiding memorial of its victories, its sorrows and its joys, a clear mirror showing its deepest experiences, and an eloquent witness for the all-conquering and invincible life-power of the evangelical Christian faith.<sup>2</sup>

Robert McCutchen, an eminent American hymnologist says concerning both the hymns of this early period and the chorales which developed later that:

The tunes which were sung to these hymns were as definitely racial as were the texts themselves. Many of them are universal in their musical appeal, but by far the majority of them are not.<sup>3</sup>

The performance of the singing whether choir or congregation was to be uplifting and cheerful. Luther wrote, "When we sing, both heart and mind should be cheerful and merry."<sup>4</sup> As for the content of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Phillip Schaff, Julian Dictionary of Hymnology, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Guy McCutchen, Hymns in the Lives of Men (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1945), p. 123.

<sup>4</sup>Phil Kerr, op. cit., p. 42.

hymns one observed that they were in a measure at least objective, didactic and theological, and that they were also churchly.<sup>1</sup> If this is in comparison to the later development of the pietistic hymnody it would no doubt be an acceptable appraisal, but to say that the hymnody lacked the expression of personal experience would be a very erroneous conclusion.

Effects. The effect of music on the Lutheran Reformation has been calculated by some to be just as important as any other factor. It was said "The whole people is singing itself into the Lutheran doctrine"<sup>2</sup> and the Catholics who hated Luther indignantly cried that "his songs have damned more souls than all his books and speeches."<sup>3</sup> Coleridge said, "Martin Luther did as much for the Reformation by his hymns as he did by the translation of the Bible."<sup>4</sup> Benson declares concerning Luther's dealings with the hymn,

He took it out of the liturgies and put it into people's hearts and homes, that when they had learned it and loved it they might bring it to the church and sing it together. He revived that is to say, St. Paul's conception of hymnody as a spiritual function.<sup>5</sup>

Here then was one of the great values of the Lutheran reformation in

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Guy McCutchen, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>Phil Kerr, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Earl Harper, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>5</sup>Louis Benson, The Hymnody of the Christian Church (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1956), p. 77.



church music, it restored the custom of congregational singing which provided the vehicle for worship, teaching, and edification of all ordinary people. It was carried on in the midst of all kinds of conflict, political and theological and although Bibles and song books were sometimes destroyed, the song was in the people's heart to stay.

The Thirty Years War - Hymnody in transition.

If the first of German hymnody had been somewhat churchly, didactic and theological, the terrible war experiences brought in at least an element of the subjective.

Paul Gerhardt (1607-76) "prince of German hymnodists" lived through the war and was a leading figure of the period between the close of the war and the beginnings of the Pietists. McCutchen says concerning his contribution to this period,

. . . there was further departure from the churchly and confessional toward the emotional and devotional . . . his (Gerhardt) appeal was universal throughout Christendom - it was not limited alone to Lutherans. His influence, therefore was greater than any of his predecessors; he was an inspiration to other hymn writers, among whom were John and Charles Wesley.<sup>1</sup>

With the coming of the Mystics and the Pietists the hymnody of devotional intensity increased. One of the signs of this was the great length at which Gerhardt and others wrote. "This" says Routley, "was a quality which the Wesleys inherited . . . they could write a hymn a hundred lines long without wasting a word."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Guy McCutchen, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>Erik Routley, Hymns and the Human Life (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), p. 46.

### Later German Developments.

The Moravians. Among those that can be classed as dissenters from the main stream of the Lutheran Church are the Moravian, a group which had no small influence in the course of Christian hymnody. This can be accounted for by the great zeal and talent of a man by the name of Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf (1700-61). He wrote about two thousand hymns, built up a model village of Herrnhut where the congregations gathered and "sang themselves hoarse for the love of Christ."<sup>1</sup> The impact of this singing was felt greatest perhaps when a later reformer came under their influence, John Wesley, first while journeying to Georgia from England, and then again by a visit to Zinzendorf's village. What happened as a result of that visit can be told in the many translations of German hymns by Wesley, and in the example it lent to the Wesleyan revival of song; but that is a later story.

J.S. Bach. The history of Lutheran hymnody is never complete without the consideration of Bach. He is unquestionably appreciated more today than he was by his own generation. The unique thing about him was that he had a burning ideal for the betterment of church music and he carried it out to his own satisfaction even though only the select few of his day received it. Robert Stevenson devoted a chapter in his study of Patterns of Protestant Church Music, to the contribution of Bach, and he states as his thesis:

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

Bach found in Lutheran churches, and in Lutheran churches only, an opportunity to present his new music week after week before receptive and intelligent audiences.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning this environment for the development of his ideal three things were in his favor. Anterior to him was the favorable philosophy of church music enunciated by Luther and the priceless treasury of German chorales. Contemporary with him was a system of church finance in which whole blocks of churches were organized under one spending agency, a council whose duties included the engagement of a trained corps of musicians to perform in the several churches under its jurisdiction. Favorable also were the length and frequency of services in the Leipzig churches where he served, usually six hours on Sunday alone.

Certain features distinguish him from other famous musicians. Unlike Handel who wrote Oratorios for the concert stage, or Mendelssohn, Bach wrote his religious masterpieces for the Church. He differed from Luther or Wesley in that he was not empassioned to write for congregational singing. His works were for the choirs, and instruments. The revival of his works which finally brought widespread approval, came a century later. It was occasioned, not by a spiritual awakening, but by a concert musician Felix Mendelssohn who said on the occasion of conducting Bach's masterpiece, the St. Matthew Passion, "and to think it should be . . . a Jew who gives back to the people the greatest Christian works."<sup>2</sup> Significantly enough even as this first hearing

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Stevenson, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

was conducted by a secular musician, so today he gains a hearing only in those churches where secular or at least professional musicians have their influence. (Perhaps Lutheran churches are excepted.)

It was during this early eighteenth century that the innovation of the cantata suddenly emerged. The Bach cantata was essentially the musical counterpart of the sermon, and at Leipzig formed an integral part of the liturgy. Another development of the period on different soil was that of the Oratorio, which came into vogue in England under the genius of George Grideric Handel, and became particularly distinguished in the operas, with his matchless sacred rendition of "The Messiah".

The Sacred heritage of German church music is indeed valuable, and though it suffered some what of a setback during the age of "Enlightenment", it nevertheless remains in the annuls of church history one of the most significant of church reform movements in music. Admittedly the German chorales became slow and heavy, and thus lost their appeal to all but perhaps the German people themselves. The Lutheran church in America is endeavoring to promote a restoration of the chorale, at the present time, to something of its primitive buoyancy and beauty. If this is done in the same free spirit that characterized the early Lutheran reform, a spirit that welcomed music from any source whatever as long as it could be adapted to sacred use, then a new revival is worth hoping for.

The lessons that can be learned from Luther in church music reform are indeed legion, more than can be noted here. The fact that

he was a musician as well as theologian put him in a more favorable position than some of his contemporaries. It was on this account that he was equipped to organize his reform in music as he did. It is significant however to note that inspite of his high ideal in the quality of music, he held that participation of the faithful in congregational singing was of first importance even at the expense of what may have been desirable music art. Further, he was concerned that music perform a definite function, especially that of teaching the word of God. To him intelligibility of the laity was of more importance than perfection of language, thus he introduced a most radical departure from the medeival practice of 'Latin only'. Calvin, Zwingli and all other Protestant reformers have shared this conviction with him, but not all have been as free to use the popular tunes and metres of their day. Neither have all been as free to use hymns other than the Psalms of sacred scripture.

The later developments of German hymnody, indicate what usually happens after any radical reform movement, there is a shift in trends. The hymns especially among the pietists became more devotional than doctrinal. Perhaps this is what always happens when the battle-line of the people becomes something other than a fight for doctrinal purity. The development of Bach is of peculiar significance, in that the Lutheran church provided him with an environment that he could have found nowhere else in which to exercise his ideal in music.

As the stage had been set for Luther in the precedent of the Minnesingers, the Bohemians and others, it was also arranged for John

Calvin and the Reformed movement on different territory, a story which was carried out as a very prominent part of the Great Protestant Reformation.

### Music of the Reformed Church Under John Calvin

#### John Calvin and the Psalms.

John Calvin (1509-64) was enjoying a religious awakening in France and Switzerland, akin to that of Lutheranism in Germany. Calvin was quick to realize that his followers needed a vocal outlet for their new found Christian faith, and so encouraged congregational singing. However, unlike Luther, he sternly disapproved of humanly composed hymns; he insisted that only the inspired songs of Scripture, the Psalms, had a rightful place in Christian worship.<sup>1</sup>

France. In the French revival, Calvin already discovered a familiarity among the people of some of the Hebrew Psalms. This was accounted for by the court poet of France, Clement Marat, who a few years before had struck up the idea of translating the Psalms into the French language. Court musicians discovered that many of these Psalms could be sung to commonly-known ballad tunes, and soon the public was singing them widely - as something of a fad. When Calvin arose to prominence, he persuaded Marat to arrange fifty of the Psalms metrically, in the French language; which he did. This collection, known as "Metrical Psalms" was published in 1541, and received such a wide acclaim

---

<sup>1</sup>Louis Benson, op. cit., pp. 79-85.

in France and Switzerland that it went through sixty-four editions in the first four years.

Geneva. A later publication known as the "Genevan Psalter", may be credited to another French poet, Theodore Beza, who finished translating the Psalms into French, metrically arranged. This collection of one hundred and fifty psalms was in turn translated into other languages and hundreds of editions were published. The Genevan Psalter was a powerful influence on the hymnsinging of Europe (except Germany) for a period of three hundred years; in fact, most of the Psalters used in England and Scotland since that time, trace their parentage to it. The "Old Hundreth" tune to which we sing "Praise God From Whom all Blessings Flow", for example, first appeared in the Genevan Psalter.

Organized Singing. As in everything else Calvin kept rigid control of church music. In 1543 Calvin wrote to a friend:

Our need is for songs that are not only pure but holy, but none can write them save he who has received the power from God himself. When we have searched around, here and there, we shall find none better, or more suitable than the Psalms of David which the Holy Spirit dictated; therefore, when we sing them we are sure God both put words into our mouths as if He himself sang with us.<sup>1</sup>

More than that, the reformed churches formed decrees that insisted on everyone singing. The Synod of the Reformed Churches of

---

<sup>1</sup>Phil Kerr, op. cit., p. 43.

France decreed that, "every worshipper must bring his own psalm-book to church and must uncover his head as he sings."<sup>1</sup> The implication, of course, is that people not only used the psalm-book in worship but that each person owned one and used it at home.

In one town where the majority of inhabitants were Calvinists, a traveler wrote what he saw as follows:

A most interesting sight is offered in the city on week days, when the hour for service approaches. As soon as the first sound of the bell is heard, all shops are closed, conversation ceases, business is put on one side, and from all parts people hasten to the nearest church. Arrived there, each one draws from his pocket a small book which contains some psalms and meter, and then the congregation sings before and after the sermon, while everyone testifies how great consolation is derived from this custom.<sup>2</sup>

The sense of individual expression which had dominated the contents of the German hymnody in the humanly composed hymns, was felt in the Calvinistic hymnody in a different sense; it was a sense of personal ownership of the psalmody. Every person even down to the children had a psalm-book of their own, and as a result they felt they were singing, not merely the songs of the Church, but songs which belonged to them personally. There were no hymn-book racks in the pews as we know them today; the psalm-book was put back into the pocket and was carried home where the song was continued. Indeed, it was a churchly

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



hymnody, but it was a personal hymnody also; a lesson for all future church musicians to observe.

The question of whether Calvin meant to lay down a hard and fast rule, binding upon the future of church music, is probably beside the point. History shows that his precedent in the "Bible only" was followed rigidly wherever Calvinism spread in the next few centuries, and was the situation which resulted in many future reforms and innovations. But with Calvin he was dealing only with a situation as he saw it in his own day. On the one hand he observed that the popular songs of the youth of his day were frivolous and unseemly, and that the more churchly hymns of the Latin had become the vehicles of Mariolatry, a thing which he hated. Following Augustine he believed that songs should be free from anything that would detract from the supreme glory of God and that might give any derivation of sensuous pleasure. It may be said in fairness that his settlement of the problem worked, and though the disciplined order may have overshadowed completely the spontaneous freedom of song that St. Paul had intended, the people nevertheless sang heartily as unto the Lord.

Calvin can hardly be blamed for the subsequent developments, when with the continued rigorous discipline of song, the heart dropped out of it. It may only serve to prove that what may work for one generation and people may not fulfill the need at all for another.

## II. REFORMATION OF CHURCH MUSIC IN THE BRITISH ISLES

### Music of the Established Church

Church music reform did not begin to take effect in Britain until about the time of Henry the VIII, though Wycliff and Tyndale had already begun Protestant influences through their Bible translations. So long as the Roman Church was the dominating force, the Latin hymns were naturally the only ones to be employed. Even with the introduction of the vernacular as the medium of worship in the days of Henry VIII the hymns were retained in the Latin. Most of the Church Music reform which followed this time came under the influence of Calvinism, and thus set a pattern of Metrical Psalmody which remained greater in length and breadth of influence than any other Protestant movement. The one exception to this was the effort by Miles Coverdale, who not only translated the Bible, but published his 'Goostly Psalmes and Spirituall Songes' in 1546, which contains paraphrases of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Magnificat, two or three Latin hymns, several German hymns, and fifteen psalms. It is clear that he was influenced deeply by Germany and not Geneva, however in the preface he writes something very much like Calvin,

Would God our carters and ploughmen had none  
other thing to whistle upon save Psalms, and  
if women spinning at the wheels had none other  
songs, they should be better occupied than with  
'hey nony nony, hey troly loly'.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Currie Martin, The Church and the Hymn Writers (London: James and Clarke, 1928), p. 120.

### A Dull Imitation of Genevan Song.

During the Reformation period England and Scotland came under the Calvinistic method of psalm-singing, as distinguished from the Lutheran free use of composed hymns. One might ask how all this came about. It happened when English exiles of Mary's reign heard the Genevan song that they felt inspired to undertake an English psalm book. A problem arose however in the attempt to imitate the delicate French lyrical meters which carried the Genevan tunes. They were up against it to get the Psalms into English measures, which would pass for verse, at all. As a result the character of the English Psalm tune was for the most part a "rather dull performance", as Dr. Benson says, and "regretably so, because dull tunes are fated to become in time the mother of a dogged congregational hymnody."<sup>1</sup>

### The First English Psalter.

The first complete English Psalter appeared in 1562 under the title The Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter. Sternhold had previously compiled a hymnbook in 1547, containing nineteen psalms, but when he died in 1549, his work was carried to completion by John Hopkins, a clergyman and school teacher. The resultant volume included several contributions from other psalm books, and became the standard version which dominated the field for a century and a half until the time of Isaac Watts.

William Hunnis, an official of the King's court in London, published a book of his original hymn poems in 1583. His hymns never

---

<sup>1</sup>Louis F. Benson, op. cit., p. 45.

attained popularity, and his book soon faded out, but the significant contribution he made to English hymnody was the incorporation of the "Amen" at the end of each hymn, a custom still practiced by many.

#### Singing Suffers Collapse.

For more than a century from the time of "Bloody Mary" (1553-58) psalm-singing and hymn-singing suffered collapse. Official edicts by Mary had banned church singing, and during the long struggle that followed between Puritan and Cavalier the song question was a source of wrangling between high church and low church. In 1623 a book of "Hymns and Songs of the Church" was published by George Wither, a famous soldier poet. Wither favored the Lutheran doctrine of composed songs and even secured King James official sanction. The King ordered that every book of Psalms which the Church printed should include Wither's hymns; but alas, there was opposition which rescinded the order.

#### A Dubious Revival.

After the Restoration of 1660 something had to be done to revive the lost art of congregational singing. John Playford brought out a folio of tunes new and old, in 1671, but it proved a dismal failure. Six years later he tried again with simpler harmonies and a four-line alternate for every eight-line tune. For a century this became the musical standard. Within the Church of England, Tate and Brady, arranged a version called "New Version of Metrical Psalms", in 1696. This was finally accepted by the Church officially, but even then the rural sections held to the "Old Version". Other difficulties involved the actual

singing of the new hymns. Where they were sung at all, even in London it was disconnectedly, as the clerk droned out the Psalm line by line, and some singers representing it, responded with whatever melody covered the line.

Thus the situation, as it existed in the British Isles during the reformation period up to the time of Watts and the Wesleys, was one in which the people failed to find an adequate expression of church music. They had come under the influence of Geneva rather than Germany, and they had not been able to transfer the Genevan ideal with any success, because of the language problem. Those who had attempted to improve the situation had met with difficulties of strong church or national controls. It was not until the early eighteenth century that a reform movement of any great significance was enacted.

#### The Reaction of Isaac Watts

##### A Distinctive Christian Song.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was among the dissenters of the Protestant group who felt keenly the need of an evangelical fervor, and with it a distinctly Christian hymnody. He believed God would inspire an eighteenth century writer as truly as he had inspired David. He wrote many new hymns, among them "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past", "Joy to the World" and the noted missionary hymn "Jesus shall Reign". In 1707 he published his first volume of Christian Hymns set to the old Psalter meters. As an appendix to this he wrote an "Essay towards the

improvement of Christian Hymnody" and proposed a new system of singing that included not only Old Testament psalms but also modern hymns about the New Testament Christ. Watts declared:

Some of the Psalms are almost opposite to the spirit of the gospel; many of them are foreign to New Testament principles, and widely different to present circumstances of Christians. If we are to make Christian hymns of the Psalms, we must first re-write them in the way that David would have written them if he had been an eighteenth century Christian instead of an Old Testament Jew.<sup>1</sup>

#### Trojan Horse Technique.

Watts was very conscious of the tradition of the Established Church, and endeavored in his first efforts to use great tact in order to enact the innovation. For this reason his own hymns were published in 1719 under the title, The Psalms of David Imitated. It may be questioned whether he was quite honest in calling them imitations, but at least he won a hearing with the public. The churchmen were naturally adverse to them and began writing criticisms against their use, but as Robert Stevenson well states in his chapter entitled, "Watts's Flights of Fancy",

By the time these criticisms reached the public (the year before the American Revolution) Watts had won the vast majority of English and American churches to his side, and his Trojan Horse technique had opened wide the closely guarded gates of the Christian system of praise; where previously the singing of divinely appointed Psalms of David had formed the sole vehicle of congregational praise, first his poems masquerading as Psalms of

---

<sup>1</sup>as cited by Phil Kerr, op. cit., p. 46.

David were wheeled within the Christian walls,  
and then there emerged a full flood tide of  
'hymns of human composure.'<sup>1</sup>

The courage and prudence of Isaac Watts, in the face of a rigid order of church music, is largely responsible for the freedom to sing humanly-composed hymns, which most of the Church of the twentieth century now enjoys.

### Doggerel Style.

There are some writers who feel that Isaac Watts and his hymnody tasted too much of doggerel to be worthy of any real contributions. This is implied by Louis F. Benson when he said that Watts "had not thought musically of anything more than getting some snap into the few tunes the people knew."<sup>2</sup> John Wesley had a great dislike for some of his "fondling phraseology" especially in addressing deity, though on other counts Wesley had words of praise. Granted that some of his verse may have leaned toward nonsense, it was still possibly an improvement on some that preceded him. It may be his critics are confusing him with some verse that is cited by Rev. S. W. Christophers as being written just before Watts. For example:

Ye monsters of the bubbling deep  
Your Maker's praises shout;  
Up from the sands, ye codlings, peep,  
And wag your tails about.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Stevenson, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Louis Benson, op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>3</sup>S. W. Christophers, The Epworth Singers (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., 1874), p. 14.

Then again some of the blame for doggerel may be not so much on Watts as on those who wished to tamper with his lines, as this was done freely in his day. For instance in Connecticut, the leading singer of a certain church thought he could better the music and poetry of their psalms. He set Watts' ninety-second psalm to music of his own; but found that to make the music and verse accord, he must substitute his own "finer" lines for those of Watts:

Oh, let my heart in time be found  
Like David's harp of solemn sound.<sup>1</sup>

He waited on the pastor to submit his improved version and music, and proposed to sing -

Oh, may my heart be tuned within,  
Like David's sacred violin.<sup>2</sup>

The pastor, severely tested, but maintaining a becoming dignity, suggested an improvement even on the singer's "great improvement". "Pray let me hear what you propose," said the flattered poet. The minister scribbled two lines for him, thus -

Oh, may my heart go diddle, diddle,  
Like uncle David's sacred fiddle.<sup>3</sup>

The reaction of Isaac Watts to the music situation as it existed in the British Isles was important and far reaching in effects. Watts was a great leader with a burning ideal. His outstanding achievement

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



lay in the successful introduction of a distinctive Christian song. His contribution to the hymnody of the Church has been lasting, as many of his hymns are still frequently used; but perhaps of equal significance is the fact that he was instrumental in influencing, and in preparing the ground for, the Wesleys.

### The Wesleyan Revival in Song

#### The Stimulus.

While John and Charles Wesley were coming to America they came under the combined influence of the Moravians and of Watts' hymns, and as a result published a small collection of hymns of human composition; a thing they felt more free to do on virgin soil than would have been the case in England. In spite of it they were hailed before the grand jury to hear grievances in the following order: First, "inverting the order and method of the Liturgy," Second, "changing . . . the version of Psalms publicly authorized to be sung in the church." Third, "introducing into the Church and service at the Altar compositions of psalms and hymns not inspected or authorized by any proper judicature."<sup>1</sup>

However the next spring the brothers returned to England where they received the epochal experience in their lives, that may properly be considered the great stimulus to the Evangelical awakening which followed. After May 21, for Charles and May 24, 1738 for John, they crossed over

---

<sup>1</sup>John Wesley, Journal, I, 385. (as cited by Robert Stevenson), op. cit., p. 117.

the Channel and journeyed to Herrnhut, the center of the Moravian activities. There they heard the enthusiastic singing in the German language and became convinced that congregational hymn singing was a great wave of song. The followers of Wesley were commonly known as the "Singing Methodists".

#### The Wesley Family.

It must be remembered that the Wesley brothers had a background which fitted them poetically and musically, for the position they were to fill. They were reared in the very atmosphere of poetry. Several of the Samuel Wesley household were especially gifted in the realm of poetic expression. This story is well told in the stirring chapters of, The Epworth Singers and other poets of Methodism, by Rev. S. W. Christophers.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Songs - Their Author.

Charles Wesley has been considered by many to be the heart of the great revival of his day. It is true that he began writing hymns more profusely upon his conversion, and wrote almost spontaneously until his death. It is estimated by Rattenbury that he wrote over seven thousand hymns.<sup>2</sup> Evidently John's part in the vast bulk of Wesleyan hymnody, according to his own word, was small. Nevertheless John played a considerable part in the selection and publication of hymns, including

---

<sup>1</sup>S. W. Christophers, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>J. Earnest Rattenbury, The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns (London: The Epworth Press, 1942)

considerable translation of many German hymns. But Charles had the genius for winning a hearing by means of song. Rattenbury points out that his approach to doctrine was that of an artist, rather than a scientist.

He won his way to truth by moral and spiritual struggle and evangelistic practice rather than by intellectual research. He was a theological artist, not a theological scientist, but when he gave rich beautiful and poetic form to truth which convinces, was it less true because it had been reached by the intuitional mode of the poet or the devotional mood of the penitent rather than by the intellectual technique of the philosopher.<sup>1</sup>

The same author says later,

He blended competent theological knowledge with the deepest religious experience, and expressed it by the least objectionable mode open to the theologian - sacred song.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Songs - In Controversy.

To say that Charles was so wrapped in experimental religion that he saw nothing of the theological issues of his day, would be amiss, for he not only saw but successfully engaged in two doctrinal controversies of his day. The one had to do with the Quietist extremists among the Moravians who claimed because of the misuse of the means of grace such as baptism and the sacraments, the only solution was their abandonment. It was largely due to the hymns of Charles Wesley that these were preserved in use in the Methodist tradition.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

But more important than this was the Calvinistic controversy, which if it had been lost would have put into the background the central teaching of the free Grace of God. He expounded in clear tones the simple truth of the free Grace for all men, and though his arguments were sound, it was his poetic irony that won the hearing. See for example the force in this strangely polemic verse,

O for a trumpet voice,  
     On all the world to call,  
 To bid their hearts rejoice  
     In Him who died for all!  
 For all my Lord was crucified;  
     For all, for all my Savior died.

#### The Songs - In Revival.

The Evangelical revival was literally carried on wings of song. People learned and committed to memory the message of Salvation as it came to them on the vehicle of song. The revival was exempt from the great chapels and cathedral pulpits of the land, but it rang through the walled streets of the cities and out across the country side, into the hearts and lives of the common people, until the songs became not merely the echo of melody and words, but the sounding board of a personal religious experience. Charles wrote out of experience, and as the revival progressed, the hymns which he composed likewise told the story. As Dr. F. L. Wiseman observes:

The Evangelical Revival breathes, or rather throbs through them all. Salvation of oneself and one's brother is their supreme concern. The whole outlook on life and the world is seen through the glass of personal experience.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>F. L. Wiseman, Charles Wesley and His Hymns (London: The Epworth Press, 1909), p. 18.

The revival was reaching the average unlearned person that hitherto had not been challenged concerning his faith and his relationship with God. The hymns in a language they could understand, covered a wide range of themes, so that they not only felt through them the call to repentance, but received extensive instruction as well. Dr. Newton Flew, in a unique study of the structure of Wesley's hymns, concludes that this element of teaching was intentional.

The main thesis which I submit . . . is that Charles Wesley's hymns can be analysed; that they have a coherent and intelligible structure of thought, and that this habit of orderly composition is due to his desire to teach Christian doctrine to ordinary people.<sup>1</sup>

Charles not only wrote in an orderly manner, but he frequently wrote hymns to meet particular needs. One of the passions of his heart was to minister to the spiritual needs of the men in prison. As late as 1785 a hymnbook was published by him containing "Prayers for Condemned Male-factors". The songs were at work in revival strength on levels of evangelistic need that had never been touched in England before.

#### The Songs - Their Influence.

The wide influence of the Wesleyan hymnody has gone far beyond the confines of the Revival period; it has extended completely into the great reaches of Methodism, and has made itself felt in practically all the main-line churches of Protestantism since the beginning. Wiseman implies that it took the hymnody of Charles to give permanency to

---

<sup>1</sup>R. Newton Flew, The Hymns of Charles Wesley - A Study of Their Structure (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), p. 18.

the work of John:

And long since when possibly the standard works of the elder brother are read only by the preachers, and the organization which he built up has been so modified as to show but little trace of its original form, the hymns of Charles Wesley will continue to permeate the Methodist Church with the gracious leaven of its primitive experience.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1957, which was the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Charles Wesley, many tributes were given from men of all denominations. Among others was a striking article in The Watchman-Examiner concerning the "Influence of Charles Wesley's Hymns on Baptist Evangelistic Zeal." The writer J. Eugene White states concerning his own denomination,

Nothing did so much to shake Baptists loose from their lethargy as Charles Wesley's hymns. His hymns gradually made nonaggressiveness incredible to the reason and repulsive to the heart.

Before Baptists had been influenced by the hymns of Charles Wesley, they were a stubborn, predestinarian people. After singing hymns that told of God's love for all, they gradually, became more concerned over their part in the world's redemption.

Baptist ministers began inviting sinners to partake of God's grace. Earlier, the atonement had been only for the elect; but now, by virtue of the universal application of Christ's death, the loving call of God was extended to all who would repent and believe. Before Wesley's hymns had stirred these Baptist hearts, no invitations were given to lost men for fear of 'meddling' in divine affairs; after him, Baptists sent the gospel call throughout the world. Before Wesley, Baptist churches were

---

<sup>1</sup>Wiseman, op. cit., p. 12.

practically empty; after him they became a great missionary and evangelistic denomination.<sup>1</sup>

In the same article it was pointed out that,

the missionary zeal which was the beginning of the modern missionary movement in Baptist life, was planted in the heart of William Carey by the Wesleys and Whitefield.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up it may be stated that the Wesleyan Revival in song was preceded by several contributing influences. Isaac Watts had set a precedent for it by breaking with the dull music which characterized the psalm singing of the Established Church; the Moravian activities provided a convincing example of the power of congregational song; the poetical inheritance in the Wesley family supplied a ready and competent source; and finally the conversion experience of John and Charles Wesley provided the spiritual vitality and evangelical fervor which ensured the success of the Revival.

Charles had a genius for winning a hearing by means of song. Not only did his songs heartily defend and propagate doctrine, but they were designed to meet the particular heart needs of people wherever they could be found. The songs were at work in revival strength on levels of evangelistic need that had never touched England before.

---

<sup>1</sup>Rev. J. Eugene White, pastor of the Rollingwood Hills Baptist Church, Mesquite, Texas. The Watchman-Examiner, "Hymns to the Rescue," February 6, 1958, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

As the Wesleys had been influenced by several factors of significance, their contribution in turn strongly influenced the future generations of Methodism in particular, and also much of Protestantism.



## CHAPTER IV

### RECENT ROMAN CATHOLIC REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC

## CHAPTER IV

### RECENT ROMAN CATHOLIC REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC

#### I. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of including in this study a consideration of the reform movement within the Roman Catholic church, is to add the needed perspective of the other stream of christianity since the Reformation. Further, it was thought, since the reform in church music is such an integral part of the modern liturgical revival, and since the reform is being carried out in a Church where authority, organization and discipline prevails, there were values here that could not be otherwise learned.

The particular approach to the study is to include a historical outlook from the catholic point of view, the recent moves toward reform, a catholic standard of church music, the matter of a hymnal, and certain other related phases of the movement.

#### II. HISTORY FROM THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW

Whatever may have existed in the form of plainsong before the time of Gregory I in the sixth century, the Catholics point to him as the Father of official chant and plainsong in the Church. It was due to his tremendous reforms in church music that the church entered what they call the golden age, which lasted until the end of the eleventh century. Hence the Gregorian Chant is the revered music of the Church to this day. It was during this 'golden age', however,

that a new type of music developed. The plainsong had been a simple melody which all could sing. The new approach introduced harmony, which was possible for only the trained to sing. At first it was not serious since the harmony was set to the Gregorian chant melodies, and the people continued to sing the well known chants. But as time passed, new melodies were devised and given a place in the sacred services alongside the traditional ones. Then with the renaissance and reformation period there came a complete silencing of the people in the congregation. This was due to an awakening of individualism among composers, who began to make their music according to their own style and fancy, and in turn the music of the church soon became so complex and involved that the layman could no longer take part in it. Added to this with the Reformation crisis, the Protestants began to exploit the possibilities of congregational singing, so much so that the Catholic Church veered off in the opposite direction to avoid any of the social evil connotations. The singing was left to an exclusively trained choir, who gave little incentive to congregational response. In the 1850's the music of the church had so degenerated that a great and gifted architect of that time, described it as follows:

In lieu of the grand and edifying spectacle of priests and people uniting in one great act of adoration and praise, the service is transferred to a set of hired musicians, frequently heretics and infidels who perform in a gallery, while the congregation is either amused or wearied, and the members of the clergy who are present generally take advantage of these interminable fuges to say their own office, which has no reference

whatever to the great act of sacrifice at which they are ostensibly assisting. Thus the unity of this the most majestic, the most solemn act of Christian worship, is destroyed, and in many places, it has degenerated into a mere musical entertainment for the audience, and at which they assist with no more devotion, than in a common theatre.<sup>1</sup>

It was into this sad condition of church liturgy that Pope Pius X was elected to act as Prince of the people. He wanted to change things, and he was the man fitted for the job. Pius the tenth was a man of music, and it was not surprizing that his first papal encyclical was entitled, "On the Reform of Church Music". This was his *MOU PROPRIO*, which came out in 1904, and is today the most quoted of all the pronouncements dealing with the present liturgical revival movement. It is said of Pius X regarding music reform, "There is perhaps no single subject atheistic communism alone excepted, on which the Holy See has spoken more frequently or more earnestly in our days".<sup>2</sup>

### III. MODERN MOVES TOWARD REFORM

In a recent Liturgical Convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Rev. Thomas P. Conley, a noted and successful priest in congregational work, expressed the hope that in this twentieth century there

---

<sup>1</sup>A. Wilby Pugin, a quotation cited in an address by Rev. Mauride Schexnayder, Things Blessed Pius X Would Wish to Have Seen (National Liturgical Week, 1953), p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Ellard, Men at Work at Worship (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940), p. 147.

would come a basic reform in the way people attend Mass. He said, "What do the people generally do when they go to Mass? They pray privately, or in some places, they recite Mass prayers together. The Church wants this changed. She wants them to sing."<sup>1</sup>

In the last fifty years three Popes have spoken out in pronounced exhortations to see this accomplished. Pope Pius X gave the following instruction in January 8, 1904:

The most ancient and correct ecclesiastical tradition in regard to sacred music encourages the whole body of the people to take an active part in the liturgical services, the people singing the Common of the Mass while a schola cantorum sings the variable and richer parts of the text and melodies, thus alternating with the people.

For this reason His Holiness, in the venerated Motu Proprio of November, 1903, prescribed that an effort should be made to restore the use of Gregorian chant by the people, so that the faithful might take a more active part in the liturgical services of the Church as was the case in ancient times.<sup>2</sup>

Nearly twenty five years later, on December 20, 1928, Pope Pius XI wrote:

It is most necessary that when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies they should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the liturgy they should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Thomas P. Conley, I Hear Whole Congregations Singing (National Liturgical Week, 1953), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Then Pope Pius XII, another twenty five years after, repeated the same exhortation and issued a famous encyclical of his own in 1947, which has been called "The Magna Carta of the Liturgical movement". This declaration echoed all that had been said by Pius X and Pius XI, but it came with sweeping gestures, and cut across a whole century of hindrances to issue in what is the most rapid transition and development that the Church has ever known. This Pope makes a great deal of the provision of the Church to "adjust to the needs of the age". In one place the MEDEATOR DEI is addressed to the bishops of the world: "We exhort you venerable brethren, to promote with care congregational singing." And in another he says "A congregation that is devoutly present at the sacrifice cannot keep silent for song befits the lover, and as the ancient saying has it, 'He who sings well prays twice'".<sup>1</sup> So for fifty years the highest authority of the Church has not only favored a revival of congregational singing in the Church, but three great Popes have advocated marked reforms of the same.

The present condition in American Churches was summed up in Mr. Ellard's book, Men at Work at Worship. Already in 1940 he cites the progress in the following stages:

1. Existing choirs are being reformed or re-formed.
2. The school population is being trained for congregational singing of chant.
3. This has reached the stage of occasional demonstrations.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

4. This will become, is beginning to become, the common Sunday observance.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the school population being trained, the priests themselves in their seminary course are being required to take more intensive work in music. In 1954 at a nationally known seminary, four seminarians were flunked in chant. At another seminary back in 1946 at least fifty per cent of the seminarians had to repeat a summer course of Gregorian chant. Father Justin Mulchay who was pointing out these facts, remarked, "That could not have happened about fifteen years ago as we oldsters know".<sup>2</sup>

#### IV. A ROMAN CATHOLIC STANDARD OF CHURCH MUSIC

One cannot help being impressed by the discipline that is exercised by the Church in regulating the type of music that is to be allowed in the Catholic services. The Protestant churches of course lack the united authority to carry out such measures. The Catholics are to be credited with a serious attempt to hold to a high standard of music in the midst of a sweeping revival of church song.

Father David Nicholson wrote recently on this subject in the *National Catholic Weekly Review*, America, and said in rather frank terms, "It is quite true the average American Catholic congregation

---

<sup>1</sup>Gerald Ellard, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>Father Justin Mulchay, National Liturgical Week, 1953, p. 54.

does not like chant."<sup>1</sup> In commenting on this point He went on to say that the taste of the people had never been developed. Their only experience with plainsong had been in listening to its performance by the parish choir and thus they had never learned to appreciate its art form. As for a remedy of the situation of course the advice of the Pope is to be heeded.

Pope Pius XII holds the Gregorian chant to be the highest ideal of church music, but he also sanctions two other types, which if they have qualities possessed by the model, are to be permitted in the church services. These two types are Classical Polyphony and Modern music. Modern music is placed third in its usefulness, the reason being that it is so elaborate only trained choirs can handle it. Then too, the latter has a tendency to borrow the style and trite cliches of secular music. The remedy offered to the problem of suitable hymns for the present day, was to encourage new compositions that will fit the need both in respect of the participation of the faithful, as well as conform to the rules of high art forms as stated by Pius XII. Musicians both within and outside the church are to be encouraged to write music for Her, and are asked to follow strictly the liturgical rules.

From the Motu Proprio of Pius X, 1903, the proper measure of a hymn's worth is given:

. . . Gregorian chant has always been considered the supreme model of sacred music, so that the

---

<sup>1</sup>David Nicholson, Contemporary Church Music and Singing Congregation (Caecilia, March, April, 1956), p. 79.



following rule may rightly be set down:  
The more closely a composition for church approaches the Gregorian melody in movement, inspiration and flavor, the more sacred and liturgical it is; and the more it departs from that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple.<sup>1</sup>

In a more general sense the same Pope gives what is still held to be the standard for Sacred music.

Sacred music must eminently possess the qualities that belong to liturgical rites especially holiness and beauty from which its every characteristic, universality, will follow spontaneously. It must be holy and therefore free from all that is secular, both in itself and in the method it is performed. It must be an art since in no other way can it have that effect on the mind of those who hear it which the Church intends of music in her liturgy. It must be universal in this sense that although each country may use whatever special forms may belong to its national style in its ecclesiastical music, these forms must be subject to the proper nature of sacred music as never to produce a bad impression on the mind of any stranger.<sup>2</sup>

It may be summed up in this: Church music however new or local in its innovation, must conform to the holy characteristics held as standard by the church, the essence of which may be found in Gregorian Chant.

## V. A ROMAN CATHOLIC HYMNAL

The matter of a church hymnal for the Catholic church is a very new thing, according to Richard Grinder in an address at the

---

<sup>1</sup>Motu Proprio, as cited by Hammernick, op. cit., p. 677.

<sup>2</sup>Motu Proprio, as cited by Rev. Andrew F. Klarmann, Gregorian Chant (Toledo: Gregorian Institute of America, 1945), p. 133.

National Liturgical Convention in 1953.<sup>1</sup> The striking feature of his address was his constant comparison to the Protestant way of doing things, something which the other speakers of the convention rarely did. For example he said:

In the Protestant service the hymn is everything. In our worship it amounts to very little. In our worship, where have we room for it except at the children's Mass and evening devotions?

For that reason, we may say that ours are simply not hymn singing people. They have never had occasion to acquire the habit. Even at Benediction the pastor can almost count on both hands the number of people singing - and the number of tunes they know!<sup>2</sup>

In the same address, he laments,

The pity of it is that we have a store of superb hymns available - hymns being used by the Protestants right now. The Protestant Episcopal Hymnal for instance, lists five hymns by St. Ambrose, four by St. Bernard of Cluny, two by St. Clement of Alexandria, four by St. John of Damascus, six by St. Thomas Aquina, and twelve by other saints. The Methodists are using two by St. Ambrose, three by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, one by St. Bernard Cluny, one by St. Clement of Alexandria, six by Father Faber, two by St. John of Damascus, one by St. Francis Assis, and so forth. Its much the same with the Presbyterians.<sup>3</sup>

At the present time there are a number of Catholic hymnals available such as, The St. Gregory Hymnal, by Montani, The Parochial

---

<sup>1</sup>Father Grinder is editor of the Catholic Choirmaster.

<sup>2</sup>Richard Grinder, Singing the Churches Music (National Liturgical Week, 1953), p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Hymnal by Rossini, and The Ave Maria Hymnal recently published by the Pius X School in New York. The main complaint with them is that they are one man compilations. Says Grinder, "In 1947, I urged the compilation of a national hymnal after the example of our Protestant neighbors."<sup>1</sup> And then he referred to the Episcopalians who have an official collection of

741 sturdy, time-tested hymns, sifted through by a committee of twenty-seven nationally known musicians, and published by their Church Pension Fund, available practically at cost.<sup>2</sup>

In 1953 when the address by Father Grinder was given a committee had been in operation for a year, working on a small hymnbook of about a hundred hymns. "Our first concern," the chairman writes,

is the vernacular compilation which is to serve our congregations and special occasions such as First Communion, Confirmation, Jubilees, Holy Week (non-liturgical services), and the like.<sup>3</sup>

The hymns are being selected through a series of surveys sent out to about a hundred musicians, who are asked to vote on a table of contents, with a place open for other suggestions. According to the plans the first editions will be just the start of a more expanded edition, to come later; the purpose being to put out a small low cost book that will have widespread use and encourage congregational singing on a wider scale.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

## VI. OTHER RELATED PHASES OF THE REFORM

Intelligability of the Liturgy

The Liturgical movement in the Roman Catholic Church is making much of the problem of intelligibility of the liturgy, especially in America. It is argued that in order to truly be an active participant in the liturgy one must understand what is being said and sung. Hence this phase has two alternatives to face, and either one may help, or both. The conservatives of the movement are advocating that the people be taught the meaning of the Latin, and that the symbolism be constantly explained. On the other hand the liberals are promoting the use of the vernacular in the service both by the priest and the laity.

The movement to greater intelligibility is facing great opposition. For example at the Second International Congress of Catholic Church Music at Vienna, in 1954, the famous Jesuit liturgist, Dr. Jungmann S.J., in an address, stressed the importance of lay participation in the Mass and went so far as to say,

. . . the ideal is to let the people sing their parts of the Mass in the vernacular so that they may better understand what they are singing.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as Dr. Jungmann concluded, Msgr. Angels of Rome stood up and, though regretting that he had to speak as he did, was obliged publically to condemn this proposal of the learned liturgist.<sup>2</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup>As cited by Charles N. Meter, The Second International Congress of Catholic Church Music, Vienna 1954 (Caecilia, February, 1955), p.42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

leaders of the opposition naturally have the authority of the Pope's encyclicals behind them, such as the one within the century by Pius X:

The language proper to the Roman Church is Latin. Hence it is forbidden to sing anything whatever in the vernacular in solemn liturgical functions, much more to sing in the vernacular the variable or common parts of the Mass and Office.<sup>1</sup>

But on the other hand the advocates of the reform are looking for every possible hint that would allow it. A quotation from Pope Pius XI is played upon by many, "The question of the vernacular in the liturgy is a grave one. But there is no objection to its being discussed."<sup>2</sup> As a result it is being discussed more and more, and progress is being made in America at least, toward its greater use. There is little question but that the problem of intelligibility is one of the greatest hindrances to the full participation of the people in all parts of the worship, including congregational singing.

#### Promotion and Publicity of the Movement

It is difficult to evaluate the efforts that are being made in this direction, for it cannot always be deciphered where the initiative in the promotion really lies. Is it the laity and clergy who are anxious to promote it? Or is it the Holy See such as Pius's X, XI, and XII, who are at the foot of the revival? The three Popes just mentioned are heralded as the great Liturgists of the Church, and yet the latest is heard saying,

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

. . . do not allow those studying this subject to withdraw from your guidance and watchfulness, or to adapt and change the sacred liturgy according to their own judgement, contrary to the Church's clearly defined norms.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the fact that the Church appears enthusiastic about the new movement, it is very evident from the lack of widespread publicity, that they face a dual problem. One of the difficulty of getting widespread acceptance of the reforms. The other is the problem of extremists carrying the movement beyond the wishes of the Church. For this reason it is expected the Liturgical Movement will continue to take a careful pace.

#### VII. THE FUTURE PROSPECT

Few are quick to predict what the future holds for music at the sacred services, and least of all a protestant observer who has only skimmed the surface in this survey. For the most part it seems Catholic liturgists and musicians are optimistic concerning the future prospect, according to some who venture statements of their hope. For example Father David Nicholson gives a challenge of the future as he notes the present trend:

It is true that we are in a transition stage, but we should do our best to produce or have produced something which will be worthy in all respects of the high level demanded by the Church.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Pope Pius XII, The Church and Its Powers of Sanctifying and Ruling. (The Pope Speaks, fourth quarter, 1954), p. 379.

<sup>2</sup>David Nicholson, Contemporary Church Music and Singing Congregation (Caecilia, March, April, 1956), p. 79.

The Most Reverend Maurice Schernoyder echoes a similar hope in a statement that contains both the retrospect and the prospect:

Gregorian chant shall regain its supremacy in the liturgy only when it shall so flood the souls of contemporary composers, that even modern compositions will share with it those qualities of peace and joy, of tenderness, yet tumult, of softness yet repose, that are characteristic of true Catholic devotion.<sup>1</sup>

Professor of Liturgy, Gerald Ellard, one of the most lucid writers in the field, views the future as having a great demand to meet:

The universal lack of singing congregations, singing reverent and 'singable' Mass music, is perhaps the saddest deficiency of the Mass of the Present, and changing this is the greatest single demand we make of the Mass of the Future.

He goes on to say in the same statement that the Board of Church Music in America, has hinted that there are two planks with which to effect the rescue:

The official Latin chants will be retained, of course, for those who can handle them; but other Catholics will find themselves offered two alternatives, vernacular plain-song or vernacular Mass hymns in seasonal melodies.

Neither solution is as novel as it first sounds: their combined effect will be a nation wide re-enactment of the miracle of the stringed tongue being loosed.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Maurice Schernoyder, National Liturgical Week, 1953, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Ellard, op. cit., p. 274.

## SUMMARY

During the time of the Protestant Reformation the music of the Roman Catholic Church continued to decline, and by the close of the nineteenth century it had reached its nadir. Then in 1904 Pope Pius X issued the famous encyclical "On the Reform of Church Music," which began a series of movements toward music reform which have continued with increasing momentum down to the present. In the last fifty years three Popes have spoken out in pronounced exhortations favoring the reform movement. The main concern of the reform is the restoration of congregational participation in the singing of the Mass, and that it be done with intelligibility of the liturgy.

The efforts toward reform are beset by certain difficulties which are peculiar to the Catholic traditions. First, the molds of ecclesiastical tradition do not yield easily to the urgency of such a reform. Second, the determined loyalties of the Church leaders to a rigid model or ideal, such as the Gregorian Chant, robs the movement of the spontaneity which normally ensures wide success. In connection with this it was noted that the promotion and publicity of the movement is carefully restrained. In America where the movement is receiving the most hearty support, it is not hard to imagine that perhaps the reform movement is partly due to the influence of the Protestant church music.

In spite of the difficulties which inhibit the reform, there are no doubt some things in its favor from which all who are concerned with church music may learn. In the Catholic Church a careful study is



now being constantly made of the progress of the reform. There are concentrated efforts toward indoctrination of the children in the schools regarding it. Furthermore, hymnals are planned with the aim of getting a small book at low cost into the hands of the greatest number of people possible. It is the hope of the Roman Catholic Church to restore the ideal of the masses of the people uniting in congregational singing, and at the same time to maintain a standard of musical excellence which is fitting to the service of the Church.

## CHAPTER V

### DEVELOPMENTS OF AMERICAN CHURCH MUSIC

## CHAPTER V

### DEVELOPMENTS OF AMERICAN CHURCH MUSIC

#### I. THE NEW ENGLAND PIONEER DAYS OF CONFUSION

It was only natural that early Pilgrims and Puritans should bring with them to America, the hymnody they knew in England. However, these colonists were dissenters for the most part, and therefore independent thinkers; so that before long they had produced a church music of their own. This "New England Psalmody" was far from the ideal of its fore-fathers, because, of course there were few who were capable of even a measure of musical excellence. Edward S. Ninde describes the general musical ignorance in these terms:

It came as a startling, and too often an offensive, revelation, that a congregation could actually begin and close a verse together. As a rule each worshiper was a law unto himself, singing his own tune and in his own time, with little or no regard to anyone else.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Bay Psalm Book.

The psalmody of this early period found its first expression in The Bay Psalm Book (1640). It was edited by a committee of three men, Richard Mather, Thomas Welde, and John Eliot. In the forward of the book Mather argued, that "David's Psalms should be sung exclusively, in English, and by all the people."<sup>2</sup> This book passed through twenty-

---

<sup>1</sup>Edward S. Ninde, The Story of the American Hymn (New York: The Abingdon Press, c1921), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

seven editions by 1750 and came to be the accepted standard Psalter of all Christian groups in the New World, thus replacing the version of Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins, which had been originally brought from the old country. The exception of course to the wide acceptance of the Bay Psalm Book was found only among those who adopted the "Wesley and Watt's hymn singing".

### Fuging Tunes.

The independance on the part of the colonists against the mother country, England, was shown also in the composition of new tunes. Unfortunately, however, much of the skill and artistry was forgotten and the result was a church music quite below the standard. There came a popular type of Psalmody which was shocking to the more serious minded.

The extreme of this new reform in tunes was set off in the "fuging tunes" of William Billings. Billings was a grotesque figure of a tanner, short in one leg and short of one eye; self-taught and with a rare touch of crude genius. He is considered by historians of church music, to have had a significant influence upon the music of his day, especially the period 1770-94. As Ninde says,

. . . many prominent men believed in him and publically encouraged him, while his popularity among the rank and file of people was unquestioned . . . he aroused a musical spirit which moved all New England, and which left a permanent impress on the music of our American Church.<sup>1</sup>

He introduced various novel features which appealed to the popular mind, as in training the singers to suit their actions to their words,

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

so that when, for example, they sang "O clap your hands!" they all broke out in vigorous handclapping. He believed that church music ought not to be the lifeless and even "lugubrious exercise" that it was so often made. He boldly called one of his books the Psalm Singer's Amusement. He was the first to introduce the bass viol into the church service to the consternation of many. It must be conceded that his method of fugging was not always a means of grace. For example a word or syllable occasionally led to startling results. Thus the words:

With reverence let the saints appear  
And bow before the Lord<sup>1</sup>

were forced to be sung, "and bow - wow - wow, and bow - wow - ow, and so on, until all the parts had "bow - wowed" in turn. Little wonder that one minister upon hearing his choir render this anthem, vigorously denounced the whole "new-fangled" system, enforcing his protest with this text from Amos, "The songs of the temple shall be turned into howling."

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe gives an animated description of the scene when, as a little girl, she used to go to the Church in Litchfield, Connecticut, where her father was pastor, and listen to:

. . . the execution of those good old billowy compositions called fugging tunes, when the four parts that compose the choir take up the song, and go racing around one after another, each singing a different set of words, till at length, by some unexplicable magic, they all come together again, and sail smoothly out

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

into a rolling sea of harmony! I remember the wonder with which I used to look from side to side when treble, tenor, counter, and bass were thus roaring and foaming, and it verily seemed, to me as if the psalm were going to pieces among the breakers, and the delightful astonishment with which I found that each particular verse did emerge whole and uninjured from the storm.<sup>1</sup>

### Influence of Hymnody.

Meanwhile the influence of the humanly composed hymns in contrast to the Psalmody only was taking effect in the American colonies. Wesleyan influence was being felt by the singing of the hymns into the hearts, into the homes, and into the congregations of many churches. Moreover as early as 1729 Benjamin Franklin published an American edition of Isaac Watts', Psalms and Hymns. Further, the revival under Jonathan Edwards beginning in 1734, and the visit of Whitefield to New England in 1740 brought impetus to the singing of Watts' hymns. Dr. Timothy Dwight, the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, must not be overlooked for the impression he made. Even though afflicted with eye trouble which limited his reading to fifteen minutes a day, he was able to carry out his regular duties as college president, and in addition, he revised Watts' hymnal.

### Employment of Musical Instruments

Early colonists objected to the use of a church organ, and called it "the Devils' bagpipe", and the "hist of Whistles". Dis-

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

senting churches sternly refused until the year 1770, when a Congregational Church in Providence, installed the first organ ever to be used by a non-Episcopal Church in America. The first organ ever built in America was installed in the Trinity Episcopal Church in New York in 1737.

The story is told of an elderly Presbyterian minister who was invited to preach in a church which had recently installed an organ. When called upon to lead the prayer he indignantly replied, "Call on the machine! If it can sing and play to the glory of God, it can pray also. Call on the machine."<sup>1</sup>

Even the leader of the singing was forced to smuggle his pitchpipe into the service and use it on the sly to begin the tune in the right key.<sup>2</sup>

Early Methodists were also slow in accepting the use of instruments, no doubt because of the stand that Wesley took, as he stated, he "had not objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen."<sup>3</sup>

## II. NINETEENTH CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

A transition period may be dated from the late part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth.

---

<sup>1</sup>Phil Kerr, Music in Evangelism (Glendale, California: Gospel Music Publishers, c1954), p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Charles G. Finney, Revivals of Religion (New York: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.), pp. 285-288.

<sup>3</sup>Kerr, op. cit.

### Decadence of Psalmody.

The psalmody which had been the distinguishing feature of the pioneer days in church music began to fall away. Leading ministers were denouncing it, and supplanting it with hymns of human composure. Musical societies were springing up and were introducing the best choral and anthem music of Germany and England. Musical instruments were gradually making their appearance in churches, the hymns of American authors and composers were being accepted, and many new hymnals were being circulated.

### The Hymnbook Era.

Among the many factors contributing to the enormous volume of Hymnbooks of this period include, the rise of the Sunday school movement, the camp meeting and revivalism, the reaction of Mason to these, and then the Moody and Sankey Gospel song innovation. It is estimated that in the period of ninety years between 1760 and 1850, some 275 tune books of the Sunday school variety were issued; and that they came out at the rate of more than one every two weeks. The number of gospel song books issued during the nineteenth century was around fifteen hundred; those of Ira D. Sankey alone reaching a sale of fifty million individual copies. Many to whom sophisticated music did not appeal welcomed this inspirational type of singing. In terms of the tremendous quantity of books that flooded the market, the impact upon the people of the day must have been massive.

Among the hymnbooks published in this period was one by Dr. Nathan Strong (1748-1816) who felt the need of a selection of hymns



especially designed for revival meetings. It was published in 1799 with 378 hymns entitled, The Hartford Selection of Hymns. Next in importance was one by Dr. Samuel Worcester, a Congregational minister in 1815. His was the first that included tunes in the same book as the words. Another in 1824 by Rev. Asahel Nettleton, a Connecticut Congregationalist, designed to supplement Dr. Watts' book. An innovation that was strongly repellent to the more formal churches, was the Christian Lyre, by Joshua Leavitt, a Congregationalist, designed especially for use in Charles G. Finney's revival campaigns. Leavitt's Hymnal boldly introduced arrangements of well known secular melodies for use with hymn poems.

#### Mason Reaction.

In a reaction against the use of these "current songs, vulgar melodies of the street, the circus, and the ball room," Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings jointly published Church Psalmody; and then in 1832, Spiritual Songs for Social Worship. Lowell Mason (1792-1872) is credited with being one of the outstanding leaders in reform and he traveled extensively in New England lecturing on Church Music. He wrote many new hymn tunes of lasting value, such as "Ariel" which is used for "O Could I Speak the Matchless Worth", "Azmon", the tune used for Charles Wesley's great hymn "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" and many others.

#### The Gospel Song Innovation.

The Gospel hymn or the Gospel song (the terms are used interchangeably) had its inception in the Second Evangelical Awakening which

occured in America and in Britain during the years 1858 and 1859. Though there had been song of its type before this time, Dwight L. Moody and his chosen song evangelist Ira D. Sankey, may be credited with its widespread promotion and acceptance. It was in fact Sankey who coined the word "Gospel Hymn".

If the number of converts of a revival is any valid measure of the worth of the hymns used, then surely the second Evangelical awakening had hymns of tremendous worth. J. Edwin Orr in his study of the revival of 1858 in America, concludes that "It is fair indeed to describe the 1858 Awakening as a Millionfold Revival."<sup>1</sup> Robert Stevenson in referring to this criteria of judgement, contrasts the work of Sankey with the example of J. S. Bach. He says,

Whether any composition by Bach, on the other hand, has ever brought even a single person to the altar for a confession of sin or into the inquiry room for pastoral prayer is doubtful.<sup>2</sup>

Stevenson, in making this approach to the Gospel hymn at least illustrated the radical difference not only in the purpose and method of the two musicians, but he brought into focus various opinions which are held concerning them. Later in the same chapter he reveals somewhat of his own appraisal:

Moody's philosophy of music is a key to the understanding of the whole course of gospel hymnody. He judged music entirely in terms of its mass effect.

---

<sup>1</sup>J. Edwin Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening in America (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1952), p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Stevenson, Patterns of Protestant Church Music (Duke University Press, 1953), p. 151.

This insensitivity to beauty in any of its forms - except as it appears in ethical conduct, the beauty of holiness - has caused many professional musicians to eschew gospel hymns. . . . Those musically minded persons who have been ready to sacrifice all canons of artistic excellence in order to reach the largest number of persons have been happiest in their association with gospel hymnody.<sup>1</sup>

In a statement concerning this author's view of the gospel hymnody,

Dr. Paul S. Rees frankly comments,

I am not 'sold' on the almost completely condescending attitude of the author toward the gospel hymns, but fairness compels the admission that something needs to be done to rescue a lot of our free church groups from the confounding of syncopation with spirituality.<sup>2</sup>

Among the free churches of the non-liturgical tradition the gospel hymn has received wide acclaim, and to a lesser degree it has attained some acceptance in other circles. There are those today who say that the Gospel hymn is fast fading away, that it has reached a low ebb unlikely to be revived again. Something of this view is stated by Dr. A. T. Davidson of Harvard,

They still hold a nostalgic place in the affections of a vanishing generation, but in the services of enlightened congregations, they are never heard.<sup>3</sup>

Another judgement, which runs nearly counter to this, is given by Edmund S. Lorenze in a very practical study which he made of church

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>2</sup>Paul S. Rees, in a statement prepared for Evangelical Books, n.d.

<sup>3</sup>A. T. Davidson, Cited by Frank E. Gaebelein in a Pattern of God's Truth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 75.

music as an applied art. His statement is as follows:

After a just and unprejudiced canvass of the Gospel song, the verdict must be a divided one; there is a limited number whose use is entirely justified in prayer meetings and evening or other free services and occasionally in a regular service. A larger, but still limited, number may be used in evangelistic meetings. The body of published Gospel songs must be canvassed only with most careful discrimination and adaptation to special needs.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the statements of these four men that the place of the gospel hymn in church music, as far as importance is concerned, can hardly be settled. Nevertheless the impact which it has made upon the masses of America can hardly be questioned. Its qualities of endurance are possibly poor, however it should be noted by comparison that only a very small portion of the hymnody of past ages has remained to succeeding generations. Of the seven thousand hymns which Charles Wesley wrote, only thirty to forty at the most are used to any extent in the services today. Yet this is more than can be found in most standard Protestant hymn books from one author. In the same respect, Fanny Crosby the great gospel hymn writer has notably written around eight thousand, of which a comparatively few remain in the hymnbooks today. But the facts are, they do remain; which indicates probably that the Gospel hymn, which dominated the field during and following the great awakening of the nineteenth century, has taken its place among the standard hymns, giving a wholesome balance.

---

<sup>1</sup>Edmund S. Lorenze, Music in Work and Worship (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925), p. 174.

### Other Nineteenth Century Developments.

There were other factors involved in the molding of church music in America, too numerous to mention here. However there were at least two factors that fostered the decadence of congregational singing in those communions which rejected the gospel song innovation.

The first of these was the ascendancy of the quartette and choir, which in turn developed what Benson calls the "Listening attitude". This new development may be accounted for by the emphasis by the active co-worker of Lowell Mason, Thomas Hastings, who was responsible to a large degree for the training of choirs in the interest of higher taste in church music. It is pointed out that although he was not opposed to congregational song as such, he was, "in his heart . . . quite willing that, until the people acquired more of that taste and a greater efficiency, they should listen to the choir."<sup>1</sup> The congregation listened, while the choir rendered anthems from the book. As to the extent of this influence, Benson declares:

I have collected abundant evidence covering the Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Lutheran communions: In all of them it became indeed a matter of synodical concern. In all of them the subjugation of the congregation had become complete. Seated between a pulpit asserting its supremacy in everything but song and a choir loft monopolizing the song, the people were no longer a band of common worshipers but merely an audience attending a performance of worship.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Benson, op. cit., p. 258.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 259.

The second factor which is akin to the first, became a threat to the congregational singing, when the tunes were multiplied and complicated beyond their ability to sing. Added to this was the necessity to enlarge the hymnbook to include the printed music, which made it expedient to place the hymnbooks in the pew racks, to be used only when the people gathered for worship and attempted to mumble through the unfamiliar exercises. Perhaps this development reached its nadir in the twentieth century and is in fact the situation as it exists in many churches today.

### III. SECULAR INFLUENCES ON CHURCH MUSIC

In America in the twentieth century there has come a fusing of the cultural environment to a greater degree than perhaps any other nation in the world. This has been due largely to the medium of the movie industry, the radio and the television. While there are still many sectional differences throughout the country, they have been reduced to an attitude of almost complete acceptance and tolerance among themselves, because of the influx of these cross-country influences. The matter of music is only one example of many. It may be indicated by the similarity in the sales industry across the various sections of the country. The same offerings of records and sheet music may be found wherever you choose to seek them. The same music is being poured out in almost wild profusion over radios, phonographs, television sets and juke boxes, and is saturating the lives of American people in a manner that is far beyond human measure.

Millions wake up in the morning to it, drive to work in it, and work in it all day, turning out as is claimed increasing production. "Over-all stitchers in Colorado stitch 10% faster to 'Ain't We Got Fun'."<sup>1</sup> The onslaught of the roc' n' rol' of the most recent years, upon the young people of America is considered by some to be nothing short of moral degeneration. The question which this brings to the church musician is indeed very serious.

#### Partitioning of Church and Secular Music.

One answer to the problem of the invasion of secular music is simply to partition it. That is, let the church have a music which is distinctly her own, and completely shut out anything that tastes of the secular either in tune, words, or form. This procedure has been attempted especially in those churches where liturgical traditions are cherished, and where the form of worship is supposedly pure. History shows that this has always been attempted by those who are thoughtful students of church music. Yet in many instances, the innovations which have livened and enriched the services of the church have found their source in the popular music of their day. Then as the years pass, the secular association is forgotten and the new song is thought of only as a church hymn. So that actually it is questionable whether the puristic attitude of strict partitioning of church music is the correct answer.

---

<sup>1</sup>Time, December 23, 1957, p. 56.

Another phase of this problem of partitioning church music, is the matter of partitioning the soul into what may be called church life and secular life. Some who on the one hand are puritan in their ideology of church music, and hold to a very strict standard of acceptable music for the church, on the other hand care not at all what type of music invades the soul outside of the church. This introduces a second question concerning the influence of the secular music on church music; the subtle effect of music upon the life.

#### The Subtle Effects of Music on the Emotion.

Those who have successfully partitioned the music of the church and the music outside the church, may have concluded that the problem has been solved for them. Perhaps as far as a "churchly music" is concerned, it has; but what of the individual who lives both in the church and out of it? Does the music he listens to in secular life so influence him that when he enters the sanctuary his worship is affected? The question deserves exploration.

Consider what is happening in secular music in America. Ralph Waldo Emerson in viewing the situation suggests some rather enlightening facts; he says,

The United States is producing more music and spending more for it than the rest of the world put together. But are many people really listening? Or are they turned into passive human receiving sets that vibrate with the sound but do not themselves hear it? 'We do anything' says one Muzak executive, 'to keep people from listening to the music. Any music that requires listening to under-



stand is not for us,' And to that a composer adds; 'Our nation has been taught to shut its ears.'<sup>1</sup>

If the statement may be accepted then it may be assumed that the people that are listening or at least in audience of this great bulk of secular music, are literally intellectually immune to it. But if America has been "shutting its ears" to music intellectually - what accounts for the phenomenal music boom at the present time? The people want more of it for some reason which should have accounting. The phonograph industry has risen 37% in the last five years to an estimated thirty million units in 1957. Record sales have doubled. Instrument and sheet music sales have had similar increases. Twice as many play musical instruments as twenty years ago; roughly eight million children are playing musical instruments in schools.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever is happening in this musical boom, it cannot be accounted for on the basis of intellectual stimulation only. Is there another answer which may have some bearing not only the question per se, but in its implications for Christian concern. In a lecture entitled, Contemporary Trends in American Music, the Dean of the School of Music at the University of Washington suggested that there are two levels of emotion in music. The one is "human emotion" and the other is a kind of "formal emotion". The first is expressed in terms of "mood" and requires no stimulation of the intellect, to

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

bring a human response. The latter is more intellectual in its demands, requiring some objective appraisal or study of the movement of music. Perhaps this accounts for the musical boom which is sweeping the public; they are unwilling to exert the effort required to satisfy the "formal emotion". As a result they are letting their "human emotions" run wildly, while their minds supposedly rest easy.

But a further question enters which presses it more closely to the moral issue. What happens to the individual in the process? Is this type of music damaging? Or is the net result morally neutral? Irving Soblosky had somewhat to say, as a music critic of the Chicago daily news, when he charged that "Disk Jockeys are Brain Washers", and that the main victims are young people. He continues,

Popular tunes are the comic books of music,  
and their chief salesmen are the disc  
jockeys.

For the youngsters, it is a kind of musical brain washing. The songs are so much alike and their onslaught so continuous that their pattern becomes a habit of thought. The songs are made for only one purpose: To sell. They are not written to communicate any real feelings; they do not intend to mean anything. Those who write them are in business. Quality is of no interest to them - any gimmick that might click is worth a try.

The disc jockeys - seduced too, by that monstrous idol of our time, Popularity - act as their chief salesmen, mostly unaware that they are seriously stunting the mental and moral growth of our children.<sup>1</sup>

According to this authority the popular music of the day is damaging,

---

<sup>1</sup>Irving Sablosky, Disk Jockeys are Brain Washers, (Chicago Daily News, Summer 1955)

and the blame can be placed at the doorstep of the disc Jockey. But another authority writing of the Battle over the Music You Hear, points out that "by far the most influential group of music critics in this country seems to be composed of 12 - 15 year-old-girls, and they are extremely impressionable."<sup>1</sup> He then shows how some of these inferior numbers become a hit.

If a popular disk jockey plugs a new record, a large number of girls can be expected to jump on the bandwagon. They buy the record; they play it on the juke box; they flood the disk jockey with requests. Reports of record sales and the number of times the tune played by jukeboxes and disk jockeys are fed into the headquarters of various polls and there you have it - a hit.<sup>2</sup>

The indications are that the young people desire these songs, and in so doing they are setting the standard of music for their own life as well as those who may be less impressionistic about it. Whatever the case the resultant damage that is done is something which as yet has not received an adequate answer, either from the secular musicians or church leaders.

There are however, implications of concern for the church musician. In the first place, partitioning of the church music to the degree that all secular connotations are stripped clean does not ensure that the individuals who are involved in the church service are going to have a desirable musical experience. If they have been taught

---

<sup>1</sup>Booton Herndon, "The Battle Over the Music You Hear," Redbook Magazine, December, 1957, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

to close their ears in the secular musical world, who can be sure that they will not do the same in the church? Further, is it not desirable to embrace in church music such types of christian song that can be carried out into life situations, of the every day sort? Should not the musical experience in the church teach people to be discriminate in the control of their musical experiences of the secular kind?

Evangelical leaders express their concern of the problem. Dr.

Frank Gaebelein, in A Pattern of God's Truth, states

There has come into Christian work a kind of music and technique of presentation, savoring more of Hollywood than of God. Glamour has invaded the proclamation of the Gospel. The deep sincerity of the simple Gospel song has been replaced by a keyboard showiness, a tear-jerking use of the most eloquent of all instruments, the violin, and a sentimental misuse of the innately noble organ, with tremolant pulled out 'adnauseam'. Messages are 'brought' on electric Hawaiian guitars, cowbells, and even musical saws. . . . All this is condoned as being catchy and giving the people what they want.<sup>1</sup>

Al Ramquist of the Lillenas Publishing Company recently had this to say against certain trends in Church Music.

The evangelical church of today has arrived at a point where she is faced with a deteriorating trend in her use of the Gospel song. We may now look for something which might be called 'the Jesus bounce'. You and I must see to it that sugar-coated ditties do not become the musical diets of our children.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Frank Gaebelein, A Pattern of God's Truth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Al Ramquist, Trends in Gospel Songs, The Free Methodist, December 25, 1956.

## SUMMARY

This chapter on the developments of American church music has been brief and selective in its treatment. The pioneer days in America, it was pointed out, were filled with music of an inferior type, and characterized by dullness and confusion. Then the reform movements began to follow in order - the fusing tunes, the rise of hymnody, the introduction of musical instruments, all in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century was seen to characterize the basis for our present musical situation, with the decadence of psalmody, the hymnbook era, the Gospel song, the rise of choirs and the partial decadence of congregational singing. In the present trends of church music, the study considered the threat of secular influences upon the stream of Christian song.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the developments of church music in its historical perspective, and to discover if possible, guiding principles which might form a basis of judgment for the understanding and direction of contemporary church music. The history of church music as it has been studied analytically suggests lessons from which one may determine such principles of judgment. Observations were drawn from each chapter as they seemed to relate to the solution of the problem.

### SUMMARY

#### The New Testament Church.

1. Christ left no established pattern for music of the Church.
2. The Pauline account indicates that following Pentecost there was a distinctly new "Christian" song.
3. This new song was both spiritual, in that it derived from the indwelling "word of Christ" and "being filled with the spirit," and spontaneous in that sprang from the heart.
4. The form of the hymns was to be "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." This leaves considerable room for interpretation.
5. The content of the singing was to include subject matter suitable for "teaching one another" (doctrine), "admonishing one another" (edification), and it was to be "with thankfulness to God" (praise).

6. The manner of singing was to be "in the spirit," "with grace," "with thanksgiving," "making melody," "with the understanding," "addressing one another," "decently and in order."

7. Beyond that already mentioned the New Testament does not seem to exact any fixed ideal of church music.

#### Pre-Reformation Movements of Church Music.

1. In the propagation and defense of doctrine hymns proved very useful. This was illustrated by the heretical movements of Gnosticism and Arianism as well as by the Orthodox groups who countered with hymn singing. This was also shown later in the Iconoclastic controversy.

2. The widest influence of hymnody was felt during periods of controversy when the populace was incited to sing.

3. This hymnody of the common people was judged unsuitable for the services of the Church because of the popular secular connotations.

4. By comparison, the dynamic hymnody of the Apostolic Church had been dominated by a spirit of subjective experience seeking expression, while that of the Eastern Church was motivated by a spirit of objective doctrine demanding defense. In both cases religious feelings ran high, but they had different sponsors.

5. In the case of the Ambrosian conflict it was noted that the hymns proved useful in strengthening the people.

6. The Ambrosian hymnody illustrates what organized reform can do to encourage congregational singing.



7. The development of the office hymn and the subsequent departure of the hymn from the lives of the people is a story which illustrates how easily a circumstance may change the entire emphasis on church music. The circumstance referred to is the occasion of the early Eastern reform movement when the services of the Church became multiplied into daily and hourly services, too many for the people to attend, and how that the services then were organized into 'offices' to be recited or sung by official singers and officiants. When the singing was left to special singers greater attention was immediately given to the form of music. Soon embellishments were introduced which made it impossible for congregations to sing. Eventually Latin was declared the official language of the liturgy which made it impossible for many people to understand the liturgy. The emphasis had shifted completely to a desire for perfection of the form of music in the liturgies.

8. This philosophy of church music of the Middle Ages which emphasized purity of form was not only occasioned by a circumstance but it was encouraged by a leader, Pope Gregory the Great, who zealously promoted training schools of music where the production and performance of music could be perfected.

9. During the Middle Ages purity of music was promoted and achieved, but within boundaries that excluded the common people. This period in Church history drew to a close with the people having neither desire nor opportunity for song in the Church.

### Protestant Church Music in Germany.

1. The reform in Germany under Martin Luther proved to be of tremendous importance in the restoration of the New Testament ideal of church music. This ideal was to have the people singing the word of God from their hearts.

2. Luther was both a theologian and a musician, which qualified him to organize the reform as he did. It is significant to note that inspite of his high ideal in the quality of music, he held participation of the faithful in congregational singing was of first importance even at the expense of what may have been desirable music art. Further he was concerned that music perform a definite function, especially that of teaching the word of God in the vernacular. In appealing to the crowds Luther took the liberty to use the popular tunes and metres of their day. The performance of singing whether by choir or congregation was to be uplifting and cheerful.

3. The later developments of German hymnody indicates what usually happens after any radical reform movement, there is a transition in the expression of ideals. For example the hymns among the Pietists became more devotional than doctrinal.

4. The development of Bach is of peculiar significance, in that the Lutheran Church provided him with an environment that he could have found nowhere else in which to exercise his ideal in music.

### Music in the Reformed Church under John Calvin.

1. As in everything else Calvin kept rigid control of church music. Decrees were issued by the churches which ordered every worshipper

to bring his own psalm book to church.

2. The sense of individual expression which had dominated the German church music, was felt in the Calvinistic hymnody in a different sense; it was a sense of personal ownership of the psalmody. Every person even down to the children had a psalm-book of their own, and as a result they felt they were singing not merely the songs of the Church, but songs which belonged to them personally. It was indeed a churchly hymnody, but it was a personal hymnody also; a lesson for all future church musicians to observe.

3. History shows that the precedent taken by Calvin in the "Psalms only" was followed rigidly wherever Calvinism spread, and was the situation which resulted in many future reforms and innovations.

4. It may be said in fairness that his settlement of the problem of church music worked in the Genevan situation, and though the disciplined order may have overshadowed the spontaneous freedom of song that St. Paul had intended, the people nevertheless sang heartily as unto the Lord.

5. Calvin can hardly be blamed for the subsequent developments, when with the continued rigorous discipline of song, the heart dropped out of it. It may only serve to prove that what may work for one generation and people may not fulfill the need at all for another.

#### Music of the Established Church in the British Isles.

1. Thus the situation, as it existed in the British Isles during the reformation period up to the time of Watts and the Wesleys, was one in which the people failed to find an adequate expression of

church music. They had come under the influence of Geneva rather than Germany, and they had not been able to transfer the Genevan ideal with any success, because of difference in metre.

2. Those who had attempted to improve the situation had met with difficulties of strong church or national controls. It was not until the early eighteenth century that a reform movement of any great significance was enacted.

#### The Reaction of Isaac Watts.

1. The reaction of Isaac Watts to the music situation as it existed in the British Isles was important and far reaching in effects.

2. Watts was a great leader with a burning ideal. His outstanding achievement lay in the successful introduction of a distinctive Christian song.

3. His contribution to the hymnody of the Church has been lasting, as many of his hymns are still frequently used; but perhaps of equal significance is the fact that he was instrumental in influencing, and in preparing the ground for, the Wesleys.

#### The Wesleyan Revival in Song.

1. The Revival in England under the Wesleys was greatly influenced by the power of hymn singing. The hymnody was likewise greatly influenced by the Revival.

2. The Wesleyan Revival in song was greatly influenced, by the precedent set for it by Isaac Watts, the convincing example of the Moravian hymn singing, the poetical inheritance in the Wesley family, and perhaps foremost in the conversion experiences of John and Charles Wesley.

3. Charles had a genius for winning a hearing by means of song. Not only did his songs heartily defend and propagate doctrine, but they were designed to meet the particular heart needs of people wherever they could be found. The songs were at work in revival strength on levels of evangelistic need that had never touched England before.

4. As the Wesleys had been influenced by several factors of significance, their contribution in turn strongly influenced the future generations of Methodism in particular, and also much of Protestantism.

#### Recent Roman Catholic Reform in Church Music.

1. During the time of the Protestant Reformation the music of the Roman Catholic Church continued to decline, and by the close of the nineteenth century it had reached its nadir. In the last fifty years three Popes have spoken out in pronounced exhortations favoring a reform movement of church music with emphasis on the restoration of congregational participation in the singing of the Mass.

2. The efforts toward reform are beset by certain difficulties which are peculiar to the Catholic traditions. First, the molds of ecclesiastical tradition do not yield easily to the urgency of such a reform. Second, the determined loyalties of the Church leaders to a rigid model or ideal, such as the Gregorian Chant, robs the movement of spontaneity which normally ensures wide success. In connection with this it was noted that the promotion and publicity of the movement is carefully restrained.

3. In spite of the difficulties which inhibit the reform, there are no doubt some things in its favor from which all who are concerned with church music may learn. In the Catholic Church a careful study is now being constantly made of the progress of the reform. There are concentrated efforts toward the indoctrination of children in the schools regarding it. Furthermore, hymnals are planned with the aim of getting a small book at low cost into the hands of the greatest number of people possible.

4. It is the hope of the Roman Catholic Church to restore the ideal of the masses of the people uniting in congregational singing, and at the same time to maintain a standard of musical excellence which is fitting to the service of the Church.

5. Gregorian Chant is held to be the highest ideal of church music. The more closely a composition approaches the Gregorian melody in movement, inspiration and flavor, the more sacred and liturgical it is; and the more it departs from that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the Temple. Two other types of music are sanctioned by the Church if they have qualities possessed by the model. They are Classical Polyphony and Modern music, the latter being placed third in its usefulness, because it is so elaborate only trained choirs can handle it.

6. Musicians both within and outside the Church are to be encouraged to write music for Her, and are asked to follow strictly the liturgical rules.

### Developments of American Church Music.

1. The pioneer days in America were filled with a type of church music which was characterized by dullness and confusion. Then the reform movements began to follow in order - the fusing tunes, the rise of hymnody, the introduction of musical instruments, all in the eighteenth century.

2. The nineteenth century was seen to characterize the basis for the present musical situation in America, with the decadence of psalmody, the hymnbook era, the Gospel song innovation, the rise of choirs, and the partial decadence of congregational singing.

3. The threat of the influence of contemporary secular music upon the music of the Church is considered by some to be of grave concern. It was noted that the problem does not consist merely in the matter of partitioning its use from the church, but that it involves the question of what happens to the musical experience of the people as they move from the so called "secular life" into "church life", and vice versa. The question was asked whether the musical experience of people in the church should not teach them to be discriminate in the control of their musical experiences of the secular kind.

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Church music was found to be of greatest interest and concern in history during periods of reform.

2. The reforms in church music at every period were usually promoted by an outstanding leader, who had a vision of some ideal, such as Ambrose, Gregory, Notker, Luther, Calvin, Watts, Wesley, Mason, and Sankey.

3. The leaders of church music reform who had the greatest success in reaching the populace were those who made concession to the use of the popular music of the day. This was true at least of the war hymns of the Eastern Church, and the music of Luther, Wesley and Sankey in their respective revival movements.

4. In all of church music history, when attention was centered upon music as an end in itself to be perfected and appreciated as an art it lost its appeal to the masses. On the other hand when church music was considered in its utilitarian aspect, the emphasis upon art form suffered.

5. The church music as it developed through the ages was an expression of the ideals of each age. It was also noted that the hymns of human composure were also an index of the theology of their time.

6. In the transition periods of development there was often a retention of some of the old, and sometimes a resurgence of the past. Frequently there was the addition of something new - an indication of creativity.

7. History illustrates that the reform movements of church music were strongly influential in beginning other reforms. The English Puritans were impressed with Calvin's pattern of Psalmody at Geneva. Wesley came under the Moravian influence. Baptists came under the influence of Wesley's songs and thus began the modern missionary movement.



## CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of this study it is concluded:

1. That the question of a standard by which to judge the music of the contemporary Christian Church should properly seek an answer first in the historical roots of Christianity.
2. That whatever basis of judgment may be determined from a study of history should be held as tentative, and moreover, that such a study should be tested by other fields of investigation such as the philosophical, psychological, and practical considerations of the work of the church.
3. That guidance is necessary in the composition, in the selection, and in the performance of church music; and that the standard, by which guidance is to be judged, is an altogether dynamic one which progresses to meet the needs of every church music situation, both universal and particular.
4. That principles of judgment for the guidance of church music are identifiable and in keeping with the findings of the historical study. The following principles are basic to a dynamic standard of church music:

Spirituality. The first test of church music is spirituality. It must have the dynamic of the Holy Spirit, and should perform, as a minimum, the spiritual functions which are found in the New Testament basis of song, that of teaching doctrine, edification and praise.

Function. Beyond the criteria suggested by the New Testament the standard must be utilitarian. Does the music do in particular and in terms of the universal need what it should do? Does it fulfill the need?

Balance. The question then becomes: What needs should the music of the Church be called upon to supply? The test is then one of balance. Is it fulfilling the required breadth of need? Is there music for all occasions and for all people?

Creativity. The fulfilling of a need inevitably involves the springing up of new situations. Can the church music move from its traditional mold to meet the coming needs? The test then becomes one of Creativity.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A study of the early Church Fathers with a view to clarifying the New Testament practice of church music.
2. A philosophical study of church music considering its aesthetics and, its values of art and culture.
3. A psychological study of the power of music upon the human life.
4. A study of the various age level and cultural level considerations with respect to the proper use of church music.
5. A study of the use and propriety of music in foreign missionary work, considering for example the matter of adjusting to the needs of varying cultural environments.
6. A study of the popular and folk music of other days and of the modern day, for the purpose of comparing the influence upon the Church.
7. A study of the relation of church music and the faith.
8. Any one period of the study in this thesis could be singled out for more intense research.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## A. BOOKS

- Anderson, William K., Methodism. Cincinnati: The Methodist Publishing House, 1947, pp. 148 - 164.
- Bailey, Alber Edward, The Gospel in Hymns. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1950, pp. 600.
- Benson, Louis F., The Hymnody of the Christian Church. Virginia: John Knox Press, 1956, pp. 310.
- Bett, Henry, The Hymns of Methodism. London: 25-35 City Road, The Epworth Press, 1913, pp. 172.
- Blair, H. A., A Creed Before the Creeds. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1955, pp. 173.
- Christophers, S. W., The Epworth Singers. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Company, 1874, pp. 520.
- Colloms, Lester H., Wilbur Fisk Tillet, Christian Educator. Louisville: The Cloister Press, 1949, pp. 234.
- Duchesne, Mgr. L., Christian Worship. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919, pp. 593.
- Davison, Archibald T., Church Music. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952, pp. 148.
- Flew, R. Newton, The Hymns of Charles Wesley. London: The Epworth Press, 1953, 79 pp.
- Gaebelein, Frank E., The Pattern of God's Truth. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 69-83.
- Halter, Carl, The Practice of Sacred Music. Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1955, pp. 96.
- Hume, Paul, Catholic Church Music. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1956, pp. 259.
- Kerr, Phil, Music in Evangelism. Glendale, California: Gospel Publishers, 1954, pp. 216.
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott, A History of Christianity. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953.
- Lorenz, Edmund S., Music in Work and Worship. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925, pp. 385.

- Laufer, Calvin W., Hymn Lore. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1932, pp. 205.
- Martin, G. Currie, The Church and the Hymn Writers. London: James and Clarke Limited, c1928, pp. 256.
- Metcalf, Frank J., American Writers and Compilers of Sacred Music. New York: The Abingdon Press, c1925, pp. 373.
- McCutchen, Robert Guy, Hymns in the Lives of Men. New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, c1945, pp. 208.
- Our Hymnody. New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, c1937, 619.
- Moerner, O. W., Better Music in the Church. Nashville, Tennessee: Cokesbury Press, 1939, 128 pp.
- Ninde, Edward S., The Story of the American Hymn. New York: The Abingdon Press, c1921, 429 pp.
- Nutter, Charles S., Hymn Studies - Methodist Hymnal. New York: Eaton and Mains, 1900, 478 pp.
- Orr, J. Edwin, The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd., c1949, 302 pp.
- The Second Evangelical Awakening in America. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, c1952, 223 pp.
- Price, Carl F., The Music and Hymnody of the Methodist Hymnal. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, c1911, 296 pp.
- Qualben, Lars P., A History of the Christian Church. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942, 644 pp.
- Rattenbury, Earnest J., The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns. London: 2535 City Road, The Epworth Press, c1942, 365 pp.
- Routley, Erik, Hymns and the Faith. Greenwich: The Seabury Press, 1956, 311 pp.
- Hymns and the Human Life. New York: Philosophical Library, c1952, 346 pp.
- Schaff, Philip, History of the Christian Church. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949, VI, pp. 502-512.
- Shields, Elizabeth, Music in the Religious Growth of Children. New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, c1943, 128 pp.

Stevenson, Robert, Patterns of Protestant Church Music. England:  
Duke University Press, 1953, 219 pp.

Swan, Howard, Music in the Southwest. San Marino, California: The  
Huntington Library, 1952, 316 pp.

Thomas, Edith Lovell, Music in Christian Education. New York:  
Abingdon Cokesbury Press, c1953, 160 pp.

#### B. PERIODICALS

Caecilia, February, 1955, p. 42.

Caecilia, March April, 1956, p. 79.

Chicago Daily News, Summer, 1955.

Redbook Magazine, December, 1957, p. 90.

The Free Methodist, December 25, 1956.

The Pope Speaks, fourth quarter 1954, p. 379.

#### C. ENCYCLOPEDIAS

"Gregory the Great," Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago: 1951, Volume 10,  
p. 870.

Wright, Hebrew F., "Gregory the Great," Encyclopedia Americana, Volume 13,  
p. 451.