

Trends in Worship Today: Various Liturgical Views

A Report on a Workshop Offered at the American Guild of Organists
Washington, D.C. Convention, July 5, 2010

The Seminary and Denominational Relations Committee of the AGO sponsored two workshops at the 2010 Washington D.C. National Convention. Representatives from five of the major church traditions in the United States were invited to share the “state of worship” in their denominations, discuss trends which are affecting worship, and highlight resources which are available to music and worship leaders. Summaries of the presentations are presented here as recorded by three members of the Committee, Joy Schroeder, Thomas Goetz, and Michael Morgan. They noted that more attention was given to describing the current state of worship and listing available resources than to listing trends. However, it was clear from each of the presentations that in the last generation the trends for all denominations have included increased multicultural and stylistic diversity.

The Presbyterian Church (USA), presented by Alan Barthel

There are many styles of worship within the PCUSA, including traditional, contemporary, Reformed, Iona-influenced, multi-generational and multi-cultural, and many others. The church has some congregations that don't identify with the Presbyterian Church, but prefer to be more independent. There are youth who are now reaching adulthood who grew up outside of the church, and these people bring new ideas to worship. As a result, unfortunately, many Presbyterian churches are spending time trying to satisfy "tastes" in worship styles rather than focusing on forming faithful disciples.

The Presbyterian Church has numerous documents on worship, with the congregations both listening and responding to God's Word. Resources for a church musician include:

- (1) *The Directory for Worship* from the *Book of Order* (published by The Office of the General Assembly);
- (2) *The Book of Common Worship* (a compendium of liturgies and services);
- (3) *The Book of Occasional Services*;
- (4) *The Companion to the Book of Common Worship*;
- (5) *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990);
- (6) *Psalter—Psalms and Canticles for Singing* (Office of Theology and Worship, 1993);
- (7) *The Psalter for Christian Worship*, by Michael Morgan (1999, revised, 2010);
- (8) *Call to Worship* (quarterly journal of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians);
- (9) The documents *Invitation to Christ* and *Invitation to the Word*.

Annual music and worship conferences at Montreat (NC); Westminster (PA); and Mo-Ranch, (Hunt, TX); as well as a biennial Professional Musicians conference, are sponsored by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. A new hymnal is in process and scheduled for publication in 2013.

Alan Barthel has been the executive director of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians for 10 years. He previously served as the St. Andrew Professor of Church Music at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, and as Director of Music at First St. Andrew's United Church of London, Ontario.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), presented by Rick Erickson

In the Lutheran Church (ELCA) there is a rich variety in worship style which varies from congregation to congregation. The 2006 worship book, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW), is the central resource of an increasing constellation of materials for use in worship – both in print and online form. The basis of the worship service still retains the four major elements of Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. The basic role of the Hymn of the Day (the principal hymn of the day) remains that of proclamation of the Gospel. Multiculturalism is increasing to broaden the styles of music, and original languages are often used for singing a stanza of a hymn – or at least present in ELW to underscore the world-wide nature of song. The Lutheran World Federation Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture presents helpful principles for conversation for congregations; it does not dictate any worship or musical style, but notes that all worship should be trans-cultural, contextual, counter-cultural, and cross-cultural. A new ELCA document, “Principles for Worship,” (2002) includes a careful discussion about music and its role in liturgy. Musicians need to be well prepared for the musical demands of their specific parish.

A common thread seems to be that where there are financial resources committed to worship and music, there is renewal, and this occurs with music of various styles. A primary trend is certainly the constancy of change!

Rick Erickson serves as Cantor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New York City, where as part of his duties, he directs the renowned Bach Vespers series. He is an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA, and hold degrees from the University of Wisconsin and Eastman School of Music.

The Episcopal Church, presented by Michael Messina

The most important resource for congregational song is *The Hymnal 1982*. A number of other resources have recently been published to broaden the base of hymnody and service music culturally and stylistically. These resources include
(1) *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (an African-American hymnal);
(2) *Wonder, Love and Praise* (supplement to *The Hymnal 1982*);

- (3) *Voices Found—Women in the Church’s Song*;
- (4) *El Himnario* (an ecumenical effort of the Episcopal, Presbyterian and UCC Churches);
- (5) *My Heart Sings Out* (a hymn collection for children);
- (6) *Music by Heart* (paperless music resources);
- (7) *Enriching Our Music* (2 volumes);
- (8) *The Emergent Psalter*;
- (9) *Music Rite Away* (music downloadable from www.churchpublishing.org).

The 3-volume series, *Liturgical Music for the Revised Common Lectionary* (Daw/Pavlechko, Years A/B/C), is a recently published resource for worship planning. As of this writing, the church is engaged in a study to determine the feasibility of revising *The Hymnal 1982*.

Michael Messina is Director of Music at Trinity Episcopal Church, Indianapolis. He was elected President of the Association of Anglican Musicians in 2006 and recently completed a four-year term. He holds degrees from Eastman School of Music and Saint Olaf College.

The Roman Catholic Church, presented by J. Michael McMahon

The foundation for the liturgical life of the Catholic Church is the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1963. That document articulates the principles that have guided the renewal of the liturgy for nearly fifty years and set out an agenda for reforming the celebration of the Church’s rites.

One of the most notable features of Catholic liturgical renewal since Vatican II has been the increased importance and prominence of music. The Council declared that music is to be esteemed more highly than any of the other arts because it is integrally connected to the texts and ritual actions of the liturgy itself rather than being a mere enhancement. In the United States the increased importance of music is part of the ordinary worship experience of Catholics, who have now come to expect singing as a normal part of Sunday Mass, with the congregation taking part in acclamations, responses, antiphons, psalms, hymns, and other liturgical songs together with music ministers who may include choir, cantor, organist, pianist, and/or instrumental ensemble.

While the place of choirs was questioned by some in the immediate aftermath of the Council, the role of the choir has been strongly affirmed in official church documents since Vatican II. At the parish level, the number of choirs has increased markedly. Many communities have multiple choirs that emphasize varying musical styles (e.g., chant, Gospel, traditional, contemporary), incorporate members of various ages (e.g., children, youth, intergenerational), or sing for particular occasions (e.g., funerals, school liturgies).

An important influence on the development of liturgical music in the Catholic Church has been the changing demographics of the Catholic community in the United States. The growth of the Catholic Church in the U.S. has been fueled in large part by recent waves of immigration, particularly from Latin America and Asia. Latinos now make up half of all U.S. Catholics under the age of 30. Pastoral care of the rapidly growing Hispanic/Latino population had been accompanied by the need for music and musicians to serve the worship needs of Spanish speaking assemblies. In Catholic churches around the United States, the liturgy is celebrated – and sung – in dozens of languages in musical forms rooted in a wide variety of cultures.

Cultural shifts in the United States reflect changes that have affected the Catholic Church throughout the world. What was once a largely European institution has become a truly global community of faith, the majority of whom live south of the equator in Africa and Latin America. Catholics of the Latin (Roman) rite now celebrate the liturgy in hundreds of languages in widely divergent cultural settings that have enriched the singing of the liturgy.

There are a number of recent events and trends that are affecting the worship life of Catholics. Let me mention just three of these. First, a new English translation of the Order of Mass and of the entire *Roman Missal* will be implemented on November 27, 2011, requiring priests and people alike to learn new ways of singing and speaking the liturgy. Second, in 2007 Pope Benedict XVI issued a document entitled *Summorum Pontificum* that allowed wider use of the pre-Vatican II or “Tridentine” Mass, now known as the “extraordinary form” of celebration. There has been growing interest in this form in the three years since this permission was extended. Finally, the bishops of the United States issued a new document on liturgical music in 2007 entitled *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. This document is by far the most comprehensive statement to date by the bishops and is characterized by a “both/and” approach to such issues as chant, Latin, and musical styles. It largely affirms the overall direction of liturgical music over the past forty years, yet offers a number of correctives and deals with some topics that had previously received insufficient attention.

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians (www.npm.org/) is an organization of musicians, clergy, liturgists, and other leaders of worship who serve the Catholic Church in the United States.

J. Michael McMahon is President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and Director of Music Ministries at St. Agnes Church in Arlington, Virginia.

The United Methodist Church, presented by J. Thomas Taylor

The United Methodist Church has much diversity in worship styles, greatly influenced by church size, geographical location, and church leadership. Three major trends in worship and service music include (1) the inclusion of global music; (2) emergent worship in which the entire congregation, along with worship leaders, shares the sense of faith unfolding; and (3) a return to the roots of Methodism and finding a sense of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

An introductory resource for those considering employment in a United Methodist church is McAnally's *Questions and Answers about the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995). Hymnal and worship resources include *The United Methodist Hymnal* and *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Additional musical resources are *The Faith We Sing*; *Songs of Zion*; *Zion Still Sings*; and *Worship and Song*. The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts (www.UMFellowship.org) and the General Board of Discipleship (www.gbod.org) provide resources, support and opportunities for pastors, musicians, and worship leaders and artists.

Tom Taylor is in his 35th year as Director of Music Ministries at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Allison Park, PA, where he directs and oversees a program of 12 performing groups. He holds degrees from Edinboro State and Duquesne Universities. Tom serves as the current president of the national Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.