

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) Morgan's *The Psalter for Christian Worship* (1999, revised, 2010);
- (8) *Call to Worship* (journal of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians);
- (9) the documents *Invitation to Christ* and *Invitation to the Words*.

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 has 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 Lutheran Church (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 basis of the worship service still retains the four major elements of Gathering, the Word, the Meal, and Sending Out. Multiculturalism is increasing to broaden the styles of music, and original languages are often used for singing a verse of a hymn. 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. 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.

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 Catholic Church has rites and liturgy as written in the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, *Sancrosanctum Concilium*, of the Second Vatican Council of 1963. In the parishes, the various parts of the Mass are sung: the acclamations, responses, liturgical texts, antiphons, psalms, hymns, and other liturgical songs. The increased role of music in worship has inspired the formation of a number of church choirs. In the parishes, there are many Hispanic members, and the majority of Catholics live south of the equator. Though the number of parishes in the United States is declining, there is an increase in diversity, with congregations singing their praise in dozens of languages.

Resources include the *Liturgiam Authenticam*, 2001; *Roman Missal*, third edition, 2002; *Grail Psalter*; *Summorum Pontificum*, 2007; and *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 2007. The National Association of Pastoral Musicians serves the musicians, clergy, liturgists, and other leaders of worship in the Catholic Church.

J. Michael McMahon is President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. He is 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, and many of its churches are quite small. Geographical location and church size often influence the worship styles. There are three major trends in worship music emerging today: (1) the world music explosion; (2) emergent worship in which the entire congregation, along with worship leaders, shares the sense of faith unfolding; and (3) going back 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 popular supplements: *The Faith We Sing*, *Songs of Zion*, *Zion Still Sings*, *Worship and Song* (to be published in 2011), and *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, and the General Board of Discipleship (www.gbod.org) provide support and opportunities for musicians and worship leaders.

J. Thomas 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 has degrees from Edinboro State and Duquesne University. He is the president of the National Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.