

# Centennial of the Lutheran Hymnary

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*The Lutheran Hymnary* was my grandpa's book. He was born in 1916 right after the *Hymnary* was printed (1913) and just before the Norwegian Merger (1917). His family moved into a new church building in 1918. This was called the "Synod" church in Scarville to distinguish it from the "Merger" or "Union" church just across town. The Scarville congregation continued to use the 1913 *Hymnary* until the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (1996) was published three years after my grandpa's death. He knew that 1913 book well.

## Leading up to *The Lutheran Hymnary*

After purging the 1851 constitution of the Grundtvigian Error, the Norwegian Synod was (re)established in 1853. By 1866, the Synod determined the time was right for the Norwegian Lutherans in America to create a new hymnbook of their own. They elected a committee for that purpose, and the Rev. U. V. Koren (1826-1910) was appointed chairman.<sup>1</sup> The first draft of the new book was finished in 1868, and after further editing, the final version was published in 1874 as the *Synodens Salmebog* ("Synod's Hymnal").<sup>2</sup> Koren and the committee took a conservative approach in hymn selections and in updating the older Danish texts to modern Norwegian.<sup>3</sup> This careful approach was important for future hymnbook efforts as Dr. Gracia Grindal notes:

Following the appearance of *Synodens Salmebog*, Vilhelm Koren was established as the grand old man of Norwegian American Lutheran hymnody and, until his death in 1910, the leader in every attempt to create a new hymnal among the Norwegian Lutherans, living to steer the revision of the *Salmebog* completed for the jubilee of the Norwegian Synod in 1903. He and his associates also helped to shape the production of the first English hymnal of the Norwegians in America, *The Lutheran Hymnary*. This is most clear in the hymnal's conservative understanding of the canon, its arrangement into hymns for each Sunday's text, and the inclusion of a substantial number of rhythmic chorales.<sup>4</sup>

Three years after the *Synodens Salmebog* was published, Prof. F. A. Schmidt began his attack against the Missouri Synod and any others who supported the confessional Lutheran doctrine of election.<sup>5</sup> His attacks intensified to the extent that nearly a third of the Norwegian

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<sup>1</sup> Gracia Grindal, "Dano-Norwegian Hymnody in America," *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (1992): 9. The committee members were Koren, Ole Juul, Jorgen Nørdbj, Andreas Kittelsen Sagen, and Marcus Friedrich Wiese (309n29).

<sup>2</sup> This book contained no hymns by the popular Danish hymnwriter N. F. S. Grundtvig. Koren was in favor of including "God's Word Is Our Great Heritage," but H. A. Preus refused to consider even this one hymn (Grindal, 266). A new edition of this book was published in 1903, and Koren was again involved with that project. There were five Grundtvig hymns in this edition (Preus died in 1894).

<sup>3</sup> Dennis Marzolf, "Germanic Influences on the Worship Life of the ELS" (presented to the ELS Historical Society, 2005), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Grindal, 272.

<sup>5</sup> S. C. Ylvisaker, ed., *Grace for Grace* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1943), 169.

Synod's pastors and congregations left by 1888 to form the "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood."<sup>6</sup> Two years after this, the Anti-Missourians united with the Augustana Synod and the Norwegian-Danish Conference to establish the United Norwegian Lutheran Church on June 13, 1890. G. O. Lillegard comments, "It is no exaggeration to say that the only bond of union between these three groups was their common hatred of the Norwegian Synod."<sup>7</sup>

Just a few years before this, the animosity among the Norwegian Lutherans in America had not been as strong. To be sure, there were major doctrinal differences among them. But when the pietistic Hauge Synod in 1885 sent an invitation to the Norwegian Synod, the Augustana Synod, and the Norwegian-Danish Conference to consider working on a joint hymnbook, these church bodies accepted.<sup>8</sup> They met on January 26, 1887, in Chicago to discuss where the project should begin.<sup>9</sup> U. V. Koren was present and suggested the formation of a committee of two men from each synod to chart a course for the effort. Ultimately a committee of four was formed, one representative from each body. M. F. Wiese (1842-1933), a close associate of Koren, was appointed as the Norwegian Synod representative.<sup>10</sup> Because of the effect the election controversy had on all the Norwegians, this joint project never got off the ground, and all talks broke off. In 1891, the Hauge Synod approached the newly formed United Church about adding a supplement to Landstad's hymnbook. The resulting book, still in Norwegian only, was published in 1895 and made available to these Norwegian church bodies, which included about two-thirds of the Norwegian Lutherans in America.<sup>11</sup> However, the book still did not "represent the sort of substantial and creative work accomplished by Koren and his colleagues for the Norwegian Synod's book."<sup>12</sup>

While they were producing new hymnbooks in their native language, the Norwegian Lutherans did not ignore their place in English-speaking America. Already in 1879, the Norwegian Synod's Lutheran Publishing House in Decorah, Iowa, printed the *Hymnbook for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Schools and Congregations*. It was not destined for widespread use in the Norwegian Synod. The book was edited by Missouri Synod professor August Crull and contained 130 hymns. Eighty-two of these were translated from German, but only seven from Danish/Norwegian.<sup>13</sup> C. F. W. Walther had high regard for the book, which predated the first Missouri Synod English hymn collection by three years.<sup>14</sup>

More and more, the Norwegian Lutherans began to see the need for a Lutheran hymnbook in English which would include translations of the best and most-beloved Scandinavian hymns. In 1895, the Norwegian Synod and the United Church each established hymnbook committees to explore this possibility. These committees even approached each other to potentially collaborate on a new book. This was surprising, because not even a decade

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 190. Christian Anderson reports in *Grace for Grace*, "The number of souls which in 1886, before the wholesale withdrawals of pastors and congregations began, according to the records was 143,885 had dwindled down in 1890 to 93,891" (92).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>8</sup> Grindal, 278.

<sup>9</sup> "Members of the group were, from the Hauge Synod: C. O. Brohaugh, A. E. Boyum, Anfin O. Utheim, Ole Nilsen, Nils Børve; from the Norwegian Synod: V. Koren, J. B. Frich, O. Juul, Bjug A. Harstad, M. F. Wiese, H. A. Preus; from the Conference: G. Hoyme, Nils Christian N. Brun, L. Lund, Iver Tharaldsen, Nils Gregor Nilsen, Johan Arndt Bergh, H. Osmundsen, K. J. M. Granville; from the Augustana Synod: J. E. Jensen, M. Nilsen." Grindal, 312n77.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>13</sup> Carl F. Schalk, *God's Song in a New Land: Lutheran Hymnals in America* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), 119. See also Grindal, 288.

<sup>14</sup> Schalk, 150-151.

had passed since the election controversy tore apart the Norwegian Lutherans. When these committees differed on what chorale melodies to use, joint efforts discontinued.<sup>15</sup> In 1898, the United Church published the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*,<sup>16</sup> and the Norwegian Synod produced *Christian Hymns for Church, School and Home*.<sup>17</sup> Dr. Schalk considered the Norwegian Synod book to be a big step for English Lutheran hymnody: "This excellent little collection of 309 hymns and 12 doxologies was rich in Reformation hymnody and retained the rhythmic form of most of the chorales. Tunes and settings were largely from the work of Ludvig Lindemann, and from the Hoelter *Choralbuch*, Brauer's *Choralbuch*, and from the *Church Book* of the General Council."<sup>18</sup> While the translations from Danish/Norwegian into English were a welcome change from the 1879 book, few of them were adopted without alterations in future books.<sup>19</sup>

Just before the turn of the century, the United Church was the largest Norwegian Lutheran body with 1059 congregations including 123,000 communicant members. The Norwegian Synod had 735 congregations with 66,000 communicant members. The Hauge Synod was the smallest of the three with 217 congregations and about 17,500 communicant members, similar to the size of the ELS today.<sup>20</sup> At least for the Norwegian Synod, huge growth was right around the corner. By the time it celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1903, communicant membership had more than doubled to approximately 140,000.<sup>21</sup> This was almost identical to the total before the Anti-Missourian exodus.<sup>22</sup> The need for a Norwegian Lutheran hymnbook in English seemed to grow more pressing with each year.

Both the Norwegian Synod and United Church formed committees to see about improving their 1898 books. The Norwegian Synod's committee started work in 1905.<sup>23</sup> In 1908, a resolution was passed in the Norwegian Synod to see if other synods in the Synodical Conference would like to collaborate on an English Lutheran hymnbook.<sup>24</sup> The Norwegian Synod quickly contacted the United Church to work on such a project, though the United Church was not part of the Synodical Conference. If there was any contact with the member synods of the Synodical Conference, the hymnbook idea did not take off. By this time, the climate among the Norwegians had changed. In the summer of 1905, Norway voted for independence from Sweden and obtained it. This event caused a swell of nationalistic fervor among the Norwegians, including those in America. That same year, the Hauge Synod invited the other Norwegian Lutherans to enter into joint doctrinal discussions.<sup>25</sup> It was no surprise, then, that the Norwegian Lutherans were ready to work on a hymnbook together by 1908, a project that was completed by 1912. The preface in the new hymnbook identified the reasons for collaboration:

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<sup>15</sup> Grindal, 289.

<sup>16</sup> Committee members: Oluf Glasøe (1859-1918), Gerhard Rasmussen (1857-1943), Emil Gunerius Lund (1852-1938), and O. G. Belsheim (1861-1925) (Grindal, 290).

<sup>17</sup> Committee members: Nils Førde (1849-1917), Adolph Bredesen (1850-1913), Oluf H. Smeby (1851-1929), and Karl A. Kasberg (1861-1924) (Grindal, 289). This book also contained no Grundtvig hymns.

<sup>18</sup> Schalk, 206n28.

<sup>19</sup> Grindal, 289.

<sup>20</sup> Schalk, 217ns1-3.

<sup>21</sup> Ylvisaker, 92.

<sup>22</sup> See footnote 6.

<sup>23</sup> Verlyn D. Anderson, "The History and Acculturation of the English Language Hymnals of the Norwegian-American Lutheran Churches, 1879-1958" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1972), 139.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>25</sup> Ylvisaker, 95.

The considerations which prompted the creation of the joint committee were, chiefly, the common need of an adequate and satisfactory English hymn book; the fact of a common faith and confession as well as a common inheritance of Lutheran hymnody; the probability of getting a better hymn book through united endeavor than by separate effort; and finally, the desirability of a common hymnary, especially in the event of a union of the Church bodies concerned.<sup>26</sup>

The hymnbook committee consisted of four representatives from each synod. From the Norwegian Synod: Rev. Alfred O. Johnson (1871-1933), Rev. Ditlef G. Ristad (1863-1938), Rev. Oluf H. Smeby (1851-1929), and Prof. Carlo A. Sperati (1860-1945), who was later replaced by Prof. John Dahle (1853-1931). From the United Church: Rev. Ole G. Belsheim (1861-1925), Prof. F. Melius Christiansen (1871-1955), Dr. Carl A. Mellby (1869-1963), and Rev. George A. T. Rygh (1860-1942). From the Hauge Synod: Rev. Knute O. Eittreim (1870-1942), Rev. Lars Harrisville (1864-1925), Rev. Karl C. Holter (1851-1923), and Prof. O. O. Stageberg, who joined in 1909. The Rev. Carl Døving (1867-1937) was later asked to assist the committee in an advisory capacity.<sup>27</sup> The committee met six times.<sup>28</sup>

In general, the Norwegian Synod was the most liturgical, traditionally Lutheran of the three bodies, with the Hauge Synod falling at the other end of the spectrum.<sup>29</sup> Still, the preface in a preliminary copy of the new hymnbook boasted that

[the editors] have sought to make this a distinctively Lutheran hymnal and Lutheran hymns have in every case been given the preference over those originating in other divisions of the church.... Altogether, more than one half of the contents of this book is of Lutheran origin, which is a much larger proportion than in all previous English Lutheran hymnals.<sup>30</sup>

When the committee received complaints that the hymn selection included too much Reformed hymnody, more Lutheran hymns were added and others were extended to include more stanzas.<sup>31</sup>

While the book was finished in 1912, it was not copyrighted and published until January of 1913. By September of that year, 30,000 copies had been sold.<sup>32</sup> It was the hymnbook committee's desire that this book "may prove no small factor in the efforts made to unify the various Norwegian Lutheran Church bodies of our land."<sup>33</sup> This came to pass when *The*

<sup>26</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1913), 3.

<sup>27</sup> Anderson, 147-149; Grindal, 314n129.

<sup>28</sup> Aug. 25-Sept. 3, 1908, in Decorah, IA; Feb. 23-Mar. 4, 1909, in Minneapolis, MN; July 27-Aug. 10, 1909, in Albert Lea, MN; Feb. 3-10, 1910, in Red Wing, MN; Feb. 28-Mar. 8, 1911; and July 10-20, 1911. Anderson, 147, 148, 151, 152, 154.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 147. Dr. Grindal contends, however, that "contrary to received opinion, the individual members' differences concerning the canon of hymnody were fundamentally minor and not predictable by synodical affiliation. The Hauge Synod was as likely to harbor hymnologists of high church leanings as the Norwegian Synod" (301).

<sup>30</sup> Anderson, 150. How would a book of sermons be received in the confessional Lutheran church if only about half of them were written by Lutheran pastors? Would it be called a "distinctively Lutheran" book? While the Lutheran Church uses and enjoys many hymns written by non-Lutherans, it should be remembered that every hymn is itself a "sermon." Orthodox hymns written by faithful Lutherans should be given predominance in Lutheran worship.

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, 152, 154; Grindal, 294.

<sup>32</sup> Anderson, 155-156, 175-176.

<sup>33</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnary*, 4.

*Lutheran Hymnary* became the official hymnbook of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, a union in 1917 of the three major Norwegian Lutheran synods.

### Looking at *The Lutheran Hymnary*

*The Lutheran Hymnary* had many strengths (see Appendix for complete contents). The first sixty-three pages of the book were dedicated to the printing of the three catholic Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and the Small Catechism. This mimicked the tradition of other Synodical Conference books. Walther's German hymnbook of 1847 did this, and later hymnbooks followed suit, including the Ohio Synod's *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal* (1880) and the Missouri Synod's *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1912).<sup>34</sup> For the first time, the Bugenhagen Order now enjoyed wide circulation in English,<sup>35</sup> and the Norwegians also printed the Common Order of service which would become the standard liturgy among confessional Lutherans in America. Following in the Scandinavian hymnbook tradition of Kingo, Guldberg, Balle, and Landstad, along with the preference of the Norwegian Synod, the hymns of *The Lutheran Hymnary* were arranged according to the Church Year.<sup>36</sup> The committee hoped that this arrangement "will prove a valuable aid in selecting appropriate hymns for the services, and, better than a mere topical index, serve to promote a general use of the hymns found in the hymnal."<sup>37</sup> The book also benefited from the collaboration of hymn text and music experts throughout the process. Previous books were often published in text form first, and then followed later on by a music edition. For *The Lutheran Hymnary*, texts and music were planned together and printed together.<sup>38</sup>

Regarding music, the committee noted that "twenty German chorals are arranged in rhythmical meter; twenty have a melodic or contrapuntal [*sic*] setting. These special features the committee hopes, will serve a purpose in discovering the wish of the Church regarding the rhythmical form and the melodic arrangement of Lutheran chorals."<sup>39</sup> The book features far more isometric versions of the chorales than rhythmic versions. In the Ludvig M. Lindeman (1812-1887) tradition of the harmonic chorale many of the older rhythmic melodies appeared in an equal rhythm (quarter note) form.<sup>40</sup> This rhythmic transformation reflects an emphasis on harmony as a driving force in music, which was a result of significant changes in the musical art beginning in the early 18th century. Acknowledging the debate about whether the isometric or rhythmic version of a melody is preferable, the *Hymnary* occasionally included both forms of the same hymn (such as #2, #85, and #492).<sup>41</sup> However, isometric melodies were more heavily used.

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<sup>34</sup> Schalk, 129, 141, 151.

<sup>35</sup> For a more in depth look at this order of service, see Erling T. Teigen, "The Worship Tradition of the Lutheran Hymnary" (presented to the WELS Commission on Worship, 1985), 6-15. See also Christian Anderson, "Our Liturgy" *Clergy Bulletin* XVII, no. 2 (Oct. 1957).

<sup>36</sup> Marzolf, 2. "This was a familiar feature of Norwegian hymnals, but not the usual arrangement of English-language hymnbooks. Only Paul Henkel, in an English hymnbook compiled by him in 1816, used this arrangement, but it never seemed to have appealed to the English churches" (Anderson, 156).

<sup>37</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnary*, 4.

<sup>38</sup> Grindal, 293.

<sup>39</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnary*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> For further information about the committee's discussions on melodies, see Grindal, 294-295. For more on Lindeman, see C. Howard Smith, *Scandinavian Hymnody from the Reformation to the Present* (The American Theological Library Association, 1987), 200-202.

<sup>41</sup> See Teigen, 20, for a balanced look at this issue. In private conversations, Professors Marzolf and DeGarmeaux expressed a similar position.

The hymns selected for the book came from a variety of sources. One breakdown of the 618 total hymns in the *Hymnary* is that 262 (42%) came from the Danish/Norwegian heritage, 118 (19%) from the German heritage, and 238 (39%) from English and American sources. Another assessment finds 7% of the hymns from Pre-Reformation sources, 40% from Lutheran sources, and 53% from Reformed sources.<sup>42</sup> Still another review organizes the hymns by centuries: 258 (42%) from the nineteenth century, 136 (22%) from the eighteenth century, 113 (18%) from the seventeenth century, 58 (9%) from the sixteenth century, and 53 (9%) from earlier.<sup>43</sup>

The task of translating an entire hymnic tradition into a new language was a massive one. It was only natural that the committee should include hymnody that already had been translated into English or was originally written in English. The *Hymnary* preface particularly highlights the contributions of Carl Døving in locating existing translations:

It is due to add that, thanks to the very extensive hymnological library and hymnological knowledge and patient research of Rev. Carl Døving, ... many excellent translations of well-known German Lutheran hymns, translations made mostly by prominent English hymnologists, have been secured for "The Lutheran Hymnary"; these translations have not appeared in an English Lutheran hymn book before.<sup>44</sup>

Other translations from Danish/Norwegian were supplied by members of the committee, and though some have questioned the quality of these efforts, the translations did fill an important need.<sup>45</sup> A number of them are still utilized today.<sup>46</sup> In general, the committee members believed that "their primary function was not the creation of something new, but the conservation of their European heritage."<sup>47</sup> In other words, their goal was to retain their beloved tradition of hymnody and pass it on to future English-speaking generations.

A substantial number of the hymns in the book came from English and American hymn writers, and not many of these authors were of Lutheran background. This caused some to wonder whether the whole project had been rushed. More time spent could have meant more translations of Lutheran hymns or even more original texts by Lutherans. M. F. Wiese, who had worked with Koren on the 1874 *Synodens Salmebog*, stated that a good hymnbook should reject and avoid the "trivial, sentimental, schwärmeristic, stilted rhyming of all kinds of spiritual poetasters."<sup>48</sup> Prof. Erling Teigen adds, "Because English was still the 2<sup>nd</sup> language of the Norwegians, and in their search for a hymnody, they recognized good poetry when they saw it.

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<sup>42</sup> Anderson, 162.

<sup>43</sup> Grindal, 297.

<sup>44</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnary*, 4. There are 67 translations from Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878) (Anderson, 165).

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of these translation challenges, see Anderson, 161-172, 215-220; see also 316-319 for a full list of hymns translated by the committee members.

<sup>46</sup> The work of these committee members is represented in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*: Ristad, one translation (252); Smeby, seven translations (25, 26, 111, 475, 482, 563, 586); Dahle, one composition (387), two settings (111, 144); Belsheim, one translation (583); Christiansen, six settings (27, 266, 397, 475, 509, 590); Rygh, thirteen translations (4, 215, 230, 241, 348, 354, 399, 437, 449, 516, 590, 595, 601); Døving, sixteen translations (44, 131, 142, 150, 211, 259, 268, 365, 368, 457, 462, 493, 495, 510, 514, 585).

<sup>47</sup> Anderson, 175. Anderson comments on this conservative approach: "With the exception of Percy Dearmer's 'Father, who on man dost shower gifts of plenty,' which was written in 1906, there is not another hymn written after 1890, twenty-three years or a generation before the hymnal was published" (175).

<sup>48</sup> Cited in Grindal, 295-296.

But, except for the Norwegian Synod members of the committee, they did not always observe the often subtle reformed tilt of that hymnody."<sup>49</sup>

While there are many examples of good hymns by non-Lutheran authors in *The Lutheran Hymnary*, there are other examples of hymns that have received too much attention through the years. "Nearer, My God, to Thee" (#466) is one of these, written by Sarah Adams, a lifelong Unitarian. This hymn suggests that we are closest to God not through the Means of Grace, but when we are lifted into the air or when we dream or think of God. Verse 2 reads:

Though like the wanderer,  
The sun gone down,  
Darkness be over me,  
My rest a stone;  
Yet in my dreams I'd be  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!

Other hymns similarly emphasize what we must do, instead of what Jesus has done for us. The first two stanzas of "God Calling Yet!" (#433) by the German Reformed author Gerhard Teersteegen show where the rest of the hymn is going:

God calling yet! – shall I not hear?  
Earth's pleasures shall I still hold dear?  
Shall life's swift passing years all fly,  
And still my soul in slumbers lie?

God calling yet! – shall I not rise?  
Can I His loving voice despise,  
And basely His kind care repay?  
He calls me still: can I delay?

The Unitarian/Presbyterian George Heath in "My Soul, Be on Thy Guard" (#485), speaks of the soul's battle but says nothing about the victorious Christ:

My soul, be on thy guard,  
Ten thousand foes arise;  
And hosts of sin are pressing hard  
To draw thee from the skies.

O watch, and fight, and pray!  
The battle ne'er give o'er;  
Renew it boldly every day,  
And help divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won,

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<sup>49</sup> Teigen, 4.

Nor lay thine armor down;  
Thine arduous work will not be done,  
Till thou obtain a crown.

Fight on, my soul, till death  
Shall bring thee to thy God!  
He'll take thee at thy parting breath  
Up to His blest abode.

Other weak hymns in the *Hymnary* come from the most beloved Scandinavian hymnwriters. Prof. Teigen writes, "The pietistic element of the hymnary committee also ensured the inclusion of some rather crass pietistic, Halleian theology – see, e.g. Hymnary 245, 'O Father may thy Word Prevail.' Their selection of Communion hymns left much to be desired and is rather reflective of the Melancthonian and pietistic approach to the sacrament."<sup>50</sup> This is the second verse of the hymn Teigen cites:

Come Jesus, come and contemplate  
Thy vineyard's sad estate:  
Baptized are millions in Thy name,  
But where is faith's pure flame?  
Of what avail that we  
Know of Thine agony  
So long as we do not o'erthrow  
In faith the wicked foe.

Here is another verse by the same author, H. A. Brorson (1694-1764), from "Life's Day Is Ended" (#591):

Hence Christ in heaven  
Did me a crown prepare,  
Which shall be given  
Not only me to wear,  
But whomsoever,  
The lowliest and the best,  
Who doth endeavor  
To serve his Savior blest,  
And so forever  
Shall be his worthy guest.<sup>51</sup>

Another weakness of the hymn selections is that there are no obvious hymns treating the doctrine of election. This was purposeful since the committee did not want to hinder any progress toward outward unity among the Norwegians.

The best Scandinavian hymns have continued to be included in modern hymnbooks, though none represents them as well as the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (more on that later).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> For more on Brorson's life, see Smith, 116-122.

Some of the Lutheran texts that have not been retained are worth another look. From verse 2 of the Pentecost hymn, “Heavenly Spirit, All Others Transcending” (#377), by J. N. Brun (1745-1816):

Merciful Jesus, with love never failing,  
Sending Thy Spirit, the pledge ever new,  
That Thy atonement for all is availing,  
Faith ever sees that Thy promise is true.  
Crowned are Thy servants with heavenly fire,  
Speaking with hearts and with tongues all aflame;  
Heavenly Spirit, our voices inspire,  
That we may sing of His glorious name!

“Thou Holy Church, God’s City Shine” (#79) is by M. B. Landstad (1802-1880):

Thou holy Church, God’s city, shine,  
High on His mountain founded!  
Sing praise to Christ, thy king divine,  
Who thee with walls surrounded;  
Thy children He doth bless and sends  
His peace to thee, thy strife He ends:  
Now praise thy God, O Zion!

He sendeth out His holy word  
To every land and nation,  
It swiftly runs, ’tis from the Lord  
His message of salvation;  
The hearts that were like ice and snow,  
It melts so that in streams they flow  
With tears of true repentance.

Who now but will himself deny,  
And yield to God submission,  
His word receive, on Christ rely,  
Obtains a full remission;  
He is converted and made wise,  
And goes from hence to Paradise:  
Grant us this grace, O Savior!

Finally, verse 4 of a Danish hymn from around 1600, “In God, My Savior, I Put My Trust Alone” (#350):

My consolation  
Thou art in every need,  
For my salvation

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<sup>52</sup> *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, 1996).

Thou on the cross didst bleed;  
In heaven dwelling,  
I shall, when past all pain,  
Thy praise be telling,  
O Lamb for sinners slain!  
When, anthems swelling,  
I sing the angels' strain.

These are some of the more unique features of *The Lutheran Hymnary*:

- Page numbers restart in the hymn section but do not match the hymn numbers.
- Two hymns are specifically about missions to the Jews (#126, #127).
- Two hymns are included by Francis Scott Key (#15, #520).
- An initial is given for the first name of male authors, but the full name of female ones.<sup>53</sup>
- Text issues: words were often condensed to fit on a line (#557), or they were bumped to the line below with brackets (#345).
- Doxologies of different meters were added at the end of the book (p. 655).
- Some hymns have different melodies than we expect to hear: A cheerful "O Come, O Come, Immanuel" (#172); the melody for "O Come, All Ye Faithful" paired with other hymns (#340 "How Firm a Foundation," #570 "We Gather, We Gather").
- Some hymn texts had not yet achieved their popular form: "Holy Night! Peaceful Night!" (#178).<sup>54</sup>

### Legacy of *The Lutheran Hymnary*

*The Lutheran Hymnary* certainly was not a perfect book, but it was a good book for its time. Though it contained too many hymns by Reformed authors, there were many who wanted still more of these texts, particularly the popular "Gospel songs" coming from the American revivals. Just two years after the *Hymnary* was published, *Concordia: A Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs* was printed without any direct synodical support. It was revised in 1932, and enjoyed special prominence among Scandinavian pietists.<sup>55</sup> The reorganized "little" Norwegian Synod was not totally happy to be using the "Merger book," but there was nothing else available in English that represented their unique hymnic tradition.

In 1928, the Norwegians received an invitation to send representatives to join the Synodical Conference Hymnbook Committee. Pastors Norman A. Madson and Christian Anderson were selected, and they served on the committee until *The Lutheran Hymnal* was published in 1941.<sup>56</sup> This was a fine book, but it omitted the Bugenhagen order of service and a

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<sup>53</sup> Alphabetically by last name (may not be exhaustive): Sarah Adams (#466), Dorothy F. Bloomfield (#538), Jane Borthwick (#556), Birgitte C. Boye (#183, #329, #383), Phoebe Cary (#289), Elizabeth C. Clephane (#321), Elizabeth Codner (#268), Annie R. Cousin (#597), Elisabeth Cruciger (#167), Sarah Doudney (#59), Catherine H. Esling (#517), Adelaide A. Procter (#267), Linda Sandell (#423), Anna Steele (#135, #473), Mrs. H. B. Stowe (#549), Adelaide Thrupp (#536), Emma L. Toke (#368), Anna Warner (#294), Anna L. Waring (#256, #343)

<sup>54</sup> "Holy night! peaceful night! / Through the darkness beams a light, / Yonder, where they sweet vigils keep / O'er the Babe who, in silent sleep, / Rests in heavenly peace, / Rests in heavenly peace!"

<sup>55</sup> Grindal, 300-301.

<sup>56</sup> Teigen, 4-5. Prof. DeGarmeaux indicates that Pr. Adolph Harstad also served on the committee. Mark DeGarmeaux, "O Come, Let Us Worship" (presented to the 78<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Mankato, MN, June 1995), 25.

number of good Scandinavian hymns. Like the *Hymnary*, it also contained many weak texts of British and American origin. Some ELS congregations adopted it, but others continued to use the 1913 *Hymnary*. Prof. Teigen writes,

The reception of the Hymnal was not all that enthusiastic in the Norwegian Synod. President Henry Ingebritson reported to the 1941 convention, “We miss many of our favorite hymns in the new book.” He suggested that “members of the hymnbook committee confer with the publishers, asking for an edition for our synod with an appendix containing some of our hymns” (SR 1941, p. 13). The convention resolved to endorse the proposal of the committee to try to get 40 additional hymns and the synod’s liturgy printed as a supplement to the new hymnbook. The committee was to report to the next convention—but the next report contains no references to it. Presumably, the wars (the one in Europe and the one in the Synodical Conference) took attention away from this less important matter. There continued to be a lack of wholehearted acceptance of the Hymnal in the synod for quite some time. Some pastors urged their congregations to introduce it, while others spoke against it because it did not contain the 40 preferred hymns nor the liturgy used in the synod.<sup>57</sup>

Scandinavian Lutheran hymnody suffered another blow with the publication of the *Service Book and Hymnal* of 1958. Even though six of the eight church bodies that worked on the hymnbook had Scandinavian roots, the committee, with chairman Luther Reed at the rudder, decided that most of these hymns should not be retained in the new book. The *Service Book and Hymnal* “exclude[d] almost entirely that normative core of Reformation hymnody from the 16<sup>th</sup> century together with many of the excellent contributions from the Scandinavian heritage which had their roots in German hymnody.”<sup>58</sup> In a paper submitted for the Bachelor of Arts Degree at Bethany Lutheran College, Andrew Soule documents the steady decline of the use of uniquely Scandinavian liturgy and hymnody. Until the publishing of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, only a small part of that tradition could be found among American Lutherans.<sup>59</sup>

The *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* was printed in 1996, eighty-three years after *The Lutheran Hymnary*. It was the effort of a small committee in a small church body, but it remains the best Lutheran hymnbook ever published in the English language. The 1996 *Hymnary* succeeded in taking the best from the Scandinavian *Hymnary* tradition (including the Bugenhagen Order), along with the German 1941 *Hymnal* tradition. Both the 1913 and 1941 hymnbooks represented hymn traditions that were moving from one language (Norwegian and German respectively) to another (English). Both of these books included too much from non-Lutheran authors, in part understandable given the monumental task of translation, but too much nonetheless. Here are the percentages of translated and non-translated hymns in some of the hymnbooks of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Keep in mind that some of the translated hymns are from non-Lutheran background, just as some of the non-translated hymns are from Lutheran background:

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<sup>57</sup> Teigen, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Schalk, 171-172. See also Grindal, 301.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew Soule, “A History of Norwegian Liturgy and Hymnody in America: Its Origins and Diminishing presence in American worship 1840-2012” (submitted for the Bachelor of Arts Degree, Bethany Lutheran College, 20 April, 2012).

- 295 (48%) written in English; 323 translated in *The Lutheran Hymnary* (1913)
- 312 (47%) written in English; 348 translated in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941)
- 312 (50%) written in English; 311 translated in *Christian Worship* (1993)
- 194 (32%) written in English; 408 translated in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (1996)
- 293 (47%) written in English; 337 translated in the *Lutheran Service Book* (2006)

It may be that we should see fewer translated hymns in American Lutheran hymnbooks as time passes. But the question remains: From where should the predominant number of the hymns representing the one, holy Christian, apostolic faith come? It seems that twenty centuries of Greek, Latin, German, Norwegian, etc., hymnody (especially from Lutheran authors), should represent more than 50% of our total hymnody.

Dr. Carl Schalk outlines what he views as the core of Lutheran hymnody. He argues that this core comes from the Babst Hymnbook of 1545, published with Luther's blessing just before his death. Schalk tracks this core of hymnody through the many American Lutheran hymnbooks published since the eighteenth century. This core of hymns faltered during the period of pietism, was totally wiped out during the age of rationalism, and has not entirely worked its way back into modern books. The confessional Lutheran tradition brought to America by men like Walther and Grabau, was a definite "shot in the arm" in this regard. But the English-language books still have not matched the core hymns included in the German books. Schalk charts how many out of forty-four of these core hymns are present in American Lutheran hymnbooks:

- 29 in *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal* (1880)
- 32 in *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1912)
- 21 in *The Lutheran Hymnary* (1913)
- 7 in *Common Service Book* (1917)
- 30 in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941)
- 9 in *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958)
- 26 in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978)
- 31 in *Lutheran Worship* (1982)
- 31 in *Christian Worship* (1993)<sup>60</sup>
- 38 in *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (1996)
- 29 in *Lutheran Service Book* (2006)
- 19 in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006)

Again, the 1996 *Hymnary* stands out. It stands out again in the amounts of hymn stanzas printed compared to most other Lutheran books. *The Lutheran Hymnary* often eliminated stanzas that the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* later restored. For example, five stanzas of "O How Shall I Receive Thee" in the old *Hymnary* (#157) were extended to ten stanzas in the new *Hymnary* (#94). Both *Hymnaries* include all ten stanzas of "Like the Golden Sun Ascending." But other Lutheran hymnbooks don't: six stanzas in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (#207), five in *Christian Worship* (#147), and three in *Lutheran Service Book* (#548).

While there are many differences among the Lutheran hymnbooks produced in America, there are also many similarities. This is a comparison of the three main English

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<sup>60</sup> Schalk, Appendix A, E. His book published in 1995 does not include the final three books on the list.

hymnbooks used in the history of the Norwegian Synod/ELS, *The Lutheran Hymnary* (TLHy), *The Lutheran Hymnal* (TLH) and the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (ELH):

- 251 hymns shared by ELH, TLH, and TLHy
- 422 hymns shared by ELH and TLH which is 69% of ELH and 63% of TLH
- 333 hymns shared by ELH and TLHy which is 55% of ELH and 54% of TLHy
- 322 hymns shared by TLH and TLHy which is 48% of TLH and 52% of TLHy
- 108 hymns are unique to ELH (18% of book)
- 177 hymns are unique to TLH (26% of book)
- 218 hymns are unique to TLHy (35% of book)

Until the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, there was reason to fear that much of the rich hymnody of Scandinavian Lutheran origin would be lost. Indeed, much of it has been. But there may be a growing awareness of the need to continue to translate into English the Lutheran gems hidden in other languages. It is exciting to see *Walther's Hymnal* published for the first time in English, the work of translator Matthew Carver.<sup>61</sup> Prof. DeGarmeaux has given the Lutheran Church a great gift in his translation of the hymn stanzas in Laache's *Book of Family Prayer*, along with his ongoing efforts to get more texts by Kingo and others into English. It may be that some of the Norwegian hymn translations we already have could benefit from a re-working. This could be accomplished by someone fluent in Danish/Norwegian and English, or by a team approach (someone to provide the rough translation, the other to provide the poetry). New translations would be preferable to the tweaking done to update language in the more recent hymnbooks. We will see what approach the WELS takes in its new hymnbook to be published in 2024.

## Conclusion

Scarville Lutheran Church was happy with *The Lutheran Hymnary*. But after 1956, no more of these books were printed,<sup>62</sup> which meant no more could be purchased as replacements or as gifts. When the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* was nearly completed, the congregation talked about changing over. This was a difficult notion for those who had known only the one book. The scales might have tipped a bit in the new book's favor when my grandma offered to dedicate the memorial funds received after her husband's death to purchase them. My grandpa never saw a copy of the ELH, and there are probably changes that would have bothered him. But he would have seen in the new *Hymnary* a book that carried on the Scandinavian tradition, while also offering the best collection of Lutheran hymns ever seen in an English book. He would have been glad for that.

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<sup>61</sup> Concordia Publishing House, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Teigen, 1.

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