THY HYMN OF THE DAY: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND USE

by

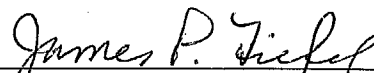Daniel T. Naumann and Patrick S. Freese

A Senior Thesis Submitted to

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ABSTRACT

This thesis depicts the development of the Hymn of the Day as it was born out of Luther's

Graduallied and how the concept of the Hymn of the Day was born out of the Lutheran

Reformation. The *Graduallied* was a hymn Luther added after the Epistle was read which

focused on the season of the Church Year. As new hymns were created the Lutherans replaced

the *Graduallied* with the *Hauptlied*, or the Hymn of the Day. The Hymn of the Day was a hymn

that fit the theme of the assigned Gospel for a Sunday or festival service. As this thesis examines

the rise of the Hymn of the Day, it also examines its fall into disuse by many parts of the

Lutheran Church and how the liturgical reawakening within Lutheranism has brought the Hymn

of the Day back into use within much of the Lutheran Church. While this thesis discusses the

development of the Hymn of the Day within Lutheranism in general, it focuses attention in detail

upon the Hymn of the Day and its use within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. This

thesis also notes some of the tensions Lutherans have had related to the Hymn of the Day.

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INTRODUCTION

After the Gospel is read and before the Sermon is preached, a hymn has a fixed position in the liturgical services found in *Christian Worship*. This is no ordinary hymn. This is not a hymn that is selected by personal whim. This is not a hymn primarily designed to get the congregation ready to hear the pastor's sermon. This hymn is the Hymn of the Day.

What is the Hymn of the Day? The Hymn of the Day is a hymn connected to the theme of the appointed Gospel for a given Sunday. The Hymn of the Day is to be seen as part of the Proper of a given week.[1] It functions liturgically as it allows the congregation to participate in the singing of a hymn that is related to the Gospel.

This thesis depicts the development of the Hymn of the Day as it was born out of Luther's *Graduallied* and how the concept of the Hymn of the Day was born out of the Lutheran Reformation. As this thesis examines the rise of the Hymn of the Day, it also examines its fall into disuse by many parts of the Lutheran church and how the liturgical reawakening within Lutheranism has brought the Hymn of the Day back into use within much of the Lutheran church. While this thesis discusses the development of the Hymn of the Day within Lutheranism in general, it focuses attention in detail upon the Hymn of the Day and its use within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. This thesis also notes some of the tensions Lutherans have had related to the appointed, liturgical Hymn of the Day.

The writers of this paper do not want to bind any consciences with this paper. Some churches may decide not to use the Hymn of the Day depending on their circumstances. The writers recognize the great freedom God gave his church in how she is to worship him and seek to cause no offense. The writers simply seek to study the development of the Hymn of the Day and recognize how valuable the Hymn of the Day has been to Lutheranism since the time of the Reformation, and how valuable the appointed Hymn of the Day can be to generations to come.

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[1]   Included in the Proper are all the lessons, the Hymn of the Day, the Psalm, the collect, and other parts of the service meant to change every week around the theme of the appointed Gospel for a specific day in the church year.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HYMN OF THE DAY

Influences of the Hymn of the Day

The Lutheran Church is popularly called the singing church.[2] The concept of the Hymn of the Day is a Lutheran concept. While the Hymn of the Day is a Lutheran idea, hymnody had been used well before Christ was born. The Bible and the church itself provided the context and some of the materials of Martin Luther's development of the Hymn of the Day.

The first hymnal was not produced by the Lutheran church but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Moses is the author of one of the psalms[3] and the Holy Spirit continued the production of the psalms possibly as late as Babylonian Captivity of the Hebrews.[4] One cannot be certain if the Hebrews used these psalms *de tempore*[5] but cannot overstate the influence the Psalms had on Christian hymnody in general, as well as Luther's hymnody.[6]

Hymnody continued to play a role in the New Testament. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Simeon sang their own songs to glorify God with their voices and words of thanksgiving. Paul refers to the singing of hymns and psalms in his writings and even makes a distinction between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. He knew these hymns well enough to sing them while he was under arrest in Philippi.[7] Again, neither the New Testament nor any records from the New Testament time frame depict a *de tempore* method of appointed hymnody. Still, these songs were used to worship God, and they would have provided a model for those who would write hymnody for generations to come.

While the Hymn of the Day was non-existent before the Lutheran Reformation, the Introit in the historic mass functioned in a role that was somewhat similar to the Gospel-hymn.

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[2]   Lutheranism is still popularly defined by its singing. Wikipedia's article on Lutheranism immediately identifies Lutheran singing as a chief part of Lutheran practice. (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheranism accessed 2/3/12)

[3]   This would be Psalm 90.

[4]   John Brug, *A Commentary on Psalms 1-72*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2004), 32.

[5]   For an appointed day.

[6]   Two of Luther's most famous hymns are Psalm paraphrases. These are "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (CW 200, 201) and "From Depths of Woe I Cry to You"(CW 305).

[7]   Paul speaks of hymnody in the following verses: 1 Cor 14:26; Col 3:16-17; Eph 5:18-20.

The Introit included psalm verses and was sung as the introduction to the worship service. As the Introit was sung the ministers of the church would process into the sanctuary. The Introit was part of the Proper and was selected in relation to the appointed Gospel for a given Sunday. By the time of the Reformation the Introit was not a whole psalm, but a brief portion of the Psalm. [8] The Introit was similar to the Hymn of the Day as it was an appointed hymn which was attached to the Gospel. The Introit was different from the Hymn of the Day in a few ways: 1) the Introit was typically a portion of Scripture and not freely composed poetry,[9] 2) the Introit was not sung by the whole congregation, but by a small choir or a cantor, 3) while the Introit fit the theme of the Gospel, it was sung as the entrance hymn of the procession and not in juxtaposition to the Gospel. [10] [11]

Luther was assisted in his development of the Hymn of the Day by the work of various hymnists who wrote in Gregorian chant. Hymns set to plainsong developed from Gregorian chant but were used primarily during the Daily Offices and not the Mass. Many of the hymns set to plainsong are still popular to this day.[12] Luther valued these hymns set to plainsong in the

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[8]   Luther Reed. *The Lutheran Liturgy*. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press,1947), 462. The Introit was initially the entire psalm. During the papacy of Pope Gregory the Introit was abbreviated to one or two verses from the psalms.

[9]   An exception to this rule is "All Glory, Laud, and Honor", which was used as an Introit even though it was a freely composed hymn sung as the Introit for Palm Sunday.

[10]   Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 184.

[11]   A. Fortescue, "Introit." *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 8, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910).

[12]   The following hymns were originally written in Gregorian chant and are still used by *Christian Worship* today:

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE	HYMN
Savior of the Nations, Come	Ambrose	4th Century	CW 2
O Splendor of God's Glory Bright	Ambrose	4th Century	CW 586
O Trinity, Most Blessed Light	Ambrose	4th Century	CW 591
Of the Father's Love Begotten	Aurelius Clemens Prudentius	4th Century	CW 35
Now Praise We Christ, the Holy One	Coelius Sedulius	5th Century	CW 39
The Star Proclaims the King Is Here	Coelius Sedulius	5th Century	CW 91
Father, We Praise You	Pope Gregory the Great	5th Century	CW 581
Before the Ending of the Day	Unknown	c. 6th Century	CW 595
Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle	Venantinus Fortunatus	6th Century	CW 122
Welcome, Happy Morning	Venantinus Fortunatus	6th Century	CW 163
Hail Thee, Festival Day	Venantinus Fortunatus	6th Century	CW 179
All Glory, Laud, and Honor	Theodulph of Orleans	7th – 8th Century	CW 131
Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest	Rhabanus Maurus	7th – 8th Century	CW 177, 178
Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid	Rhabanus Maurus	7th – 8th Century	CW 188

development of his *Graduallied*. "Savior of the Nations, Come" was *Graduallied*[13] for the season of the Advent. Throughout the course of the middle ages new hymns were written in plainsong. The new hymns set to plainsong from the 11th to 13th centuries tended to use brighter imagery than earlier seen.[14] "The World is Surely Evil" by Bernard of Cluny (c. 1100 AD) evoked emotion not usually seen in hymnody before 11th century.[15]

The Christian church developed sequences and tropes. These were sung in Gregorian chant. Tropes were used to expand liturgical elements in the canticles.[16] The sequence was a development of the trope.[17] Sequences gained widespread practice around 850 AD. Martin Luther was well acquainted with sequences. His hymn, "Christ Jesus Lay in Death Strong Bands", was an adaptation of a popular sequence.[18] While some might say that the sequence had a function in the medieval service that is similar to the function of the Hymn of the Day today, it is problematic to trace the Hymn of the Day to the sequence since the sequences were largely

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The hymns set to plainsong that serve as the Hymn of the Day in *Christian Worship* are:

Savior of the Nations Come	Advent 1	CW 2
Of the Father's Love Forgotten	Christmas Day	CW 35
Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest	Pentecost 1- Holy Trinity	CW 177, 178
Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid"	Pentecost 4	CW 188

[13]   Before the Hymn of the Day was the *Graduallied*. In the next pages this thesis explains how the Hymn of the Day was born out of the *Graduallied*.

[14]   Senn, 211.

[15]   Today this hymn appears in most hymnals as "Jerusalem, the Golden". Bernard of Cluny was a satirist who despised immorality, especially in the lives of monks and priests. "The World is Surely Evil" is a selection of verses from his work *De Contemptu Mundi* which went as far as to attack Rome itself. Portions from this work were largely forgotten until Matthias Flacius republished them in his work *Varis poemata de corrupto ecclesiae statu* written in 1557.

[16]   Senn, 218. Most tropes were smaller couplets written for the *Kyrie*. They were quite shorter than the sequences.

[17]   Ibid. 219. "A sequence was a special kind of trope associated with the troping of the alleluias. […] The standard sequence pattern has two strophes sung to the same melodic segment, which is repeated; the first and last strophes are the exceptions, and do not have parallels. The pattern can be illustrated thus: a bb cc dd ee ff g."

[18]   Ibid. The sequence Luther used was CW 144 "Christ is Arisen". CW 161 "Christ Jesus Lay in Death Strong Bands" is a suggested Hymn of the Day for Easter Sunday. As a new melody for this hymn has been recently composed, this hymn may regain its popularity in the WELS in the years to come.

abandoned at the time of the Reformation. [19] Luther himself was not too fond of most of the sequences as they typically did not edify with the Gospel, and he had no qualms about removing most of them from his settings of the Liturgy.[20] The Council of Trent removed almost all of the sequences from the mass due to their superfluous nature.[21]

At the time of the Reformation many hymns and Christian songs existed and provided a body of materials for the reformers to incorporate in their public worship. Singing had already been a part of worship in the lives of God's people in the time of Moses. Songs developed as the book of Psalms was written and used by believers during King David's reign. The Psalms were always valued by the Jews and the Christian church as a systematic way God's people could praise their God. The first hymn sung by a Christian after Jesus took on flesh was Mary's *Magnificat* which she sang in response to the favor God had shown her. Hymn singing must have been fairly common in Paul's ministry for him to have distinguished psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs from each other. The church followed the example it had been given in the Bible. Psalms were sung and Christians crafted new songs of praise. From the birth of Christ to the birth of Luther, one sees the development of the songs of the liturgy and the creation of an excellent base

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[19]   While many of the sequences fell into disuse following the Reformation, the following sequences are included in *Christian Worship:*

	TITLE	HYMN OF THE DAY
CW 150	Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia	
CW 176	Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord	Pentecost- Year A, B, C, One Year; Reformation- One Year
CW 206	Day of Wrath, Oh, Day of Mourning	Last Judgment- Year A

[20]   Martin Luther, *American Edition of Luther's Works Volume 53: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 24-25. Luther says of the Sequence, "We allow no sequences or proses unless the bishop wishes to use them [with exception of the four sequences Luther lists as universally accepted sequences]. There are hardly any [sequences] which smack of the spirit."

[21]   Senn, 219. While one will find no specific mention of the sequences in the chapters of the Council of Trent, the Council of Trent did establish the *Tridentine Mass*. The *Tridentine Mass* codified the worship of the Counter-Reformation Roman Catholics. Through the printing press the *Tridentine Mass* was the standard order of service until the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965 AD). Only four of the sequences were included in the *Tridentine Mass*. Three of these are in *Christian Worship* and serve as the Hymn of the Day in the church year. These are: CW 144 "Christ Is Arisen" (Easter Dawn), CW 176 "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord" (Pentecost Day), and CW 209 "Day of Wrath, Oh Day of Mourning" (Last Judgment, Year A).

set of hymns for Christians to use. The *Hauptlied*[22] did not formally exist yet in the Mass, but it was born in a context influenced by the Psalms, the plainsong settings of hymns, the tropes, and the sequences. Many of the hymns chosen to serve as an appointed Hymn of the Day today were written well before the Reformation.

The Creation of the Hymn of the Day

Martin Luther saw value in hymns for worship and wrote many hymns to serve various and different purposes. Luther is attributed to have written at least thirty-six hymns.[23] These hymns are typically organized according to five distinct classifications[24]: 1) translations and paraphrases of Latin hymns written by other poets,[25] 2) revisions of other popular religious poems,[26] 3) psalm paraphrases,[27] 4) adaptations of other biblical texts,[28] and 5) original hymns.[29]

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[22]   This term will appear frequently in this paper. The *Hauptlied* was the chief hymn, or Hymn of the Day in the German churches. It was the chief hymn of the proper, thus it was defined by the Gospel for the Sunday like the rest of the proper.

[23]   It is impossible to know with certainty how many hymns Luther wrote, as the authorship of some hymns attributed to him is contested. Christopher B. Brown *Singing the Gospel* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1972) 9. E. E. Ryden *The Story of Lutheran Hymnody*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 60.

[24]   C. T. Aufdemberge, *Christian Worship: Handbook*, (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 774.

[25]   Latin translations and paraphrases include:

*	CW 2	"Savior of the Nations Come"
	CW 39	"Now Praise We Christ, the Holy One"
*	CW 161	"Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands"
	CW 262	"All Glory Be to God Alone"
	CW 271	"We All Believe in One True God"
	CW 522	"Grant Peace, We Pray, in Mercy, Lord"

[26]   Popular German religious poems include:

*	CW 33	"All Praise to You, Eternal God"
*	CW 176	"Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord"
*	CW 190	"We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost"
*	CW 313	"Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior"
	CW 317	"O Lord, We Praise You"

[27]   Psalm paraphrases include:

*	CW 200, 201	"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"
*	CW 305	"From Depths of Woe I Cry to You"

[28]   Adaptations of other biblical texts include:

	CW 267	"Isaiah, Mighty Seer in Days of Old"
*	CW 269	"In Peace and Joy I Now Depart"
	CW 285	"The Ten Commandments Are the Law"

Luther gathered his hymns with a purpose. Some of these hymns were German translations and paraphrases of liturgical canticles.[30] Others primarily existed to teach the people basic truths of the catechism.[31]

Martin Luther had modified the Mass with his *Formula Missae et Commuionis* in 1523. His first setting of the Mass did not include the Hymn of the Day. He composed his German setting of the Mass, *Die Deutsche Messe*, in 1525. This setting did not include the *Hauptlied*[32], but Luther developed the *Graduallied* to function as a precursor to what is called the Hymn of the Day today.[33]

In Luther's German Mass the *Graduallied* was the chief hymn sung for an entire season. In ordinary time the Gradual was the hymn "We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost". In Advent "Savior of the Nations, Come" was the Gradual. [34] In the season of Easter "Christ Jesus Lay in

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*	CW 410	"Our Father, Who from Heaven Above"	

[29] His original works include:

*	CW 38	"From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"	
	CW 53	"To Shepherds as They Watched by Night"	
*	CW 88	"To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord"	
*	CW 202	"If God Had Not Been on Our Side"	
*	CW 203	"Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word"	
	CW 205	"O Lord, Look Down from Heaven"	
*	CW 377	"Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice"	
*	CW 534	"In the Midst of Earthly Life"	
*	CW 574	"May God Bestow on Us His Grace"	

[30] Luther's liturgical canticles include:

	CW 262	"All Glory Be to God Alone"	*Gloria in Excelsis*
	CW 267	"Isaiah, Mighty Seer in Days of Old"	*Sanctus*
	CW 269	"In Peace and Joy I Now Depart"	*Nunc Dimitis*
	CW 271	"We All Believe in One True God"	*Credo*

[31] Luther's catechetical hymns include:

	CW 285	"The Ten Commandments are the Law"	10 Commandments
*	CW 410	"Our Father, Who from Heaven Above"	Lord's Prayer
	CW 271	"We All Believe in One True God"	Apostle's Creed
*	CW 305	"From Depths of Woe I Cry to You"	Confession and Absolution
*	CW 88	"To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord"	Baptism
*	CW 313	"Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior"	Lord's Supper

* Hymns marked with an asterisk serve as the Hymn of the Day in Christian Worship

[32] Senn, 283.

[33] Robin A. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 302.

[34] Luther, 235. "Savior of the Nations Come" could not have been used as the *Graduallied* until it was written in 1523.

Death Strong Bands" was the Gradual. [35] These hymns were all written in time to be used as soon as Luther introduced his German liturgy. Luther's idea for *Graduallied* was the skeleton of the Hymn of the Day. Because of the lack of hymns fixed to the Gospel, the Gradual hymn was not tied to specific Sundays, but by the season of the church year. [36]

Luther's *Graduallied* functioned in an almost identical way to how the Hymn of the Day operates today with two exceptions: 1) it was sung before the reading of the gospel and 2) the hymn was tied to the season of the church year instead of every individual day of the church year. If Luther had more time to devote to his hymnody it is quite possible he would have written a hymn for every week of the church year. [37] While Luther was still alive, the first known list of recommended *de tempore* hymns was compiled for every Sunday and festival of the church year. [38] Luther himself may not have publicly commented on the list of *Hauptlieder*, but the *Hauptlieder* is a logical conclusion of Luther's liturgical ideals.

While Luther wrote an impressive number of hymns, he knew the Lutheran Church would need many more hymns than he could ever plan on producing. Luther hoped to inspire others to build upon his work and to also succeed his abilities in hymn-writing. Luther writes:

"I, too, in order to make a start and to give an incentive to those who can do better, have

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[35]   Ibid, 255. "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands" could not have been used as the *Graduallied* until it was written in 1524.

[36]   Leaver, 302. Leaver writes:

> Second, hymns were to be sung in response to the Epistle and in preparation for the Gospel. Luther wrote: "After the Epistle a German hymn … is sung with the whole choir." Thus the concept of the Gradual as the song of the choir was expanded to embrace the whole church, congregation and choir together. In Wittenberg this *Graduallied* became the primary hymn at the evangelical Mass. At the time that Luther wrote the *Deutche Messe* the corpus of hymns was relatively small. Thus he named the epiclesis hymn *Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist* [CW 190- "We Now Impore God the Holy Ghost"] as a general *Graduallied*. But already there were seasonal hymns that were being sung as *Graduallieder*, such as *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* [CW 2- "Savior of the Nations Come'] on the Sundays of Advent and *Christ lag in Todesbanden* [CW 161- "Christ Jesus Lay in Death Strong Bands"] during the Easter season.

[37]   Leaver, 302. "Over the years [of the Reformation] the basic corpus of *Graduallieder* expanded to include appropriate hymns for all the Sundays and festivals of the church year."

[38]   Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 154. The Naumburg list was created in 1538 and included a suggested hymn for every Introit, Hymn of the Day, and post-sermon hymn for every Sunday and festival of the church year.

with the help of others compiled several hymns, so that the holy gospel which now by the grace of God has risen anew may be noised and spread abroad.[39]

While Luther's humility is admirable, he understates his abilities. Luther belongs in the same category as Ambrose or Paul Gerhardt for his hymn-writing abilities. The fact that his hymn "A Mighty Fortress" is included in non-Lutheran hymnals today testifies to his talents.[40] While Luther is among the best-known hymnwriters still to this day, Luther did succeed in his goal of inspiring his contemporaries in Wittenberg to undertake hymnwriting. Among them are Nikolaus Decius[41], Hermann Bonnus[42], Elizabeth Cruciger[43], Paul Eber[44], Johann Gramann[45], Adam Reusner[46], Johann Walter[47], Paul Speratus[48], and Philipp Melancthon[49].

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[39]   Luther, 316.

[40]   See *Worship*, a Roman Catholic hymnal produced by GIA. See *The Church Hymnal*, the official hymnal of the Seventh Day Adventists. See *The United Methodist Hymnal*. See *The Presbyterian Hymnal*. See *The Hymnal 1982*, an Anglican hymnal.

[41]   Aufdemberge, 683. Decius wrote a setting of the *Gloria in excelsis* (CW 263) and the *Agnus dei* (CW 268).

[42]   Ibid. 654. Three of Bonnus' hymns are listed in *Christian Worship*: 153 "Alleluia! Jesus Lives", 415 "Be Still My Soul", and 422 "Jesus, Lead Us On."

[43]   Aufdemberge, 677. Cruciger was a woman well respected for her musical and poetical abilities. One of her hymns is listed in *Christian Worship*: 86 "The Only Son from Heaven". This hymn is the appointed Hymn of the Day for Epiphany 2 in Years A and B.

[44]   Ibid. 693-694. Paul Eber was a close associate of Luther's. Eber served as the pastor of the Wittenberg Castle Church after the death of Johann Bugenhagen until he was removed from the Lutheran church in 1559 due to the influence Calvinism had on his doctrine. Three of his hymns are included in *Christian Worship:* 73 "To God the Anthem Raising", 413 "When in the Hour of Utmost Need", and 608 "I Fall Asleep in Jesus' Wounds". "When in the Hour of Utmost Need" is the Hymn of the Day for Lent 2 – One Year and Pentecost 3 – Year C.

[45]   Ibid. 722.

[46]   Ibid. 820. Reusner has one hymn included in *Christian Worship*: 448 "In You, O Lord, I Put My Trust". This is the Hymn of the Week for Epiphany 8 – One Year, Pentecost 6 – Year B, and Pentecost 22 – Year C.

[47]   Ibid. 871. Walter must have been renown for his musical abilities, because Luther summoned him to Wittenberg in 1524 to assist him in the preparation of the *Deutsche Messe*. One of his hymns is included in *Christian Worship*: 10 "The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us". This hymn serves as the Hymn of the Day for Advent 2 – One Year.

[48]   Ibid. 851. Speratus worked closely with Martin Luther in the development of the Lutheran liturgy. One of his hymns appears in *Christian Worship*: 390 "Salvation unto Us Has Come". "Salvation unto Us Has Come" is the Hymn of the Day for Epiphany 6 – Year B and One Year, Pentecost 16 – Year A, and Reformation – Year C.

[49]   Ibid. 783. Melancthon is certainly more known as a theologian and humanist than a hymnist, yet he did take up Luther's challenge and tried to write hymns. One of them is included in *Christian Worship*: 196 "Lord God, to You We All Give Praise."

Nikolaus Herman is a noteworthy hymnist from this same time period. He was not a student of Luther's but started his work while Luther was still alive. Herman composed a whole hymnal devoted entirely to the Hymn of the Day for every Sunday, festival, and minor festival of the church year. [50]

Herman devoted much of his work towards the composition of hymnody and his efforts toward teaching uneducated Lutherans how to sing. He served as cantor and school teacher in a small mining town, Joachimsthal in present day Czech Republic. While he wrote most of his hymns with the instruction of children in mind, the strong doctrinal content of his hymns must be noted. To prove his impact, one must know the history of Joachimsthal. Herman died in 1561, but his music remained in constant use in Joachimsthal. Catholicism became the official religion in Joachimsthal at the conclusion of the Thirty Years War, yet the townspeople remained Lutheran in doctrine even with no Lutheran pastor. On Sundays the Roman Catholic church in town remained empty for twenty-five years, as the citizens actively resisted Roman Catholicism. Family's worshipped at home and sang the *de tempore* hymns Herman wrote.[51]

Shortly before Luther died he feared hymns might lose their place in the public worship. He thought a legalistic understanding of worship could catapult any hymn from the church service that was not a paraphrase or direct quotation of Scripture.[52] Luther wrote the following as the forward to the *Babst Songbook* to quiet legalistic voices:

> Many false masters now hymns indite.
> Be on your guard and judge them aright.
> Where God is building his church and word,
> There comes the devil with lie and sword.[53]

What Luther feared regarding hymnody never happened in the Lutheran church in the years that immediately followed his death. Other branches of the Reformation such as the

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[50]   Ibid. 740. Two of the hymns Herman authored appear in *Christian Worship*: 41: "Let All Together Praise Our God" and 308: "As Surely As I Live, God Said". "Let All Together Praise Our God" is the Hymn of the Day for Christmas 1 in Years A, B, C, and One Year. This hymn was also used as the Hymn of the Day for Christmas in *Die Sonntags Evangelia*.

[51]   Christopher B. Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1972), 133.

[52]   Senn, 347.

[53]   Luther, 332.

Zwinglians[54] and Calvinists[55] did refuse to use hymns not found in Scripture around this time, but the Lutheran church was spared from this legalism. No Lutheran movement rid the church of her hymns, even in the midst of the schisms and scandals that would not be resolved until 1580. From 1546 – 1580 the corpus of Lutheran hymnody was expanded by many hymnists such as Nikalous Selnecker[56] and Philip Nicolai[57]. As the hymns expanded, so the volume of *Hauptlieder* lists. By 1587 three hymnals included *Hauptlieder* lists.[58]

By the end of the 16th Century the position of the Hymn of the Day was firmly fixed within the Lutheran liturgy. The Hymn of the Day's position in the service varied among Lutherans, [59] but Lutherans before the 17th century understood the value in having a hymn functioning in the liturgy according to the theme of the proper.

PEOPLE AND EVENTS WHO AFFECTED THE LUTHERAN HYMN OF THE DAY

By his innovative reconstruction of the historic Gradual in *Die Deutsche Messe*, Luther created a space in the Lutheran liturgy for a congregational hymn which his successors filled with hymns which matched the spirit of the appointed Gospel text.. Such hymns came to be an integral part of Lutheran worship. Despite the *Graduallied* and then the *Hauptlied* finding use within the Lutheran church from its beginnings, the Hymn of the Day would fall out of favor

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[54]   Senn. 362. Zwingli's reformed liturgy included no hymns. The only liturgical canticle he retained was the *Gloria*, although it was to be read antiphonally. 368. Zwingli forbade any music in the liturgy. He believed music was a distraction and had the organs in Zürich.

[55]   Senn 368. Calvin saw value in musical meter, but only used music with the Psalms

[56]   Aufdemberge, 843-844. Selnecker is most known for his work in assisting with the Formula of Concord. Two of his hymns appear in *Christian Worship*: 541 "Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide" and 596: "Let Me Be Yours Forever". "Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide" is the Hymn of the Day for Pentecost 9 – Year A. "Let Me Be Yours Forever" is the Hymn of the Day for Pentecost 3 – Years A and B.

[57]   Ibid. 799-800. Nicolai has the distinction of writing the text and tune to what many Lutherans regard as both the king and queen of chorals. These both appear in *Christian Worship*. CW 79 "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star" is the queen of chorals and serves as the Hymn of the Day for the festival of Epiphany in Years A, B, C, and One Year. CW 206 "Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying" is the king of chorals and serves as the Hymn of the Day for Saints Triumphant in Years A and One Year.

[58]   Herl, 155. Spangenberg's hymnal was published in 1545, Keuchenthal's in 1573, and Nicholaus Selnecker's in 1587.

[59]   Senn, 518.

within a large portion of the Lutheran church. The ultimate cause of much of the upheaval of the church and society in Germany was the result of the Thirty Years' War.

A single event can change almost everything in a society. The attack on Pearl Harbor turned a largely pacifist nation in the midst of the Great Depression into a leading belligerent of the allied powers, with the strongest world economy geared entirely for war. Crisis causes change in society.

In the 17th century, Germany was a center of destruction on an unprecedented level. The horrors of disease, rape, murder, and poverty changed people. This terror was not the result of one horrifying event, but thousands of horrifying events over the span of thirty years. This war changed every part of German society. It affected the way many Germans viewed religion. As a result of this war Pietism and Rationalism were born.

The Thirty Years' War

By the end of the 16th century Lutheranism had a firm place within the Holy Roman Empire. Lutheranism enjoyed peace. That changed in the early 1600s as several once-Lutheran princes converted to Calvinism. The Roman Catholic princes of the Holy Roman Empire saw this as a sign of weakness in non-Catholic Germany and saw an opportunity to bring Catholicism back to all of Germany. These princes formed an alliance, protected by the might of the Spanish Hapsburgs. Spain's march into Germany to crush the Protestants alarmed Catholic France which feared an imbalance of power. This brought French support to the German Protestants. The forces of Ferdinand II, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor during the Thirty Years' War, overpowered those of the French and the German Protestants. Denmark and Sweden entered the war to protect Protestant Germany, yet their assistance was detrimental because Denmark and Sweden were at war with each other. Sweden was a harsh liability because its armies were not disciplined. Of all the towns and villages destroyed in Germany during the Thirty Years' War, 30% of them were destroyed by pro-Lutheran Sweden.

As the war ended France received Alsace and Lorraine, Sweden seized parts of Catholic Poland and Lithuania, and the rest of Germany was absolutely devastated. The French, Swedes, Danes, Austrians, Bohemians, Spaniards, and Germans all fought for power in a chaotic thirty

year struggle. Villages were torched, disease ravaged the battlefield, and 25% to 40% of the pre-war population disappeared.[60]

The Thirty Years' War ended as the Peace of Westphalia was signed in1648. This peace decentralized the Holy Roman Empire and resulted in the *de facto* independence of many cities and territories. This decentralized the Lutheran church.[61] The shortage of citizens also caused a shortage of pastors.

Congregations' libraries were burned along with their chapels, and this caused a crisis. Churches depended on books written before and after the Reformation to conduct their worship. In this time of near anarchy, worship had to be greatly simplified because much of the richness of Lutheran worship before 1618 went up flames. While churches were targeted and many of their resources were destroyed, during this time the corpus of Lutheran hymnody would be enlarged by great hymnists like Paul Gerhardt[62], Sigmund von Birken[63], Tobias Clausnitzer[64], Johann

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[60]   Wikipedia, "The Thirty Years' War," www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty_Years_War. Accessed 12/18/2011.

[61]   Previously Lutheran churches were kept in unity by the state as it needed to keep Lutheran alliances strong. The end of the Thirty Years' War led the German Lutheran churches into the days of the judges, where everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

[62]   Aufdemberge, 716-717. Paul Gerhardt knew the horrors of war and the price of remaining faithful through his life experience. In 1637 he witnessed his own home, four hundred other homes, and his church burned by Swedish occupiers who were, at least on paper, allies of the German Lutherans. These Swedes did not simply burn the town; they destroyed this village after they demanded 3,000 gulden from the townspeople. The villagers were ravaged with disease as 300 people fell to illness the summer after the Swedes burnt down their homes. By 1643 Paul Gerhardt had graduated from the University of Wittenberg as a candidate for ministry. He would not receive a call until nine years later. While he was a popular pastor, he found himself persecuted by the emperor of Berlin because he refused to sign a document promising that he would not publicly note the differences between Lutherans and Calvinists. As his career was ruined four of his children died along with his wife, leaving him to raise his only surviving son who was age 6.

Eighteen of his hymns are included in *Christian Worship* and *Christian Worship: Supplement*:

	TITLE	HYMN OF THE DAY
CW 18, 19	O Lord, How Shall I Meet You	
CW 37	Once Again My Heart Rejoices	Christmas Eve – Year A, B, C, One Year
CW 40	O Jesus Christ, Your Manger Is	Christmas 2 – One Year
CW 42	Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising	
CW 74	Now Let Us Come before Him	
CW 100	A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth	Good Friday – Year A, B, C, One Year
CW 105	O Sacred Head, Now Wounded	
CW 113	Upon the Cross Extended	

Frank[65], Johann Heermann[66], Johann Rist[67], Michael Shirmer[68], and Josua Wegelin[69]. Renowned Lutheran musician, Johann Crüger[70], composed his hymn tunes during this time as well. A characteristic of the hymnody developed during the Thirty Years' War is the focus on the Christian's cross.

In the chaos following the Thirty Years' War many Lutheran territories enacted harsh laws to enforce strict catechesis and strict worship attendance. Some preaching became overly

CW 156	Awake, My Heart, with Gladness	Easter Day – Year A, B, C, One Year
CW 219	Lord, When Your Glory I Shall See	
CW 253	I Will Sing My Maker's Praises	
CW 419	If God Himself Be For Me	Pentecost – Year A
CW 428 (v. 1-3)	Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me	
CW 430	Evening and Morning	
CW 443	Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing	
CW 479	Jesus, Your Boundless Love to Me	Pentecost 4 – Year C
CW 587	Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow	
CWS 736	All Christians Who Have Been Baptized	

[63]   Ibid. 651. Two of Birken's hymns are included in *Christian Worship*: 98: "Jesus, I Will Ponder Now", and 452: "Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus".

[64]   Ibid. 668. Two of Clausnitzer's hymns are included in *Christian Worship*: 221: "Blessed Jesus, at Your Word" and 270: "We All Believe in One True God".

[65]   Ibid. 707. Four of Franck's hymns are included in *Christian Worship*: 78: "O Light of Gentile Nations", 302: "Lord, to You I Make Confession", 311: "Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness", and 349: "Jesus, Priceless Treasure". "Lord, to You I Make Confession" is the Hymn of the Day for Lent 3 – Year C and Pentecost 11 – One Year. "Jesus, Priceless Treasure" is the Hymn of the Day for Lent 4 – One Year, Pentecost 10 – Year B, and Pentecost 11 – Year A.

[66]   Ibid. 738. Six of Heermann's hymns appear in *Christian Worship*: 117: "O Dearest Jesus", 121: "Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing", 393: "If Your Beloved Son, O God", 459: "O God, My Faithful God", 569: "O Christ, Our True and Only Light", and 616: "Feed Your Children, God Most Holy". "O God, My Faithful God" is the Hymn of the Day for Pentecost 15 – Year B.

[67]   Aufdemberge, 823. Four of Rist's hymns appear in *Christian Worship*: 44: "Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light", 70: "Help Us, O Lord, for Now We Enter", 137: "Oh Darkest Woe", and 314: "O Living Bread from Heaven".

[68]   Ibid. 835. One of Schirmer's hymns is included in *Christian Worship*: 184: "O Holy Spirit, Enter In".

[69]   Ibid. 877. One of Wegelin's hymns is included in *Christian Worship*: 173: "On Christ's Ascension I Now Build".

[70]   Ibid. 677-678. Crüger was a cantor and composer of Lutheran hymn tunes. He collaborated with Paul Gerhardt and is considered the most significant composer of chorale melodies in the 17th century.

dogmatic, and to many people worship became an external and disconnected act.[71] This could not continue for long without an opposite reaction.[72]

The Effect of Pietism on the Hymn of the Day

Pietism, like everything else, was not born in a vacuum. The factors which led to Pietism started in the early 1600s, over twenty years before the founder of Pietism, Philipp Jacob Spener, was born. The effects of the Thirty Years' War led to Pietism.

In reaction to what appeared to some as dead worship, Pietism was born. Pietism as a movement originally started in reaction to a forward written for a collection of Johann Arndt's sermons by Philipp Spener known today as *Pia Desideria*. Spener called for more Bible study, more sanctified living, a more loving Christian practice, more tolerance of heretics and other religions, and a reformation of the existing ministerial education system. No one could argue that some of Spener's goals were good for the church, but Pietism had no respect for conscience and sought to use the law to do what only the gospel can accomplish. Spener and his disciple August Francke were banned from the province of Saxony, which was known for its more confessional nature.[73] Francke and Spener were allowed to work in Halle, and there Pietism flourished at the university in that city.

Pietism did retain many hymns written around the Thirty Years' War. Philip Niccolai and Paul Gerhardt were both very popular hymnists among the Pietists because of the hymns' personal nature.[74] At the same time Pietism diminished the liturgy. The Pietists did not have a fixed liturgy to replace it.[75] As Pietism focused on individual faith, the external liturgy was not practiced in Halle. The old objective hymns which focused on God's grace were replaced, as

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[71] This assessment cannot be made about all Lutheran churches at this time. John Gerhardt's devotions and Paul Gerhardt's hymnody show that not all worship was a disconnected, external act.

[72] Senn, 494-496. Senn gives a very detailed picture of the causes and effects of the Thirty Years' War.

[73] Senn, 497-499.

[74] Ibid. 552. Paul Gerhardt's influence among the Pietists is somewhat ironic. Pietism sought to downplay the use of Polemics among the Lutherans. Paul Gerhardt had been removed from the pastoral office because he refused to stop preaching against Calvinists in his sermons.

[75] Ibid. 498.

were the hymns assigned for use in the church year. Instead new melodies were written to evoke emotion and the hymn tended to focus more on the Christian living than the gospel.[76]

Pietism in general diminished the value of the Old Lutheran hymns, the church year, and the *Hauptlied*.[77] [78] [79] Pietism continued to affect Lutheranism centuries after Spener's death. Pietism was a reaction against legalism. In Pietism's attempt to personalize Lutheranism it removed features of orthodox Lutheranism, including the *Hauptlied*.

While many in Germany embraced Pietism, many did not. The University of Wittenberg charged Philip Spener of at least 284 heresies and pamphlets were distributed by many, warning of the dangers inherent in Pietism.[80]

The De-Tempore Hymn of Bach's Cantatas

By the 18th century the wars between Pietism and orthodox Lutheranism were raging. This created a vast range of inconsistent worship across Europe, where the church was not

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[76]   Ibid. This is by no means intended to condemn worship that moves one emotionally, or discourage the use of hymns that encourage Christian living. This kind of hymnody is permissible and valuable.

[77]   Ibid. Senn writes:

> Pietist influences were evident at points in the liturgy where […] hymns could be selected. The old objective hymns […] were set aside in favor of hymns that concentrated on the conditions of the soul. As new hymnals were published, they were arranged according to the theological order of salvation rather than the liturgical calendar and the church year.

[78]   Luther Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), 146. Reed explains how the Pietists felt the "liturgy and the church year were too objective and contraining". The Hymn of the Day cannot function if the Proper has been replaced with free texts.

[79]   John A. Maxfield, ed. *The Pieper Lectures, Volume 3: Pietism and Lutheranism,* (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute, 1999), 146. John Pless' essay quotes a leading Pietist, Gottfried Arnold: "[The Pericope] is a vicious and abominable mutilation of the Bible." Later in the paragraph Pless quotes Spener: "How I wish with all my heart that our Church had never adopted the use of Pericopes, but had allowed a free choice, or else had made the Epistles instead of the Gospels the chief texts." The Hymn of the Day cannot exist apart from the Pericope

[80]   Theodore G. Tappert, ed. and trans., introduction to *Pia Desideria*, by Philip Jacob Spener, (Fortress Press), 23. This is not to say that all of the University of Wittenberg's charges against Pietism were legitimate. This simply illustrates the divide that existed within the Lutheran church and how it functioned as though she were in the days of the Judges, where each man did what was fit in his own eyes.

simply plagued with religious disunity, but would soon come under the threat of Rationalism by the Enlightenment and the advancement of science from outside of the church.[81] Thus it is difficult to describe what the liturgical style was as a whole at this time. Nevertheless, the liturgy from at the time of Johann Sebastian Bach and the emergence of his cantatas left a lasting musical imprint on the Lutheran Church, an imprint that still shows today.

Evidently, the churches in Leipzig were still following the Historic Pericope and were using the Gospels for the appointed Sundays and festival days. Senn notes, "What we see in Leipzig was a full round of liturgical services coordinated among the churches of the city."[82] They were not given over to the topical style that was dominating the Pietistic movement around other parts of Germany. Phillip Spitta explains that the Epistle lesson, a congregational hymn "suited to the Gospel," and the Gospel for the Sunday were being used. He explains the details:

> The Collect was now read, likewise in Latin—that is to say, sung to the proper tone and after the chanting of the Epistle for the day from the reading-desk—in Advent and Lent the Litany was sung in such a way as that the congregation not only repeated the responses, but joined in the petitions—the Litany was chanted in St. Thomas' by four boys specially appointed and called '*Altarists*,' the choir responding. Then came a congregational hymn suited to the Gospel, while on other Sundays the congregational hymn followed immediately after the Epistle, and the Litany was omitted. The Gospel was then intoned from the desk, and after it the minister whose weekly turn it was intoned the "*Credo*" before the altar, and on the three last Sunday in Advent and in Lent, as also on the Festivals of the Apostles, the whole of the Nicene Creed was sung in Latin by the choir.[83]

It is undeniable that Bach contributed heavily toward this liturgical worship life in Leipzig and the liturgy's connection to the church year. However, some historians and critics have made the argument that this was not Bach's true ambition. Senn quotes two critics in particular who feel this way about Bach's professional career. He quotes Joseph Sittler saying, "'I have yet to find in Bach's confessions, either by word or by implications of his life or in the content of his music, any concern for religion save as that word meant to him the common faith

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[81]   Senn describes Bach's efforts towards liturgically rich worship to be "at a time when [the liturgy] was disintegrating under the combined impact of a stagnant orthodoxy, a fanatical Pietism, and an incipient Rationalism that would call for an entire reorientation of cultic life." 527.

[82]   Ibid. 500.

[83]   Philip Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Volumes 2 and 3* (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), 267.

of his people and church and time.'"[84] Senn finds a similar opinion in the writings of noted music historian Friedrich Blume and writes: "[Bach's] well-known disagreements with both city and church authorities in Leipzig […], the fact that he wrote no church cantatas during the last years of his life, and his constant search for other musical positions, prompted even Friedrich Blume to suggest […] that for Bach the writing of church music was a job to be done and 'not an affair of the heart.'"[85] Both views, however, stand in opposition to Bach's professional goal as he himself stated, "I should always have liked to work toward the goal, namely, a well-regulated church music, to the glory of God."[86] One must assume that Bach viewed this goal as intrinsically tied to the matter of the church year and the themes as taken from the appointed Gospels.

This commitment to the liturgy and to the church year, including hymns, is perhaps best shown in the great emergence of the cantata which was more or less based around on a hymn which was intimately connected to the Gospel for the Sunday. This, as much as anything, contributed to the rich tradition of the Lutheran chorale and the *de tempore* idea. While Bach by no means invented the cantata, he certainly mastered it and made it what we know today.

Cantatas were a genre of musical composition that grew out of Luther's emphasis on congregational singing and participation in the vernacular. Lutheran musicians had long before developed the cantata genre from that emphasis. Famous musicians such as Heinrich Schuetz, Johan Hermann Schein, and Samuel Scheidt had been using this style to highlight the sung Word in worship since the early part of the 17th century.[87] Bach patterned his cantatas after those of famous church musicians who also used the cantata, such as Dietrich Buxtehude, Georg Behm, Johann Pachelbel, and his predecessor at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, Johann Kuhnau.[88]

The cantatas of Bach typically consisted of several movements called *Coro* (the chorus), *Recitativo* (recitatives), *Aria*, and the *Chorale*. It is debated how exactly each cantata was divided and set into a church service in Bach's day. However, it is clear that they were written for the service and intentionally written to emphasize the Gospel for the Sunday. They were

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84   Senn, 525.
85   Ibid.
86   Ibid. 526.
87   Carl Schalk, *Key Words in Church Music* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 37.
88   Ibid. 38.

even based on a hymn that would reinforce the theme taken from that Gospel reading. Guenther Stiller is of the opinion that almost all of Bach's cantatas were sung in two sections, the first section sung after the Introit and before the Epistle and the second section sung after the Sermon.[89] Though the entire cantata was based on a hymn which reinforced the Gospel, the highpoint of most cantatas was the closing Chorale. This was the famous hymn stanza which tied to the season of the church year and the Gospel for the Sunday. Bach's Chorales highly contributed to what has been passed down to the Lutheran Church today.

Though not every detail is clear as to how exactly Bach's cantatas fit into the church service, it is very clear how they fit into the church year and connected to the appointed Gospel for the Sunday. As seen in the quote above, it was Bach's self-professed goal to maintain "well-regulated church music, to the glory of God." Christhard Mahrenholz shows how important it was to Bach that the congregation participate in these hymns, and that they be the hymns selected for the Sundays:

> This uncompromising holding fast to the traditional series of hymns was not restricted to the field of his own cantatas, but extended to the singing of the congregation. And this established the fact that Bach was not interested in only the more artistic and musically sophisticated side of well-ordered church music. It was traditional in the Lutheran Church of Bach's day that the cantor, as the appropriate trained professional, had the duty of watching over the selection of hymns. He made the selection from a number of hymns established for each individual Sunday.[90]

Christhard Mahrenholz goes on to explain a quarrel between Bach and the pastor of St. Thomas Church. Bach had reluctantly handed over the responsibility of selecting the hymns for each Sunday to Pastor Gaudlitz. However, when Bach had observed that the Pastor was refusing to select hymns appropriately tied to the Gospel for the Sunday he took this responsibility back.[91] Mahrenholz gives this defense for Bach's actions: "Since Pastor Gaudlitz chose hymns 'that were not customary […], i.e., that did not fit the *de-tempore*, Bach for the sake of 'well-ordered

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[89]   Guenther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 80-82.
[90]   Mahrenholz here is translated by Ralph Gehrke in his article "The Hymn-of-the-Week Plan." WLQ Vol. 56, No. 4. p.274-294, (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1959), 277.
[91]   Ibid. 277-278.

church music' (*regulierte Kirchenmusik*, Bach's ideal) had to take back to himself the function that was his right and duty as Cantor of St. Thomas."[92]

Perhaps the greatest lesson to be learned from this incident is Mahrenholz's final observation. "In protecting this clear-cut liturgical series of *de-tempore* hymns Bach was guarding against a misunderstanding that considers church music only decorative addition to the Service. Even as every Sunday had its Hymn of the Week, its Lessons, its Sermon, so every Sunday also had its church music which was an organic part of the Service."[93]

One could appropriately ask what resources Bach drew from. to find which hymns were appointed for which Sundays. Stiller lists a number of resources which Bach may have used:

> The choice of hymns exercised by Bach, however, was everything but purely subjective. It was closely tied to the collection of hymns that was liturgically approved. Just as Bach in the well-known competency controversy regarding hymns with Master Gaudlitz in 1728 insisted on selecting the hymns for the Sunday and festival day services according to the hymn schedule established for the congregation, so he also used in his cantatas as much as possible the hymns appointed for a given Sunday. Conspicuously, Bach made no use worth mentioning of the hymns that at that time offered themselves to him in great abundance (though they were not familiar liturgically), that were available to him and demonstrably also studied by him in the eight-volume *Wagnersches Gesangbuch* (*WGB*) with its 5,000 hymns. This deserves to be emphasized especially because the Wagner hymnal itself had a volume entitled *Evangeliums- und Epistel-Lieder auf jeden Sonn-Fest- und Apostel-Tage gerichtet* (Gospel and Epistle hymns appointed for every Sunday, festival day, and apostle day), a volume, therefore, that could have provided enough material particularly suited for Bach's sermon music.[94]

Stiller does not specify here what the "hymn schedule established for the congregation" was exactly, but in his Bibliography he does include seven Hymn Books which would have been available to Bach. The oldest of these resources is "*Leipziger Gesang-Buch, Welches Anno 1682 in octavo mit derer Lieder Melodeyen von 4-5 biß 6 Stimmen: Jetzo aber ohne dieselben, mit vielen Liedern vermehret.*"[95] This was a songbook written by Gottfried Vopelius which was printed for the use of approved hymns for churches in Leipzig. These are various resources which Bach had available to him that listed hymns appointed for specific Sundays and festivals connected to appointed Gospel readings. One can speculate how much or how little Bach used

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92   Ibid. 277.
93   Ibid. 278.
94   Stiller, 233.
95   Ibid. 293.

the various resources available to him, but many of the Chorales he used in his cantatas matched appointed hymns in these lists and schedules.[96]

To Bach, music was not simply a nice addition to the service that filled space or time. It was not simply something that made the service sound pretty. Neither was it simply an avenue through which Bach achieved the peak of musical excellence. To Bach, music in general and congregational hymns in particular were integral parts of the service that contributed to advancing the theme derived from the Gospel, as demonstrated from Stiller above. This was the true lasting legacy that he left the Lutheran Church.

Rationalism and the Hymn of the Day

Like Pietism, Rationalism did not retain the Pericope, church year, or *Hauptlied*. [97] Rationalism was not content to criticize the orthodox Lutherans; Rationalism openly attacked the reliability of the Bible.

In the context of the Thirty Years' War Rationalism makes sense. Rationalism did not take hold in Germany until the 18th century. At this time Germany had largely recovered from the Thirty Years' War and found its footing on the world stage. The Thirty Year's War had brought destruction to Germany around a hundred years before the Rationalism became popular in Germany and the rally cry of this war was religion. Following the devastation of this war, many grew weary of the church's influence on the state. As Germany gained power**,** German philosophers were intent on weakening religion, and the fruits of their work are evident in Europe today. After the Thirty Years' War, no Christian nation has evoked the Christian cause to declare a major war against a world power. People were tired of the crusades and the inter-Christian conflicts. Many were tired of the church.

Once upon a time the truths of Scripture were treated as objective fact by all of society. The Reformation may have weakened the Roman Catholic Church, yet it did so out of the conviction that *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeterium*. God calls his people to be faithful to his Word and not to the thoughts of man. Until the Age of Reason, every major and influential group

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[96]   Stiller details these matches on pages 233-254.
[97]   Senn, 542.

wanted to prove themselves as faithful followers of Scripture. In the late 18th century that changed. Immanuel Kant wrote *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone,* and everything came under question. Kant taught that Christianity was the world's true natural religion and had no need for fabricated miracles or prophecy for its legitimacy. Kant's stance sought to reduce Christianity to basic ethics. Sin was unimportant, the miracles were superstitious, and Scripture did not mean much more than "Love your neighbor as yourself" to Kant or the Rationalists. Neither doctrine nor exegesis were favored disciplines in Rationalistic churches.[98]

Rationalism as a movement found itself allied with Pietism in some respects, especially in their heavy emphasizes on sanctification. Both Rationalists and Pietists objected to traditional liturgies and focused on practical messages.[99] Everything in worship built towards the sermon.

As Rationalism spread so did a breakdown of the liturgy.[100] As the authority of the Bible was questioned, the Proper did not have a place within Rationalism. Variety was seen as being more important than services themed around the appointed Gospel. The Hymn of the Day was replaced by new hymns that were chosen because they matched the theme of the sermon.[101]

Singing was always assisted in Lutheranism by the Latin schools.[102] The school choirs would function in the Sunday service, weddings, funerals, and other church services. The musicians trained in these schools were also obligated to function within the church. As Rationalism entered the Latin schools, the schools connection to the church was severed.[103] The singers of the boys' choirs no longer functioned for the church, but instead found work in amateur singing societies, at a time when concert halls and opera houses were becoming increasingly popular.[104] To make up for this loss congregational singing increased, yet the old

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[98]   Senn, 540.
[99]   Ibid. This does not mean good sermons should have no practical content, they must. Rationalistic sermons did not seek to make the Bible's teaching practical, instead it wanted the sermon to offer practical advice, i.e. common sense. William Nagel was a Rationalist. He wrote a sermon on Luke 24, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, about the value one receives by daily walks.
[100]   See Senn, 542.
[101]   Ibid.
[102]   Senn, 556.
[103]   Ibid.
[104]   Ibid.

hymns were largely replaced.[105] During the Age of Reason, hymnody declined.[106] Hymns were still used in churches, but they no longer had a relationship with the liturgy or the church year.[107] [108] The Hymn of the Day cannot function apart from the Proper of the church year.

Recovery of Orthodox Lutheranism in Germany

By the beginning of the 19th century Prussia managed to bring the German people to world power in a way never before seen in Germany. At this time the Germans were firmly divided into Lutheran, Reformed, and Roman Catholic camps. Different cities and places were affected by Pietism and Rationalism in varying degrees.[109]

The King of Prussia was Reformed; his wife a Lutheran. King Wilhelm III sought communion with his wife, but that was not possible as the Lutherans refused altar and pulpit fellowship with the Reformed.[110] Since union was not about to come about by the theologians of the Reformed and Lutheran camps, King Wilhelm III forced their union and had it coincide with the 300th anniversary of the posting of the 95 theses. In order to force the Prussian Union, Wilhelm III designed one liturgy to be used in all churches under his control. This liturgy reduced the Reformed and Lutheran churches to their lowest common denominators. Pastors who refused to go along with the union were imprisoned. Churches which desired to use the old orders were under the threat of being closed.[111]

As the inroads of Rationalism and the Prussian Union into Lutheranism became unstoppable, the worship was an odd mixture of rites and rituals unknown to either the Reformed and the Lutherans.[112]

The Prussian Union left many Lutheran voices to seek to reclaim their Lutheran heritage.

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[105]   Ibid. 557. Senn notes the Catechetical hymns were simply removed from the hymnals produced at this time.
[106]   Ibid. 558.
[107]   Ibid. 559.
[108]   Reed, 148. Reed states that Rationalism "mutilated the liturgy beyond recognition".
[109]   Ibid. 150
[110]   Senn, 579.
[111]   Senn, 579
[112]   Ibid. 592.

Some German cities were never influenced by Pietism and Rationalism to a great degree,[113] but those cities were exceptional. Claus Harms posted ninety-five theses against the Prussian Union and against Rationalism in 1817. These theses became a rallying cry against the Prussian Union,[114] as many pastors protested despite legal repercussions. Although the Prussian Union itself did not assist the Lutheran liturgical re-awakening, it served to unite the Lutherans who resisted the Prussian Union in the name of Lutheran orthodoxy.

Over twenty years later, outside Saxony, another major revival effort was being led by Wilhelm Loehe.[115] Loehe was a Lutheran who was deeply concerned about the spread of orthodox Lutheranism. He ministered in the small town of Neuendettelsau. From there he sought to influence the surrounding area in its understanding of the church, the liturgy, and social ministry.[116]

From Neuendettelsau, Loehe would also influence American Lutherans. Loehe's agenda, *Agenda fur christliche Gemeinden* was of great value to the Lutherans in America.[117] Through his agenda and the candidates he trained to serve in America Loehe instilled an appreciation for the liturgy among a large group of North American Lutherans.

Harms most likely did not create or revive the Hymn of the Day in Prussia, yet he did ignite interest in orthodox Lutheranism. Loehe most likely did not create or recommend a list *Hauptlieder* list for worship either, but his work revived an interest in liturgics, largely lost by the influences of Pietism and Rationalism. As the church year and the periscope were restored, the Hymn of the Day would be able to fit within the Proper.

Lutheranism in America and the Hymn of the Day

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[113]   Reed, 150. Reed notes Nuremberg, parts of Saxony, and Mecklenburg in particular as having retained Orthodox Lutheran worship. Reed states these churches were largely empty.
[114]   Ibid. 151.
[115]   Though he never served in America, Loehe's contributions to the American Lutherans were invaluable. He financially supported the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod and the Iowa Synod and sent many pastors to America to assist those synods. He founded Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana and supported it until his work ended with the LC-MS. After his break with the Missouri Synod he assisted the Iowa Synod and founded Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Because of his work with those two synods he has a festival day in his honor in both the *Lutheran Service Book* and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship.*
[116]   Senn, 580
[117]   Reed, 153.

Before the Prussian Union, Lutherans did have a presence in America. Lutheranism in America has its first roots already in the first half of the 17th century. Pockets of Lutheran immigrants began to trickle in from countries including Holland and Sweden. The first Lutheran church in America was established by Swedes southwest of Philadelphia in 1646.[118] While these various Lutherans with their backgrounds would have undoubtedly brought over various liturgical traditions, one of the first German Lutheran liturgies in America can be traced to Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

Muhlenberg arrived in Philadelphia in September of 1742 at the age of thirty-one.[119] Muhlenberg was a graduate of Göttingen University. Though his roots were somewhat tied to Pietism and to Halle, Muhlenberg was from Leipzig and taught during Bach's lifetime. Luther Reed notes that "while Muhlenberg was a schoolmaster in Halle and for almost a decade after he came to America, Johann Sebastian Bach in Leipzig continued to exemplify the Lutheran church year."[120] Whether this influenced him or not, Muhlenberg had in mind to adopt a Lutheran liturgy early in the history of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

With this confessional Lutheran background in Muhlenberg's early life he was able to establish a Lutheran liturgy already at the very first convention of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1748.[121] This liturgy was not only traditional according to confessional Lutheranism, but it even includes the "Epistle for the Day" a "Hymn," which was "a Reformation substitute of the Gradual," and the "Gospel for the Day."[122] Despite this quick start in the direction of a liturgy that not only followed the church year but also included a Hymn connected to it, this did not last in the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. In 1782, at its thirty-fifth convention, the Ministerium resolved to print a new Liturgy and Hymn Book along with other Protestant church bodies in America, but under less traditional standards. Reed records that "the

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[118]   Reed, 161.
[119]   Ibid. 162.
[120]   Ibid. 164.
[121]   Ibid.
[122]   Ibid. 167.

Gospels and Epistles for apostles' days […] and the catechism were to be omitted."[123] The hymn book was printed in 1786 without the connection to the church year.

This was not the end of the American Lutheran liturgy, however. As Pietism and Rationalism continued to rage across Germany in the 18th century, orthodox German Lutherans were affected by the Prussian Union. This single event drove many Lutherans to take the long and treacherous trip over to America in search of religious freedom. Among them was a group of Lutherans from Saxony led by Martin Stephan in 1839.[124] These German Lutherans officially formed the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States in 1847, electing Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther as its first president.

Along with them, this group brought over two major worship resources that would influence their liturgical life as they moved forward. The first was the *Kirchen-Agenda* published in 1771, which was included in a larger worship work with the shortened name *Vollständiges Kirchenbuch*.[125] This agenda, though a bit outdated by Walther's time in America, was "the last in the long line of theologically sound Lutheran, liturgical, apostolic, catholic, and confessional stance."[126] This agenda included a thorough set of readings that reflected the seasons of the church year. The second resource used by the early Missouri Lutherans was the 1812 *Kirchenbuch*, known as the Saxon Agenda. This book was heavily influenced by Pietism and Rationalism and was frequently criticized by Walther.[127]

The first major worship resource which Walther and this band of American Lutherans produced on their own was the *Kirchengesangbuch* of 1847.[128] This resource in and of itself would not necessarily have contributed to the adherence to the church year since it was merely a songbook and not an agenda. However, it certainly preserved the Lutheran chorales, or the *Kernlieder* (or the core of historic Lutheran chorales), so that these tunes and texts which were connected to the church year remained in the hearts and minds of this new Lutheran Synod. Finally, the first agenda published by Walther was the *Kirchen-Agenda* of 1856. This agenda

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123   Reed, 170.
124   Fred L. Precht, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 85.
125   Ibid. 86.
126   Ibid.
127   Ibid.
128   Ibid. 88.

included the Epistle, the Hymn of the Day (*Hauptlied* in the Agenda), and the Gospel for the Sunday.[129]

These resources were the basis of the confessional Lutheran liturgical life of not only the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, but, as it turned out, also of other synods in the Synodical Conference. This conference, established by confessional Lutherans in 1872, was made up of the synods we know today as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

As English grew to be a priority among these synods which made up the Synodical Conference, they saw the need to publish a Lutheran hymnal in English, and this need was made even more pressing by the anti-German sentiment that spread across America during World War I. Fortunately, the Joint Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States were in fellowship with an English Synod with since the late 19th century, and in 1911 this English Synod became the English District of the Joint Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States. Upon the merger, the English Synod had an edition of its *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* ready for wider publication.[130]

This hymn-book filled an immediate need for an English hymnal, but there was much room for improvement. Among the desires were better translations for the German chorales, inclusion of yet-to-be-translated German heritage hymns, and inclusion of other Lutheran hymns from other countries. So in 1929 the decision was made for a joint venture within the Synodical Conference "to authorize the 'ultimate publication of a new hymnal.'"[131] The work of this joint venture resulted in the publication of *The Lutheran Hymnal* in 1941, which not only became a standard for fifty years across all synods within the Synodical Conference, but was also accompanied by a number of companion volumes which provided much needed supplemental material. These resources included *The Lutheran Liturgy* of 1943 (an altar book); *Music for the Liturgies of The Lutheran Hymnal* of 1944; *The Lutheran Lectionary* of 1945 which provided the appointed Epistles and Gospels for the every Sunday, plus selected psalms; *The Lutheran*

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129   Precht, 94.
130   Ibid. 98.
131   Ibid. 99.

Agenda of 1948 for occasional services in the life of a congregation; and *The Pastor's Companion* in 1950 for personal use of pastors.[132]

This plethora of resources encouraged congregations within the Synodical Conference to observe the church year and use the readings selected for each Sunday, thus taking the day's theme from these readings. However, this does not mean that every congregation followed the church year. To be sure, various congregations used the church year and the lectionary to varying degrees. No congregation or church body was immune to the liturgical effects of Pietism. Surely some congregations were more affected by Pietism's topical sermon idea than others, but it was something that was prevalent in many congregations throughout America, even in the Synodical Conference. As a seminary student in 1945, Ralph Gehrke described the standard that the Sermon, and not the appointed Gospel reading, set the tone for hymns:

> Thus I began to gradually realize that, as a future worship planner and hymn selector, I should abandon the almost unquestioned custom of choosing hymns, especially the hymns before and after the sermon, to amplify the particular theme of my sermon. Instead, Nelle urged, the Hymn of the Day, historic Lutheranism's *de-tempore* hymn, should be related to the church year season and the Gospel of the Day.[133]

For this reason, among others[134], a group of pastors and church musicians in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod around the Watertown and Milwaukee area in Wisconsin gathered together regularly in the 1950's to discuss worship. They ended up producing a periodical entitled *Viva Vox*. The two main authors of this periodical were Pastor Kurt Eggert and Professor Ralph Gehrke. Ralph Gehrke was a professor of Greek and ancient history at Northwestern College as he became a part of this small group. The purpose of this group and their periodical was described in the introductory article, "The Living Voice," of that first issue as follows: "This is the first of a contemplated series of circular letters which will be sent out to you from time to time. The general purpose is to help stimulate us, pastors and church musicians,

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[132]   Precht, 104.

[133]   Ralph Gehrke, "Recollections of Viva Vox, 1955-1961," in *Not Unto Us: A Celebration of the Ministry of Kurt J. Eggert*, ed. William H. Braun and Victor H. Prange (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2001), 121.

[134]   Gehrke suggests many reason leading up to this small group meeting. Kurt Eggert was leading hymn sings, seminars and workshops around the Milwaukee area leading up to the 1955 initial publication. There were seminars on church-music at Valparaiso University which Kurt Eggert was attending. There was an increased interest in church-music in the LC-MS at the time led by Edward Klammer. For a fuller view of these details see Gehrke's "Recollections of Viva Vox," 123-124.

to fresh efforts to make the musical parts of our Sunday service ever more and more a living, gospel-centered experience."[135] It was within this forum that Ralph Gehrke first developed his hymn plan which was later published in Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly in 1959.[136]

Based on the *de tempore* hymn plan, Gehrke took his cue from the liturgical revival that was happening in Germany and around other parts of America, such as at Valparaiso University, shortly before his time. As the concept had grown out of the Reformation from Martin Luther's Gradual hymn in his German Mass of 1526, it had long been exiled since the days of J. S. Bach due to the rising influences of Pietism and Rationalism. Gehrke's groundbreaking work was the concept of basing all parts of the Proper on the Gospel appointed for the Sunday. This work culminated in a 1961 publication by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod called *Planning the Service*, which brought this Hymn of the Day plan based on the Gospel readings into the studies of pastors and church musicians.[137] This plan is the basis for the current Hymn of the Day in *Christian Worship* and *Lutheran Service Book.*

<div align="center">THE HYMN OF THE DAY TODAY</div>

Until now this paper has explored the historical development of the Hymn of the Day and its predecessors (*de tempore hymn, Graduallied, Hauptlied*). Now it will explore the present day form and function of the Hymn of the Day. While there are certainly many practical uses for such a hymn, there are really two main functions of the Hymn of the Day. First, it is to connect and reinforce the lessons for the Sunday. This advances the chief theme of the Sunday which is taken from the Gospel for the Day. In connection to this function, the Hymn of the Day then guides the other hymns in their connection to the lessons as well. The second main function of the Hymn of the Day is to give a congregation a core repertoire of familiar hymns passed down through the Lutheran church. Some of these would be Luther's hymns or other historic hymns that are worthwhile for the church to maintain. Other hymns have been added since and

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[135]   Ralph Gehrke and Kurt J. Eggert, "The Living Voice" in *Viva Vox*, no. 1, 1954.
[136]   Ralph Gehrke, "The Hymn-of-the-Week Plan." WLQ Vol. 56, No. 4. p.274-294, (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1959).
[137]   Ibid. *Planning the Service: A Workbook for Pastors, Organists, and Choirmasters*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1961).

identified as lasting hymns that have stood the test of time. Both pools of hymnody could be drawn from to develop a core of hymns with which congregations would be familiar. While these are the two most prevalent functions of the Hymn of the Day in today's service, there are certainly other practical uses for it. For example, it gives the congregation an opportunity to respond to the Word they have heard. Another use is that it also gives the congregation an opportunity to proclaim the main message or Gospel truth for that particular Sunday to their fellow congregation members.

The Hymn of the Day as it is set up in *Christian Worship* fulfills these two main functions most of the time and fairly well. However it does not do it perfectly. In fact, admittedly, no Hymn of the Day plan can serve both functions perfectly. Hymns have been chosen for the Hymn of the Day over a vast span of time, as has been shown in the previous section of this paper. In addition to this, hymns have been chosen for one set of Gospel readings (the Historic Lectionary) while over the span of time other sets of Gospel readings have been inserted and updated so as to form a new lectionary (the three-year lectionary). Such lessons that were added later may not have been used frequently in the context of the service before being added and thus do not have many (or any) hymns written to which they can connect. So the question then becomes, which is the primary function of the Hymn of the Day, and which is the secondary function?

The Hymn of the Day Connects to the Gospel for the Sunday

As mentioned above, Ralph Gehrke was a pastor fundamentally involved in bringing the Hymn of the Day plan into American Lutheranism. In the article named after his plan he describes what he sees as the purpose for the Hymn of the Day, or Hymn of the Week, as he calls it.

> One of the important recent developments in the field of church music has been, it seems to me, the appearance, or, better, the re-appearance of the Hymn-of-the-Week Plan, that is, the plan whereby each Sunday or festival has its own particular hymn. Such a hymn is sometimes called the *de-tempore* hymn, that is, a hymn that fits the time, the general season and the specific day of the church year.[138]

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[138]   Gehrke, "Hymn-of-the-Week-Plan," 274.

Thus, as Gehrke sees it, the intention of the Hymn of the Day is that it would fit into the church year and would tie in with the lessons for the appointed Sunday. It, along with all parts of the Proper, would take its emphasis on the theme from the Gospel for the particular Sunday.

As this was not the norm at the time of *Viva Vox*, Pastor W. Wegner proposed an early idea for a Hymn of the Day to be incorporated as a part of the Proper in an article for *Viva Vox*. He first states such a hymn's purpose: "Making our hymn-singing in the Divine Service Gospel-centered means not merely singing hymns which are based on or reflect some Gospel truth. It means above all: selecting and singing only those hymns whose main thought is in harmony with the particular Gospel truth which the Church celebrates on a given Sunday or festival."[139] However, in the same article Pastor Wegner reflects how this new plan wasn't always met with success.

> It should be stated quite frankly that this view is in conflict with the practice of choosing hymns to harmonize with a sermon based on a free text which ignores the Gospel for the Day. The hymns of the Church Year will harmonize with the sermon when the pastor bases his sermons on the standard pericope texts of the Church Year, or at least on pericope texts which are close parallels to the standard pericopes. If we are convinced of the value of observing the Church Year as a means of keeping our worship Christ-centered and bringing to our people the whole counsel of God, then what justification is there for introducing into a given Service either a sermon, or hymns, or both, which are disparate in theme to the Gospel for the Day? The burden of proof must rest with those who feel that there is justification for such arbitrary setting aside of the Gospel for the Day.[140]

Prof. em. Bruce Backer was a pastor in the WELS and a professor at its teacher college, Doctor Martin Luther College, and he occasionally wrote for *Viva Vox*. He reflects these same sentiments in his experience within WELS congregations of that time. When asked in an interview if he felt there was ever any resistance to the appointed Hymn of the Day within the WELS he responded, "Yes! Pastors had a hard time giving up their sermon as the very high point of the service, with all other parts being negotiable, or maybe even irrelevant."[141]

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[139]   Wegner, "What Can We Do to Make the Music of the Service A Living, Gospel-centered Experience," *Viva Vox*, vol. l, no. 1, 3.

[140]   Ibid. 3-4.

[141]   E-mail correspondence with Bruce Backer, interviewed by authors, Dec. 17-18, 2011. Prof. em. Backer also explained the norm for what pastors had been basing their hymn selection on in that era of WELS history. In response to the question, "Before the Hymn of the Day was based on the gospel for each appointed Sunday, how did most WELS congregations choose a hymn of the day?" He responded, "There was no HD. The second hymn, known as *Hauptlied*,

Despite such rocky beginnings, Gehrke and the other members of this small group continued their plans of having a unified service, including the Hymns. This plan was not only developed in the WELS, either. It was also being explored in the LC-MS as well, where Prof. Gehrke ended up himself. Dr. Carl Schalk, from the LC-MS, was another hymnist who saw value in such a plan of hymns, and he recognizes a similar function. He says of the Hymn of the Day:

> The Hymn of the Day is one of the central musical components in the Lutheran liturgy. It was and remains "one of the most promising developments of Reformation hymnody after the chorale itself." The importance of both its historic and contemporary roles in Lutheran worship can hardly be overestimated. Whether sung by the congregation alone, or together with the fuller participation of choir, organ, and instruments, its purpose is to help focus on the central theme of the particular Sunday or festival of the church year being celebrated. For Lutherans that central theme is determined by the appointed Scripture lessons, especially the Gospel, as they unfold in the context of the church year.[142]

He again describes the idea of the Hymn of the Day as being directly connected to the season of the church year and also being connected to the lessons, most notably the Gospel. The "De tempore hymn [is] the name given to the chief hymn in the service on every Sunday and festival, so called because it fits the specific day and season in the church year. It is the hymn that responds most intimately to the dominant theme of the day, which is usually contained in the Gospel for the day."[143]

So it followed these events that both of these major Lutheran church bodies in America took steps to implement this plan for the Hymn of the Day in their new hymnals. It all stemmed from this movement to make the service more unified and keying off of the theme taken for each Sunday from its appointed Gospel.

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was tightly knit to the sermon. In fact, the other hymns were also connected to the sermon. Many pastors did not choose their hymns until their sermon had been completed. Often that was Saturday suppertime. Thus organists had to practice Saturday night, or a little on Sunday morning, or not at all. They might have to 'wing it.' They might also practice general music during the week with the hope that it might fit. The same applied to choir music. Choir directors were clueless as to what would be heralded from the pulpit; so they would choose general music also with the hope that it would fit in some way. And, since choral music of the Sunday was seen more or less as a musical performance, it really didn't matter." Quote taken from the same e-mail correspondence noted above.

[142]   Carl Schalk, *The Hymn of the Day and Its Use in Lutheran Worship*, Church Music Pamphlet Series (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 5.

[143]   Carl Schalk, *Key Words*, 162.

The Hymn of the Day Builds the Repertoire of Hymns for a Congregation

The second of these two main functions of the Hymn of the Day finds less support than the first—nevertheless it certainly is a legitimate function. This function was to build a repertoire of core Lutheran hymns. *Christian Worship Manual* states the case this way: "Using the Hymn of the Day on a regular basis…will keep alive in the congregation's consciousness the most important hymns in the hymnal. It may also add to the congregation's hymn vocabulary a number of great hymns that may not have been used or even tried before."[144]

Manual on the Liturgy: Lutheran Book of Worship explores this function of the Hymn of the Day as well. In the section on "Music and Worship" the editors note the great tradition given to the Lutheran Church of congregational singing. This congregational singing was a staple which Luther frequently emphasized and which those who followed him continued to implement. From this tradition emerged what is known as the Lutheran chorale. "The chorales were originally intended for unison singing by the people. Their strength and popularity stem from their textual integrity, from their clear-cut and singable melodies, and from their vigorous rhythms. It is these rhythms—often irregular and syncopated—which give to the original sixteenth- and seventeenth-century chorales their unique appeal."[145] This rich tradition has been a source of pride in the Lutheran Church for centuries, and as it is so important to Lutherans today steps have been taken to preserve such a wonderful tradition of hymns.

> The most systematic use of the Lutheran chorale has been the association of certain notable chorales with specific Sundays and festivals of the church year. The assignment was made by the consensus of a large number of local practices, chiefly on the basis of the relationship of a certain hymn text with the readings and the liturgical theme of a given day. But it was also made because the melody of the chorale was particularly worthy and could bear repeated use as a kind of Lutheran 'proper.'[146]

So again, while the Hymn of the Day reinforces the theme of the Sunday or festival most notably from the Gospel, it was also a way of preserving this rich tradition of Lutheran hymnody.

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[144]   Gary Baumler and Kermit Moldenhauer, eds., *Christian Worship: Manual* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), 276-277.

[145]   Philip H. Pfaetticher and Carlos R. Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy:Lutheran Book of Worship*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 86.

[146]   Ibid.

The Hymn of the Day is to be seen not merely as a sermon hymn (although it surely may reinforce the message of liturgical preaching), nor merely as a poetic paraphrase of the Gospel (though it surely is related to the Gospel). Placed immediately after the sermon, it is a musical and poetic commentary on all of the lessons and chiefly on the meaning or theme to be communicated by the service. When the Hymn of the Day plan is followed, the congregation will become acquainted with the finest musical expressions of Christian truths; it will deepen its spiritual insights and increase its capacity to appreciate the great classics of Christian hymnody.[147]

As the Lutheran Church continued to see this tradition of hymns as useful and something to be preserved, so strong were their motives of retaining this tradition that pastors even went to great lengths to teach their congregation rich hymns which they have never heard, or to make longer classic hymns more singable. Many of the sources already cited include elaborate descriptions of how to teach a congregation a new hymn. These plans include antiphonal singing, hymn sings before or after church services, choirs introducing hymns, instrumentalists leading an unfamiliar melody, and other methods.[148]

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[147]   Pfaetticher, 86-87.

[148]   Carl Schalk includes a section named "Method of Performance" in his *Key Words in Church Music*, 166. "From earliest days psalms were sung antiphonally in the church, that is, in such a way that two parts of the congregation or two choirs, often facing each other, sang alternate verses, thus inciting one another by the reciprocal, lively rhythm of alternate tension and relaxation. In a similar manner in the Reformation age, the gradual hymns were sung antiphonally by the unison congregation and a "partner."[…] In this way genuinely artistic music became an organic part of corporate worship, and the congregation was drawn into the music making of the choir and organ, even as the choir and organ by the subjection to the *cantus firmus* of the congregation's hymn showed that they understood that they were not called to dominate the congregation, but rather to serve it in its worship. This is also the preferred method of rendition of the gradual or de tempore hymn today." In *The Hymn of the Day and Its Use in Lutheran Worship*, Carl Schalk dedicates even more space to the topic of exactly how to implement this antiphonal singing with various accompaniments. Schalk, *The Hymn of the Day,* 17-25. He then spends another 3 pages summarizing how to teach a congregation new hymns. Ibid. 26-28. In the periodical *Viva Vox*, Ralph Gehrke also wrote an article entitled "How to Acquaint Your Congregation with New Hymns." *Viva Vox,* vol. IV, no. 2, 5-7. Gehrke also included this article and others on antiphonal singing in his Quarterly Article "The Hymn-of-the-Week Plan" in 1959. In an earlier issue of the *Viva Vox*, Pastor W. Wegner states how important antiphonal singing is to introducing new hymns and keeping them fresh. "A final suggestion may be added in the interest of making our hymn-singing more of a 'living experience', and that is that we give serious consideration to the practice of singing hymns antiphonally." *Viva Vox,* vol. I, no. 1, 5. He then concludes with a story of a German pastor using antiphonal singing which illustrates the importance of antiphonal singing to the livelihood of congregational hymns. At the end of the story the pastor, Wilhelm Nelle, says of this method: "And after the celebration one of our church officers stepped in the sacristy, deeply moved by this as well as all the antiphonal

The Hymn of the Day certainly keeps these classic and timeless hymns fresh in the congregation's minds throughout the church, and they then associate classic melodies with certain seasons of the church year. What has been known as the "Queen of Chorales," *Wie Schoen Leuchtet*, is a melody that has long been associated with Epiphany. The Hymn of the Day, *Savior of the Nations Come*, for the first Sunday in Advent is immediately associated with that season of the church year. Luther's famous Christmas hymn, *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*, is another hymn that immediately takes the singer to the scene at the manger during the Christmas Eve Service. These hymns are engrained in our members, and it would almost be strange and foreign <u>not</u> to sing certain hymns on certain Sundays or festivals. This association is continued today by the Hymn of the Day tradition.

These are certainly worthwhile functions and results of the Hymn of the Day. These functions were started many years ago, and they continue to serve the same purpose for liturgical, Lutheran congregations today. Carl Schalk sums up both purposes well:

> Such an approach to the sermon and Hymn of the Day is a valuable discipline for the preacher, the church musician, and the congregation. For the preacher, it helps center preaching in the theme of the appointed texts, avoiding the temptation of a more casual kind of preaching unrelated to the lessons. For the musician, it helps center the choice of hymns—especially the Hymn of the Day—in the theme of the Sunday or festival as developed in the lessons, especially the Gospel. For the congregation, it helps make more apparent the unity which ought always to exist between the Word read, the Word preached, the Word sung, the Word confessed, and the Word received in Holy Communion. It is a discipline which benefits all the participants in worship.
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> The recurring use of such a cycle of hymns related to the lessons also helps to develop a usable core of liturgical hymnody in the congregation repertoire. Many of these hymns will already be familiar to congregations. Where such hymns are presently unfamiliar, the use of the Hymn of the Day can be an effective vehicle for broadening the scope of a more limited congregation repertoire.[149]

Which Takes Precedence

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singing in the Service, and said, 'What singing that was! That was no mere singing, that was sheer exultation! I would never have thought it could be so wonderful in our church!'" Needless to say, keeping these Lutheran gems fresh for congregations was invaluable to these pastors as they implemented the Hymn of the Day, as were their methods to do so.

[149] Carl Schalk, *The Hymn of the Day*, 15.

These are both very excellent uses for the Hymn of the Day. Here is the problem. As both of these main and basic functions are important and useful to the congregation, it is a sad reality that the Hymn of the Day cannot always fulfill both functions perfectly. This has become even more evident and even more problematic with the development of the relatively recent ILCW Three-Year Lectionary over and above the Historic Lectionary. Many of the Hymns of the Day were selected originally to fit the Historic Lectionary, but now that the Three-Year Lectionary has come out the Hymns of the Day have not always been changed to fit the readings they were now given to emphasize. Another problem that has arisen is that there simply was not a hymn written for the Gospel which was appointed for a specific Sunday. Perhaps in the future work could be done towards assessing the current Hymn of the Day plan in *Christian Worship*, and suggestions could be made for improvements.

To some this may not present such a major problem, especially considering the second function of the Hymn of the Day. Every Hymn of the Day in *Christian Worship* chosen for the Three-Year Lectionary is certainly a rich hymn that supports Lutheran doctrine and is useful for building any congregation's core repertoire of hymns. However, if some miss the more important and first function of connecting the people to the readings and Gospel for the Sunday and emphasizing the Word for that day, there would be room for improvement. If such instances were identified and rectified, the Hymn of the Day plan could be refreshed and improved to assist pastors and church musicians in keeping a unified yet unique theme for each Sunday. Martin Luther said it very well when he expressed what is most important for public worship:

> This is the sum of the matter: Let everything be done so that the Word may have free course instead of the prattling and rattling that has been the rule up to now. We can spare everything except the Word. Again, we profit by nothing as much as by the Word. For the whole Scripture shows that the Word should have free course among Christians. And in Luke 10 [:42], Christ himself says, "One thing is needful," i.e., that Mary sit at the feet of Christ and hear his word daily. This is the best part to choose and it shall not be taken away forever. It is an eternal Word. Everything else must pass away, no matter how much care and trouble it may give Martha. God help us achieve this. Amen.[150]

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[150]   Martin Luther, 14. This same idea of the elevation of the Word above all else in worship was then also taken in and applied by the Lutheran church in the Augsburg Confession: "Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. The Mass is held among us and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, except that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns. These have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed for this reason alone, that the uneducated be

One must understand correctly: the Hymns of the Day chosen at present are certainly Scriptural hymns that will feed God's people and edify their singers and hearers by reinforcing Scriptural truths. However, Luther's emphasis on the importance of the Word is an excellent rubric to follow whenever one plans worship. It is also an excellent rubric to follow regardless of which part of the public worship service one is planning. With a proper emphasis on the importance of hymnody for the congregation, and a proper understanding of the use of the Hymn of the Day, the more important function of the Hymn of the Day must be the first one, namely emphasizing the Gospel and the other lessons for the Sunday. Whatever portion of God's Word is selected for meditation in the service should be the standard for planning the other parts. The Hymn of the Day should facilitate the planning, not hinder it.

CONCLUSION

The Hymn of the Day is a part of the service passed down through the Lutheran church for centuries. It has its roots all the way back to Martin Luther's German Mass and even further back in the music of the Christian church throughout history. Yet the Hymn of the Day serves a special, focused purpose: to reflect the theme taken from the Gospel. This response of the people to the Gospel is never sung in a vacuum or taken out of the context of the rest of the service. It is as much an integral part of reflecting and focusing the theme taken from the Gospel as the other lessons are, as the Prayer of the Day is, and even as the sermon itself is. It is connected to and enhances the church year which is meant to facilitate teaching the full council of God. When used with this primary purpose in mind, the Hymn of the Day can bring a theme for a given Sunday straight to the heart of the person in the pew. It can couch this focused theme in emotion that will not easily leave them.

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taught ‹what they need to know about Christ›." Paul Timothy McCain, *Concordia : The Lutheran Confessions*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 47. Taken from the Augsburg Confession, XXIV, 1-3. Teaching was a main concern for the confessors and Lutheran pastors, teaching what people need to know about Christ. This they did by implementing hymns that could be sung in the vernacular that would progress the thought of the lessons within the Mass.

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