

*Changes in Twentieth Century*

*Christian Hymnody*

*by*

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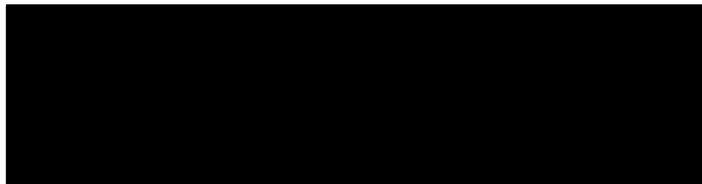
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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



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## *Introduction*

According to Augustine a hymn is 'the praise of God in song' (Commentary on Ps. 148.14) and this will serve as a minimum definition of our subject, though strictly speaking not all hymns fall into the category of praise, and Augustine's definition could be used also of the Canticles, Psalms, or Worship Songs as distinct from hymns today. What is sure is that 'of the making of books there is no end,' and the same can be said of hymnbooks. English hymnals can be numbered in their hundreds, and if earlier editions are considered, then in their thousands. But this study has been more than a survey of hymnals and songbooks. There has been practical research in that between September 2004 and September 2005 I have, at the risk of overdosing on religion, on nearly every Sunday attended churches of different denominations to listen to their singing (see page 197f). The whole spectrum of churches has been researched from Greek and Russian Orthodox, through Catholic, and Protestant churches of all types, to Pentecostal and Charismatic fellowships, and beyond to what some would describe as sects! This in itself has been a fascinating experience. The notice board outside might say 'welcome,' but in reality congregations, especially small fellowships view with grave suspicion a stranger in the midst, particularly if he is sitting in the back pew scribbling notes.

I have been struck by the great variety of worship styles and congregational singing across the denominational board. My experience has been that every church is different, and music chosen for worship is conditioned as much by taste as by tradition. My

interest has not been in the words or even the theology of hymns. I have resisted too giving the background of hymns, as this information is readily available from the various hymnbook companions. Neither strictly speaking have I explored musically the meters and rhythms of hymns. My concern has been hymns in the context of worship i.e. this study seeks to account for the changes that have occurred in congregational music in the last fifty years or so. It has required a wide canvas in that I have had to take into consideration music books and styles in the UK and the USA, which have found their way to these shores. In regard to traditional hymns, Australia has generally followed the hymn tradition of England though in regard to contemporary songs it has sometimes taken a lead as in the case of the Hillsong Church Sydney. What is clear is that the church is always wanting new songs to express its faith. We should not be surprised by this, for the tradition of creating new songs is as old as the Pauline churches mention in the New Testament. I have tried to show that in spite of objections by conservatives, new material has generally been influenced by the styles of contemporary secular music, and this has always been the case from the Reformation onwards.

This thesis follows the usual pattern of causes, events and results. After a brief history of hymns and a comparison of hymnals in the first part of the twentieth century, I have examined the social background of the sixties that gave birth to a musical culture which in turn shaped much that would be sung in Christian congregations for the next few decades. Examples have been given throughout these chapters (see page 194f.). The contemporary Christian music scene is producing a mass of material, and it has been interesting to observe how some songs have become “classics” in the last few years. As

to where the present tension between traditional hymns and contemporary songs is likely to lead, I attempt to predict in Chapter 7 and my conclusions.

In addition to Internet access, I have been fortunate to have use of five main libraries for this study; The Information and Reference section of the Newcastle Public Library; The Newcastle Conservatorium Library, The Auchmuty library at the University of Newcastle; St John's Theological College Library at Morpeth, and The Avondale College Library at Cooranbong. To these I am in debt. I can only add that this study has given me immense pleasure, and I am grateful to the University of New England and in particular to Dr Rex Eakins for his encouragement and advice.

*Abbreviations*

- AH The Australian Hymnal
- A & M Hymns Ancient and Modern
- AOG Assemblies of God Denomination
- AV Authorised Version
- BCH Baptist Church Hymnal
- BHS Bulletin of the Hymn Society
- BJS British Journal of Sociology
- CCLI Christian Copyright Licensing
- CCM Contemporary Christian Music
- CP Congregational Praise
- CUP Cambridge University Press
- CWM Contemporary Worship Music
- EETS Early English Text Society
- EH English Hymnal
- EMH Early Music History
- JAMS Journal of the American Musicological Society
- MHB Methodist Hymn Book
- NAS New American Standard
- NCLS National Church Life Survey
- NEB New English Bible
- NIV New International Version
- OUP Oxford University Press

PCH Presbyterian Church Hymnary

PUP Princeton University Press

SPCK Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge

SS Scripture in Song

TEV Today's English Version

TIS Together in Song

WCC World Council of Churches