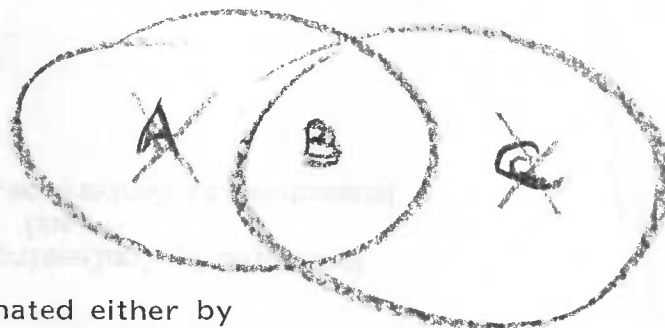


ON NOT SINGING STRANGE SONGS IN A FAMILIAR LAND

Dear _____:

Yes, this Thinksheet title is a twist on "How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Ps.137.4 NRSV).

1 By "a familiar land" I mean today, where the people are & how they feel & think & speak. They want to own the past, as necessary to owning themselves & the future; but they don't want the past to own them. Nor do they care to be owned by somebody's idea of the future, as in the UCC's THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL.



2 By "strange songs" I mean hymnals dominated either by archaic language or by "politically correct" speech. Emphasis on "dominated": some archaic speech is appropriate to the religious & poetic heritages, & (eg) for fairness & clarity generic pronouns ("he" as inclusive of she) should not be used either in old or in new material.

3 This Thinksheet, as you've now gathered, is about **specifications** for the hymnal to be used in the Tabernacle, according to me: let's hear from one another at our next meeting.

Circle **A**, exclusive of its overlap with B, is old hymnals such as the (1958 ['66 reprint]) PILGRIM HYMNAL we're now using. The Foreword of THE WORSHIPING CHURCH (Hope/90) says it well: Every hymnal (including ours, which is excellent) has "a reasonable lifetime,...after which it must be replaced by another book that has been designed to serve the next generation." Of course traditionalists will always argue "the old is better": I'm not a traditionalist. The words & music of the Lord's song should be at as little distance from the people's here-&-now as the essence & tradition of the Faith will permit.

Circle **C**, exclusive of its overlap with A, is "politically correct" new hymnals disdainful of how the Lord's song was sung & obsequious to the hypersensitivities of some minorities who, it is claimed, are "hurting." The largest of these minorities is, numerically, the majority of the populace: females (such hymnals being embarrassed by the masculinity of the biblical God & even by the maleness of Jesus)....Of these hymnals, the most radical, an oddity & in the longer run a curio, is THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL. As you know, I consider this one so blasphemous that I could not worship regularly anywhere where it's in congregational use.

That's two specs: Our Tabernacle hymnal should be respectful of the past & its products, but not traditionalist; & it should be contemporary without being modernist. A final spec: It should be nondenominational, nonsectarian.

4 In circle **B**, the only hymnal I know that meets all three specs is THE WORSHIPING CHURCH: A HYMNAL (Hope/90). Please inform the committee if you know of any other(s)....This further on TWC: 79pp of indexes, 845 hymns, with a good balance of new & old & without ideological rewriting (ie, bowdlerization) of the old (eg, "America the Beautiful" is as Katharine Lee Bates wrote it). Hymns such as "This is my Father's world" are not excluded (as by THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL) on the ground of masculine language for God. The theology is like that of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, viz, derivative from Scripture, the ecumenical creeds, & the primary affirmations of the Reformation; but the new hymns are "fresh in their language" (eg, 8 hymns of Brian Wren). "To match our growing understanding of the Christian's responsibility in the world, new categories of hymns and worship materials have been added," including on ecology. "We offer congregations a broad spectrum of musical expression that is comparable to that of the first-century church, which sang 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' (Col.3:16, Eph.5:19)."....Unless we can find a better hymnal meeting the three specs, I recommend that we purchase this one.

	Ransom to Satan Theory	Recapitulation Theory	Dramatic Theory	Mystical Theory	Example Theory
Definition	Christ's death was a ransom paid to Satan to purchase captive man from Satan's claims.	Christ in his life recapitulated all the stages of human life, in so doing reversed the course initiated by Adam.	Christ is Victor in a divine conflict of good and evil and wins man's release from bondage.	Christ took on a human, sinful nature but through the power of the Holy Spirit triumphed over it. A knowledge of this will mystically influence man.	Christ's death provided an example of faith and obedience to inspire man to be obedient.
Proponents	Origen	Irenaeus	Aulen	Schleiermacher	Pelagius, Socinus, Abelard
Scriptural Support	Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; I Corinthians 6:20	Romans 5:15-21; Hebrews 2:10	Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; I Corinthians 15:51-57	Hebrews 2:10, 14-18; 4:14-16	I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6
Object	Satan	Satan	Satan	Man	Man
Man's Spiritual Condition	Bondage to Satan	Bondage to Satan	Bondage to Satan	Lack of God-consciousness	Spiritually alive (Pelagian)
Meaning of Christ's Death	God's victory over Satan	Christ's recapitulation of all of the stages of human life	God's victory over Satan	Christ's triumph over his own sinful nature	An example of true faith and obedience
Value to Man	Freedom from enslavement to Satan	Reversing the course of mankind from disobedience to obedience	God's reconciliation of the world out of its bondage to evil	A mystical subconscious influence	Inspiration to a faithful and obedient life

	Moral Influence Theory	Commercial Theory	Governmental Theory	Penal Substitution Theory
Definition	Christ's death demonstrated God's love, which causes man's heart to soften and repent.	Christ's death brought infinite honor to God. So God gave Christ a reward which he did not need, and Christ passed it on to man.	Christ's death demonstrates God's high regard for his law. It shows God's attitude toward sin. Through Christ's death God has a rationale to forgive the sins of those who repent and accept Christ's substitutionary death.	Christ's death was a vicarious (substitutionary) sacrifice that satisfied the demands of God's justice upon sin, paying the penalty of man's sin, bringing forgiveness, imputing righteousness, and reconciling man to God.
Proponents	Abelard, Bushnell, Rashdall	Anselm	Grotius	Calvin
Scriptural Support	Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19; Philipians 2:5-11; Colossians 3:24	John 10:18	Psalms 2:5; Isaiah 42:21	John 11:50-52; Romans 5:8-9; Titus 2:14; I Peter 3:18,
Object	Man	God/Man	God/Man	God
Man's Spiritual Condition	Man is sick and needs help.	Man is dishonoring to God.	Man is a violator of God's moral law.	Man is totally depraved.
Meaning of Christ's Death	Demonstrated God's love toward man.	Brought infinite honor to God.	A substitute for the penalty of sin and showed God's attitude toward sin.	Christ bore the penalty of sin instead of man.
Value to Man	Man is moved to accept God's forgiveness by seeing God's love for man.	This honor, not needed by Christ, is applied to sinners for salvation.	Makes legal God's desire to forgive those who accept Christ as their substitute.	Through his repentance, man can accept Christ's substitution as payment for sin.

1 of 4 charts (64-67) on this subject, in H.W.House's excellent CHARTS OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE (Zondervan/HarperCollins/92). But I prefer "ways of viewing": "theories" wrongly connotes logic or science. Note that every way of viewing has value: theories may be false.

1 Our next meeting will probably be at 3pm Sat. Oct. 12 (on the pattern of our meeting at 3pm at three stated morning-meeting days of the CCMA Directors: the "probably" allows for possible change of time for the Oct. CCMA Directors' meeting). Please jot on your calendar: I'll not be sending another notice.

2 Thanks again, Linda McKinney, for (1) all you've done for the Lord & Craigville through your years of service on our committee, & (2) your willingness to "do what I can" during succeeding summers. Besides other media, I hope my Thinksheets will give you some idea, albeit indirect, of what's going on here before we see you & Bill again.

3 Our committee agreed, even before Linda's leaving, that we were a mite too small. Now, we need--I think--to add two. As I said at our most recent meeting, I welcome suggestions. Two new CCMA directors--Suzanne H. Embree (of Craigville) & Paul H. Sangree (pastor of the Middleton UCC church) are willing to serve, & I would be enthusiastic to have them if you also would be. You may wish to talk with me (508.775.8008) &/or Sue (508.775.3114) &/or Paul (508.774.3788). Unless you think otherwise on either or both, at the Oct. meeting of the CCMA Directors I'll recommend them as additions to our committee.

4 At our midsummer meeting we affirmed that "The Pilgrim Hymnal is the Tabernacle hymnal," but we all agree that it needs **supplementation**, especially to provide some inclusive-language resources. Ways to go:

A Bulletin inserts. We've done some of this this summer.

B Not a second hymnal but a supplemental songbook. Any suggestions? Ideal would be a combination of inclusive-language (except for God!), contemporary hymns/tunes, & gospel [including traditional spirituals not in THE PILGRIM HYMNAL]). One I like & use is HYMNAL SUPPLEMENT 1991 (Gia Publications, Chicago), which supplements the (1978) LUTHERAN BOOK OF WORSHIP. Better, of course, to have an ecumenical (nondenominational) supplement.

C An additional, but nondenominational, hymnal, such as Hope Pub. Co.'s THE WORSHIPING CHURCH. Too bulky? Also, another hymnal of equal size would seem to be an alternative.

D An additional hymnal of another denomination, with "Craigville Tabernacle" (rather than the denominational name) on the cover. This I think would be less desirable than A-C, but here's the result of my study:

1 The best inclusive-language hymnal is THE (1989) UNITED METHODIST HYMNAL. Only it meets my criterion of offending everybody: it let's the old be old (with little doctoring) & the new be new, as Jesus approves (Mt.13.52).

2 Somewhat more distortive of the old is THE (1990) PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL.

3 Definitely more distortive is the Disciples' (1995) CHALICE HYMNAL.

4 Radically distortive is the UCC's (1995) THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL--indeed, so distortive that in a review of it, an eminent hymnologist-musicologist says it has the feel of a product of "a sect, not a church." Ed. Arthur Clyde (p.29 of his "The Language of THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL," Pilgrim/96) unwittingly states the hymnal's central, damning flaw, viz. that it's principled: "If language is to be made inclusive, then it should be made inclusive throughout." The hymnal's "integrity" depends on "its treatment of language...in a consistent way." Reminds me of the Swansea Conference, at which the Nazis decided on a principled action against Jews (to replace the former sporadic laws & hits).

Here are a few comparisons & curiosities:

Ps.23 TNCH has neither "Lord" nor "he": TUMH substitutes "Lord" for "he," so has "Lord" 4x! CH has it as KJV except for updating of verb forms. TPH does not have a Psalter but has this Ps. in a number of versifications, none bowdlerized (i.e., robbed of "Lord" & "he"). NB: In this case, TUMH is not as good as CH & TPH. TNCH is, as to be expected, off the playingfield.

Kingdom of God appears in TUMH's subject index but has no parallel in TNCH or TPH. The CH parallel is "Reign."

"This is my Father's world" is, in TUMH, intact ("Father," "he," "King"). TPH has "he" but (because no 3rd stanza) not "King." CH has "Father" but not "he." And, understandably, this great & popular hymn does not occur in any form in TUCH.

"Crown him with many crowns" is thoroughly bowdlerized in TNCH, "he" eliminated 9x! All the other hymnals preserve the masculine pronoun for "the Lamb" (i.e., Jesus resurrectus, whom TNCH treats as having been de-gendered by the resurrection--a move with no biblical warrant). Even worse than post-Easter docetism is TNCH's tendency, as in the Christmas carols, to pre-Easter docetism.

The following excellent & familiar hymns do not appear at all, even bowdlerized, in TNCH. The list is suggestive, not comprehensive:

"Morning has broken" has "his" in TUMH but not in TPH or CH.

"At the name of Jesus" is not in CH but in TPH & TUMH has "Father," "Lord," "King," "he"--in one hymn, radical feminism's hated F-word, L-word, K-word, & h-word!

"Christ whose glory fills the skies" is not in CH but TPH & TUMH preserve the archaic 2nd. pers. "thou."

And here's one that failed to make it in any of the four hymnals:

"O be joyful in the Lord"

5 Nothing urgent about \$4, as I see it; but doing something would (1) enrich our worship-potential & (2) fend off the now-vague threat of my being driven out of the Tabernacle by TNCH on the benches--the only hymnal I could not live with.

Gabe from Willis, 20 Mar 97

re your suggestion that we use, for the Tabernacle hymnal, some other denomination's (Meth., Presb., Disc.)

My response to you Monday on this was that while those hymnals are not quite as bowdlerizing as the new UCC/BHM hymnal, all share with TNCH a sense of apologetic shame vis-a-vis the till-now universal Christian pronominal language for God. I could support only a new hymnal without this defect, a hymnal with excellent new hymns (such as Brian Wren's eight in THE WORSHIPING CHURCH) but with an unembarrassed inclusion of great hymns of the past without the degendering scruple, the PC need to damp down the noun/pronoun masculinity of God....of course I meant all that in just a few words before our H&H meeting began.

1 N.T. Wright's 12 Mar 97 CHRISTIAN CENTURY article "Thy kingdom come: Living the Lord's Prayer" is a model of God-language. No defensive-concessive snivelling about nouns (King, Father, Lord) or pronouns. The masculine pronouns for God flow freely from his scripture references to his own expositions. No "freshly crafted theology" based on "some new religious advice." Eg: "as we look up into the face of our Father in heaven, and commit ourselves to the hallowing of his name, we look immediately out upon the world that he made, and we see it as he sees it [boldface, mine]." He calls Jesus "dear King." Our body-language in prayer, & our inner disposition, should reveal that we are "humble but happy in the presence of the Creator whom we are learning to call Father [boldface, mine]." "If it was Jesus' task to teach his followers to pray in this way, it is in a sense our task to teach the world to pray in this way." I believe it, & clearly the hymnals I cannot accept aim to teach the world something else, some degendered garbled form of the Lord's Prayer & the Christian Faith.

Of course Wright, whom you & I consider a worthy world leader in thinking about Jesus, the Gospels, the resurrection, has the advantage of not being an American. The strong voguish winds redesigning the deity on our shores are considerably weakened by the time they reach England.

2 M. Scott Peck says (199, FURTHER ALONG THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED [Simon & Schuster/93]) "I had become a Christian since I wrote THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED." When he began to use the Christian (biblical-theological) language in his lectures, he was shocked at the feministic reaction. (On 201, he speaks of "New Age fundamentalists" some of whom are "herbal fundamentalists" who "insist not only that there be herbal tea present, but that everybody...ought to drink it." The verbal intolerance of the feminists, whose disruptive tactics we experienced at Craigville Colloquy II, has succeeded: now we're all supposed to drink herbal-tea hymnals.)

The psychiatric term for such extremism is "reaction formation." 198: "the New Age movement,...in reacting against male sexism,...has created a brand of radical feminism that can be not only distinctly unpleasant and unsettling but also rude and uncivil and even silly at times. I have spoken to audiences that comprised mainly radical feminists and it was difficult going indeed, even though I always go to some pains to use nonsexist language and to combat sexism." Carlton Young in recent issues of THE HYMN underlines the silliness of the new UCC/BHM hymnal, a product of radical feminism's successful intimidation of the UCC controlling interests.

Elsewhere (188) Peck speaks of "the sin of [a Roman Catholic phrase] 'excessive scrupulosity,' a subtle form of pride--which (I add) can be psychopathic: compulsive elimination of masculine pro/nouns for God is like compulsive hand-washing.

3 While mainline churches & their prayerbooks & hymnals are trying to brainwash the troops in restricting their God-language to "gender-neutral" words, all the forms of "Western" religion (orthodox Judaism, Roman/evangelical/pentecostal Christianity, & Islam) are expanding their influence with no shame-motivated (feminist-intimidated) mucking around with revisionist God-language, no depressive-depressing screening out of "he." And AA, a strongly successful conversionist movement, is unembarrassed to speak of "God as we understand Him [boldface, mine; Peck 139]!"...Embarrassment about the masculinity of the biblical God leads straight to embarrassment about the maleness of Jesus, & these wacky new mainline hymnals display both embarrassments.

