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HOW TO USE THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL (Pilgrim Press/95)

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How not to? Don't put it in the pewracks!

How to? (1) As a user-friendly clergy tool (1 copy!); & (2)

For "one-time use" of copies (under the rightfully strict rules

printed on the reverse of the titlepage; this Thinksheet was prepared for use with a clergy group meeting 1 Apr 96).

1 A good feature of TNCH is its incorporation of a number of classic evangelical hymns, gospel songs, even camp-meeting choruses. (Yes, I do have some good things to say about it!) E.g., #199-200 does not appear in either the PILGRIM HYMNAL or the UNITED CHURCH HYMNAL. This Issac Watts hymn appears both with a meditative tune (#200) & with the swingy, syncopated "Hudson," to which "a familiar camp-meeting chorus [is added] as a refrain" (says the source-note at the bottom of #199 [the source-notes being another good feature of TNCH]).

2 To the above good news I must add the bad (as noted in my handwritten restoration: my copy throughout has this private feature). (1) Jesus is degendered, a neodocetic ploy. (2) "Christ" is once in Watts, but here it's 3x--an excess theological note. (3) The 2nd line of the 1st stanza has a theological change: in Watts the act is by the Savior-Sovereign, not by "God." (4) In the last line, the gift of self is to Christ, whereas in Watts it's in submission to the Lord. (5) In stanza #1, Watts had "worm"; TNCH has bad grammar, "sinners" requiring "we." (6) Don't sing []: TNCH changes are improvements....In #199-200 TNCH, you're no longer a "worm"; but in "Amazing Grace" (#547), you're still a "wretch." (7) In stanza #3, "darkness" is out for fear it might offend darkies (a word for which I have no other use)....OK to make changes, but not TNCH's radical demasculinization of the biblical deity.

Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed

200

Isaac Watts, 1707; alt.

Gal. 2:20; 6:14; Phil. 2:2-12; Heb. 12:1-3

He [his] drops darkness

He [man the creature's] such a worm Lord [Tis]

This tune has also been called Avon, Fenwick, Drumclog, Inverness, and All Saints. Although published by Hugh Wilson (1827) and Robert Smith (1825), some claim it to be a Scottish folk tune. In early America, the hymn appeared in shape note books to at least five other tunes.

Tune: MARTYRDOM C.M.
(AVON)

Scottish folk tune

Alternate setting: HUDSON

Again an evangelical song (with a gospel beat) not in the PILGRIM HYMNAL or THE HYMNAL OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

And again my *ambivalence*:

I want these old songs (along with the grand old & worthy new hymns), but I abhor the antimasculine bowdlerizations, as in this one the 5-fold degendering of Jesus.

Note further that the song's dominant metaphor is the blood-filled cleansing fountain, reminiscent of Wm. Cowper's "There is a fountain filled with blood."

This impersonal metaphor specifies the salvific action of the "Savior": he saves by dying, thus becoming "my Savior," the song's single personal appellation.

To add one or more titles for Jesus would muddy both the metaphor & the title.

But this bowdlerization, TNCH #189, adds the title "Christ" five times!

The NT coloration of "Christ" is quite other than that of "Savior." If one has a tin ear to this nuancing, one can accept "Christ" for how it normally serves in TNCH, viz. as a surrogate for the masculine pronominal anaphors (back-referencings) for Jesus.

But this surrogate use of "Christ"--as merely a substitute for masculine personal pronouns (5x in this song)--debases, dilutes, the biblical-theological word "Christ."

What here is so sad is that the ideological (radical feminist) need to avoid masculine pronouns for Jesus (to say nothing of God!) is so strong.

Down at the Cross

Elisha A. Hoffman (1839-1929); alt.

189

Gal. 2:20



- 1 Down at the cross where my Sav - ior died, down where for cleans-ing from
- 2 I am so won-drous - ly saved from sin, Je - sus so sweet - ly a -
- 3 O pre-cious foun - tain that saves from sin, I am so glad I have
- 4 Come to this foun - tain so rich and sweet, cast your poor soul at the



sin I cried, there to my heart was the blood ap - plied—
bides with - in; there at the cross where Christ took me in—
en - tered in; there Je - sus saves me and keeps me clean—
Sav - ior's feet; plunge in to - day and be made com - plete—



(1-4) Glo - ry to Christ's name. Glo - ry to Christ's name, glo - ry to Christ's



name; There to my heart was the blood ap-plied; glo - ry to Christ's name.



While Elisha Hoffman pastored several congregations, he was associated with evangelical publishing houses as editor or compiler of fifty songbooks. Although never formally trained in music, he wrote texts and tunes for more than 200 hymns.

Tune: DOWN AT THE CROSS
9.9.9.5. with refrain
John H. Stockton (1813-1877)