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

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

a clergy group meeting 1 Apr 96).

How to? (1) As a user-friendly clergy tool (1 copy!); & (2) For "one-time use" of copies (under the rightfully strict rules

of #199 [the source-notes being another good feature of TNCH]).

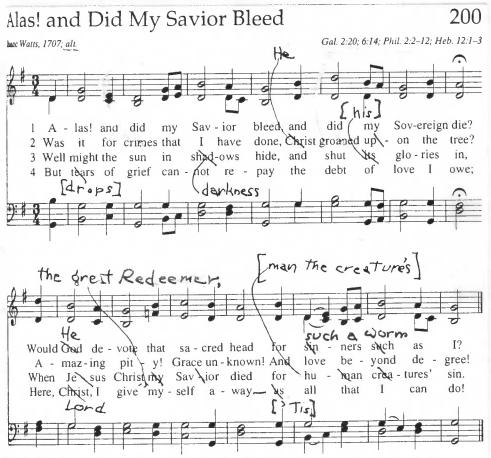
309 L.Eliz.Dr., Craigville, MA 02636 Phone 508.775.8008

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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

printed on the reverse of the titlepage; this Thinksheet was prepared for use with

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 (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.



This tune has also been called Avon, Fenwick, Drumclog, beerness, and All Saints. Although published by Hugh Wilson (1827) and Robert Smith (1825), some claim it to be a Scottish lolk 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 appelative.

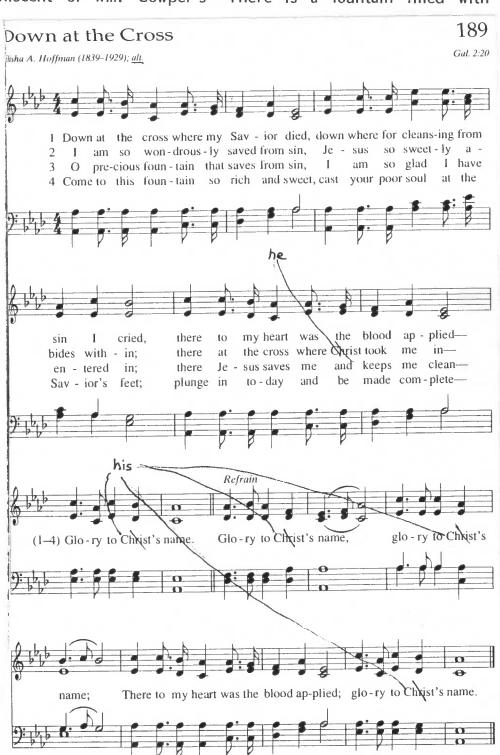
To add one or more titles for Jesus would muddy both the metaphor & the title.

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

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

But this surrogate of use "Christ"--as merely a substitute for maspersonal culine pronouns (5x in this song) -debases, dilutes, the biblicaltheological 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.



While Elisha Hoffman pastored several congregations, he was associated with evangelical publishing houses as editor or compiler of fifty sanghacks. Although never formally trained inmusic, 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)