

NEW HYMNAL

notes from MS of David Bowman, Nancy Livingston Goff, Margaret Tucker--dissidents from the UCC hymnal committee

"The UCC Hymnal Committee: Its Process and Work (1990-1993): An Alt. Report"
(summary by W. Elliott)

Ansley Coe Throckmorton called for a "hymnbook expressing the faith of the church in our time." But what was produced was a hymnal for a supposed future time, "the new century"--a title the committee did not get to vote on.

Little voting: "had the committee been allowed to vote on most issues, it is probable that a majority of 7 (out of [the] 13) would have sided with most of the concerns here represented."

"We were being asked to create a hymnal in the image of UCBHM ideology, rather than a h. to serve the needs of congregations across the UCC." Change of aim: "by the time the committee was prematurely dismissed in 1993, it was made quite clear to us by UCBHM staff that our responsibility was only to UCBHM, whose Exec. Comm. (not Gen. Synod) would give final approval to, or rejection of, the hymnal. We were, in essence, if not in name, the UCBHM Hymnal Committee, not the UCC H.C."

"Some members" concluded "that the expensive process of obtaining the data was done only to make the congregations feel they had input into a new hymnal, not to infl. any real decision making; and that the survey info. was not use seriously...bec. it did not support what eventually came to light as the UCBHM's guiding principle conc. the hymnal: radical incl. lg."

"as with the survey material, the impression was given that the 'input' part of the forums existed only to make those attending feel they had been heard." The forums data "were never collated in any form w. could be consulted to infl. decision making."

UCBHM personnel took the minutes, which do not reflect the un-peace! "The 2nd report...makes no mention of the serious discussions and disagreements that had developed in the committee concerning lg. usage in hymns....3rd report: "The lack of consensus slowed the work of the Advisory Comm. on the Hymnal (the name given to the Hymnal Committee by BHM after its dismissal)....It was the judgment of the UCBHM Exec. Comm. that this absence of working consensus could not readily be resolved within the Advisory Comm. on the Hymnal." So the project was turned over to UCBHM staff!

"deceptive advertising," no blick as to the radical extent of lg.-changes; in the video, "no indication of the scale and scope of the lg. changes w. have been made in familiar hymns."

Ed. Arthur Clyde's presentation to the 1994 Ann. Meet. of the Hymn Soc. of Am.--reviewed in Oct/94 THE HYMN, p.39: the main emph. of this hymnal is on incl. lg. & pluralism, while the "roots and heritage [of the UCC] seemed to play little part in the hymnal's makeup."

"our meetings were not 'business' meetings with motions to be voted on, the minutes tended to be general in nature. Also, additions and corrections to the minutes were never called for."

The sugg. of Goff & Tucker that the hymnal be pastoral as well as prophetic was disregarded. "The Hymnal Comm. never voted on the Lg. Guidelines," w. were imposed by A.Throckmorton & UCBHM exec. T.Dipko. Comm. not consulted when Sharon Ringe added as full voting member. Staff tightened the loose guidelines: "no gender lg. for the Deity would appear in this hymnal" (not staff qt.). "UCBHM had no synodical authorization to constitute a 2nd panel to complete the hymnal," but did so. "The new Editorial Panel contained no UCC musicians." Dipko had req'd. Comm. to follow BHM lg. guidelines. The Comm. "was 'used' by BHM." Pp.18-19: "Some Suggestions for Future Hymnal Committees." (Cp. W. Elliott's #2702, "Guidelines for the Next Hymnal Committee.")