

From the Director

Hymns: Old and New, 6

To this point in our Fall series, we have been looking at hymns from our own (western) church culture. Just as we sing “Praise to the Lord” and not “Lobe den Herren” (the German original) we will also include English translations of hymns written and sung in non-western churches. Today’s hymns comes from China. Both are set to pentatonic tunes. While not the only tuning system in use in China, we associate this sound with China’s music.

Father, Long Before Creation

Father, long before creation
you have chosen us in love;
And that love, so deep, so moving,
draws us close to Christ above.
Still it keeps us, still it keeps us,
firmly fixed in Christ alone.

Though the world may change its fashion,
yet our God is e’er the same;
His compassion and his covenant
through all ages will remain.
God’s own children, God’s own children,
must forever praise his name.

God’s compassion in my story,
is my boasting all the day;
Mercy free and never failing
moves my will, directs my way.
God so loved us, God so loved us,
that his only Son he gave.

Loving Father, now before you
we will ever praise your love;
And our song will sound unceasing
till we reach our home above,
Giving glory, giving glory
to our God and to the Lamb.

Chinese hymn, anon., 1952
trans. Francis P. Jones, 1953

the pentatonic tune MILLER CHAPEL is from Wales

It would be interesting to see a literal translation of the Chinese original. We must assume that the translator — especially working mid- as opposed to later-20th century — was culturally compelled to cast his work on a European model. Still, I am struck with the theology of the hymn, its praise to the Father specifically through the Son, its sense of the present and of eternity. While the translation is quite western, the pentatonic tune helps us “hear” that our faith is universal, shared across time and cultures.

Another text from China shows the difference a generation makes. The clear English words nevertheless take us to another culture:

Christ, the Everlasting Lord

Who can comprehend
secret’s from creation’s dawn?
God was there, with his precious Son,
making all things by his Word,
keeping all things by his Word—
Christ, the everlasting Lord!

Oh, how deep his love!
God gave up his only Son.
History knew this Ruler divine,
over all salvation shines!
Victory is for all time—

Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Let us now respond,
listening to this holy Word:
Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
Christ the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Christ who died to conquer death —
Christ, the everlasting Lord!

Shen I. Fan,
trans. Jeanne Harper, revised Tony Payne

The tune associated with this hymn is Chinese. Though the tunes for these hymns come from opposite ends of the earth, they are equally apt and remind us that God’s love has built the church around the globe. Let us join our hearts and voices with that church as we

Sing on!

Chuck

Calendar Corner:

Sunday, October 1—morning services: string ensemble; College Church Singers; H.E. Singley, organ
Sunday, October 8—Missions Festival; children’s choirs sing in the Evening Service, “Missionary Christmas”
Sunday, October 15—morning services: Brass Ensemble; Chancel Choir; H. E. Singley, organ
Concert Series: Saturday, October 28, 7:30PM (solo recital) and Sunday, October 29, 4:00PM (with chamber orchestra, Boys Choir) — Philip Scriven, organist/choirmaster, Litchfield Cathedral, England

THE PRAYER COLUMN LEE HOFFNER, CHOIR CHAPLAIN
The Devoted Worship Leader

As God's creatures, we are beings of multiple senses. Proper worship will satisfy all of the senses of the congregation, insofar as the congregants submit all of their nature to God. We have an innate need for holiness (purity), truth, beauty, love and purpose. Properly submitted to God, we find truth because our consciences are cleansed by his holiness; we find beauty because our imaginations are purified by his beauty; we find purpose because our will is suborned to his purpose for us (individually).

If the worship service does not fully engage the multi-sensory self, to challenge the congregant's life, then the congregant has been robbed of an hour and a half that rightly belonged to him and God, for the purpose of quickening to life. Leaders in worship are obliged to provide the congregant with the chance to understand himself in God's eyes: to see how the parts of his life must converge upon, and emanate from the worship of God.

When we worship corporately, we are the most powerful evangel for Christ. This is often overlooked by the modern church. Visiting corporate worship is meant to be like visiting a home, where the visitor witnesses a genuinely loving family *at work*. This is a powerful witness, unmatched by an individual witness (perhaps at the office).

Worship is the sense and the service of God. You cannot serve him unless you sense him. If you just sense God without serving him, you are not worshipping and the act becomes a mockery. If you serve him without sensing him, neither is this worship: it is a drudgery. If we do not worship individually, we cannot worship corporately and we become unable to lead corporate worship.

So, personal devotion becomes paramount in preparing the individual (you) for leadership in worship and the faith. How are your personal devotions? Pray that God will quicken your sense of him, so that you may serve him wholly and that your service will become so much more valuable to those for whom you are a leader. Pray that he will help you in your service of him, so that those whom you lead rightly sense God and see their lives tied irrevocably to him.

[These thoughts are a gift from the Lord, thanks to the ministry of Ravi Zacharias, for whom I am grateful to the Lord for a deeply instructive study this week.]

It is our custom and privilege to pray for one another as part of weekly rehearsals, and privately throughout the week. Items for prayer are printed here for your convenience. *To include your new prayer requests, call or email Chuck King (668-0878 x122; cdking@college-church.org).*

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Chancel Choir Rehearsal Music:

Voice Building

This is the Day/Think on these things Oct. 8
 something from *St. Paul*
 some Christmas music
 Ain'a That Good News

Choir Calendar:

Next Thursday, Sept. 28: we will record during rehearsal. September birthdays celebrated at the end of rehearsal.

Sunday, October 1: Choir Sunday Off

Thursday, October 5: Rehearsal from 7—9 PM
St. Paul workshop

Jubilation Bells Rehearsal

Wednesday 6:45 PM in the Choir Room
 Paul Wrobbel, director

Brass Ensemble Rehearsal

Wednesday 8:15 PM in the Old Balcony

String Ensemble Rehearsal

1st and 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 PM
in the Sanctuary, September through May

Concert Series

College Church Sanctuary
Saturday, October 28, 7:30 PM

Philip Scriven
organist/choirmaster, Litchfield Cathedral (UK)
 a solo recital of organ works

Sunday, October 29, 4:00 PM

Philip Scriven
organist/choirmaster, Litchfield Cathedral (UK)
 Poulenc Concerto for Organ, strings

& percussion
 An anthem with our Boys Choir
 and works for solo organ