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^{*}Indicates former students of Eskew at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

^{**}Indicates papers originally read at the Annual Church Music Symposium, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, January 2001, which was dedicated to Harry Eskew in honor of his long-time service to the school.

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Foreword

Terry W. York

One knows something is profound when, even in its absence, it is present. So it is with hymns. In recent history, when praise choruses were prominent and touted to be the new genre and pinnacle of congregational song, there was a common awareness that for all their liturgical contributions, these were "not hymns." In fact, all during that period, new and wonderful hymns were being written, sung, and "canonized" in new hymnals, hymnal supplements, and warmly received single-author hymnaries. We now delight in global hymnody that was being written during that time as well, and see it as evidence that Christianity has, indeed, taken root in soil that was so roughly plowed by early missioners. At the time of this writing, newly composed modern worship songs are being strengthened by linkage to timeless hymns of similar mood and message. Silent or sung, hymns are "present" in the musical praise and prayer of Christian congregations. One wonders if new genres of congregational song are not developed and employed, in part, for the subconscious purpose of making sure that hymns are, indeed, as foundational and reliable as we think they are ... as we hope they are ... as we need them to be. Interestingly, it has proven true over time, that the best of these "test" genres gain a level of acceptance that courses them to become a part of the ever-expanding definition and repertory of hymnody. More than one writer/composer in some new congregational song genre (meant to be displayed on a screen) has "confessed" to me that they hope at least one of their songs will "make it into a hymnal."

Hymnology, or its now more descriptive name, congregational song, is a field of study that is as central to understanding Christianity as is the study of Christian liturgy itself. Music and worship are not synonymous terms (despite common contemporary usage), yet, the congregation's song and the congregation's worship are nearly inextricable. Debate over worship styles and musical styles absorbs so much ink and energy there is little left for deeper hymnologi-

cal investigation. To study hymnology is to study the church's music, poetry, history, biographies, ethnicity, scripture, theology, doctrine, prayer, praise, sense of community, and cultural awareness. Hymnology is at the hub of those spokes because liturgy is at the hub. Jesus's question, "Who do you say that I am?" is answered each time we worship. Our answers are etched deep in our hearts by the congregational song of our worship.

Hymnology mirrors theology's academic and applied streams of engagement, including the dynamic tension that binds the streams together. There is no more noble or necessary field of study in the church. While hymnology may be primarily considered a subset of musicology, I would suggest that just as importantly and, perhaps, more immediately, hymnologists must see their discipline as a subset of theology. We hear variously that "one does not believe something until they say it," "say what you will, we will know what your theology is by how you live," and "your worship and your theology cannot be divorced." Somewhere in that conversation we must discuss the profundity of singing what we believe and believing what we sing. It is important that we not sing theology that we would not preach. Neither the composer's "powerful music" nor the poet's clever imagery can make poor theology good theology. Theologians know that. Hymnologists know that.

Hymnology is the steward of the church's treasury of theology and doctrine. That stewardship includes both protecting and investing the treasury. Hymnology serves the church by insisting that the truth of God's word be sung and that it stays coupled with the truth that God speaks through laity as well as clergy; by continually reminding us that eternity's insights are often discovered in, and are most profoundly proclaimed in, the realities of life's twenty-four hour segments. That is hymnology's work of protection. Its work of investing is accomplished by studying congregational song investment options. How much of the church's theology and doctrine can/should be invested in any new congregational song option? Hymnologists are the ones to tell us.

Hymnology can inform and facilitate a higher discourse concerning the contextualization of worship, higher than sales-related demographics. We are, indeed, in this world. To what extent should our worship be "of" it? Whatever the answer, it will probably be both theological and hymnological in nature.

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What past contextualization mistakes can inform us now? What past successes can encourage us now? We ask the hymnologists. How can the church be more communal in its worship, work, and witness? The question has us turn to hymnologists to help us create and understand a global congregational song repertoire. I once had a missioner to Indonesia voice this plea while speaking at the seminary where I teach: "Send us your best theologians." He was not referring to the establishment of a new Christian seminary. He was referring to the challenges of contextualized Christ-following. He asked for theologians. I think we would do well to send along our best hymnologists as well. It is obvious, that for the same reason, we need hymnographers and hymnologists to speak out as prophets and missioners in the mission field known as the Western world.

My colleagues in this *Festschrift* are scholar/practitioners of the first order: hearts, minds and careers dedicated to searching for bits of insight that might cause the church's prayer and proclamation to inch toward new heights and depths. May I be so bold as to use these early pages to urge these brothers and sisters, as well as myself, toward renewed courage in writing the poetry and prose of our sung faith ... courage to write the truth of Christ-following, fearless of arrows from the left or the right of this world's politics and the politics of the Church in the world? Write hymnographers and hymnologists, write fully committed to the truth of the political differences between the Kingdom of this World and the Kingdom of Heaven as seen in that most political of all human endeavors, Christian worship. Sing the songs of Zion. Sing the stories of the church's long march to Zion. Bring to its full potential, *hymnology in the service of the church*.

What is presented here has been done for the glory of God and with deepest admiration and respect for our teacher, mentor, friend and colleague, Harry Eskew.

Terry W. York Baylor University Waco, Texas, USA Harry Eskew taught Music History and Hymnology at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for thirty-six years. For those lucky enough to be among his master's and doctoral students, he made hymnological research a joyful adventure. Likewise, he influenced other students and colleagues through his work as Editor of *The Hymn* and through his hymnology textbook *Sing with Understanding*, co-authored with long-time friend and colleague Hugh McElrath. Few among contemporary teachers of hymnody could claim a wider influencze, as attested by some of his former students and colleagues:

I'll never forget the day when Harry handed me a tattered copy of William Walker's *Southern and Western Pocket Harmonist* and said, "Write a paper on this and tell me about it." Projects like that and Harry's own passion for hymns taught me to love hymnody, writing, and research.

—Lee Hinson, Oklahoma Baptist University

Through his teaching, Harry Eskew convinced me that hymns were, and are, written by real human beings. That gave me confidence to try my hand at it. He is to "blame" for my attempts at hymn writing.

—Terry York, Baylor University

When my friend Harry Eskew and I served on faculty together, he set the standard for scholarship that is trustworthy and relevant to the faith and life of the church.

— Fisher Humphreys, Beeson Divinity School

Harry Eskew has represented Baptists well in the larger world of hymnology and musicology and has brought the riches of these fields to Baptists, enabling a richer understanding of their history and ministry.

—Paul Richardson, Samford University

As editor of *The Hymn*, Harry Eskew encouraged many young scholars and writers in the field of hymnology. I was one of them. For his influence I am profoundly grateful.

—David W. Music, Baylor University

Harry Eskew befriended me as a newly minted DMA when I submitted my first article to *The Hymn*. His encouragement helped me make the transition from "dissertation-ese" to material suited for a wider audience.

—Paul Hammond, Oklahoma Baptist University

I am especially grateful to Dr. Eskew for the opportunity to have served as his assistant during his tenure as editor of *The Hymn*. I found this to be a magnificent introduction to the world of hymnology—its history, current trends and issues, and people.

— Joseph Scott, Louisiana State University

Harry Eskew and I were never in each other's classes, but I learned much from him informally and am indebted to him for his intense interest in shape-note music and his consistent encouragement to all others with that interest.

—Wallace McKenzie, Louisiana State University (Retired)





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