

Halland Chapel Hymnbook Supplement

Preface

More often than not, Church music and hymns have been a matter of disagreement and unrest in the local Church. A brief preface to this small supplement is therefore a necessary one. For anyone needing an understanding of where we stand with regards to the criteria for hymn selection, I would refer you to the preface of the 'Christian Hymns', which is the main hymn book that we use in our services. We also have a brief summary of the criteria posted on our website.

So why this new supplement you might ask!

Simply put, because there are a number of hymns that many of us would like to sing which we have heard and sung to our profit and blessing which are not in our hymn book. There are many more good hymns which cannot be included in this small supplement.

There are some obvious concerns in the minds of all thinking and observant Christians about the addition of some of these hymns. It is our intention to touch on some of them, briefly, for clarification with regards to our present and future practice of worship.

Included in this supplement are hymns with whose authors we at Halland do not agree; with regard to worship and even at some points of theology and practice. In this area we have adopted the wise counsel of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who is quoted in the preface to the Christian Hymns. "Whatever may be thought of our taste we have used it without prejudice; and a good hymn has not been rejected because of the character of its author or the heresies of the church in whose hymnal it first occurred; so long as the language and the spirit commended the hymn to our heart we included it....."

There is a particular concern about 'living and popular' authors with whom we do not agree. Singing their hymns might create the impression that all the practices and theology of the author and the Church or denomination they belong to, is fully acceptable to us at Halland Chapel. This is a present and a future danger. We want to say categorically that we do not endorse every theology, practice or method of worship of any author or man whose songs we might sing because the words of a particular hymn[s] by them are acceptable to us biblically. We are saying no more and no less than the particular songs we have chosen to sing are acceptable to us from our biblical stand point.

Furthermore, some are legitimately concerned that the allowance of certain kind of hymns, [because of their association to the authors], could very well dilute our convictions and then our practice of worship progressively. To which we state and reply that we intend only follow the pattern of worship that in the judgment of our fathers in the faith and in our judgment, fits the biblical requirements and priorities. These are based on Acts 2.42, 1Cor 14.25 and 1 Tim 3.15. We at Halland Chapel hold to these historic priorities and pattern of Biblical worship. While we need to be continually reforming, the basic principles of our worship theology should not be guided by trend, preference and popularity.

The centrality of the worship of God's people must be God's word. The word of God preached, taught, prayed and sung by God's people, must be maintained without compromise. We want to state definitively that our worship pattern and proportion given to the Word of God is not a mere 'worship style' that can be dispensed with, without serious harm and spiritual consequences. To state it again, we reject any move to alter the centrality and proportion of the Word read publicly, preached and taught; along with public prayers in favour of any other popular 'style' of worship that compromises the above emphases. We see it as detrimental to the health of the people of God and a subversion of the priority of true biblical worship.

Finally, it is appropriate at times to include simpler music that is easily sung by a younger [and some from the older] generation, and clearly understood by those who are used to a certain type of music. 'Such hymns and music must meet the criteria for hymns of worship as shown on our website'.

I trust that these brief words state our priorities now, and also affirm our intent for the future.

May the Lord God bless these hymns along with the great classical hymns that the Church has sung for decades and some even for centuries help and enrich the worship of Jehovah Triune's people here at Halland.

Abe Thomas 2017

[Some biblical criteria for choosing hymns.](#)

It is absolutely essential to have some biblical guidelines while choosing hymns for worship as in everything else that concerns Christians. The introduction to Christian Hymns is quite helpful and it helps us in our own choosing and singing of hymns.

Here are some essential criteria that we need to bear in mind.

- The content of the hymn must be not only profoundly but solely biblical.
- Hymns need to primarily reflect the glory, majesty and greatness of God i.e. God centeredness and giving God the primacy. See Isaiah 6:3: Rev 4.8, 11 "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created." The primary emphasis should always be the Triune Jehovah and not us. As seen in Isaiah 6 and Rev 4, 5 and 7. i.e. primarily, 'You are worthy of worship'; as opposed to 'I worship You.'
- This does not exclude personal expressions but should never be the predominant note. When we think about the 'love of God for us' it is something glorious that we can sing about and rejoice in. When we think about 'our love for God', while by God's grace it is true in some measure, it is not something we can sing without the confession that our best efforts are far too mean and small', at best.
- First of all we have the Psalms which have been the hymn book of God's people for 3000 years including the Lord Himself. We must continue to sing them in every service if possible. This will be either by using hymns based upon the Psalms or the metrical Psalms which are available. The Psalms also give us a proportion of the type of hymns sung in worship of God. Penitential, rejoicing in God's victories for us, His goodness and provision, His corrections and His instruction, thanking Him for His word and also hymns sung through the dark and despairing times of life. To do anything else is both unbiblical and at the same time is blind to the realities of the struggles and pain and failings of His people as they gather around the throne of the Almighty Triune God.
- It is also essential to remember the history of the Church and maintain a right proportion in our hymn singing. We have 20 centuries of Christian history that has produced hundreds of rich and wonderful hymns which we should never be squeezed out to be replaced by songs or hymns of our generation alone. These fathers and mothers have much to bequeath us. And such a glorious inheritance should not be made subservient to the preference and style of the day. We should not, and must not, discard what the Spirit has blessed the Church with over the centuries. It is our spiritual inheritance and The Spirit of God's gift to the Church: while including good hymns from our own proportionate slice of history in the last 100 years or so.
- The tunes must aid congregational singing as hymns are congregational expressions of worship, prayer, confession and faith set to music.

To sum up, we should not be selecting to sing songs that are just new and popular-but instead hymns that best meet the above biblical criteria at a minimum, while guarding, treasuring and singing hymns from the long and rich history of the Church from the past 2000 years founded on and including the God breathed hymns the Psalms.

Conclusion: I trust that on the basis of the above criteria, we can accommodate the singing of some new hymns to the glory of God our Saviour and the benefit and instruction of His people at Halland while holding to our view of Worship and continuing to sing the Psalms and hymns based on the Psalms and other portions of Scripture..

To the glory of God alone.

A..Halland Chapel 2017