

Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

I have seen "it". I have held it in my hands and turned its pages. I have had a chance to skim it - not in the painstaking detail I would have liked, but sufficiently enough to know that some of it is not as bad as I feared - and some is much, much worse. And what, of course is THE worst thing, is that very few of us have seen the final product. "IT", of course, is "Evangelical Lutheran Worship" (ELW) - the new ELCA "worship resource". And the copy I had the opportunity to peruse was one of the less than 200 "embargoed", top secret paper-cover copies AFPH produced for the various Synod "Trainers" and staff. So, as I critique what I've seen I have to say that maybe this isn't the final product either - but it's got to be close!

I have also held "it" in my hands - THE final, hard-cover pew edition, and I AM able to read it at my leisure. This second "it" is "Lutheran Service Book" (LSB) - the new Missouri Synod book which I received in the mail from CPH three weeks ago and which I am about halfway through in reading. It's a "good book" in many ways but it is also problematic, if far less secretive than ELW. How ironic that the vaunted "liberal", "open" ELCA has had a very top down, elitist process for developing its new hymnal (they'll deny this, of course, citing the various "Renewing Worship" resources and events over the past few years, and the changes that were made as a result, but the "bottom line" is that the final product was done at HQ, with the unfortunate approval of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly), while the arch-conservative, "closed" and autocratic Missouri Synod had a much more open process from what I've heard and can tell.

## TWO DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

The promise of the 1978 "Lutheran Book of Worship" (LBW) was "one book" for all the Lutherans in the country. In the pattern of the history of American Lutheran hymnals (The Common Service, The Common Service Book, The Lutheran Hymnal, The Service Book and Hymnal, and certainly LBW), common worship begat, to a greater or lesser degree, a unifying and consolidating process among Lutherans in this country. Although only officially accepted by the denominations which formed the ELCA in 1987, many LC-MS congregations also bought the LBW. At its height of usage, something like 75% of all the Lutherans in the country may have been using LBW as their primary worship resource. Mobile Lutherans, moving around the the USA and Canada, readily found the Green Book and could feel more or less "at home" immediately.

Since those heady days of yore, in the increasingly diverse movements in worship practices and worship resources, cross-denominationally and cross-traditions (catholic/orthodox/protestant/evangelical), we see Lutheran congregations moving in a myriad of directions - with many strongly rediscovering and augmenting the catholic style in liturgy, dress, eucharistic frequency, etc., and many others moving into a pan-protestant/evangelical "praise and worship" style. ELW and LSB are not limited by either of these styles, of course, and so, in some sense, may be more traditionally "American Lutheran", but they move in decidedly and deliberately different directions, in

both liturgy and hymnody, and especially in use of God - language. Both new books, in other words, are idiosyncratic in their own and opposite ways.

I'll come back to LSB throughout this critique, but let me deal, at some length, with ELW.

## ELW - A BOOK BY AND FOR ELITES

The ELW has been hyped as a book by the church and for the church. It is neither. I have yet to get any but vague numbers ("thousands") in terms of how many people actually came to "Renewing Worship" (RW - ELW preparatory books) workshops across the church. My Synod (Upstate NY) could not tell me how many came to events up here. Attempts in many Synods before last summer's Churchwide Assembly to delay the book by 2-4 years were opposed by the power brokers and overwhelmingly defeated at the Orlando CWA (in my Synod the Bishop tried twice to defeat a delaying resolution on voice and standing votes. When a head count was finally taken the outcome was narrowly to ask for delay!). But the CWA gave a blank check to Headquarters anyway, to complete ELW, with no provision for any further review by the people of the church - whom we always hear so much about when "they" want money from us (sorry, that's my cynical side). The LBW took about 13 years (1965-78) of field testing and feedback before it came out. ELW has barely had 5 years (2001-06). The question is, why the rush? The obvious answer: the financially troubled Augsburg Fortress Pub. Hse. was no longer selling very many LBWs or even With One Voices (WOV) and needed a new book for sales purposes. I am not aware of ANY great outcry by a significant number of ELCA folk demanding a "new worship resource" now - but here it comes.

Many congregations produce their own worship resources, use video/screens (no books at all!). Others are very content with LBW/WOV and see no need for a new book. Many will buy some copies as a resource or just to finally actually see the darned thing - or for the library or choir, but - despite the sell-out of the 70,000 copy first printing, it remains to be seen how good overall sales will be. I hope they will be poor!

I was also told that something like 75,000 people came to LBW introductory events and that the "hope" is that about 1/3 of that number will actually attend ELW events.

## WHAT'S IN ELW: Liturgies

So, what's in (and out of) the new book? Liturgical section first.

Oh - the cover is nice (I saw that at the Youth Gathering) - a kind of crimson - darker than SBH - not as dark as LSB which is a deep maroon. There are dark "tabs" on the side of the book for easy finding of the various sections - a helpful touch.

The numbering in ELW is consecutive, and that's a plus. As others have noted the pagination includes all the psalms/liturgical section/service music/hymns as one numbering system - so all 150 psalms are included (after the liturgical section), followed

by Service Music/Canticles, #151-238, followed by the hymns. There are about 200 more pages in ELW than were in LBW (but if you use LBW and WOV the total number of pages is pretty much the same), but improved paper production means ELW will be not much larger than LBW and should fit in the pew racks! Will it be heavier to hold? Don't know that.

There are no more "P/A" in the communion liturgies of "L" in other services - everything is just bold or light print. Is that an anti-clerical move or just a savings on ink? Who knows?

Invocations seem always to include a non-trinitarian option (that is, an option which does not specifically include "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" language) – invoking "the Holy Trinity" is NOT the same as naming God explicitly. God language and the emasculating of the Trinity continue at a pace much beyond that in WOV - and yet it is also very inconsistent (more on this below).

I expected the changes in the Nicene Creed (I've been socialized to them at recent Synod assemblies) - Jesus now becomes "fully human" not "man". BUT I was not prepared for the changes in the Apostles' Creed. Jesus is no longer "His only Son" but "God's only Son". And the common text, "He descended into hell" is now the footnote in favor of "He descended to the dead" in the body of the creed. Personally I don't care about the latter, and theologically, we could have a good discussion about which one should have been used, but, of course, we weren't permitted that. Oh, and Jesus was no longer "conceived by the POWER of the Holy Spirit". "Power" has been excised - too militaristic for the "peace-loving" ELCA elites? This is definitely "under the radar screen" hijacking of liturgical language, and I think once people have the book in the pew and see this for the first time they will NOT be happy campers.

So - we really DO have Ten (count them, 10!) "Settings" of Holy Communion - double that of LBW and WOV combined - again, so much for liturgy as a unifying factor. Why 10? Why "diversity, of course! So what do we have to do to accomodate 10 settings? Well, remember improved paper production - more pages in the same amount of space. That's one explanation. But some other things have to give too. No Athanasian Creed - saves 2 pages. I guess we ELCA Lutherans no longer need all 3 Great Ecumenical Creeds (as cited in the Book of Concord, for example), in our primary worship resource. Those of us who like to use it once a year on Holy Trinity Sunday can copy it...but if it's not in the book, well..."out of sight, out of mind...". It's in LSB, of course.

It was my understanding that an earlier proposal was not to have "Settings" but to have a kind of Chinese Menu effect - there would be printed Kyries, Hymns of Praise, Offertories, "Holy, Holy, Holy's", etc. and congregations could select from among them and make their own settings, so to speak. That proposal got nixed in favor of actual settings in the style of SBH, LBW, WOV. Well "in the style of" is the operative phrase. In fact, what we get is the worst of both worlds. Both the Ten more or less incomplete "settings" AND a large section of liturgical music to skip back and forth to.

For example - I saw no offertories in the body of the settings I perused.; only "Lord Now You Let" as the Post Communion canticle. "Let the Vineyards" and "Thank the Lord" (oops!! I forgot!) - "Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise" (there's that PC God -language thing again) show up in the liturgical music section - skip there if you want to use them...I believe there were 3 offertory prayers, but not "Merciful Father" - a version of that and other "offering prayers" are in the "Prayers for Worship" section. More page flipping - or, printing out the whole service in the bulletin to be "seeker friendly" But then what happens to concern for the environment? "Kill MORE trees for Jesus"! Ah, the head-splitting problems for the Politically Correct among us!

In addition, there is a PC "re-imagining" emphasis I first noticed in WOV - from God being primary, to us (e.g. "it is right to give HIM thanks and praise" became in WOV - and still is in ELW - in the communion settings, and daily prayer offices, too - "it is right to give OUR thanks...". The same refocus shows up in "Thankful hearts..." where the last phrase reads "send US with your promises" rather than "He recalls his promises...").

Settings 1 and 2 are new (maybe from RW?) and the music seemed trite and uninteresting (again, understand this was a cursory review and I was singing the music in my head). Setting 3 is LBW 1, more or less; Setting 4 is LBW 2 and Setting 5 is LBW 3, with the wonderful "Glory to God" (adapted from SBH Setting 2) replaced by the hymn "All Glory be to God on high". I like this hymn and use it when we do a Chorale or Hymn Setting of Holy Communion (see LBW p 120), but I love the LBW Setting 3 "Glory to God" too.

I don't remember seeing any sung gospel acclamations in the body of the settings.

I was told with a straight face that one of the ways "they" think the new book will be "unifying" is in the music for the opening dialog of the Great Thanksgiving. Remember LBW Settings 2 and 3 use the older music (from SBH, I believe) in "the Lord be with You...And also with you...Lift up..." etc., and LBW 1 had a different, somewhat simpler and "upbeat" music (I know - everybody's taste is different!). Now ALL the settings with music for the dialog use the LBW 2 and 3 music. Wow - THAT's a really BIG unifying move!

Eucharistic prayers in the settings include at I..the alternative to LBW rubric 31 ("You are indeed..."); II. bare Words of Institution; III. "Holy One..." (for Advent -Epiphany) and IV. "Blessed are you..." (Ash Wed.-Pentecost). I didn't see LBW rubric 33 - maybe it - and the other LBW eucharistic prayers, e.g. LBW III and IV - are in the Altar Edition. But who knows? Haven't seen that either...

There is a rubric allowing for "brief announcements" at the end of the settings - why do they think the need to tell us where we can make announcements? The Aaronic benediction "The Lord bless..." has, of course, been PC-emended ("The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy...")

For those who like the WOV Service of Word and Prayer, and I'm one (I saw nothing like the LBW Service of the Word), a variant is in ELW - with a Kyrie and "Glory to God". The text of "Salvation belongs to our God" has been "emended" (that's ELW-speak for changed to make it more PC).

In the Daily Prayer Services the familiar (to those of us who've prayed them during the past 30 years) and tuneful canticles and responses from LBW Morning and Evening Prayer are largely excised or in the liturgical music section - more casualties of the space realities to accommodate 10 Settings? By the Way, they ARE in LSB, along with the old Matins and Vespers services from The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH). The text of Morning Prayer's "Venite" ("O come let us sing...") has been emasculated. They also messed with "Let My Prayer Rise Before You..." in tune and text in Evening Prayer - certainly one of the most popular pieces in LBW. And the blessing at the end of MP and the versicles at the beginning of EP get new music - for the sake of new music? Why can't they just leave well-enough alone? :(

Of course, the response, "In many and various ways..." has been PC-ed and reads very awkwardly: "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets" - nothing poetic or lovely about that phraseology. The Gospel Canticle becomes "Blessed are you Lord, the God of Israel...mercy to our forebears (not "fathers") - yet the next line has Abraham (alone) as the referent! There are many such inconsistencies - or "compromises" - in liturgical and hymnological language (bones thrown to the not-yet-with-it folks in the pews?). The Vespers litany offers only one of the 2 musical versions from LBW - and I saw no "Alleluia" phrase.

I noted minor changes in Compline (basically brought over from LBW): "The Lord Almighty grant us..." becomes "God Almighty..." and there is a minor - and unnecessary - change in the music in "Guide us waking" on the phrase, "and asleep we may rest in peace..."

In the Responsive Prayer Services, (and Daily Prayer Offices?) only the "contemporary" version of The Lord's Prayer is included. OK, I know we ALL know it, but what of the hymnal as a teaching tool for kids and people whose primary language is not English - why not have both? Saving ink again?

The Calendar of Commemorations, etc. has a number of new ones - probably they've been showing up in AFPH's resource "Sundays and Seasons". But who decides on who gets remembered officially - and how are these guys and gals vetted? There seem to be some "inclusive" demons at work here - we don't JUST want to remember dead white European males now, do we? Which is fine with me, but again - who decides, and on what basis? "Of the church, by the church"? Or of and by the elites? It's also fun to compare the ELW calendar not just with LBW, but with LSB. The Mo. Synod "purified" version of LBW, "Lutheran Worship" (LW) - which never had wide acceptance in the LC-MS - DID include a calendar - with just 2 (count 'em, TWO!) non biblical "saints" worthy of remembrance: CFW Walther (Founder of the Mo. Synod - duh!) and St. Laurence, Deacon - why him - and not St. Patrick, or St. Nicholas or...??? Anyway -

the LSB calendar is significantly expanded from LW but with some interesting twists - one I found interesting but curious is the inclusion of some Old Testament "saints" - patriarchs, prophets, etc. - e.g. Adam and Eve on Dec 19; Sarah on Jan 20 (Inauguration Day!); Joseph on March 31, etc. Why these guys and gals on THESE days? Were Adam and Eve created on December 19? Again - who decides these things??? I don't believe any of these OT personages made the ELW calendar...Maybe they'll be in the 2nd printing. Oh, I was amused that to "justify" their inclusion of such a broad calendar - and anticipate criticisms from some in the LC-MS about "worshipping saints", the LSB Calendar begins with a several paragraph explanation of why this is a good thing to do, and with quotes from Augsburg Confession 21 and the Letter to the Hebrews, 12:1. It's actually nice - and at least they care enough to explain in the book why they're doing what they're doing, to their constituency. LSB also includes a helpful 2 page glossary of liturgical terms, and an explanation of the cover design imagery/symbolism. Will ELW have anything similar?

In the lectionary listings in ELW, there are 3 different Prayers of the Day for each Sunday - couldn't read them all carefully, but why? Certainly more opportunity for language mischief. There are also 2 different sets of readings for the Old Testament lessons and Psalms on Sundays after Pentecost (there is an explanation for this) - but the end result is more "diversity" - more picking and choosing - in what's actually DONE in our congregations on any given Sunday. So much for worship as a unifying force.

Much has been written by others of the decision to "emend" the Psalms - i.e. paraphrase them - changing the text from a translation of the Hebrew into a prayer form addressed to God - e.g. "The Lord is my shepherd, He makes me..." becomes, "The Lord is my shepherd, YOU...". In Ps. 121, v.3, "...he who watches over you will not..." becomes, "nor will the one who watches over you..." The PC Police at work again. There are other similar examples (cp. Ps. 8).

## HYMNS

I'm a Hymnophile. I own over 200 hymnals of many traditions from the past century and a half. Many hours of leisure reading is spent reading hymnals - stanza by stanza - a fascinating exercise.

So, what's in and what's out? Remember this is a cursory overview - I could go on and on and...Others have already done a more comprehensive listing.

LBW/WOV hymns left out:

Let's cut to the quick - or (a better metaphor) - let's take a sword/ax to the military! Hymns that are "too militaristic" are out (my phrase, but I understand that was a big factor - geez, I never realized we Lutherans were a pacifist denomination. Maybe Luther's tract ""Whether Soldiers, too, May Be Saved" needs re-writing).

So, no "Onward Christian Soldiers" - as one of my parishioners who is a professor of Religious Studies at a formerly Lutheran College quipped, "don't these people understand metaphor? It's 'marching AS to war'"... And no "The Son of God Goes Forth to War", or "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" either.

"My Country, 'tis of thee" and "God of Our Fathers" also got cut. In the National Songs section we do get "America, the Beautiful" - fine with me, but what's "O Canada" all about? If the Canadian National Anthem is in then where is "The Star Spangled Banner"?

"Soldier-ing" language is out also (didn't we just have the Ephesians "whole armor of God" pericope in the lectionary?). Without having to go stanza by stanza as I perused the hymns, I know my LBW hymns and their numbers of stanzas - so when ELW cuts one I take notice. E.G. - LBW "For All The Saints" has 8 stanzas, ELW's 7. Missing? "Oh may your soldiers faithful, true and bold fight as the saints who nobly fought of old". Now, children, we know it's not nice to fight, don't we? In "Let the whole creation cry", LBW 242, "Warriors fighting" becomes "servants..."

Or, "Lift High the Cross" - LBW - 5 stanzas; ELW - 4...missing? St. 2 - "...the hosts of God in conquering ranks...". In St. 3 "soldiers" becomes "servants", again. Interestingly, in this, and several other cases, LSB retains or adds stanzas from the LBW's renderings. In this case it would be nice if some hymnal included ALL 12 stanzas of "Lift High" that I'm familiar with.

What is this thing about leaving stanzas/phrases out in some places when we obviously don't care in others (see comment about "Amazing Grace" below)? LBW left out 2 of 3 stanzas of "This Joyful Eastertide", LBW 149 - restored in WOV and ELW. WOV and ELW leave out 1 of the 3 stanzas of "Shine Jesus Shine", a text which I don't find particularly objectionable.

Perhaps this pacifistic thinking also affected some ELW tune choices? "Glorious things of you are spoken" is no longer set to "Austria" ("Deutschland, Deutschland Ueber Alles", as we all know it!) but to a fine Welsh tune, "Blaerwen" (which I like when used with the "Love Divine" text as I've sung it at worship in Wales). Why the change?

A number of "new" LBW tunes have been done away with, although the text is retained - probably they were not considered too popular: "As Saints of Old", LBW 404; "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation", LBW 367; "Deep Were His Wounds", LBW 100 (text gone too). "In His Temple" (LBW 181) is now set to Regent Square.

If "popularity" was a rationale then some LBW hymns were, to my mind, surprisingly retained: e.g. "O God of Every Nation", LBW 416 (nicely pacifistic) and "God Whose Giving", LBW 408. Maybe I'm out of some loop but I've never heard either of them sung in worship - in my parishes or anywhere else.

WOV's "O Christ the Same" is in but not to "Londonderry Air". I think that tune/text combination works well - the ELW tune not nearly so... Why the change?

Also left out - LBW's Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) hymn #529 - "Praise God. Praise Him"

"What God Ordains Is Always Right", LBW 446, is totally emasculated ("What God ordains is good indeed"), not to mention the significant difference in the force of the text, theologically, between "always right" and "good indeed". Nothing inherently wrong with the latter, but does it show a lack of confidence in God? Is He (oops, God) not "ALWAYS right"? Well, not in ELW, He's not!

Another God language/PC example is "We Plow the Fields" - 1st stanza, "he" becomes "who".

Some good things - for my taste:

"Vater Unser" gets a fuller treatment in ELW than LBW as a Lord's Prayer paraphrase. "Savior, Like A Shepherd" gets restored to the old, familiar Bradbury tune (there were some poor choices - anomalies - in LBW that I ascribe to snobbery on the part of some involved with it).

"Amazing Grace" still has the problematic phrase, "the hour I First believed" (not in LSB) but adds a stanza, "When we've been there 10,000 years" - a good addition.

“Antiquated” Language Returns:

Then there is the odd return of King James/Elizabethan language on occasion in ELW. There are pros and cons to updating hymn text (or liturgical or biblical) language for understanding...language DOES change (I remember an SBH hymn that used the word "guerdon"). The church is NOT a museum though we do preserve the tradition. But in ELW the changes back again seemed to me like a bone being thrown to those of us who object to all the PC tampering with language. But what is the rationale in particular occurrences?

"Come You Thankful People" (LBW 407) returns to "Come YE..."; "All is safely gathered in" becomes, "all be..."

"Rejoice Oh Pilgrim Throng" (LBW 553) returns to "Rejoice Ye Pure in heart".

In "For the beauty of the earth", the refrain goes from "to you we raise" to "to ye".

One salutary change back is in "Joy to the World". Did anyone but die-hard feminists ever sing "Let earth receive ITS king". The earth in ELW is "her" again. But maybe this is in deference to Mother Earth or the goddess? The point is, who knows on what bases such changes were made? Certainly not "the church" - but I assume the elites who did it know...

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" is in ELW twice, but in two different places (332/611) with 2 different tunes - Third Mode Melody and, I believe, an alternate tune which was in the SBH.

"In the bleak midwinter" returns from the SBH and "Jesus Loves Me" shows up. But 2 of my favorite communion hymns from my LC-MS upbringing are out "I Come O Savior To Thy Table" LBW 213, and "Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared", LBW 208 are gone (both are in LSB, of course).

Other changes - for better/for worse:

"From Heaven Above" - 14 stanzas, LBW 51; 11 stanzas, ELW

"I Am So Glad" -LBW 69 - loses the "home" stanza in ELW

"Lo How A Rose" - LBW's st 3 gone in ELW

"Let All Together" - LBW 47 has emasculated text in ELW

"O Lord Throughout These 40 Days" - LBW 99, ELW changes tune to "Consolation" - why?

"My Song Is Love Unknown" - LBW 94, ELW replaces the lovely "Rhosymedre" tune (R. Vaughan Williams composed such a beautiful fantasia on that tune), loses a stanza and reworks the text to 3rd person

"The Day of Resurrection" - LBW 495 - ELW replaces "Lancashire" tune with

"Ellacome". Both are good, singable tunes but why the change - for the sake of change? LSB keeps "Lancashire".

"If God Himself Be For Me" - LBW 454 becomes ELW's "If God MY LORD be for me", and the rest of text is similarly emasculated.

"The God of Abraham Praise" goes from LBW's 11 stanzas to ELW's 8

"I Bind Unto Myself" - LBW 188 - stanzas 3, 4 and 5 are eliminated and the Episcopalian tradition of singing "Christ be with me..." is added (see The Hymnal, 1982, ECUSA)

"Dear Christians One and All" - LBW 299, 2 stanzas eliminated

"O Day Full of Grace" - LBW 161 - comes with an alternate text in ELW

"All Hail the Power" - LBW 328/329 ELW leaves out st. 2, "Crown Him You Martyrs..."; the Miles Lane tune ( a favorite of mine) is left out.

"Just as I am" - LBW 296, loses stanzas 3 and 4.

"Faith of Our Fathers" , LBW 500, is left alone, textually, sort of - the traditional text is printed, but next to it is a revisionist text - "Faith of our Fathers, Mothers, sisters, brothers", etc. They do the same kind of thing with "Praise to the Lord", LBW 543.

"All Creatures of Our God and King", LBW 527 is so messed up it's too painful to recount - it becomes "All Creatures worship God Most High"...ostensibly the new text is based more directly on St. Francis' Canticle of the Sun" - does anyone have access to an accurate translation of St. Francis' original text? Oh, and one stanza is deleted.

"Kingly" language is also out in ELW's "Praise My Soul the God of Heaven" (LBW 549).

"Awake My Heart" - LBW 129 (one of my top 10 favorites) ELW conflates stanzas 2 and 4 and emasculates the text.

"Now Thank We All Our God", LBW 533/534 is emasculated, as is "When Morning Gilds", LBW 546 (st. 3 eliminated), and "In Thee is Gladness", LBW 552.

There are ironic moments in this. "Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power", LBW 525 shows up with a totally emasculated text - but on the facing page we have "Crown HIM with many crowns" - They KNEW they couldn't mess with that one. Of course the elites will argue this shows how diverse and sensitive to traditional language they are!?

There is a new text to "Nettleton" (LBW's 499) - which refers to "the One" - who is this "one"? There are no biblical references until st. 3.

There seems to be a PC move in a number of texts to de-particularize God/Jesus - so the Son or Jesus becomes "Christ" (e.g. liturgically we see this at the end of the Great Thanksgiving where "In Him, with Him, Through Him" becomes "In Christ..."). Nothing wrong with "Christ" of course, but it's all part of the long-range attempt to de-emphasize "the scandal of God's particularity" and make God a generic blob.

I counted (give or take) 190 "new" hymns among the 600+ hymns (not counting the Psalms and liturgical music).

One other thing - LBW insisted on only 4 stanzas of text within the music scores - additional stanzas were outside the music. This rigidity led to some goofiness - like in "The Strife is O'er" (LBW 135) where the 5th stanza is not only outside the music but AFTER the final set of "Alleluias". LSB "corrects" this. Not sure about ELW. LSB also does a helpful thing by identifying with a triangle the explicitly trinitarian stanza of a hymn - helps prepare people like me whose piety includes bowing at the Name of God+.

I want to finally publicly also claim credit for the inclusion in LW and LSB (not in LBW to which I submitted it, nor in ELW) of the fine Irish hymn, "Christ is the World's Redeemer" (TUNE: Merville). I can't prove this, of course, but I first heard/sang it in my Air Force days - it was in the old blue Armed Forces Hymnal, and a Presbyterian chaplain selected it one Sunday. It's a great tune and a strong text.

Oh, almost forgot - "Hail Thee Festival Day" is STILL printed in both ELW and LSB in the dumb way it is in LBW with the 3 festivals texts (Easter, Ascension and Pentecost) all printed together, and with the numbering of the stanzas left out after the first score in each stanza. This wonderful hymn is confusing to those not familiar with it and this attempt to save space makes it very difficult to follow. I always ask my people to write in the enumeration of the stanzas.

## SOME SUMMARY THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

+ELW and LSB are both sectarian hymnals - each pursuing a particular - and opposite - political/theological agenda. ELW, more than LSB, is a departure from traditional christian language. It has no "core values" in terms of the orthodox, evangelical-catholic

(Lutheran) faith handed down by the saints. It takes "diversity" to the next logical (?) level – a further step down the path of inclusivity for its own sake; a great leap "forward" not far removed from the recent United Church Of Christ hymnal (which even includes "Our Father/Mother" in the Lord's Prayer). LSB does have a "core value" which is narrow-minded and anti-catholic in some significant ways. Again, LBW thought to bring Lutherans together in worship; ELW and LSB intentionally try to move us apart.

Why is ELW apparently selling so well upfront? Why would anyone who cares at all about the worship of God buy ELW sight-unseen? Well, newness/novelty sells; and scripture also tells us that people with "itching ears" will eagerly follow (and be tossed about by) every wind of doctrine. It's also true that in spite of the ELCA's fervent attempts to seek (and cause) controversy, at the expense of mistrust and division (and a loss of some 500,000 members in barely 20 years!), people in the church still WANT to trust. ELW's birth-process has been designed to engender more distrust and I have to believe that many - once they have the book, and experience changes in language of creeds, liturgies and hymns; the too-many settings, etc., etc., will be frustrated, angry and disappointed. And we have yet to see what's been done to the Occasional Services Book liturgies and texts in THEIR final forms. You don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to ask what the agenda is here, that our leadership would not seriously consider a reasonable delay, IF trust-building was really an interest of Higgins Road (ELCA HQ). Apparently that's too big an "if".

Again, the theory is that the ELCA is the more open denomination in comparison to the LC-MS - but, as I understand and compare the processes of development of these two new Lutheran worship books, it seems to me that it was LSB's process which was more open, and ELW's that was more closed.

Sadly I've had colleagues say to me, "why are you so exercised about this? It's just a new worship resource!" "A"? No it's THE official ELCA worship resource in every way that word implies. Others say – in an almost hand-wringing fashion - "what can we do? What choice do we have?" We can let the elites know by making the choice that hurts them the most - NOT buying the book (as many in the LC-MS did not buy LW)

The ancient dictum, "Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi" (the law of prayer/worship, is the law of faith/belief) still holds true. We are - in our religious life - who/what we worship and pray to. If I was banned from using the LBW (and WOV) and had to choose only between ELW and LSB, I would be hard pressed to make the choice. And that's the saddest thing of all.

I'll buy a handful of each of these books for myself, the library, the musicians, but "as for me and my house/parish" - we will use the LBW (supplemented with WOV) for the foreseeable future.

In Christ's Service,

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