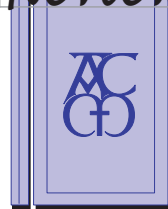
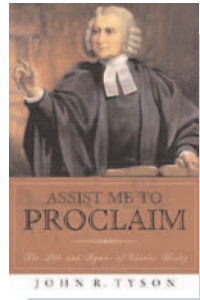


## Reviews of Note



John R. Tyson, *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008). Softcover, 328 pages, \$14.96 (available on Amazon.com) ISBN: 0802829392



This is a book both for the church musician and for the pastor/theologian. John Tyson, professor of theology at Houghton College, Houghton, New York, weaves an interesting tale of Methodism's poet laureate, Charles Wesley, through the tapestry of eighteenth century English Protestantism. The narrative abounds with biographical anecdotes that capture the reader's interest all the way through the book's 300-pages. The author conveys his keen interest in the thoughts and feelings of Wesley's spiritual life, from his deep struggles prior to conversion to the lifelong longings to live obediently and submissively to the will of God. For those who like a little romance, Tyson freely serves up one story after another, both of Charles' years of single life during which he enjoyed the pure and sweet friendship of two Christian women to the time when finally a third one, Sally, captured his heart and they married.

For the church musician whose duty it is to know and select hymns for the public worship, there's a collection of poems on just about every subject or occasion the biographer considers in Wesley's life. (Did Wesley actually think in verse rather than prose? Poems abounded from Wesley's pen on his own spiritual state.

("Thou God of glorious majesty, To thee against myself, to Thee a worm of earth I cry..."), his wonder at God's immense grace ("And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?"), and many more.

The pastor/theologian will find this biography useful as a summary of theological questions that factioned Christians into opposing camps in eighteenth century England. The contrasting views (Calvinistic) of George Whitefield with both Charles Wesley and John Wesley (Arminian) take a prominent place in public ministries of both camps. The author does not sugarcoat the real troubles between Christians in that day, including the large tensions between Charles and John, and their impact upon the public. How these and other Christian leaders handled the theological controversies provides instructive reading for ministry professionals today.

If this is not a must-read for the church musician or pastor, it is at least a singly helpful volume to illuminate one's understanding about a significant period of theological and church worship developments within Christian church history.

*Reviewed by Ron Bechtel, Dean, ACM Pacific Northwest*



the alliance of christian musicians  
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### Help Build the ACM

Please help grow our numbers! Visit our website, [www.acmusicians.org](http://www.acmusicians.org) and click the membership button. You'll be able to read about the many benefits of joining the ACM. The fees for annual dues are listed there as well.

We are pleased to announce that the ACM has been granted tax exempt status for all charitable donations. Just a reminder: payments for membership dues and seminars are not tax deductible because you receive a good or service in exchange for such a payment.

Thank you for your financial support.



The **HERALD**  
the newsletter of the Alliance of Christian Musicians

volume 6, number 3

summer 2009



Vince Treadway, ACM Executive Director

## AN EXCITING SEASON OF GROWTH & OPPORTUNITY

The upcoming 2009/2010 ACM season will be filled with wonderful events that will inspire growth in your personal and professional skills within a fellowship of like-minded Christian musicians. I invite you to join us for an exciting season.

The season begins with our annual Church Music Symposium, this year featuring conductor Constantina Tsolainou and pianist Samuel Hsu. The symposium will be held October 9 and 10 at Proclamation Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, PA. I particularly want to invite Choir Directors to invite their choirs to join us on Saturday, October 10, as we will ALL have an opportunity to learn from the wonderful conducting skills of Constantina Tsolainou in several massed choir rehearsals. There is a special rate on Saturday for choir members who register with their choir directors. I hope you will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to learn, grow, and have fun too.

On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, October 15-17, the PNW Chapter will hold its annual CMS featuring organist Christopher Garven in concert and Vince Treadway teaching classes on children's choirs and leading an Evensong. Additional informational about these two events can be found on our website or in the enclosed flyer.

The Delaware Valley Concert Choir is sponsoring a Musicians' Training Event on Saturday, October 24, at St. George/St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

Our first luncheon discussion is scheduled for Thursday, November 5 at 12:00 noon at Proclamation Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, PA. Our discussion topic will be, *Creatively Training and Encouraging "Challenging" Voices and Instrumentalists.*

This year's Festival of Carols, featuring many of the area ACM musicians, will be held on Friday, December 4, at Proclamation Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, PA at 8:00 pm.

Other events this year include: The Church Music Explosion in Fort Lauderdale Florida January 4-8, 2010, featuring organist Paul Jacobs and several ACM offerings as well as many other learning opportunities; the Recital for Young Church Musicians on Saturday January 30, 2010, at Proclamation; the Annual Handbell Festival featuring conductor David Harris of the Raleigh Ringers on Saturday, March 6, at Delaware County Christian School in Newtown Square, PA, and much more!

Please visit our website at [www.acmusicians.org](http://www.acmusicians.org) for these and all ACM events. May God richly bless you all as you continue to serve Him, and as we serve Him together!



### COMING EVENTS

**Friday-Saturday, October 9-10, 2009**  
ACM Church Music Symposium featuring world-renowned conductor Constantina Tsolainou, pianist Samuel Hsu, theologian and jazz pianist Dr. William Edgar, and composer performer Dr. Ron Matthews at Proclamation Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr.

**Friday and Saturday, October 16 & 17, 2009**  
ACM Northwest Church Music Symposium  
Ron Bechtel, ACM Board Member and Convener  
Christopher Garven, Organ; Vince Treadway, Children's Choirs at Faith Presbyterian Church, Tacoma WA

**Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009 - 12:00 noon**  
Luncheon Discussion: Creatively Training and Encouraging "Challenging" Voices and Instrumentalists at Proclamation Presbyterian Church

**For more information contact: Vince Treadway at 610.520.9500 ext. 237 or email: [vince.treadway@proclamation.org](mailto:vince.treadway@proclamation.org)**

# Worship in a Higher Register

The following is the keynote address given by Rev. Dr. Robert S. Rayburn on October 17, 2008 at the Pacific Northwest ACM chapter's Church Music Symposium which took place in Tacoma, Washington. Because of its length, the speech will be continued in the next three issues of *The Herald*.

I want to address what I gather is the chief objection to that Lord's Day worship service and the sung praises that belong to that service that have been both handed down to us by the Christian ages and recommended by the most important of the church's liturgical authorities. I am speaking of a service that is structured according to a biblical theory of liturgy, is complex in its parts and organization, and expects a great deal of its participants both inwardly and outwardly. In varying degrees this is not the Lord's Day service of most evangelicals in America today. Their services are simpler, omit substantial parts of historic Christian worship, and ask for substantially less of their participants, intellectually, artistically, and, I would argue, spiritually.

Those who recommend those services typically do so for one reason supremely. They argue that the classical service of Christian worship is not sufficiently accessible to the modern American, believer and unbeliever alike. The formality of the service of the central tradition of Christian worship is off-putting to casual, informal Americans. By formality I mean such things as: a minister in a robe, architectural and liturgical distance between the congregation and the ministry, music that is more complex and serious than the music they ordinarily listen to and accompanied by instruments generally identified with more serious music, and an order of worship that requires constant attention to the succession of elements. The forms of that service likewise strike the modern American as alien, so unlike anything else they encounter in life. Kneeling has disappeared from American democratic life, surviving perhaps only in the marriage proposal. Confessions of sin have disappeared almost entirely from American therapeutic culture. We expect such confessions only of politicians after they have been caught! Corporate acts in themselves — confessions of sin and confessions of faith — have virtually no counterpart in American life. And the Lord's Supper, a sacramental act, is much more foreign to Americans than it would be to Christians in other cultures.

The American contemporary service is a service designed precisely to overcome the fact that Americans don't find naturally congenial what Christians have historically done in worship. The service has been suited to modern American taste and comfort. The service is Spartan in its organization; just a few things are done. The atmosphere is upbeat, familiar, humorous, much more like a sales convention than a service of Christian worship historically, but an experience Americans are very familiar and comfortable with. The music is mostly soft-rock with lyrics so simple that they invite little to no intellectual engagement. The service is devoid of those aspects of the Christian faith that might cause an unbelieving mind to raise a question, still more to recoil. No rites are encountered except the offering and Americans are well used to being asked for money. It is a service in which Americans, even unbelieving Americans, can feel at home.

By Rev. Dr. Robert S. Rayburn

I don't doubt that the architects of this contemporary service believe that a biblical argument can be advanced on its behalf. There is not, to be sure, much serious thinking being done by the advocates of the modern contemporary service, certainly not much engagement with serious liturgical scholarship. The biblical argument is likewise superficial, based largely on the assumption that the first 39 books have little to nothing to say to Christians nowadays.

The argument I wish to make is not that a properly ordered Christian worship service is in fact easily accessible to the unchurched and unbelieving or even to the typical American Christian. It is not. It is a service that must be learned. A Christian must grow up into this service. It has always been so. It was so in the worship of the ancient church. Indeed, Israel was always tempted to prefer the more accessible, the more sensual, the less intellectually demanding worship of the ANE. The services appointed for her by the Lord required a great deal of her and she was tempted to prefer something simpler.

And so it was in the worship of early Christianity. It was a service so unlike anything then known in the Greco-Roman world that that society continually struggled to understand what was going on in it. The church made so little effort to accommodate the culture that, widely practicing the *disciplina arcana*, the secret discipline, the unbaptized were required to leave the service half-way through, after the sermon and before the Lord's Supper. Though little effort was made to make the worship service accessible — though the church certainly availed itself of artistic and intellectual forms from the culture — early Christianity was as successful evangelistically as at any subsequent period in the history of Christendom. The only period of Christian history to rival the first three centuries for missionary advance was the missions movement of the 19th century. There too, cultures were confronted with a service alien to their experience. Christian worship did not mimic the culture; it created its own culture and then transformed the culture around it into its own image. While Christians built catacombs and buried their dead, we create churches that look like shopping malls or theaters and more and more often cremate our dead just like the pagans always have. We've traded Pentecost for Mother's Day and the language of Christian theology, spread over the world through Christian worship, is now hardly used even in the church herself and her people don't know it, much less the unbelievers round about. This is a recipe for irrelevance and that is what we are increasingly seeing everywhere we look: the irrelevance of the church in our modern culture. *(to be continued.)*



Author, preacher, and teacher, Dr. Rayburn earned his master's degree from Covenant Theological Seminary and his doctorate in New Testament from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Published in the *Evangelical Commentary of the Bible* is Rayburn's commentary on *Hebrews*. He also leads sermons at Faith Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, Washington.

## Why Start a Choir in a Small Church?

By Lisa Ridenour

Stepping onto a homemade plywood podium in the back corner of the local fire hall, I looked into the attentive eyes of the nineteen volunteer singers of our small church plant. With an assuring smile, I gestured their entrance, knowing full well that the acoustical tile ceiling was waiting to absorb their carefully prepared anthem. Despite the cramped "choir loft" where the congregation's folding chairs encroached into our singing space; never mind the tired keyboard pushed to one side—I felt an inner confidence that this young ensemble had the potential to take on an important ministry in the life of our church. Then I was thinking music ministry, but to my delight and surprise, their ministry has moved beyond Sunday preludes and offertories.

Churches that are being revitalized and planted could greatly benefit from starting a church choir not only by enhancing the worship service, but by contributing in unexpected ways to the life of the church. The choir can take a critical leadership role in the congregational singing. Engaging fifteen to twenty congregants in weekly rehearsals gives the director an opportunity to develop their vocal ability and prepares them to be skilled participants in congregational singing, which in turn helps the congregation in their singing to God! When well-prepared voices sit evenly distributed in the pews among the congregation, the singers function as worship leaders from the pew. Right alongside other worshippers, they assist the church by carrying the melody, and sometimes they even stimulate part-singing. What's more, choir members aid the improvement of the tone and quality of the congregation's singing with thoughtful singing.

The choir can also help the congregation expand its repertoire of songs. Commonly, smaller churches face many challenges when introducing a new song in a worship service. Non-singers can feel discouraged when attempting to sing a new song with confidence while remaining engaged in thoughtful worship. Here's where the choir can help. Preparing the choir to present a new song as a prelude a week or two in advance of its being introduced to the church makes for easier congregational participation. As the choir members sit scattered throughout the church, the congregation experiences the musical support that allows them then to sing and worship freely during the service.

Finally, a church choir can model to the congregation what it means to be a part of the Body of Christ and encourages the use of gifts and talents, which would otherwise lay dormant. Just as a body functions best when all its parts are healthy and active, so a well-functioning choir sees its members faithfully present at weekly rehearsals in order for the ensemble to be at its best. Although initially members may fulfill their commitment to the choir because of the director's expectations, in time they begin to function together in a way that fosters accountability and camaraderie. Times of fellowship in addition to weekly rehearsals such as dinners or attending concerts enhance the choir's relationships with each other. In addition, setting time aside at each rehearsal for prayer together not only develops bonds that further their functioning as a body, but creates a group within the church that is regularly thoughtful and prayerful about the upcoming worship service.

The blessing of our choir has continued, extending past our local church. This past year, because of our mutual involvement in the ACM, our church choir joined with the choir of Proclamation Presbyterian Church in a joint Maundy Thursday Service. The joint rehearsals and conducting training I received greatly improved the quality of our ensemble, and the encouragement received by our church in worshipping together with a sister church is immeasurable.

No longer in a fire hall, today we worship in an acoustically beautiful church. There is no denying the giftedness of this ensemble. Their skill and size have been greatly blessed by God, especially when I consider the limited resources of our small church. But when I now step onto the same plywood podium and gesture their entrance, acknowledging all ways God has used this group of Christians to impact the greater Body leaves me in deep gratitude to the One who promises, "I will build my Church." (Matthew 16:18b)

Lisa Ridenour has served as Music Director of Christ the King Presbyterian Church, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, for nearly 11 years. Recently she joined the board of directors of the Alliance of Christian Musicians.



### The Alliance of Christian Musicians

The ACM exists to promote excellence in the ministries and performance of music in the church by providing education, fellowship, and support for those musicians whose first priority and obligation is obedience and service to their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:33)

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*The Herald*, the quarterly newsletter of the ACM, is published in September, December, March, and June. Readers who subscribe to the above mission statement of the ACM are encouraged to submit articles on any phase of church music. Contact the editor at [acm@proclamation.org](mailto:acm@proclamation.org) or ACM, Proclamation Presbyterian Church, 278 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010.

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