

Realizing the Psalms: Options for Singing or Speaking

An excerpt from *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship* by John Witvliet:

Throughout Christian history, Psalms have been presented or “performed” in liturgy in many ways, both spoken (solo voice, choral reading, or congregational responsive reading) and sung (in one of several forms of chant, in responsorial settings, metrical settings, solo or choral anthems), though the vast majority of practices in history push beyond speaking to some form of song. In recent years, the Psalms have also been sung to new settings in popular, folk, or contemporary styles of music, and depicted visually. The following paragraphs briefly describe this range of options, offer brief commentary on their strengths and weaknesses, and provide an annotated guide to publications and recordings of each mode of presentation.

Solo Reading

The simplest form of rendering a Psalm is simply having it read by a single reader or lector, just as with any other scripture reading. While appropriate for all Psalms, the use of a single reader is particularly fitting for the Psalter’s most intimate texts, its personal prayers of lament and trust. In fact, congregations that practice regular corporate singing or recitation of the Psalms may benefit from occasionally diverging from this practice for certain intimate Psalms (perhaps Psalm 88 or 139).

While a solo reading is relatively simple compared with some of the more elaborate forms for reading or singing it is by no means an easy alternative. Reading poetry is a challenging assignment. The best readings are those that are alert to a Psalms’ pace, form, script, and other poetic devices contribute to its meaning (see the previous section for more details).

Printed Resources

Calvin Seerveld, *Voicing God’s Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. The volume includes a recording of the author’s effective and moving readings of his own translations.

Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers. Liturgy Training Publications. Published annually for lectionary texts. Scripture readings are printed with helps for effective interpretation.

For general guidance in the public reading of scripture, see:

- Charles L. Bartow. *Effective Speech Communication in Leading Worship*. Nashville, Abingdon, 1988.
- G. Robert Jacks. *Getting the Word Across: Speech Communication for Pastors and Lay Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Jack C. Rang. *How to Read the Bible Aloud: Oral Interpretation of Scripture*. Paulist Press, 1994.
- Jana Childers. *Performing the Word: Preaching as Theater*. Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Clayton J. Schmit. *Public Reading of Scripture: A Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002.
- Harold A. Brack, *Effective Oral Interpretation for Religious Leaders*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964.

Choral Reading

Choral readings of Psalm texts offer rich possibilities for presenting the Psalms in creative and accessible ways in many congregations. The advantages are many: multiple readers convey the communal nature of many Psalm texts, a rehearsed reading promises to capture more of the poetic nuance than unrehearsed congregational reading, and the interplay among

readers is useful for capturing the dialogic nature of many Psalm texts.

The danger of this practice may be the temptation toward overly complicated renderings of a Psalm which calling attention to the innovation of the performance rather than the text—though this danger is no different from dangers that face any preacher or musician in almost any of service.

Examples of choral readings of the Psalms can be found in:

- Calvin Seerveld. *Voicing God's Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Michael Perry. *The Dramatized Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994. Suggested choral readings for most Psalms.
- Donald L. Griggs. *Praying and Teaching the Psalms*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- John and Audra Parker. *Psalms for Worship*. Shawnee Press/Harold Flammer Music.

Responsive or Antiphonal Readings

Psalms may also be read responsively with a single leader alternating with the full assembly, or with the assembly divided into two or more groups—either by gender or by seating arrangement.

Antiphonal readings are a staple of some monastic renderings of the Psalter during their cycle of daily prayer (though other monastic communities sing the majority of Psalms). Responsive readings also became a prominent way of increasing congregational participation in worship among twentieth-century Protestants. A large number of twentieth century hymnals included a section of responsive readings of the Psalms. This mode rendering the Psalms has the advantage of being relatively easy to do with little rehearsal or preparation.

This practice is, however, very difficult to do well. And many musicians lament the lost opportunities in having

congregations read, rather than sing a Psalm. Indeed, it is this practice that Earle Bennet Cross labeled as “deplorable” (see p. 3 above). There are at least three barriers to overcome to make this practice work well.

One of the barriers to effective responsive readings are the verse markings of modern Bibles, which often are the basis for marking off who reads what text. In many Psalms, verse markings do not correspond with the form or flow the poetry (and they were added long after each of the Psalms were originally composed). This can easily be remedied by reprinting the Psalm with markers for readers that correspond to the poetic structure rather than the verse markings.

Another barrier to effective responsive readings is the low-pitched tone in which most congregational habitually read together. This is, no doubt, a difficult habit to break. But leaders could consider adding instructional cues to the reading (e.g. “read with quiet intensity” or “with urgency”), much like the composer’s cues in a musical anthem. Even subtle invitations to read with interpretive sensitivity can make quite a difference in congregational reading.

Still another issue is the pace of congregational readings. Many monastic communities over time develop a beautiful contemplative pace for reading the text, with ample silence between verses or half-verses. In some monastic communities, all Psalms are read at the same measured, contemplative pace, regardless of genre. This has the value of encouraging a disciplined, contemplative approach to all texts, though it does risk missing some of the exuberance of the more celebratory Psalms. Other communities intentionally develop variation in their approach to group reading, rendering Psalms of praise and thanksgiving with more exuberance and rendering Psalms of lament or intimate trust with more reflection. For congregations who use responsive reading infrequently, it can be enormously helpful have a choir or other leadership group rehearse the reading

of the Psalm ahead of time and lead the congregation in speaking their parts.

Readings with Musical Refrains

The following hymnals include several Psalms set for responsive reading, with boldface print to indicate the congregation's part. Each of the sources alternates parts between leader and people in ways that follow the poetic structure of the Psalm rather than verse divisions. Each text also includes a musical refrain (see "responsorial Psalmody" below).

- Chalice Hymnal. St. Louis: Chalice Pres, 1995. pp. 726-768.
- The Covenant Hymnal: A Worshipbook. Chicago: Covenant Publications, 1996. pp. 779-861.
- United Methodist Hymnal. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989.—the official denominational hymnal of the United Methodist Church. Includes 100 responsorial selections for each Psalm appointed by the 1983 Common Lectionary. (pp. 736-862).
- Come, Let Us Worship: The Korean-English Presbyterian Hymnal and Service Book. Louisville: Geneva Press, 2001. In both Korean and English, pages 393-537.
- Sing! A New Creation. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2002—a publication of Reformed Church of America, the Christian Reformed Church, and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.
- Voices United. Etobicoke, ON: United Church Publishing House, 1996—the denominational hymnal of the United Church of Canada. Pp. 724-875. (This section also includes a few metrical Psalm settings).

Readings Only

- Voices in Worship: Hymns of the Christian Life. Christian Publications, Inc.: 2003—a hymnal for Christian and Missionary Alliance congregations. Includes over 60 responsive readings based on

representative examples of each type of Psalm (pp. 674-734).

- Trinity Hymnal. Atlanta: Great Commission Publications, 1990—the hymnal of the Presbyterian Church of America and Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Responsive readings for portions of most Psalms. Pp. 785-841.
- Hymnal: A Worshipbook. Brethren Press, Faith and Life Press, Mennonite Publishing House, 1992—a hymnal for the Church of the Brethren, the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the Mennonite Church in North America. Nos. 811-825.

Classification Challenges

Any classification system for types of Psalm singing will be inadequate to convey the multiple possibilities that composers and songwriters have at their disposal. I have chosen to present this material in four basic categories: chant, responsorial settings, metrical psalmody, and scripture choruses.

The challenge is that some chant involves responses by the congregation, some responsorial settings use verses that are metrical, and some metrical psalms are done in a popular music style and thus are known as scripture choruses. Indeed, strictly speaking the term 'chant' refers, in practice, to a melodic style, 'responsorial' refers to a type of leadership, 'metrical' to a type of textual adaptation, and 'chorus' (often) to a style of music.

Still, these four categories seem to me to map the territory most efficiently, reflecting the basic primary musical literatures used in the majority of North American congregations. Thanks to all readers for their patience in negotiating these challenges!

Chant

While reading Psalms is accessible and open to several creative variations, the vast majority of resources for rendering the Psalms in worship involve singing. The Psalms cry out to be sung.

And indeed, the Psalms have been sung for 3000 years, in innumerable musical idioms and styles. The most ancient traditions for Psalm singing—and indeed, some of the most vital living traditions—involve some form of chant. Rendering a Psalm by means of chant has two main advantages. First, it invites the participation of the community (either a choir or the entire congregation), a fitting mode of expression for corporate prayer. Second, in contrast to metrical Psalmody (see below), it allows for singing the unadapted text of the Psalm.

For congregations new to chanting, the process of learning to chant together in a manageable unison may seem daunting. However, the practice is very learnable, provided that there is a confident and patient musical leader. In fact, Erik Routley once referred to chant as “the only really simple way of singing [the Psalms] congregationally.” Over the past decade, I have been gratefully surprised to hear numerous testimonies of pastors, musicians, and worshipers in a variety of traditions who have said, in effect, “chanting Psalmody seemed daunting, but wasn’t. Once we started, it grew and developed quite naturally, and now seems as natural as breathing.” Typically, the most successful chanting happens in communities with a small group or choir that rehearses it first in order to unify the pace and strengthen the basic cadences of the chant.

There are several vibrant living traditions for chanting the Psalms. Each of the following forms of chant can be rendered in several ways:

- Having the whole congregation sing the entirety of the Psalm text.
- Having a cantor (or small ensemble) sing a verse, with the entire congregation answering with the subsequent verse. This may be known as “responsorial” form of chant (though the term “responsorial” can mean different things in the context of Psalmody).

- Having the congregation divide into two equal groups and singing each verse or half-verse in alternation. This is often called “antiphonal chant.”

Note: some Psalm traditions suggest alternating between a cantor and the assembly at the half-verse, with the congregation essentially completing the thought of the cantor. While this is technically possible, it also can break up the Psalm into too many tiny parts. It also can make it difficult to interpret the nuance of the poetic parallelism contained within the verse (see the discussion on parallelism above).

In every form, what distinguishes chant from other musical forms is the closeness of the music to human speech. Chant is a form of heightened speech. Erik Routley once advised thinking of chant as “reading-plus” rather than “music-minus.”

Here are several forms of chant.

1. Psalm tones and pointed text. (See Appendix 2, example 1). The simplest form involves the use of a 8-note Psalm tone, with “pointing” marks included in the printed text.

Music. The eight notes outline a simple melodic pattern that can be applied to any text, regardless of its length. Typically, the eight-notes are divided into two 4-note sequences, the second of which feels like a satisfying musical completion of the first. (Or, to use slightly more technical terminology: the first is an antecedent phrase; the second is a consequent phrase).

In each of these four-note sequences, the first pitch (called the “reciting tone”) is the pitch on which the first several words of each half-verse are sung. The final three notes create musical movement near the end of the phrase. Several liturgical resources offer double tones with four (rather than two) four-note clusters. These provide music for two rather than one Psalm verse.

Pointed Text. Printing marks included within the Psalm text itself guide singers in mapping these musical phrases appropriately onto texts—no matter how short or long a given verse might be. Each verse is divided into two parts, typically marked by an asterisk (*), with the first half of the verse sung to the first part of the Psalm tone, and second half sung to the second part of the Psalm tone. A simple mark, usually a dot, is placed above the syllable at which the singer switches from the reciting tone to the remaining pitches.

Singers would recite the first syllables of a line on the first pitch of the Psalm tone, and then sing the last three syllables on the last three notes of the tone. The point, then, tells the singer when to change pitch. The point is usually placed above an accented syllable, and at a point in the phrase that guarantees that an accented syllable is sung on the final pitch.

The most effective chant is usually very much like speech. The pace for chanting a text is similar to that of reading it out loud. Accented syllables are stressed in singing, just as they quite naturally are in speaking.

Fortunately, most congregations can learn this form of chanting without any technical knowledge of textual accent, antecedent and consequent phrases, and text points. They simply hear it done, and follow the lead.

See the following resources for this form of Psalmody.

- A New Hymnal for Churches and Schools, ed. Jeffery Rowthorn and Russell Schulz-Widmar. Yale University Press, 1992. Five Psalm tones and eight antiphons, along with the pointed printing of a majority of Psalm texts (also includes thirteen metrical Psalms and twenty four hymns based on Psalms).
- Lutheran Book of Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978—the official hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Includes pointed text for the entire Psalter (pp. 215–289) and 10 Psalm tones (pp. 291). See also D. Rotermond,

Intonations and Alternative Accompaniments for LBW Psalm Tones. Concordia.

- Lutheran Worship. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982. pp. 313–368. —the official hymnal of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Includes the pointed text for the entire Psalter, 10 Psalm tones, and instructions on chanting Psalmody. See also D. Rotermond, Intonations and Alternative Accompaniments for LW Psalm Tones. Concordia.
- Hymns and Psalms. London: Methodist Publishing House, 1983—a project of the British Methodist Conference, includes the melody line only for several chant settings of the Psalms.
- Libro de Liturgia Cántico. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998—a Spanish language hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Includes pointed text for several Psalms in Spanish and multiple Psalm tones. pp. 151–179.

2. Anglican Chant.

(See Appendix 2, example 2). Anglican chant uses Psalm tones and a pointed text, just as the previous example, but features Psalm tones with four-part harmony. The use of this harmony, often with organ accompaniment, has created a very expressive and beautiful form of Psalmody.

The best examples of Anglican chant feature the sensitive adaptation of a given Psalm tone to the meaning of each verse of text. Expressive organists, for example, may accompany Psalm 23 with soft and subtle sounds to accompany the words “The Lord is my shepherd,” dark and brooding sounds to accompany “the valley of the shadow of death,” and triumphant sounds to accompany “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Expressive choir directors may, for example, ask singers to sing Psalm 24 with both quiet intensity (for phrases like “who shall ascend the hill of the Lord”) and majestic breadth (for phrases like “The Lord, mighty in battle, is the king of glory.”) The combination of a repeated harmonized melody, with dramatic

possibilities for choir and organ, makes this form of Psalmody one of the most expressive. I should also note that some congregations have explored how this same approach to Psalmody might work with jazz chords in a very different musical idiom that the choirs and organs of English cathedrals.

Music

Hymnal 1982: Service Music. Accompaniment Edition, vol. 1 Church Publishing, 1982, nos. S 408-445.

Wyton, Alec, ed. The Anglican Chant Psalter. New York: Church Publishing, 1987.

The RSCM Chant Book. Croydon, England: The Royal School of Church Music, n.d.

Recordings

- The beauty and popularity of Anglican chant is signaled by the significant number of available recordings.
- The Psalms of David. (10 vol.) Priory.
- Psalms from St. Paul's (11 vol.) Hyperion.
- The Psalms of David from King's Choir of King's College (3 vol). EMI Records Ltd.
- Psalms. (2 vol.) Virgin Classics. Westminster Abbey Choir, Martin Neary, director.

In general, this form of chant is best for choirs and organists with ample rehearsal time. As Erik Routley once said of it: "Never was there such exquisite Psalm singing as one can count on in the cathedrals: but the congregation at large has to some extent lost this." This form of chant is also very valuable for devotional use made possible by modern recordings.

3. Gelineau Psalmody. (See Appendix 2, example 3). Eager to promote a form of chanted Psalmody appropriate for congregational use, in the early 1950s Roman Catholic liturgical reformer Joseph P. Gelineau developed a form of chant in which a regular pulse is maintained and accented syllables in the text are sung to correspond with the recurring pulse. Thus, the basic idea

behind Gelineau chant is that the presence of a regular pulse makes it easier for a congregation to sing together. This form of Psalmody is especially associated with the Grail Psalter, a translation which gives particular attention to the pattern of syllabic stress in the English text.

When well led, this form of chant can be effective for encouraging participation. When poorly led, it can risk artificial imposition of a rhythm on a text that may be too complex to fit it. Published settings of Gelineau Psalms also feature antiphons that recur throughout the Psalm.

Note: Most often, Gelineau chants are sung with a congregational refrain—and thus could well have been included below in the section on responsorial psalmody. I have included them here, because of their unique approach to chanting the text.

Lectionary Psalms: Grail/Gelineau. Chicago: GIA Publications. The complete Psalter in Gelineau-style settings. GIA also publishes several smaller volumes of Gelineau settings, and few individual Psalms. These individual settings would be useful for a choir that might experiment with this style of chanting for a particular service.

- J. Robert Carroll, A Guide to Gelineau Psalmody. Chicago: GIA Publications. A how-to guide for singing Psalms in this style.

Recording

- Joseph Gelineau: Psalms of David. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1995, with the Cathedral Singers, Richard Proulx, conductor.

4. Plainchant. Many plainchant settings are essentially a variation on no. 1 above, but with a more extensive pattern of notes to end each Psalmtone sequence. More complex patterns of chant involve use of a unique chant-like melody for each Psalm verse. Published and recording examples offer historic melodies that date back into the medieval period, from both Western and

Eastern liturgical rites. The most complex forms of chant, in which the cantor improvises a melody in the style of a given chant, are often called “cantillation.”

Printed Resources

- Hymnal 1982: Service Music. Accompaniment Edition, vol. 1 (Church Publishing, 1982), no. S 446.
- The Plainchant Psalter, ed. James Litton. New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1988. Includes substantial introduction on the practice of chanting the Psalms, and plainchant Psalmtones, with pointed text, for all 150 Psalms.
- Psalterium monasticum (available from GIA Publications). Includes Gregorian settings of the Psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours based on the Vatican-approved Thesaurus liturgiae horarum monasticae.
- By Flowing Waters: Chant for the Liturgy (A Collection of Unaccompanied Song for Assemblies, Cantors, and Choirs). Ed. Paul F. Ford. includes 102 Psalms. Liturgical Press.

5. Responsorial Psalmody (or Psalmody with Congregational Refrains or Antiphons)

The term “responsorial Psalmody” refers to any rendering of Psalms in a back-and-forth, call and response format between a leader or small group of singers and the congregation. (See Appendix 2, examples 9-14)

Often, however, the term “responsorial Psalmody” has come to be associated with the use of a congregational sung refrain or antiphon in conjunction with either the reading or singing of the entire Psalm by a single voice (reader or cantor) or choir.

As they frame the Psalm text, these refrains play significant interpretive role, signaling to the congregation a key theme or image in the text. Often a key phrase or central verse of the Psalm is chosen as the antiphon or refrain. Some published settings choose refrains or antiphons that are not directly from the Psalm, but rather come from the season of the year or place in the service

in which the Psalm might be sung. (Note: in some contexts, the term ‘refrain’ refers to the use of an actual line from the Psalm, while the term ‘antiphon’ refers to a paraphrase or summary of the meaning of the Psalms).

This form of Psalmody works especially well for Psalms that themselves have refrains, as is the case in Psalms 42, 46, 59, 80, 107, for example. It is especially effective in Psalms where a refrain may not be noticed upon first reading, as in the acclamation “God is Holy” in Psalm 99:3, 5, 9.

This method of Psalm singing is also useful because it can be particularly responsive to local needs and cultural contexts. Refrains could presumably be drawn from any musical style. Published refrains are currently available in classical, jazz, folk, folk-rock, gospel and other musical idioms.

This method of Psalm singing has also achieved an impressive ecumenical reach in the past two generations. Several mainline Protestant, liturgical Protestant, Roman Catholic, and even some evangelical publishers have issued extensive publications of responsorial Psalmody. Evangelical and charismatic churches may well be drawn to this tradition because of the recent publication of volumes of responsorial Psalmody in a variety of folk music styles. In fact, several praise choruses (which are often based on a single Psalm verse) may be used as a congregational refrain before, during, and after the reading of a Psalm.

Responsorial Psalmody has the advantage of using the actual text, not a poetic reworking, of the biblical text (though some responsorial Psalm settings feature reworkings of the Psalm text for solo singers or cantors). In the hands of skilled composers and cantors, responsorial Psalmody calls attention to the poetic features of the Psalter that are so carefully studied by biblical scholars. It is also quite possible for local musicians to compose Psalm refrains in ways that are

attentive to local needs—making this one of the most contextual forms of Psalmody.

Printed Resources

- A Hymn Tune Psalter. Carl P. Daw, Jr. and Kevin Hackett. New York: Church Publishing, 1998. Responsorial Psalms with Psalm tones and antiphons derived from familiar hymn tunes.
- Book of Psalms. Presbyterian Church in Canada 1995. Responsorial settings with at least two different refrain options and Psalmtones for each of the 150 Psalms.
- The Basilica Psalter: Responsorial Psalms for the Parish Church. Jay Hunstiger. Liturgical Press.
- United Methodist Hymnal. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989—the denominational hymnal of the United Methodist Church. Includes 100 responsorial selections for each Psalm that is appointed by the 1983 Common Lectionary. (pp. 736-. 862).
- Mil Voces Para Celebrar: Himnario Methodista. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1996. Includes responsorial settings for the majority of Psalms in Spanish. pp. 87-140.
- Lift Every Voice and Sing II: An African American Hymnal. New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1993. Includes 8 responsorial Psalms, with music in African-American gospel style (pp. 273-280).
- Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1987. Includes over 20 responsorial Psalms, with music in African-American gospel style (nos. 499-545), plus 20 Psalmtones (nos. 546-565).
- The New Century Psalter. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1999, responsorial settings for all 150 Psalms.
- The Psalter: Psalms and Canticles for Singing. Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993—an extensive collection of responsorial Psalms and Psalmtones in a variety of formats and styles.
- This Far By Faith: An African American Resource for Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996,

nos. 1-36. Responsorial Psalms and Psalm tones, with music in African-American gospel style.

- Holbert, John C., S T. Kimbrough Jr, and Carlton R. Young, eds. Psalms for Praise and Worship. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992. Pointed printing of all 150 Psalms, along with 127 musical antiphons, and several Psalm tones.
- Psalter for Worship. 3 volumes (Cycles A, B, C). Augsburg Fortress.
- Singing the Psalms. 5 volumes. OCP.
- Psalms for the Church Year. 10 Volumes. Chicago: GIA Publications. Responsorial Psalms for cantor and congregation in a folk liturgical style.
- Psalms and Ritual Music. Three volumes (year A, B, C), in multiple editions. World Library Publications.

Jazz Settings

- Bill Carter, ed., Swing a New Song to the Lord: Resources for Jazz Worship. Presbybob Music (visit www.presbybob.com). Includes nine Psalm settings.
- Jazz Psalms—Sheet Music. Grand Rapids: Calvin College, 2004. A recording of these Jazz Psalms is also available from Calvin College.

Single Authors

- Tony Alonso, Michael Mahler, and Lori True. As Morning Breaks and Evening Sets: Psalms, Canticles and Hymns for the Liturgy of the Hours. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 2004. Includes 10 responsorial Psalm settings for cantor and congregation in a folk liturgical style. A recording of music from this collection is also available from GIA Publications.
- Michael Burkhardt. Psalms for the Church Year. MorningStar Music Publishers.
- Rory Cooney, Cries of the Spirit – 2 volumes. Portland: Oregon Catholic Press. Includes responsorial Psalm settings for cantor and congregation in a folk liturgical style. A recording of music from this collection is also available from the publisher.

- Christopher Willicock, *Psalms for the Journey*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991. 12 responsorial Psalms for cantor or choir and congregation.
- Cyprian Consiglio, OSB, Lord, *Open My Lips: Music for the Hours*. Portland: Oregon Catholic Pres. Includes 9 Psalm settings. A recording of music from these collections is also available from the publisher.
- Jeanne Cotter. *We Are God's People: Psalms for the Family of God*. (GIA Publications). Includes 10 responsorial Psalm settings for cantor and congregation in a folk liturgical style. A recording of music from this collection is also available from GIA Publications.
- Michael Guimont. *Lectionary Psalms and Psalms for the Revised Common Lectionary* (GIA Publications). A recording of music from these collections is also available from GIA Publications.
- Robert A. Hawthorne. *Portland Psalter. Book One: Liturgical Years ABC*. Church Publishing. settings for all Psalms appointed for the Sunday Eucharist according to the Book of Common Prayer lectionary and the Revised Common Lectionary. Book Two will contain the balance of Psalm settings as well as a CD-ROM with printable versions of the congregational refrains.
- Hal Hopson, *18 Psalms for the Church Year*, Hope Publishing Company. See also his *Psalm Refrains and Tones and 10 More Psalms* (also Hope Publishing).
- Bob Hurd, Eleazar Cortés, Jaime Cortez, Mary Frances Reza and Donna Peña. *Cantaré Eternamente / For Ever I Will Sing Bilingual Psalms for the Liturgical Year*. 2 volumes (Oregon Catholic Press). Includes 46 bilingual Psalms. A recording of music from these collections is also available from the publisher.
- David Hass, *Light and Peace: Morning Praise and Evensong* (GIA Publications). Includes 4 responsorial Psalm settings for cantor and congregation in a folk liturgical style. A recording of music from this collection is also available from GIA Publications.
- Columba Kelly, OSB. *Lectionary Psalms for Lent and Easter and Lectionary Psalms for Advent and Christmas*. For cantor, assembly, and keyboard.
- Robert Kreutz, *Psalms*. Portland: Oregon Catholic Press.
- Henry V. Gerike, *Psallite: Psalms Settings for the Church Year*. Concordia Publishing. 23 Psalm settings.
- *Psalm Songs*. 3 volumes. ed. David Ogden and Alan Smith. London: Cassell, 1998. Also, published by Augsburg Fortress, 1998. Responsorial Psalms for cantor and congregation in a folk liturgical style. Also available in a one volume *Psalm Songs: Complete Set*.
- Carlos Rosas. *¡Grita de Alegría! Salmos para el año litúrgico*. Portland: Oregon Catholic Press.
- John Michael Talbot. *Chant from the Hermitage*. OCP. A recording of music from these collections is also available from the publisher.
- John Schiavone, *A Lectionary Psalter. Psalms and Gospel Acclamations for Sundays, Solemnities and Feasts for the Three-year Lectionary Cycle*.
- Ed Bolduc, *A Collection of Songs and Psalms*. World Library Publications.
- Chrysogonus Waddell, *Psalms for the Advent Season*. World Library Publications.
- Dolores Hruby, *Seasonal Psalms for Children*. World Library Publications.

Most responsorial settings use of a congregational sung refrain or antiphon, interspersed with the singing of the literal Psalm text by a cantor or choir. Some, however, use of a congregational sung refrain, interspersed with the singing of an adapted Psalm text by a cantor or choir. This form has become particularly popular in recent years, with hundreds of folk-like Psalm settings emerging from Roman Catholic congregations, following the Second Vatican Council. Roman Catholic publishers, such as G.I.A. Publications, Oregon Catholic Press, and

World Library Publications offered hundreds of published Psalm settings for cantor and congregation. Their published hymnals also include substantial sections of Psalmody, most often with a simple, folk-like refrain or antiphon for congregation, with adapted Psalm text set for soloist (and guitar, keyboard, or small instrumental ensemble). See, for example:

- *Flory canto*. Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 1989, pp. 494-579 (musical refrains only).
- *Glory and Praise*. Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 1997, pp. 167-285.
- *Ritual Song*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1996, nos. 28-200.
- *The Colledgeville Hymnal*. (Colledgeville: Liturgical Press, 1990, nos. 104-160.
- *Gather Comprehensive*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1994, nos. 18-152.
- *Worship: A Hymnal and Service Book for Roman Catholics*. Third Edition. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1998. See nos. 24-100 for settings of the majority of Psalms, with both an antiphon, Psalm tone, and Gelineau-style tone.
- *Catholic Community Hymnal*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1999. See nos. 19-48.
- *One Faith, Una Voz*. Oregon Catholic Press. Includes extensive bilingual responsorial Psalms.

Musicians need access to the music leader's editions of these hymnal for complete musical accompaniments.

Recorded Examples

- *Marty Haugen, Come, Let Us Sing for Joy*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 2000. Includes eleven responsorial Psalms for cantor and congregation in a folk liturgical style.
- *Sing Out! A Children's Psalter CD*. World Library Publications.

Performance Suggestions

For suggestions about effective leadership of responsorial Psalmody, see Kathleen Harmon, *The Ministry of Cantors* (Liturgical Press).

6. Metrical Psalmody

Metrical Psalms feature poetic reworkings of the biblical text that provide regular patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables so that the Psalms can be sung to hymn tunes. Some metrical Psalms also feature rhyme. (See Appendix 2, examples 15-19).

The advantage of metrical Psalmody is the accessibility of musical settings, an advantage that was central to the sixteenth century Protestant Reformers. Metrical Psalmody was promoted by Martin Luther "so that the Word of God even by means of song might live among the people." John Calvin, who restricted church music to metrical Psalmody for the congregation, contended that "the Psalms can stimulate us to raise our hearts to God and arouse us to an ardor in invoking as well as exalting with praises the glory of his name." As Emily Brink concludes, "the great strength of metrical song is the accessibility and memorable quality of patterned texts and tunes to a large gathering of untrained singers."

Metrical Psalmody was the exclusive form of church music for early Reformed and Presbyterian congregations, with distinct traditions of Genevan and Scottish Psalmody. The Puritans sang Psalms as they founded new communities in what became the United States, taking with them the Ainsworth Psalter from Europe and publishing *The Bay Psalter* as one of most prominent early American publications. Isaac Watts began his work as text writer by writing numerous metrical Psalm settings. Later, he expanded these to include explicitly Christological references. "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun," example, is Watt's metrical setting of Psalm 72, but with explicit naming of Jesus as the king referenced in the Psalm. Watt's Psalmody influenced nearly every subsequent English language hymnal, and was particularly significant in shaping

the musical repertoire of many African American denominations in the United States.

Metrical Psalmody has also been practiced by several other Christian traditions. In the late 19th century, C.P. Jones, an early African American Pentecostal Holiness Bishop, produced several metrical Psalms for use by his congregation in Jackson, Mississippi. In the 1970s, several renewal groups began to produce metrical Psalms that could be sung to a variety of musical idioms shaped by more popular music. The Iona community has produced a particularly influential collection of metrical psalms. Recent work has called for new inclusion of metrical Psalmody as a form of congregational participation in Roman Catholic worship.

Metrical Psalms vary widely in terms of how closely they correspond with and parallel the biblical text. Some closely follow the logic, script, imagery, and even the parallelism of the Psalm text, while others exercise great freedom in re-arranging the basic ideas of a given text. Some (especially settings of longer Psalms) omit several ideas, images, or petitions from a Psalm, while others “pad” the Psalm text with additional images or insights in order to fill out the desired meter.

The choice of meter is especially important when setting a Psalm. The meter of text can change the entire feel of the text, with some meters conveying strength and vigor (especially those that begin each line with an accented syllable) and others conveying a more introspective or narrative feel. In contrast with the English and Scottish traditions of Psalmody which nearly all Psalms were set in a ballad-like Common Meter (86 86), the Genevan Psalter used 110 different meters to set 150 Psalms!

Some well-known hymns are clearly inspired by specific Psalms, but are sufficiently independent of the Psalm so that they are usually categorized not as metrical Psalms, but hymns:

- “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (Martin Luther’s hymn based on Psalm 46),

- “O God Our Help in Ages Past” (Isaac Watt’s hymn based on Psalm 90),
- “Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven” (based on Psalm 103),
- “O Worship the King” (based on Psalm 104)

Congregations (and hymnal editors) would do well to clearly identify the connection between the hymn and the biblical Psalm.

In recent years, metrical Psalmody continues to be the exclusive form of church music for some Presbyterian denominations (e.g., the Reformed Presbyterian Church), remains prominent in the church music of others (e.g. Orthodox Presbyterian), and has witnessed renewed attention in several others (e.g., Presbyterian Church USA). Numerous recent publications signal a modest resurgence of published metrical Psalmody. Many recently published texts and tunes may well prove to be among the most accessible and creative ever produced, though their influence depends on the intentionality of congregations.

One disadvantage of metrical Psalmody is that worshipers are singing an adaptation of the text (some of which depart rather significantly from the text), rather than the Psalm itself.

Denominational Hymnals

- Book of Praise. Quebec: Presbyterian Church of Canada, 1997—the denominational hymnal of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Includes 108 metrical Psalm settings.
- Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter. Winnipeg: Premier Printing, 1984—the denominational Psalter of the Canadian Reformed Church. English language metrical settings of all 150 Psalms for use with Genevan tunes.
- Praise! Psalms, Hymns, and Songs for Christian Worship. Praise Trust, 2000. Includes metrical settings of each Psalm, with multiple settings of select Psalms.

- Presbyterian Hymnal. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990—the denominational hymnal of the Presbyterian Church USA. Selections 158-258 feature settings of the Psalms in multiple formats (metrical, chant, responsorial), but with a predominance of metrical. The same volume is published for ecumenical use under the title *Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs* (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990).
- Psalter Hymnal. Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1987—the denominational hymnal of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The collection begins with metrical settings of all 150 Psalms, and includes several dozen additional metrical Psalms scattered throughout the thematic sections of the book.
- The Book of Psalms for Singing. Pittsburgh: Board of Education and Publication, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1973—the denominational Psalter of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.
- Rejoice in the Lord. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985—a denominational hymnal for the Reformed Church of America. Selections 81-143 include metrical settings of roughly one third of the biblical Psalms.
- Trinity Hymnal. Atlanta: Great Commission Publications, 1990—the hymnal of the Presbyterian Church of America and Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Includes several metrical Psalm settings scattered throughout the thematically-organized sections of the hymnal.
- Trinity Psalter. Presbyterian Church in America, 1994. Words-only, metrical settings of all 150 Psalms, with suggestions for use with familiar hymntunes. Both a text-only and music edition are available from Crown and Covenant Publications.
- Crown and Covenant Publications also distributes the Psalters from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Japan, the Free Church of Scotland, the

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, and the Irish Reformed Church.

Single Author Collections

- Anderson, Fred R. *Singing Psalms of Joy and Praise*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986. 53 metrical Psalms, along with suggested tunes, and brief prayers that correspond with each Psalm.
- John Bell, *Psalms, of Patience, Protest, and Praise*. Chicago: GIA Publishing, 1993. A recording of music from this collection is also available from GIA Publications.
- _____. *Psalms of David and Songs of Mary*. Chicago: GIA Publishing, 1993. Includes settings of 7 Psalms. A recording of music from this collection is also available from GIA Publications.
- Mary Louise Bringle, *Joy and Wonder, Love and Longing*. Chicago: GIA, 2002. Includes metrical settings of Psalm 42.
- Carl P. Daw Jr., *New Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*. Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1996.
- Ruth C. Duck, *Circles of Care*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998, see pp. 1-4 for settings of Psalm 8, 23, 40, and 90.
- Timothy Dudley-Smith. *A House of Praise: Collected Hymns, 1961-2001*. Oxford University Press/Hope Publishing. 2003. Includes 45 metrical Psalms (pp. 131-176).
- Rusty Edwards. *As Sunshine to a Garden*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999. Includes paraphrases of Psalms 47, 149, 51, 23, 122, 27, 62, 66, 30, 139, 43, 65, and 121.
- Gracia Grindal. *We are One in Christ*. Kingston, NY: Selah Publishing Company, 1996. Includes a section of 12 Psalms.
- Christopher Idle. *Light Upon the River*. London: St. Matthias Press, 1998. Includes over 60 metrical Psalms (pp. 201-264).
- Fred Kaan, *The Only Earth We Know: Hymn Texts by Fred Kaan* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Stainer and Bell,

1999). See pp. 86–90 for settings of Psalm 8, 23, 92, and 130.

- Richard Leach. *Memory, Take the Hand of Hope*. Kingston, NY: Selah Publishing Company, 2000. Includes a short section of Psalms paraphrases.
- _____. *Over the Waves of Words*. Kingston, NY: Selah Publishing Company, 1996. Includes a short section with paraphrases of Psalm 1, 137, 8, and 150.
- Michael Morgan. *Psalter for Christian Worship*. Louisville: Columbia Theological Seminary, Witherspoon Press, and The Office of Theology and Worship Presbyterian Church (USA), 1999.
- Michael Perry. *Singing to God*. Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1995. Includes approximately 60 Psalm paraphrases.
- James Quinn, *Praise for All Seasons: The Hymns of James Quinn SJ*. Selah Publishing Company, 1994.
- Herman Stuempfle, Jr. *Redeeming the Time*. Chicago: GIA Publishing, 1997. Includes paraphrases of 5 Psalms: 139, 138, 130, 31, and 144.
- Christopher L. Webber, *A New Metrical Psalter*. New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1986.
- Jaroslav J. Vajda. *Sing Peace, Sing Gift of Peace*. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003. Includes paraphrases of Psalms 93, 130, 111, 46, 23, and 133.

Historical

- *The Songs and Hymns of Isaac Watts* (reprinted Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997).
- S.T. Kimbrough, Jr. and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds. *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*. Vol. II: *The Hymns and Poems on Holy Scripture* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990). See pp. 441–451 for Psalm-based examples.
- See also the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada for facsimile editions of *The Bay Psalm Book* (1640) and Henry Ainsworth's *Psalter* (used in the Plymouth Colony).

Recorded Examples

- *Psalms of the Trinity Psalter*. 2 volumes. Savannah, Georgia: IPC Press, 1999. Scottish Festival Singers, Ian McCrorie, Director. Available through Gothic Records.
- *Music of the Genevan Psalter*. H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. Available at www.calvin.edu/worship/psalms.
- *Psalms*. Music of the Genevan Psalter recorded by the Japan Bach Collegium, Masaakoi Susuki, conductor. Available at www.calvin.edu/worship/psalms.
- *Scottish Metrical Psalms*. Northern Presbytery Choir, Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, conducted by Kathleen R. Wright. 5 CDs. Available through Crown and Covenant Publications.
- *Korean Psalter and CD Set*. 20 CDs from the Korean Book of Psalms for Singing. Available through Crown and Covenant Publications.
- Crown and Covenant Publications also lists over a dozen other recordings of metrical Psalms by individual choirs and artists.

Psalms-Based Solo and Choral Anthems

There are literally thousands of choral and solo anthems on Psalm based text, including famous examples from George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* ("Lift Up Your Heads" based on Psalm 24) and Johannes Brahms' *A German Requiem* ("How Lovely Are Your Dwellings" based on Psalm 84). The catalog of nearly every publisher of sacred and liturgical music includes many selections based on particular Psalms, with dozens of new published Psalm settings added every year.

Many Psalm settings for solo or choir are written in what musicians call a "through-composed" form. That means that unique music is written for every phrase in the entire Psalm, without the repetition of a melody as in a hymn or responsorial setting of the Psalm. Through-composed settings are almost impossible for effective congregational singing, because congregational

singing relies on the use of repeated melodies (as in the repetition of melodies in each stanza of a hymn) or refrains (as in responsorial Psalmody). But they are very effective for soloists or choirs, given their opportunity to rehearse the nuances of more complex music.

To locate solo and choral works based on individual Psalms, consult:

- James Laster, *Catalogue of Choral Music Arranged in Biblical Order*. Second Edition. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1996. Volume 1, plus supplement.
- _____. *Catalogue of Vocal Solos and Duets Arranged in Biblical order*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1984.

Several publishers also often on-line scriptural indices for their music.

Recordings

Several choral and vocal solo recordings include Psalm-based selections. For a sampling of recordings devoted exclusively to musical settings of the Psalms, see:

- *Psalms*. Turtle Creek Chorale. 1999.
- *Make a Joyful Noise: American Psalmody*. Ron Jeffers, conductor. New World Records, 1996.
- *Goostly Psalms: Anglo-American Psalmody from 1550-1800*. Paul Hillier, conductor. Harmonia Mundi, 1996.
- *The Psalms in Contemporary and Emerging Worship, Psalm-Based Scripture Songs, and the Psalms in Popular Music Idioms*

The majority of published resources for using the Psalms in worship were developed for use in what many now think of as “traditional” or “liturgical” worship—though some of them use a folk or jazz musical idiom that is associated with “contemporary” worship. They present a rich repository of pastoral, homiletical, and artistic wisdom, and continue to be used by millions of Christians each week.

Yet many congregations in contemporary or emerging worship traditions may not perceive the potential of this material for their own learning or use. As hundreds of congregations have embraced a variety of newer approaches to worship, many have set aside any Psalm-based music or liturgical texts. When they replaced the organ with the praise team and the hymnal with the media projector, they also set aside the use of the Psalms.

Yet, the Psalms remain one of the richest sources for inspiration, instruction, and use in worship. In fact, the three largest streams of influence behind various approaches to contemporary or emerging worship each have significant reasons to embrace Psalmody.

- Seeker-sensitive worship, eager to make worship relevant to a particular cultural context for the purpose of evangelism can find in the Psalter a map of the whole range of human experience. The Psalms can be a powerful way of identifying with the experience of all kinds of people who do not (yet) love God, attend worship, or bother with church.
- Charismatic worship, eager to experience intimacy with God in prayer and worship, can find in the Psalter not only Psalm verses that make good praise choruses, but entire texts that demonstrate God’s faithfulness.
- Emerging church worship, eager to recover a sense of mystery in worship and personal authenticity and intimacy in community, can hardly find anywhere else such evocative and challenging images and metaphors.

Many of these possibilities have been recently explored in writings on the Psalms in *Worship Leader* magazine and other recent publications. In contemporary and emerging congregations, the easiest way to incorporate a Psalm might simply be for a worship leader to read the text, perhaps over a simple musical accompaniment by a guitar or band. But once the pastoral and creative possibilities of the Psalter are discovered, there is no end

the creative potential for their use in worship. In fact, each type of use described in this volume—from choral reading to responsorial Psalmody, metrical Psalmody to chanting—has very possible analogues in contemporary and emerging idioms.

The best place to begin is with the already extant body of scripture songs based on the Psalms. Over the past thirty years, the biblical Psalms have significantly shaped the development of a variety of contemporary song forms, including the “Praise and Worship” chorus and other worship songs based on various forms of popular music in rock, folk, country and jazz musical idioms. In fact, the CCLI licensing company has administered the copyright to over 3500 songs based on the Psalms. (See Appendix 2, example 20-22). A significant percentage of these songs are based directly on single verses or memorable images from the Psalms (e.g., “As the Deer,” “We Bow Down,” and “Shout to the Lord”). These songs have done much to make selected verses of the Psalms well-known and loved.

A desideratum for future composition would be setting larger portions of Psalm texts for reasons described above. The use of Psalms versicles in contemporary scripture songs finds its closest historical precedent in the versicles used at transition points in the medieval mass. This is not bad in itself. It is only incomplete unless complemented by musical settings of larger portions of the Psalms, if not the entire poems themselves. As the growing size the following recording lists suggests, new energy is being given to revitalizing the inclusion of whole Psalm texts in the repertoire of contemporary and emerging worship.

One of the simplest ways to achieve this is to pair short choruses based on a single verse of a Psalm with the reading of the entire Psalm (which results in another type of responsorial Psalmody as described above). For example, Darlene Zschech’s “Shout to the Lord” might be paired with a reading of Psalm 65. Or Martin Nystrom’s “As the Deer” might be paired with a reading of Psalm

42, the source of its primary imagery. As these songs move from being considered “contemporary” to more traditional, no doubt new compositions will emerge also based on verses or images from particular Psalm texts.

Other contemporary and popular songwriters have begun to write rhapsody-like songs that mirror the structure of specific Psalms or to adapt metrical Psalms into music of a contemporary idiom. The leading example of an individual text is likely U2’s setting of Psalm 40, entitled “40” (see the recording “Under the Blood Red Sky”). Bono, in fact, is a leading spokesperson for the value of the Psalms in contemporary culture.

A number of new recordings in “contemporary” rock or folk-rock style have been produced in the last few years, many by individual congregations or produced by local recording companies:

- Shane Barnard and Shane Everett. Psalms. Franklin, TN: Inpop Records, 2002. www.inpop.com and www.waitingroomministries.com
- Margaret Becker and David Edwards. Psalms: Faithfully Yours. West Monroe, LA: The Select Artist Group/Here To Him Music, 2004
- Scott Brenner, King of Glory: Worship from the Book of Psalms. Franklin, TN: MMV Scott Brenner Music, www.scottbrenner.org
- Celtic Psalms: featuring the Praise and Worship of Eden’s Bridge. Brentwood, TN: StraightWay Music (a division of EMI Christian Music Group), 1997.
- The Graham Kendrick Psalm Collection. Croydon: Make Way Music, 2002. www.makewaymusic.com
- Brian Moss, Prayerbook no. 1: New Songs Inspired by the Psalms (150 Records, 2005),
- Paul Field, Make A Joyful Noise: Psalms for a New Generation. Eastbourne : ICC Studios, 2003 www.iccrecords.com (2 CD set)
- Psalms: Series with Kent Henry. 2 volumes. Chesterfield, MO: Kent Henry Ministries, 2000-2001. www.kenthenry.com

- Psalms & Hymns: Praying the Bible with Wesley Campbell. vol. 1 produced by Stephen Mullin for YB4 Productions. Kelowna, BC, Canada: Revival Now! Resources Inc, www.revivalnow.com
- Sing unto the Lord: The Psalms of David for Daily Living. Brentwood, TN: MMV Martingate Music, LLC. www.martingalemusic.com. Distributed by CBD. A collaboration of twelve song-writers.
- Sojourner, These Things I Remember. Produced by Mike Cospers, co-produced by Eddy Morris, Louisville: Sojourn Community, 2005. www.sojourncommunity.com
- Sword of the Spirit: The Psalm Series. Chesterfield, MO: Kent Henry, 1999. www.kenthenrymin.org
- John Michael Talbot, Songs for Worship, vols. 1-2. Navarre Corporation, 1992. Several other of John Michael Talbot's recordings also include songs based on the Psalms.

New publications and recordings in these genre appear almost weekly.

Basis for Improvised Prayer

The Psalms can also be well used as the basis for newly-prepared or extemporaneous prayers. This can happen in any number of ways:

- The use of a Psalm paraphrase that is itself a prayer (see list of Psalm paraphrases above),
- The adaptation of a Psalm into a prayer,
- The use of a key verse from the Psalm of week (Wallace, 128, Sourcebook)
- The intentional of pervasively scriptural language in prayers (H.O. Old model prayers based on Psalms adaptations)

The following example is based on Psalm 121:

No matter where we are, where we are going, or what we are doing,
we know that we find our help in you, our Lord.
You are the creator and sustainer of all

that has been made and will be made.

And yet, the immensity of creation does not distract you from caring personally for every person in it.

We know that is true of your care for us too!

You do not daydream or become weary in that care.

We thank you that you not only watch over us with diligence

but that you will guide us so that we will not fall--

so that we won't even stumble.

Whether we are awake or asleep, you are there,

sheltering and protecting us from all that would hurt us.

We know that you watch over all our living--

you have in the past, and we know you are now.

Your promise holds for the future and for eternity,

and we praise and thank you for that. Amen.

It is also possible that the structural analysis of a Psalm (see analysis above) might suggest ways of using the Psalms as a guide to structure extemporaneous prayer.

Just as the Song of Mary (Luke 1) improvises on the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2), so too worshipers today can use the Psalms as the basis for improvising our own prayers (see further suggestions below). Consider using Psalm 51, for example, as the basis for improvising a prayer of confession, as follows.

Leader 1: Psalm 51:1-6: "Have mercy on me . . ."

Leader 2: Extemporaneous Prayer of Confession

Leader 1: Psalm 51:7-12: "cleanse me . . .create in me a pure heart . . ."

Leader 2: Extemporaneous Prayer for Renewal

Leader 1: Psalm 51:13-19: "then I will teach transgressors your ways . . ."

Leader 2: Extemporaneous Prayer of Dedication

Or, consider taking an entire worship service, perhaps a mid-week prayer service or thanksgiving day service, to "pray through" Psalm 33.

Resources for Adapting the Psalms for Prayer

- Donald L. Griggs, *Praying and Teaching the Psalms*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1984.
- Ward Patterson, *Under His Wings: Psalms 1-50 and Into His Love: Psalms 101-150*. Denver: Accent Books. A series of prayers based on individual Psalms.
- See T. M. Moore, *The Psalms for Prayer*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. The complete Psalter, with Psalms interspersed with suggested topics for prayers. The introduction also describes several different ways of praying the Psalms: verbatim praying, paraphrase praying, guided praying, and responsive praying. This volume is particularly useful for connecting the materials in this volume with other resources in what has broadly been called the “prayer movement” among evangelical Christians.
- Leslie E. Stradling, *Praying the Psalms*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977. Meditations on over 20 Psalms that prompt ways of praying in light of the text.
- Maxie Dunnam and John David Walt, Jr. *Praying the Story: Learning Prayer from the Psalms*. Abington Press, 2005. See pp. 89-100 for complete prayers based on adaptations of particular Psalms, plus several Psalm excerpts for use during prayer.
- Marjorie Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. See pp. 45-46 for suggestions for preparing prayers based on particular Psalms.

In addition to complete Psalm paraphrases, single verses or small portions of a given Psalm can be used as refrains during prayer, such as the familiar refrain from Psalm 136 (and several other Old Testament canticles):

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.
God’s love endures forever.

Short sections of a Psalm can also be used to begin or end an otherwise extemporaneous prayer, such as:

We pray to you, O Lord;

you hear our voice in the morning;
at sunrise we offer our prayers
and wait for your answer. (from Psalm 5:2-3)

Or,

May the words of our mouths
and the meditations of our hearts,
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, our Rock and our Redeemer. (from Psalm 19:14)

Visual Imagery, Children’s Books, Calligraphy

Worship leaders and planners might also look for ways that visual artists might work to convey the meaning and significance of particular Psalms. Psalm-based images, whether gleaned from professionally printed materials or commissioned from local artists (or children), could be either projected in some form or printed on worship folders or bulletins. As with liturgical music, the use of published artwork requires securing copyright permission. See especially:

- Anneke Kaai. *The Psalms: An Artist’s Impression*. Downer’s Grove: IVP, 1999. She offers abstract settings of individual Psalms, containing over twenty four-color renderings.
- *Psalms*. Donald Jackson, Artistic Director and Illuminator. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006. The second in a seven-volume series of full-color, page-by-page reproductions from The Saint John’s Bible.

Several Psalms are depicted evocatively in books suitable for children (but instructive and inspiring for people of all ages). These books might also suggest new possibilities for children’s sermons (simply reading these books in worship would engage children around the straightforward words of the biblical text). See the following children’s books:

- Joel Anderson. *God Knows Me! (Psalm 139)* Golden Books, 1999.

- Johannah Bluedorn, *Bless the Lord: The 103rd Psalm, and The Lord Builds the House: The 127th Psalm*. Trivium Pursuit, 2005.
- Niko Chocheli. *The Praises: Psalm 148*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000.
- *Illustrated Psalms of Praise/Salmos De Alabanza Ilustrados*. Liturgy Training Publications., 2005. Illustrated by Amy Ribordy Reese.
- Tim Ladwig, *Psalm 23*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Bijou Le Tord, *Sing a New Song: A Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Dorrie Papademetriou. *Celebrate the Earth: Psalm 104*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000.
- Christopher L. Webber and Preston McDaniels (Illustrator). *Psalms for Children Series*. Morehouse Publishing: *Shout for Joy and Sing!:* Psalm 65 for Children; *Praise the Lord, My Soul:* Psalm 104 for Children; *The Lord Is My Shepherd:* Psalm 23 for Children.
- Perry, Michael, David Peacock, Christopher Norton, and Chris Rolinson, eds. *Songs from the Psalms*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990.
- Perry, Michael, and David Iliff, eds. *Psalms for Today*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990.
- *El Himnario*. New York: Church Publishing, 1998—a Spanish language hymnal developed by Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, and Presbyterian Church USA, see nos. 405-441 for several Spanish-language Psalm settings in both metrical and responsorial formats.
- *Psalm Praise*. London: Falcon, 1973. Chant and metrical settings for all 150 Psalms
- *The Psalms in Worship: Arrangements from the Psalter for Performance and Liturgy*, By: Jeff Allan Wyatt, Paul M. Miller, Lillenas (composite).
- *Sing! a New Creation*. (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2003). Includes over 70 Psalm settings in both metrical and responsorial forms.

Calligraphy is also a means of rendering the text of the Psalms memorable, instructive, and inspiring ways. See, for example, Timothy Botts, *The Holy Bible: Botts Illustrated edition* (Tyndale House Publishers, 2000), or *The Book of Psalms* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1987).

Composite Collections of Psalmody

The following volumes include selections of Psalms in multiple styles and formats:

- Angela Tam, ed. *Hymns of Universal Praise*. (Chinese Christian Literature Council, 2002). Includes 30 Psalms in multiple formats. in Chinese and English.
- *Journeysongs, Second Edition*. Oregon Catholic Press.
- Leach, Richard, and David Schaap, eds. *The Selah Psalter*. Kingston: Selah Publishing Co, 2001. See also selected examples in David Schaap, ed. *New Songs of Rejoicing*. Selah Publishing, 1994.
- *Refuge and Strength: Selections from the Psalter of the Book of Common Prayer*. New York: Church Publishing, with the choir of the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, conducted by David Shuler.
- *Psalms for the Soul* (Naxos: 2000) with the Choir of St. John's, Elora, Ontario, Noel Editon, director.
- *The Jerusalem Psalter* (Hänssler, 2000). Four CD's, with Psalmody from the city of Jerusalem by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox congregations.
- *Spirituality of the Psalms*. The Schola Cantorum of St. Peter the Apostle; J. Michael Thompson, Director. Collegeville: Liturgical Press

The following recordings including settings of the Psalms in multiple styles and formats.

Children, Youth, and Intergenerational Worship

It also must be stressed that there is nothing about Psalmody that should limit its use to adults. The

Psalms offer the kind of honesty and authenticity that adolescent youth long for. They offer to young children a language for worship that is at once vivid, formative, and surprisingly accessible (witness the list of children's books above based on the Psalms).

When we think of children and youth praying the Psalms, it immediately suggests the value of appropriate instruction to help them engage the text more meaningfully. Importantly, this instruction is often equally needed by adults! One value of engaging children and youth in praying the Psalms is that it often gently forces congregations to offer better instruction to the whole community.

Several available resources on Psalmody are specifically geared toward children, youth, or intergenerational audiences. See, for example,

- C. Michael Hawn, *Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round*, Songs from the World Church for Children, Youth, and Congregation (Choristers Guild, 1999), includes several Psalm refrains that could be used by adult, as well as children's choirs.
- Carolyn C. Brown, *Forbid Them Not: Involving Children in Sunday Worship*, 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991). Offers suggestions for each Sunday, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, many of which involve the Psalm readings.
- John D. Witvliet, *A Child Shall Lead: Children in Worship* (Choristers Guild, 1999).
- Over 200 anthems for children's and youth choirs based on the Psalms are available from Choristers Guild (see www.choristersguild.org/catalog/).

Selecting from Among These Methods

The Psalms are so varied in style, voice, and tone. It is unfortunate the most congregations and most traditions are familiar with only one form of rendering the Psalms. Ideally, a congregation would have the flexibility to move among various forms—choral reading, metrical Psalmody, and simple chant, perhaps—in order to

choose the form best suited to a particular text. Some texts call for exuberance, others for introspection. Some are conventional; others defy convention. In each congregation, in each cultural context, the musical or dramatic that form that best suits a given Psalm will vary.

It could be the one effect of this flexibility (and this volume) will be to encourage greater experimentation in worship. This is potentially either a very good or very bad thing. Some communities suffer from years of drought when it comes to creativity. Others suffer from endless innovation. Ministry with pastoral poise requires a judicious mix of repetition and innovation, form and freedom, creativity and accountability. While the matter of creativity is the subject for an entire book in itself, let me say briefly that innovation is typically best when it is:

- piloted in a small group outside of a congregation's normal worship services (perhaps with a choir or education class—and especially with the children in a congregation),
- explained (best in an educational session, but also through a congregational newsletter or worship bulletin announcement),
- modeled first (perhaps by a soloist or small vocal ensemble), then done with full participation,
- done more than once (it typically takes a while for a new form of participation to become natural), and
- limited to one innovation at a time (it is difficult for most congregations to absorb changes in too many directions at the same time).

Wise, winsome leadership is a key to helping congregations both sense the value of the Psalms and pray them with open hearts and minds.