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The Lutheran Hymnal after Seventy-Five Years: Its Role in the Shaping of Lutheran Service Book

Paul J. Grime

The year 2016 will mark not only the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Lutheran Service Book* (*LSB*) but also the seventy-fifth anniversary of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (*TLH*). As one who was intimately involved in the development of *LSB*,¹ I find it hard to believe that we have now lived with the “new” hymnal longer than the number of years it actually took to develop it. More breathtaking still is the realization that *TLH* was published a full three-quarters of a century ago. While there are no firm statistics providing the percentage of congregations that still use *TLH* exclusively, the fact that there are *any* still using a seventy-five-year-old hymnal is unprecedented in modern times.

Why is this so? When the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod published its new hymnal, *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*, in 1993, virtually every congregation in that church body transitioned to the new book.² Yet in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), a 1999 survey taken just as development of the Synod’s new hymnal commenced revealed that 53% of congregations had *TLH* available and that 36% still made regular use of it—a full eighteen years after the Synod’s previous “new” hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*, had been published.³

During the development of *LSB*, the question of how best to unite two hymnal traditions—namely, *TLH* and *Lutheran Worship* (*LW*)—continually

¹ From 1996 to 2007 the author served as Executive Director for the LCMS Commission on Worship and in that capacity served as project director for *Lutheran Service Book*. This article was originally presented as a public lecture on October 21, 2015, in recognition of his advancement in rank to Professor.

² Within three years of publication, congregations were informed that nearly ninety-five percent of congregations had purchased *Christian Worship*. See Victor H. Prange, “The Shaping of *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*,” in *Not unto Us: A Celebration of the Ministry of Kurt J. Eggert* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2001), 252.

³ “Concordia Publishing House/Commission on Worship: 1999 Worship Survey,” in *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 4, *Other Documents*, compiled by Paul J. Grime and Jon D. Vieker (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2007), 29.

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occupied the LCMS Commission on Worship and its hymnal committees. The concern that we not tip our hand toward one hymnal or the other even surfaced when it came time to choose a title for the new book. Naming it *The Lutheran Hymnal II*, for example, was clearly out of the question! Nevertheless, *TLH* did figure prominently in the development of *LSB*. This article will explore one particular area of influence, namely, the extent to which the *LSB* Liturgy Committee wrestled with how to include the beloved *TLH* Page 15 service in a twenty-first-century hymnal.

I. On the Road to *TLH*

In order to understand the impact that *TLH* exerted on *LSB*, it is necessary, however, to consider how *TLH* came to hold such a prominent position of influence in the Synod.⁴ When work began on *TLH* in 1929, the opportunity presented itself for the church bodies that comprised the Synodical Conference to develop a common hymnal.⁵ Not to be lost in this laudable ecumenical goal, however, was the fact that the LCMS itself was in need of a common direction in its worship practices. This was the era, after all, when the Synod was on its long journey from German to English as the language of worship. Those still using German had little trouble; Walther's hymnal, published eighty years earlier, was the exclusive resource. Anyone using this German hymnal could expect reasonable consistency from one congregation to another, with its exclusive reliance on hymnody of German origin.

For congregations that were making the transition to English, however, it was apparently a different story. In the early 1930s, editorials and occasional letters to the editor appeared in the *Lutheran Witness* in which concern was expressed about the deterioration of a common service from one congregation to another. A rather informed, though unnamed, layman, for example, wrote a letter in which he decried the apparent lack of appreciation for liturgical order within Missouri Synod congregations at the very time when other, non-ritualistic church bodies were beginning to appreciate the church's liturgical treasures. His conclusion: "Waiving the differences in taste and temperament, it is safe to say that Lutherans who

⁴ Two helpful resources by Carl F. Schalk that chronicle the development of hymnals in North American Lutheranism are *God's Song in a New Land: Lutheran Hymnals in America* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), and *Source Documents in American Lutheran Hymnody* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1996).

⁵ In addition to the LCMS, those members were the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

do not value the liturgical services of their Church have never bestowed much thought on them.”⁶ Nine months later, another unnamed layman expressed similar concerns, though much more directly. He writes,

The form used in H. Church was entirely different from that of two other churches which I frequently attend, and these two also differ very much from each other. The result was that the whole service was spoiled for me because I could not take part in anything but the hymns on the board and listen to the sermon. One stands there like a dummy, and if one tries to find the responses to the altar readings or chants, one usually does not succeed until it is all finished.⁷

Several editorials appeared in the following years, expressing similar concerns and raising the call for congregations to follow a uniform order. In an apparent response, another layman expressed his delight that the Synod’s official news magazine was taking up the cause. Writing under the title, “Our Liturgical Chaos,” he described his own experience: “In my home town there are about 25 churches of the Missouri Synod, and I do not know of two that use the same liturgy. Some pastors and organists have reduced the liturgy to the merest skeleton, while others have made a very elaborate affair out of it.”⁸

Shortly thereafter, in 1935, Theodore Graebner, professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and editor of the *Lutheran Witness*, borrowed that title, “Our Liturgical Chaos,” and published an essay in which he reiterated the call for congregations to strive for uniformity in their services, especially those that were continuing their transition from German to English.⁹ While Graebner did not provide any specific examples of what this chaos looked like, he did provide a marvelous summary a few years later in an editorial in the *Lutheran Witness* on the occasion of the publication of *TLH* in 1941. In that editorial, titled “Follow the Entire Service,” Graebner alludes to his previous essay when he writes: “Some five or six years ago we made a similar appeal [for a uniform service] in an essay entitled ‘Our Liturgical Chaos.’ In that essay we pointed out the difficulties which challenge the wit of the hapless guest preacher who finds himself with an utterly strange ritual as he stands at the altar.”¹⁰

⁶ “The Value of Liturgical Services Recognized,” *Lutheran Witness* 49, no. 19 (1930): 308.

⁷ “Our Liturgical Confusion,” *Lutheran Witness* 50, no. 12 (1931): 206.

⁸ “Our Liturgical Chaos,” *Lutheran Witness* 52, no. 4 (1933): 57.

⁹ Theodore Graebner, “Our Liturgical Chaos,” in *The Problem of Lutheran Union and other Essays*, 135–166 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1935), 135–166.

¹⁰ Theodore Graebner, “Follow the Entire Service,” *Lutheran Witness* 21, no. 21 (1941): 347.

While congregations did have resources available to them such as the 1912 *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book (ELHB)* and the 1917 *Liturgy and Agenda*, it is not clear whether they used them all that effectively or faithfully. One problem with *ELHB*, the Synod's first official English-language hymnal, was that it was available in several editions, including both music and text-only versions. Just the fact that these editions contained differing sets of page numbers presented practical challenges that likely discouraged their use.¹¹ Another was the fact that the 1917 agenda had provided a second order of the morning service that simplified some aspects of the historic rite.¹² Even in cases where congregations were using one of the official services of the Synod, it appears that attention to the details of the service was so haphazard that the service shared little resemblance from one congregation to another.

Specific evidence of the rapidly changing nature of worship in the LCMS was apparent, however, more than a decade before Graebner raised his alarms. While this evidence takes us slightly off our topic in that it focuses on hymnody rather than the order of service, it is worth the digression. In this case, the catalyst was clearly the transition from German to English, which each congregation of Synod was allowed to make at its own pace. That transition, which the Synod had in varying degrees resisted for so long, was bound to have some unintended consequences, not least of which was that a body of hymnody in the English language entered into use in our congregations that relied less on the traditional Lutheran cho-ales and more on hymns from non-Lutheran sources.¹³

¹¹ Compounding the problem was that not all congregations were using the 1912 *ELHB* but also previous versions from the late nineteenth century. See Dan Paul Gilbert, "How the Missouri Synod Accepted The Lutheran Hymnal of 1941," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1978): 24; and William G. Polack, *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal*, 2nd and rev. ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1942), v.

¹² Graebner admits in his editorial of 1941 that his 1935 essay "Our Liturgical Chaos" was an apology of sorts for the decision to include a simplified order of service in the 1917 agenda "since the time was not ripe for a return to the old Lutheran type of liturgical service." Graebner, "Follow the Entire Service," 347.

¹³ Jon D. Vieker ably traces this transition in his recent dissertation, "The Fathers' Faith, the Children's Song: Missouri Lutheranism Encounters American Evangelicalism in Its Hymnals, Hymn Writers, and Hymns, 1889-1912" (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2014).

Evidence of a significant change comes from a report printed in the *Lutheran Witness* in 1922.¹⁴ Theodore Buenger, a teacher at Concordia College in St. Paul, Minnesota, reported that the president of the institution had recently sought the counsel of pastors regarding hymns that all young men should know before heading off to the seminary. The college polled the pastors of the English District, which had at the time been a part of the Synod for only a decade, as well as two (unnamed) professors at the seminary in St. Louis. Twenty-four pastors sent in replies, as did the Cleveland English Conference, which sent in a joint response, and the two (still unnamed) seminary professors. Two lists of ten hymns were prepared. The first consisted of those hymns deemed important enough to be committed to memory.

Rock of Ages*	24
Just as I Am*	23
Abide with Me	21
What a Friend We Have in Jesus*	21
Jesus, Lover of My Soul*	18
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*	17
My Faith Looks Up to Thee*	16
Come, Thou Almighty King	15
There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood	14
From Greenland's Icy Mountains	13

The second list provided additional hymns that the respondents believed should be sung more frequently in school chapel services in order for future seminarians to become better acquainted with them.

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*	13
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	12
In the Hour of Trial*	11
Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed	9
Holy, Holy, Holy*	9
Holy Ghost, with Light Divine*	8
Thy Life Was Giv'n for Me*	7
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say*	7
In the Cross of Christ I Glory*	7
Let Me Be Thine Forever	7

The contents of the lists are most revealing. Only one hymn among the twenty originates from sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Germany, and that one, "A Mighty Fortress," probably earned a spot only because of its

¹⁴ Theodore Buenger, "Hymns in the Curriculum of Our Colleges," *Lutheran Witness* 41, no. 5 (1922): 75. The asterisks behind the hymns in the list below indicate the recommendations of the Cleveland English Conference's joint response.

iconic value as the so-called “Battle Hymn of the Reformation.” To think that in just a single generation, and with the transition from German to English far from complete,¹⁵ the Missouri Synod was rapidly losing its hymnic heritage. Though the Synod was undoubtedly still wearing proudly its moniker as the singing church, it was, in reality, sounding a lot more like the general Protestants than like Lutherans.

Two interesting comments accompany Buenger’s report. First, he writes that “the request has been made that we publish the results of the questionnaire.”¹⁶ The passive voice is telling in that someone, again unnamed, wanted the results of this survey to be made known to the Synod but apparently did not want anyone to know who had made the request.¹⁷ The second comment comes at the end of his brief report, where he writes that “this list will be taken as a canon in St. Paul at the present.”¹⁸ In other words, it is not necessary to guess what future pastors and teachers were singing in daily chapel at at least one of the Synod’s prep schools.

Three years later, another report on hymn preferences appeared in the *Lutheran Witness*. Walter Wismar, a church musician in St. Louis, reported that when he spoke to young people’s groups on the topic of hymnody, he would always conclude by polling the students, asking them to write down their three favorite hymns, indicating that they could provide either English or German titles.¹⁹ The top twenty hymns identified by these young people are equally telling:

1. What a Friend We Have in Jesus	284
2. Rock of Ages	158
3. Abide with Me	140
4. A Mighty Fortress (G)	138
5. Just as I Am.....	119
6. Jesus, Lover of My Soul	109

¹⁵ In 1922, 12% of congregations in the LCMS were still worshipping only in German and another 32% were worshipping more in German than English. Compare that with only 23% that were worshipping only in English or more English than German. By 1935, the time when Graebner published his essay, only 2% of congregations still worshiped solely in German and 10% more German than English. *Statistical Yearbook, 1935* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1936), 149-150.

¹⁶ Buenger, “Hymns in the Curriculum of Our Colleges,” 75.

¹⁷ Admittedly, this use of the passive voice with an unnamed agent may simply have been common parlance at that time. The result, however, is still the same: we do not know who requested its dissemination.

¹⁸ Buenger, “Hymns in the Curriculum of Our Colleges,” 75.

¹⁹ Walter Wismar, “Popular Hymns,” *Lutheran Witness* 44, no. 17 (1925): 280.

7. Savior, I Follow On.....	106
8. Nearer, My God, to Thee	98
9. In the Hour of Trial	82
10. I'm But a Stranger Here	68
11. From Greenland's Icy Mountains	54
12. My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less	53
13. Abide, O Dearest Jesus (G)	31
14. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty	24
15. O Friend of Souls, How Blest Am I (G)	22
16. Lamb of God, Most Holy (G)	20
17. My Faith Looks Up to Thee	18
18. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (G)	14
19. Lead, Kindly Light	12
20. Beautiful Savior	11

The results are quite similar to the “canon” at Concordia, St. Paul, reported three years earlier. One can, perhaps, take solace in the fact that in this case five of the hymns are identified as being of German origin (marked by Wismar with a “G”). Of course, the number of votes for those five German hymns tallied together still falls short of the number one choice on the list. One wonders whether Wismar submitted his report as a retort, to some degree, to the earlier survey from Concordia, St. Paul. While the results were only marginally better, it provided Wismar the opportunity to make the point that the Synod was heading in a new direction: “Contemplating further the above list and figures, we realize that the German choral is losing favor and prestige.” Later, he adds, “While a number of Standard English hymns appear on the list, the best of them are not equal to the German choral.”²⁰

What these two reports from the 1920s reveal is that the transition from German to English was not proceeding as smoothly as Missouri’s fathers had hoped. While the editors of *ELHB* were careful to maintain a balance between hymnody of German and English origin, it did not take long for the non-Lutheran, English-original hymnody to predominate in the hearts and minds of the people. In his dissertation on the development of the Synod’s first English-language hymnal, Jon Vieker summarizes this unintended consequence:

Although the editors of *ELHB* had made a sizeable commitment to retaining the German hymnody of Missouri’s fathers in English trans-

²⁰ Wismar, “Popular Hymns,” 280. While the limited scope of this survey is evident, with a “margin of error” that would likely be quite high, the similarities between the results of Wismar’s surveys and the Concordia, St. Paul, list suggest that both were fairly indicative of hymn preferences at that time.

lation, the hymns of American Evangelicalism that they introduced in even greater number quickly began to dominate Sunday-morning services. The transition from German to English in the Missouri Synod and its ecclesial Americanization were thus greatly enhanced by the great number of Evangelical hymns its congregations quickly embraced in *ELHB* 1912.²¹

Thus, the LCMS had two increasingly opposed worship traditions. Given, however, the steady progression toward English, this opposition would eventually subside as familiarity with the German chorales continued to wane.

By the time the Synod resolved in 1929 to proceed with the development of a new hymnal and to invite the other members of the Synodical Conference to participate in the process, there was a growing realization in the Synod that a new resource was sorely needed. Work proceeded over the course of a decade, with periodic reports published in the *Lutheran Witness*. By the time *TLH* was published in 1941—on the eve, no less, of the United States' entrance into World War II—an up-to-date hymnal in English was bound to be a welcome resource.

II. *TLH* Comes into Its Own

It is here that I must shift to the liturgical portion of the hymnal, since the crux of my thesis concerning the impact that *TLH* had on the development of *LSB* will rely on that section of the hymnal. Liturgically speaking, the changes from *ELHB* to *TLH* were minimal. The *ELHB* morning service that included Holy Communion and was based on the Common Service of 1888, was divided into two services in *TLH*, the “Page 5” service without communion, and the familiar “Page 15” service with communion. Textually, the services in *TLH* were identical to those in *ELHB*, and musically, they were virtually the same, though some slight rhythmic changes were made here and there that likely caused some initial consternation for those who were familiar with the earlier forms.²² One significant textual change concerned Confession and Absolution. Whereas the service in *ELHB* provided only a Declaration of Grace, the Absolution was introduced into the Page 15 service and the Declaration of Grace, which had been a part of

²¹ Vieker, “The Fathers’ Faith, the Children’s Song,” 325.

²² James Brauer provides a helpful service in tracing the origins of the musical setting for the Common Service at it has appeared in these hymnals. See James L. Brauer, “Trusty Steed or Trojan Horse? The Common Service in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*,” *Logia* 14, no. 3 (2005): 21–30.

the original Common Service, was reserved for the non-communion, Page 5 service.²³

Clearly, it was not in the liturgical section of *TLH* that the editors intended to make great strides, as William Polack explained in the *Handbook to The Lutheran Hymnal* when he wrote: "As to the liturgical section of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, the committee held it to be within the scope of its work to make no changes in the liturgies as such, but to simplify the rubrics as much as possible, to correct any discrepancies, to supply the most necessary general rubrics," and to add the texts of the propers where they had not been provided before.²⁴

One individual who was frustrated by this limited mandate regarding the development of the services was Walter Buszin. A member of one of the subcommittees that worked on *TLH*, he shared his evaluation of the hymnal in a letter to an unknown recipient a few years after *TLH* was published.²⁵ In his critique, he revealed the frustration that he and others on the subcommittee had with the main hymnal committee, noting that only one individual serving on the latter had any serious training in liturgical theology. Far from advocating a departure from the historic liturgy, Buszin likely considered it a missed opportunity that the committee did not insist that the "scope of the book" with regard to the services be broader, especially by recovering some of the more venerable practices of the Lutheran tradition.

Nevertheless, despite minor misgivings and regrets, *TLH* was very well received. While there were the usual complaints about the size of the book and other minor matters, sales were unquestionably brisk.²⁶ References to the new hymnal in the *Lutheran Witness* in 1941 were relatively few, all of them focusing on the encouragement to use the "entire ser-

²³ It is likely that the introduction of the Absolution was influenced by its use in a separate service of confession in Walther's agenda. *Kirchen-Agenda für Evang.-Luth. Gemeinden ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1902), 91-93. This service also appeared in English in essentially the same form in the 1917 agenda, 25-27.

²⁴ Polack, *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal*, vii.

²⁵ D. Richard Stuckwisch, "The Tale of Frustrated Lutheran Hymnal Revision," *Logia* 14, no. 3 (2005): 41.

²⁶ So brisk, in fact, that over 850,000 copies were sold in the first three years. John Fuchs, "From *The Lutheran Hymnal* to *Lutheran Worship*. A Paradigm of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod History," *Concordia Journal* 20, no 2 (1994): 131. Fuchs notes that an additional reason for the initial success of *TLH* was likely the decision by Concordia Publishing House to discontinue publication of any of its previous English-language hymnals.

vice."²⁷ In other words, the general hope that existed within the Synod was that the appearance of *TLH* would facilitate a more common service among the congregations of the Synod. Given that these calls ceased the following year, one can assume that for the most part congregations settled into a use of *TLH* that was fairly consistent from place to place.

By the 1950s, however, new winds were blowing over the liturgical landscape, fueled in part by the Liturgical Movement that was sweeping across much of Christendom. With the publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (RSV) in 1952, the use of language in worship also came into sharper focus. In fact, within months of the release of the RSV, a study group of students at the seminary in St. Louis (with Arthur Carl Piepkorn serving as an advisor) wrestled with the question of how the RSV might be integrated into the service used in *TLH*. They asked such questions as whether it would suffice simply to substitute the RSV text for the pericopes or whether it would be necessary to revise other occurrences of biblical texts in the service, such as in the Introits and Graduals. Acknowledging that "the Lutheran rite is thoroughly Biblical," they proposed that "a modification of the vernacular Biblical basis requires a thoroughgoing revision of the *whole* service, ordinary and propers, collects and creed as well as lessons and psalmody."²⁸

Their revision, which was used in a service at the seminary in the spring of 1953, shows a fair amount of restraint in that the "Thees" and "Thous" are retained. There are seeming inconsistencies at times, such as retaining words like "didst," "lettest," and "sittest" while at the same time updating words like "hath" to "has." There were, however, a number of minor changes that occur not infrequently, including the following:

unto	→	to
meet	→	fitting
remission	→	forgiveness
infinite	→	endless
Holy Ghost	→	Holy Spirit

Probably the boldest moves appear in the Gloria in Excelsis and the Creed. In the former, the song of the angels is altered from "and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" to "and on earth peace among men with whom He

²⁷ See, for example, *Lutheran Witness* 60, no. 20 (1941): 341; 60, no. 21 (1941): 347; 60, no. 25 (1941): 423–424.

²⁸ "The Common Service Adapted according to RSV Principles," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 24, no. 5 (1953): 357.

is pleased," which matches the RSV translation. Likewise, the study group made a number of minor changes to the Apostles' Creed.²⁹

In retrospect, what is most striking about this proposed service is the cumulative effect that all of the minor changes would likely have had on anyone attempting this service after decades of using the service in *TLH* and *ELHB*. While there is no record that anything ever came of this revision, it does provide evidence that some in the Synod were beginning to raise questions about the need for an update of *TLH*. In 1956, the LCMS Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics reported to the Synod convention that while the general sentiment in the Synod at the time did not favor development of a new hymnal, it was in the committee's estimation a task that should be completed within ten to twelve years.³⁰

Just three years later, the Committee released two new musical settings of the Common Service by Healey Willan and Jan Bender. The preface to these settings, written by Walter Buszin, chairman of the Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics, is very revealing of the goals that were on the Committee's mind at that time. While acknowledging that *TLH* had helped to foster a degree of liturgical uniformity among congregations, he also noted some criticisms that had developed in the nearly two decades since its appearance. Buszin writes, for example, that "within a short time worshippers began to complain about monotony and the deadening effect produced by the use of the same setting year in and year out." He goes on to suggest that perhaps the time had come for some musical variety in the liturgy: "Why should the same musical setting be used on Advent Sunday, on Christmas Day, on Good Friday, on Easter Sunday, and on a Day of Humiliation and Prayer, when in each case the spirit and character of the day varies so greatly? Thoughtful Christians thus realize that it is not the text but rather the musical setting of the Liturgy which needs variety."³¹

For purposes of this study, two points are pertinent at this juncture. First, because the goal of these 1959 publications was to focus on new musical settings of the Divine Service, the Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics made no changes at all to the text of the Common Service. Thus, while there were discussions in the air concerning updating the Jacobean language in the service, nothing was done on that front at this time. Second, the introduction of these settings, coupled together with the Com-

²⁹ "The Common Service Adapted according to RSV Principles," 365.

³⁰ See Stuckwisch's excellent recounting of this development in "A Tale of Frustrated Lutheran Hymnal Revision," 41-44.

³¹ *The Order of Holy Communion: Musical Setting by Jan Bender* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), Introduction.

mittee's official report in advance of the 1959 Synod convention, left little doubt that the LCMS was on its way toward the revision of *TLH*.

The story of that revision and the detour that was taken as the Synod joined with other North American Lutheran church bodies to develop a common hymnal is simply beyond the scope of this presentation. The subsequent decision of the Synod not to give approval to *Lutheran Book of Worship* (*LBW*) and to develop instead a revision, *Lutheran Worship*, is well documented.³² For purposes of this presentation, I will focus on one particular decision related to the development of *LW*—namely, the inclusion of the Common Service, or better known as the Page 15 service from *TLH*.

Had the LCMS adopted *LBW*, and had *LBW* found acceptance within our congregations, the Common Service would have, by and large, ceased to exist among us. So when the newly constituted Commission on Worship began its work on revising *LBW*, the decision to include the Page 15 service must have seemed at first glance to be a brilliant move. While some congregations may not have been happy about the decision to nix LCMS participation in the pan-Lutheran project, perhaps the disappointment of some would be mollified by the inclusion of that familiar service that had served so well for decades.

The thing is, when *LW* finally appeared a couple of years later, Page 15 did not look, or sound, all that familiar. Besides being buried behind more than one hundred pages of introits and graduals, the service had undergone countless changes. The language had been thoroughly updated, the accompaniments changed, and even some of the melodies had been altered. What had been intended as a familiar entrée into the new hymnal ended up being worse than a totally new service in that anyone who had sung the service from *TLH* all those years found the countless little emendations irksome, if not offensive.³³ Add to that the incessant frustration

³² Much of that story has already been told by D. Richard Stuckwisch, "Truly Meet, Right, and Salutary—or Not?: The Revision of the Order of the Holy Communion of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* in the Preparation and Development of *Lutheran Worship*" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2002). See also, Stuckwisch, "A Tale of Frustrated Lutheran Hymnal Revision."

³³ One is hard-pressed to fault the committees that worked on *LW*. In many ways, they were given an impossible task. The Synod had just come through a bitter fight that, while climaxing with the walkout at Concordia Seminary in February 1974, continued to linger, with the removal of some district presidents, the departure of several congregations, and deep distrust among some who remained in the Synod. It was in this climate that the Commission on Worship, which had to be reconstituted after all, save one, of its members had resigned in protest following the 1977 decision not to endorse *LBW*, had to do its work. There was enormous pressure to complete the revision of *LBW*

with the hymn accompaniments, the lingering disappointment of some that the Synod had not simply signed on to the pan-Lutheran *LBW*, and new challenges on the horizon in the form of what would come to be known as contemporary worship—all of these came together in what I would describe as a perfect storm that prevented *LW* from ever gaining a firm foothold in our congregations.

III. Moving On

This brings us to the topic at hand, namely, how *TLH* influenced the development of *Lutheran Service Book*, and, more specifically, how revisions to the Page 15 service were made for that new book. As the Commission on Worship began to deliberate in 1996 the question of whether it was time to begin work on a new hymnal, Commission member Elizabeth Werner and I were instructed to develop some discussion points to guide the conversation. Among the points that received the most attention from the Commission were the following.³⁴ First, *LW* had moved the ball forward, so to speak, in several important ways, such as by a more conscious promotion of the Psalter, the inclusion of the Small Catechism, the availability of several musical settings of the Divine Service, and, most importantly, the seminal teaching on the theology of worship that was contained in Norman Nagel's introduction. A second point, however, noted the weaknesses that hobbled *LW*: esoteric hymn accompaniments, minor changes in melodies of both the Page 15 service and a number of familiar hymns, retranslations of hymns that were often of poorer quality than the originals, and confusing options in the services that often befuddled the person in the pew. After considerable discussion, the Commission concluded that *LW* would never become a beloved hymnal the way *TLH* had, and that it had probably reached a saturation point in that not many more congregations would ever adopt it than the 67% that had by that point.³⁵

quickly, lest more congregations, tired of waiting for a new hymnal, simply adopted *LBW*. In regard to the many changes made to the Page 15 service, the Commission understandably believed that the changes would make the service more accessible. However, the "little" changes likely added up, and the Commission members were hobbled by the lack of time both to reflect on their decisions and to seek the reaction of others out in the church.

³⁴ "Some Ideas regarding a New Hymnal/Supplement," *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 4, *Other Documents*, 1–2.

³⁵ While *LW* was available in 67% of congregations, the 1999 survey showed that only 58% were actually using it on a regular basis. "Concordia Publishing House/Commission on Worship: 1999 Worship Survey," *Historical Records*, vol. 4, *Other Documents*, 29.

Thus was born what would ten years later appear as *Lutheran Service Book*.³⁶ It would be another two years, with the intervening publication of a hymnal supplement, before work would begin in earnest on what was at that time dubbed the Lutheran Hymnal Project. Committees met for the first time in January of 1999, and already at this point the Liturgy Committee was wrestling with the place that the Common Service—the Page 15 service—would occupy in the new hymnal, a deliberation that would last for four years!

The best way to chronicle this careful, and sometimes fitful, approach of the Liturgy Committee to what had by that point in time become a much-revered service, is simply by working our way through the historical record of the committee's deliberations.³⁷ Already at its second meeting, the committee was prepared to report to the commission that a limited testing of a revised version of Page 15 would be ready by December of that year. A short while later, the committee was seeking the names of congregations, especially those using *TLH*, that could serve as test sites for the Page 15 revision.

By the fall of 1999, with a revised version of the Page 15 service nearly ready for testing, the Liturgy Committee was wrestling with questions of both music and language. Their sense was that, in contrast to the extensive changes to the music in the version of this service that appeared in *LW*, there was little wisdom in forcing musical changes on people who had been singing this service for nearly a century. The committee was proceeding, however, with gentle updating of the language, similar to what had been done in *LW*. Questions were raised concerning the purpose for the upcoming testing, asking, for example, whether a congregation of the twenty-first century could live with the modest revisions that were being proposed. In other words, at this point so early in the project, the committee was struggling to determine whether congregations that had been using *TLH* for so long would be willing to accept updated language so long as the musical setting remained the same. The members of the Liturgy Committee recognized that they were walking a fine line, hoping on the one hand to demonstrate that the committee had “heard the concerns

³⁶ The decision to move forward on a new hymnal was made at the September 3–4, 1996, meeting of the Commission and then reaffirmed at the next meeting, November 19–20, 1996.

³⁷ The minutes of the Liturgy Committee are included in *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 2, *Committee Minutes*, 429–517.

about past revisions"—namely, what had appeared in *LW*—but on the other hand to do so in a way that did not cast a bad light on the previous work.³⁸

Several days after the Liturgy Committee's October 12–13, 1999, meeting, I drafted the cover letter³⁹ that was sent to approximately fifty congregations, inviting them to serve as field test congregations for the revised Page 15 service. The language used in my letter reveals the tight-rope that we were attempting to walk. I made it clear, for example, that we were not changing any of the melodies or harmonies. And as to the matter of updating the language, I noted that our "gentle" update was similar to what had been done recently for the new hymnals for both the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods. Finally, since the committee had not yet taken up the issue of whether or how to revise the language of the creeds, I indicated that each participating congregation could order test copies with either the *TLH* or *LW* translation of the creeds, depending on what they were currently using. Since our goal was to ascertain the reaction to the other changes, we made certain to eliminate the creed from the discussion at that time.⁴⁰

By the spring of 2000 we had received approximately thirty responses to the first test. The general response was good, though the consistent complaint that was raised concerned the updating of the Jacobean language. As the Liturgy Committee reviewed the comments, a larger question came into focus, namely, what the purpose was for retaining the Common Service. The committee's sense was that this venerable service, which had served in the midpoint of the twentieth century as the common liturgical text for virtually all Lutherans in North America, was worth preserving for the next generation, and that in order for that to happen, a careful updating of the language would best serve to introduce the service to a whole generation that had not used the version that appeared in *LW*.⁴¹ It should

³⁸ *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 2, *Committee Minutes*, 446.

³⁹ This letter is in my personal files. The documents mentioned here and in the notes below to my personal files are also most likely included in the *LSB* archives, which are stored at the Concordia Historical Institute. Among the eighteen boxes of archived materials, they will be found in box 8, folders 12–14.

⁴⁰ We were very diligent to make this field test as controlled as possible. Note, for example, this instruction that was provided in the same letter: "For this testing, we strongly encourage you to conduct the service as your congregation is accustomed to it. For example, if you do not chant in your congregation, then do not chant this service. If your congregation deviates from the service in other ways, those too should be continued (though we may not wish to encourage them!). Our goal is see how easy it is for congregations to use this revised service as they currently know it."

⁴¹ *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 2, *Committee Minutes*, 455. Throughout the development of *LSB*, the Commission on Worship and the hymnal committees

be noted that at this April 2000 meeting, the committee made a significant number of minor modifications to the service as they continued to press forward.

The committee's intent to provide an updated version of the Page 15 service continued for almost another year. In January 2001, the committee members even developed a rationale for continuing in this direction. The first eight points were developed by Dr. Thomas Winger, a member of the committee; the last point was added by the committee.

1. A Lutheran theology of the Word suggests that the Word should be understandable—a principle that led to the adoption of vernacular services.
2. The language of the KJV and the Book of Common Prayer was already archaic in the 16th and 17th centuries, but was used because the language of the liturgy tends to be conservative.
3. Many features of this language moved from archaic to obsolete by the 18th century. Hence, when we Lutherans moved from German into English in the 19th century, we adopted a form of language that was already out of common use.
4. The retention of archaic or obsolete language can be easily justified when one is preserving original texts, but is difficult to justify in translations. There is no compelling reason to retain 500-year-old language when translating ancient liturgical or Biblical texts.
5. This does not mean that the language of the liturgy needs to be popular or informal. There is a distinction between modern language as such, and the various "registers" of style in use today. The language of the liturgy can be formal, churchly, and dignified, without being archaic or obsolete.

continually invited input from the church. In addition to the targeted field tests that were conducted on a small scale, we also sought input from larger groups. For example, delegates to both the 2000 and 2003 district conventions were provided updates on the Commission's progress toward a new hymnal and then given the opportunity to complete a survey. The delegates to the conventions in the year 2000 were asked whether their congregations would use the Page 15 service on an occasional basis if it were included in the new hymnal. Responses from over 2,200 delegates indicated that 78% thought they would. *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 4, *Other Documents*, 33. Unfortunately, we did not ask about the language issue in that survey, partly out of a concern that it would be too complicated a question for delegates in such a short time. Had we asked that question, and especially had we asked the delegates to indicate which hymnal their congregation used at that time, we might have discovered considerably earlier that the Liturgy Committee was barking up the wrong tree, so to speak, as it persisted with its plans to update the Jacobean language.

6. Should liturgical language then be regularly updated? In keeping with Luther’s advice in the preface to the Small Catechism, public texts should not be changed very often. But once every 500 years isn’t very often.
7. If regular TLH users are happy with the texts in the old form, and understand them, why update them? Answer: the Common Service form of the liturgy is a treasure that we do not want to lose, and is valuable enough that we would hope congregations would re-adopt. Many congregations that moved from TLH to LW moved completely into DS II, as if it were a replacement for the Common Service. They may be now so accustomed to modern language that they would not consider moving back into the obsolete language forms of TLH. Such congregations are impoverished by the loss of the Common Service, which is superior theologically to DS II in many ways. Modern language will encourage them to add this service into their ‘rotation’.
8. Furthermore, when the Common Service is used side by side with DS II, common language between the two services aids memory retention and forestalls stumbling.
9. No other Lutherans have retained the old language. Even the more conservative Lutherans have changed it.⁴²

The committee still believed at this time that a thorough updating of the language was the correct course to take and that a concerted effort to teach the church on these matters would be required.⁴³

Meanwhile, though the committee was committed to an updated language, reactions continued to suggest that this direction would meet with some opposition. A second round of testing of the revised service with even more congregations participating concluded in mid-2001. We specifically asked about the importance of retaining the “thees” and “thous” in the sung portions. The response suggested that a clear barrier existed for the 35% of congregation that still used *TLH* exclusively:

Evaluation Question	Answers Provided	<i>TLH</i> only	<i>LW</i> only
How important is the retention of the “thees” and “thous” to your congregation?	very important	11	2
	somewhat important	13	6
	not important	11	20
	no big deal	0	5

⁴² This rationale is found in my personal files.

⁴³ See committee minutes, *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 2, *Committee Minutes*, 468.

This concern was reinforced by the response of one pastor, who wrote:

It appears that in my congregation the retention of “Thees” and “Thous” is much more important than I realized. . . . If the purpose of this new hymnal is to unite us in a single hymnal, then leaving the Jacobean language as it is would remove one significant barrier to its acceptance by a significant portion of our Synod. Now, if this were 25 years ago and we were developing the revision for *LW*, then I would have a different opinion. But as it is, the dichotomy between the Jacobean-loving *TLH* users and the contemporary language *LW* users is so entrenched, [that] the updating of the language will only serve to alienate those who use *TLH*.⁴⁴

Thoughtful comments such as this increasingly led the committee to the realization that all the teaching in the world would perhaps be of little help if congregations still using *TLH* would not give the new hymnal a second look, so long as *their* service was significantly altered.

The Liturgy Committee’s position on how best to present the Page 15 service evolved throughout 2001. By May, the members were entertaining the possibility of developing a version that provided the text in both the original and updated forms. This proceeded to the point of going back to our test congregations a third time in October 2001 to seek their opinions about this compromise. In a detailed letter dated October 9, 2001, I described this latest iteration of the Page 15 service. Toward the end of the letter, I attempted to demonstrate the competing interests that the committee was attempting to satisfy. Furthermore, I appealed to the larger purpose of cultivating an attitude among the members of our congregations would acknowledge the necessity of accepting the compromises that had to be made:

Clearly, this is a compromise solution. And as is the case with most compromises, no one is 100% satisfied. Permit me a few personal comments at this point, thoughts that I have shared with the various hymnal committees on numerous occasions. The reality is that no one—not even I—will be completely satisfied with the hymnal when it is finally published. Quite honestly, that is the nature of any hymnal. But in this day and age when everyone can tailor-make their worship just the way they want it, it will be a challenge for all of us to put aside some of our preferences as we receive a common hymnal that faithfully teaches the Word of God and preserves the best of our liturgical heritage.

⁴⁴ The survey results are found in my personal files.

What does this mean in the concrete? It means that pastors will have to be willing to expend a little “pastoral equity” as they lead their congregations into the new hymnal. Yes, it would be nice if everything could be the same. But if it isn’t the same or exactly as “I” would like it to be, then what? In other words, how will we help people adapt to something that is very much the same, but not exactly as they’ve always done it? In the end, it all boils down to a matter of attitude. For example, I can think of any number of older members in my former parish who learned the *LW* version of the creeds when that book was introduced. I’m sure it was uncomfortable at first, but they put their mind to it and did it. If we were proposing all kinds of changes for no good reason, that would be one thing. But specifically in regard to the proposed revisions to the Page 15 service, the committee is trying to be very careful to balance any number of contradictory goals.⁴⁵

It was this version of the service, with both traditional and updated language, that was published in the 2002 booklet of field test materials that was sent to all congregations of the Synods in compliance with the Synod’s bylaws.⁴⁶ In the introduction to the revised service, the committee reviewed the several rounds of testing that had been carried out over the previous two-plus years. That introduction is quoted here at length:

With nearly one-third of LCMS congregations still using *The Lutheran Hymnal* as their only or primary worship book, the Liturgy Committee quickly determined that the Order of Holy Communion, commonly referred to as the “Page 15 Service” would be included in the new hymnal. The committee set about to make a “gentle” revision of the service, leaving the musical setting virtually intact and only updating some of the language. In certain places where updating the language would require changes in the music, the committee resolved to keep the original text (e.g., “Holy Ghost” in the Gloria Patri and the Gloria in Excelsis).

The first revision of the Page 15 Service was tested in about 50 congregations, most of whom used *TLH* regularly. Based on their responses to an extensive survey, revisions were made. The service was then made available to the entire Synod through the commission’s Web site. Well over 1,000 individuals downloaded the service,

⁴⁵ This letter is found in my personal files.

⁴⁶ At that time, Synod Bylaw 3.929 required synodwide field testing of materials before a resolution could be brought to the Synod convention requesting approval of a hymnal. Thus, in 2001 the Synod passed Resolution 2-06 authorizing the Commission on Worship to conduct a formal testing of materials and to bring a full proposal for the new hymnal to the 2004 Synod convention. *Convention Proceedings*, 2001, 129.

and 90 congregations responded to a second survey. The committee has now finalized its revisions, which are included in the pages that follow.

Even before its initial field test, the Liturgy Committee expected that the updating of language would generate the most comments. While both surveys indicated that the majority of congregations felt that they could eventually become comfortable with the changes that were proposed, there was still a frustration expressed by some who were fearful of losing a beloved service that has served them for so long. The committee considered simply returning to the language as it is found in *TLH*. But it also wrestled with the fact that many congregations have not used the language of *TLH* for several decades and would most likely not consider using this service if it were printed only in that form.

In both surveys, the respondents indicated that the desire for the traditional language was primarily for the texts in the sung portions of the service. Based on these responses, the committee has chosen to provide updated language in the spoken portions of the service. In the sung portions, both versions of the text will be provided, the *TLH* version printed on top in boldface, and the updated version printed below in italics. While the committee would prefer to avoid providing options, it believes that this proposal of providing both texts will be immediately self-evident to anyone who uses the service and will not cause undue confusion.⁴⁷

The crux of the issue, as described in this communication to the entire Synod, was the challenge of helping congregations currently using *TLH* to find *their* service in the new hymnal. The proposed solution, providing both versions of the text within the musical portions of the service, was the committee's way of still trying to make the service palatable to those congregations that were no longer using the older language.

⁴⁷ *Lutheran Hymnal Project: Field Test Materials 2002* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), 9; the service itself is found on pages 12-23. These test materials are included in *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 3, *Significant Documents*.

The image shows a musical score for the Gloria in Excelsis, presented in two systems. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in a simple, homophonic style with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are presented in two columns: the original language (in all caps) and an updated language (in title case). The first system covers the lyrics: "men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor-ship Thee, men. We praise You, we bless You, we wor-ship You,". The second system covers: "we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory. we glorify You, we give thanks to You for Your great glory.".

Figure 1: Example of the Gloria in Excelsis with both the original and updated language as it was presented in the 2002 Field Test Materials for the Lutheran Hymnal Project.

Recognizing the danger of confusion that this two-text proposal might create, the Commission asked specifically for a response to that concern. The results were fairly clear: 49% said that it would cause confusion, 41% said no, and 10% said they would not use the service.⁴⁸ More helpful, though, were the 185 individual comments that were provided by the respondents. They ranged all the way from “God does understand updated language” to “we will be a BOLD, not ITALICS congregation.”⁴⁹ The responses were often quite candid, with many expressing frustration that the committee had to go to so much trouble to bring congregations still using *TLH* into the new project:

I fear that the tone of the Lutheran Hymnal Project betrays more of a longing for familiarity’s comfort, bordering on nostalgia, than a concern for the clearest possible communication of the Truth. The restoration of archaic language in liturgy and hymns, except where ABSOLUTELY necessary, can only serve to obscure and distance the Truth.

It is time to just plain update. This revision is just a collected cop out.

⁴⁸ *Historical Records*, vol. 4, *Other Documents*, 36.

⁴⁹ These and the following comments are found in my personal files.

Please DO NOT keep the outdated language as an option—any reasonable person should be able to adjust to the minor changes.

It saddens me that, as much as I enjoy TLH 15, we so identify ourself [sic] culturally as a church body with that service.

Our congregation would use this setting very rarely. I believe it's time for the original language to be updated. P. 15 people will not forsake the new hymnal because of the translation. Using both old and new wordings as proposed is confused, and, frankly, plain silly.

Others, however, expressed concerns about the updates. One response, in particular, was quite direct.

Please consider approaching TLH service as a historical landmark which cannot be remodeled in any way. By all means clean up the format, but leave the service completely intact textually and musically. My congregation has reacted negatively to any proposed changes to this service. Many of us like the so-called "archaic" language, chiefly the use of "thee" and "thou". There would be little objection to the removal of "forgiveth" etc. but the omission of "thee" and "thou" will be noticed and cause offence to many, especially our seniors. What of Matins and Vespers? We prefer TLH versions and hope that they are a part of the hymnal. Please do not alter them other than to change the format to avoid "page flipping."

And still one other comment hit the nail on the head with the pithy observation that this "revision is one generation too late." That was hardly news to the Commission or any of the hymnal committees.

The handwringing was soon to come to an end. At its March 2003 meeting, the Liturgy Committee considered briefly one final option: retaining the original language only in the pew edition of the hymnal, while also providing an updated version that would be available electronically for those congregations that wanted to use the Page 15 service but had no desire to continue with the Jacobean language. The Commission on Worship, however, had heard enough and decided at its April 2003 meeting⁵⁰ to abandon the updated language version once and for all and to move ahead with the final form as we have it in *LSB*, with the language updated in just a few spoken sections while any text set to music remains as it appeared in *TLH*, and even before that in *ELHB*.

⁵⁰ Minutes, April 7–8, 2003, *Lutheran Service Book Historical Records*, vol. 1, *Commission on Worship Minutes*, 202–203.

IV. Conclusions and Observations

That decision came four years after the Liturgy Committee had first begun its work. Considered from our perspective now, having used the service for nearly a decade, the multiple testings and second-guessing might lead some to conclude that the Liturgy Committee did a lot of wheel-spinning during those long years. While it certainly felt that way at times to those of us who served on the committee, the entire process was, I would say, a necessary one, as the following points hopefully make clear.

First, we were fortunate to have the luxury of time. When the Commission resolved in 1996 to develop a new hymnal, we indicated that we were giving ourselves a decade to complete the work. That extended time, something that the editors of *LW* never had, was essential both for giving the committees time to weigh the pros and cons of various decisions and for allowing the church-at-large the time buy into the project. While the committees sometimes proceeded in a very inefficient manner, first making and then later reversing decisions, the end result, I believe, was almost always for the better of the overall project.

Second, the development of this hymnal occurred at a time when we had technology as a friend. The use of the Internet, not only to conduct committee and Commission business but also to disseminate materials to the church-at-large allowed for far greater input than would have been possible even a decade earlier. In addition, the power and flexibility of desktop publishing enabled us to test both content and layout designs. My colleague Jon Vieker, assistant director of the Commission on Worship, served, among many other roles, as an in-house editor. His ability to put design concepts into reality made it possible for us to fine tune the layout of the services to such a degree that the old complaints about hymnals being confusing were silenced once for all.

Third, before the Liturgy Committee's first meeting, each member recognized that the Page 15 service from *TLH* would have to be included in *LSB* if we were to bring along the 35% of congregations that were still using *TLH* exclusively. While it would take several years to conclude that updating the language throughout the service was not the way to proceed, we all realized very clearly that the excessive changes that had made to this service in *LW* were one of the significant reasons why that hymnal had not received a better reception in the Synod.

Fourth, the committee members believed very strongly that retaining the Common Service was important not just for the congregations that were still using *TLH* but also for the many others that had discontinued

using it. It was this conviction that compelled the committee to press so long for updating the language.

Fifth, it took time for the committee members to recognize just where the “red line” had been placed as a result of the *LW* revisions. We were well aware that there was dissatisfaction with the Page 15 revisions in *LW*. What we did not appreciate at first was how this had caused those still using *TLH* to put down their line in the sand fairly close to where they were already standing.⁵¹ Through the multiple testings and (mostly) thoughtful comments we received, we slowly came to acknowledge that the inclusion of this service in *LSB* was chiefly for the *TLH* congregations and that the added benefit would be for others who would choose to use it.

Sixth, and this realization has struck me only while the preparing this study, in all of the comments received from the testing, we rarely if ever heard calls to provide *both* Page 5 and 15 services. The conclusion I draw from this is that the renewed emphasis on more frequent communion, especially as it had been promoted before and during the introduction of *LW*, had moved the needle on the assumption that the full Divine Service of Word *and* Sacrament is the norm among Lutherans. Granted, we are not there yet. But consider that the practice of more frequent communion continues, ever so slowly, to increase.

Seventh, even after the Commission decided to provide only the older translation for the sung portions of the Page 15 service, the issue of the translation of the creeds was yet to be tested, let alone decided. The month after the Commission had made its decision, the Liturgy Committee met again and this time urged the Commission to approach the issue of creed translation with great care, even suggesting that perhaps it would be in the best interest of the new hymnal if the *LW* versions of the creed were used throughout rather than going for more extensive revisions, which is where the Commission was leaning at the time.⁵²

⁵¹ I distinctly remember receiving a letter from one layman who insisted that the new hymnal dare not be any taller, wider, thicker, or heavier than *TLH*. Of course, that was easy for him to say, but it is likely that he was not aware that the slightly larger dimensions of *LW* (and eventually *LSB*) allowed the editors to increase the point size of all the text, thus making it easier for those with sight impairments to see the material.

⁵² *Historical Records*, vol. 2, *Committee Minutes*, 496. As the Commission would later learn in the firestorm of reactions that it received in its proposal to retranslate “who for us men and for our salvation” to “who for us humans and for our salvation,” what was good for the goose was also good for the gander—namely, if there was wisdom and sticking with the older text in the Page 15 service, as the Commission had decided in April 2003, then there was also good reason perhaps not to push the issue of creed

Finally, the comment referenced earlier in response to one of the field tests was spot on: the time to have done a responsible revision of the Page 15 service was twenty-five years too late. I am convinced that in 1982 most of our congregations would have accepted a gentle updating of the Jacobean English, especially if the familiar melodies of the service had not been changed. The church's liturgical rites are ever in flux, as they must be. But if that change is forced upon the faithful without consideration for the long-term memory and appreciation that the people have for the church's heritage, we ought not be surprised by the negative reaction that sometimes comes.

What, then, does this mean for the future? When the next hymnal revision comes, I really do not foresee an attempt to make any substantive changes to the Page 15 service, or what we should really now be referring to as Divine Service, Setting Three. Perhaps if that hymnal project is far enough in the future, memories of the frustrations brought on by *LW* will have faded sufficiently for the Synod to step back and take an honest appraisal of the situation. In the meantime, it seems to me that those congregations that are still using *TLH* really need to step back themselves and ask whether perhaps the careful and conservative revisions found in Setting Three are sufficient for them to adopt *LSB*. In the past nine years, well over 1,000 congregations have made that move away from *TLH*. Surely it would be in the best interest of all that those still using *TLH* do the same so that when the next hymnal comes off the presses, we will all be on the same page, singing the same song.