

English and American Hymns Represent Distinct Traditions, And Each Is Its Own "Conversation"

When a church draws primarily upon Anglican sources for its hymns and worship, as does Epworth Chapel on the Green, the result is quite different from what one would experience when the sources are primarily American.

The two bodies of hymnody differ from one another, first, because of the purposes for which the hymns were collected and published in hymnals. The Anglican hymnic tradition is embodied, first and foremost, in *Hymns Ancient and Modern, for use in the Services of the Church*, which "followed the Prayer Book" and the Church year. J.R. Watson, *The English Hymn*, p. 390. It was this integration of prayer-book worship and hymnody that marked what was meant for hymns to be said to be "English" or "Anglican". That integration of the prayer book with the hymns assisted in giving the Church of England "its unmistakable character," according to Watson.

In contrast, the core of the American hymnic tradition is "testimony of individual experience rather than Church doctrine" and "the value placed upon freedom of worship and respect for the individual conscience." Watson, p. 485.

That doesn't mean that English hymns have to be old. Watson approvingly cites recent English hymnwriters such as Timothy Dudley-Smith, Fred Pratt Green and Brian Wren, whose writings have a prayer-book orientation, and some of whose hymns can be found in Epworth's hymnal.

Whether the hymn collection is English or American, Watson says that the separate hymns in the collection will often bear a "family resemblance to one another," as a "conversation with other hymns" in which each has "something to contribute".

Importunity in Prayer, This Sunday at Epworth

Genesis 18:20-33: "Suppose you find fifty innocent people there within the city—will you still destroy it, and not spare it for their sakes?" Then Abraham pressed his request further. "Suppose there are only forty?" "Abraham pleaded. "Let me speak—suppose only thirty are found?" "Suppose there are only twenty?" "Suppose only ten are found there?"

Psalm 138: When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me. . . . O Lord, your love endures for ever; do not abandon the works of your hands.

Colossians 2:6-15: Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught.

Luke 11:1-18: "Lord, teach us to pray." . . . Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this illustration: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread." "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for." "You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead?"

Processional hymn (*All My Hope on God is Founded*), in v.4: "Daily doth the almighty Giver bounteous gifts on us bestow; his desire our soul delighteth, pleasure leads us where we go. Love doth stand at his hand; joy doth wait on his command."

Evening unscripted prayer meeting: 6-7 p.m.



Luke 11:5-8, about importunity, in the Gospel lesson for this Sunday. Image source: www.textweek.com.

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Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service
11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation
11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

6:00-7:00 p.m., this Sunday: Unscripted evening prayer meeting

Thursdays: 5:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 6:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

Readings, 7/29: Gen. 18:20-33; Ps. 138; Col. 2:6-15; Luke 11:1-18. **8/5, 10 a.m.:** Eccl. 1:12—2:23; Ps. 49:1-11; Col. 3:12-17; Luke 12:13-21. **8/5, 6 p.m.:** Ps. 34; 2 Sam. 6:12-23; Romans 14:7-12.

Prayer Emphases: Equatorial Guinea; Conservative Congregational Churches; Grace Episcopal Church, Monroe, LA, and the Rev. Canon Greg Riley, Rector; Council for Christian Colleges and Universities; parishioners on Larch Street.

Spiritual Discernment Is Required,

to Know When to Contemplate, and When to Act

When Jesus did not tell Mary to help her sister prepare the meal, "Does Jesus value one sister over another, the active servant or the contemplative one?" Deacon Don Hughes asked in his sermon Sunday. "Not likely," he said. "According to St. Benedict, they go hand in hand. Without the first you wouldn't eat. Without the second you wouldn't worship." In the words of Fred Craddock, "If we censure Martha too harshly, she may abandon serving altogether, and if we commend Mary too profusely, she may sit there forever. There is a time to go and do. There is a time to listen and reflect, and knowing which and when is a matter of spiritual discernment."