

# Celebrating Grace Hymnal: Five Years Later

BY DAVID M. TOLEDO

**S**outhern Baptists have long been a singing people, led by such luminaries as William Walker, B.B. McKinney, William J. Reynolds, and David Music. These leaders, and countless other men and women, have guided the musical lives of Southern Baptists through the pendulum swings of cultural change, doctrinal controversy, and evangelistic fervor. In spite of these challenges, and perhaps as a direct result, hymnody has buoyed Baptist congregations through substantial musical changes.

This article will examine *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* published in 2010 by Celebrating Grace, Inc., founded out of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. I will explore the musical and textual contents of the hymnal, compare it with its immediate predecessor, *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991), place it in its historical context within twenty-first century Southern Baptist life, and highlight several important contributions it makes to the study of hymnody. I will also reflect on its reception and adoption as a resource for congregational worship within its first five years of publication.

## *Southern Baptists: How and What We Sing*

While the mid-twentieth century demonstrated a relatively homogeneous ideal for Baptist church music and congregational song, that has not always been the case. It is not necessary to belabor the point that Baptists have long-standing worship traditions that have shaped congregational piety and practice. Both the Charleston (formal, liturgically-minded) and Sandy Creek (enthusiastic, revivalistic) traditions became streams that influenced countless generations of worshippers. In many ways, these traditions remained distinct until the national denomination entities sought to establish a uniform hymnal for Baptist worship.

The Southern Baptist Convention has long had an interesting entanglement between popular song and traditional hymnody. B.B. McKinney, perhaps the denomination's most influential early musical leader, served as a music editor for a publishing house, as a faculty member at the School of Sacred Music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and as music director at Travis Avenue Baptist Church. This coalescence of varied roles in McKinney demonstrated the rich diversity of musical influences in Southern Baptist congregational

song. McKinney led the compilation of *The Broadman Hymnal* (1940) and served as the first secretary of the Church Music Department of the Southern Baptist Convention Sunday School Board.

It is hard to underestimate the influence of the revivalistic tradition on Southern Baptist worship. What began as an evangelistic or revival service became normative in many churches for corporate worship. The spontaneous nature of the Sandy Creek tradition, marked by enthusiasm, emotion, and dramatic salvation experiences, came to shape much of Southern Baptist life, especially in the southern states. The rise of the Sunday school song and gospel song fueled this tradition and provided musical material with which to convict the sinner and lead to conversion. The anthropocentric nature of these songs emphasized personal conversion and piety and focused less on the attributes and actions of God. While emerging from different streams, most notably the charismatic revivals of the 1960s, many current popular styles reflect the same concerns and attitudes of revivalistic worship. The megachurches of Southern Baptist life are direct descendants of the crusade revivals of earlier years and utilize many of the same techniques and structure.

At the same time, Baptists have a long-standing formal worship tradition represented by the worship at First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina. This Calvinistic stream emphasized worship marked by simplicity and order. *Baptist Psalmody* (1850), published by Basil Manly, Sr. and Basil Manly, Jr., served as the first hymnal specifically published for Southern Baptists and represented the Charleston tradition. *The New Baptist Hymnal* (1926) was a joint publication between the American Baptist Publication Society and the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and sought to incorporate many of the advances made by the Oxford Movement and other reforms within traditional hymnody. The formal liturgical practices and style of hymnody characterizing this stream never became dominant, but maintain a rich heritage in many circles to the present day. This approach toward congregational worship and the fully-graded church music program became the dominating patterns for Baptist higher education in the 1960s. The 1975 and 1991 Baptist hymnals demonstrate this influence with their inclusion of many standard twentieth-century hymns and songs of non-Baptist origin.

The publication of the *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991) marked the anniversary of two important entities within Southern Baptist life: the founding of the Sunday School Board in 1891 and the creation of the Church Music Department in 1941. It reflects many of the changes in hymnody that took place in the mid-twentieth century and incorporates traditional hymnody, praise choruses, global songs, and several representatives of modern hymnody. It represents the cumulative efforts of many influential leaders in Southern Baptist life on the local, state, and national level.

The 1991 hymnal also represents the last major Baptist music publication before the finalization of the conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention. Many significant church musicians involved with the publication of the 1991 hymnal served at the denominational seminaries and other places of academic and church leadership. These leaders include well-respected members and fellows of The Hymn Society such as David Music, Michael Hawn, and Terry York. Many of the editors and influencers have since moved to other positions outside of national denominational service.

Similar to many other denominations, the congregations of the Southern Baptist Convention face tremendous challenges in navigating the turbulent waters of music and worship styles. Many congregations, led by influential megachurches, have adopted contemporary worship practices and no longer use hymnals in worship. Traditional hymns may be sung, but they are often recast as popular-styled songs led primarily with a praise band. The vast majority of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention have fewer than one hundred people in weekly worship attendance and struggle to balance the desires of differing generations of worshippers.

## *Turmoil Within the Southern Baptist Convention*

Beginning in the late 1970s, the conservative wing of the Southern Baptist Convention led an initiative to transform denominational agencies and seminaries. The central issue in their efforts was the nature of Scripture and its role in shaping doctrine and belief. The resulting chaos revealed a considerable rift between the majority of the congregations and those in places of denominational leadership. Through successive elections of conservative presidents of the Convention, the trustee boards of the various agencies became decidedly conservative and instituted wholesale changes of leadership, faculty, and employees.

For many years a student could enter one of numerous Baptist colleges and receive an undergraduate degree that would adequately prepare him or her for seminary studies. Both the undergraduate and seminary experiences shared many characteristics with state universities and music graduate programs, but prepared students for a life of ministry service. The best and brightest church musicians headed these programs and shaped the Southern Baptist

musical landscape. Many of those who led the local, state, and national Southern Baptist Convention music departments have retired from active service or have transitioned to roles outside of mainstream denomination service. In many ways the landscape has become fragmented and compartmentalized, not unlike the worship services of Baptist congregations. The political controversies of the 1970s and 1980s led to several Baptist universities severing official ties with state conventions and charting their own course along the Baptist tradition.

## *The Emergence of Celebrating Grace*

Following its publication in 1991, *The Baptist Hymnal* enjoyed widespread adoption throughout Southern Baptist congregations in the 1990s and early 2000s. The dramatic influx of praise choruses and worship songs led many Baptist congregations to supplement or replace this hymnal with non-affiliated hymnals such as *The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration* or *The Celebration Hymnal*. Because of the substantial turnover of leadership within the music department of Lifeway Christian Resources and the move toward the exclusive use of contemporary worship music in many congregations, there were no specific plans to produce a subsequent hymnal from the denomination. This led the leadership team of John Simons, Tom McAfee, and others to envision a hymnal that would meet the needs of a diverse group of congregations.

The *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* Editorial Board was decidedly academic in nature, led by John Simons, David Music, Milburn Price, and Stanley Roberts, all of whom hold positions of notable influence in Baptist academic life. Many members of the various advisory boards have extensive experience in the publication of hymnals for worship. John Simons, coordinating editor and co-founder of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal*, describes the circumstances which prompted the creation of the hymnal:

*Celebrating Grace Hymnal* was created to meet a need for well-constructed resources for planning and leading congregational song from a Baptist heritage posture, and it cultivated the concept of families and people of all ages worshipping together. Personally, many hours of prayer, countless conversations with worship leaders, and the image of a parent sharing a hymnal with their child as they sang praises to God in corporate worship contemplation inspired me to begin this project. As well, the 1991 *Baptist Hymnal* was at the end of its projected lifespan, and there were no indications that Lifeway would produce a hymn book. Joining with Baptist entrepreneur and philanthropist J. Thomas McAfee III, I sought to create a worship book based on collaboration, contribution by church musicians and pastors, and connection between academia and the local church. The hymnal was to be a planning tool for liturgists and worship leaders, a practical book to be used

by all people to worship God, and a discipleship resource to help shape the future development of congregational song.<sup>1</sup>

The editorial board demonstrated an awareness that their hymnal would primarily serve Baptist congregations, but also would cross denominational boundaries and find its way into hands of a diversity of worshipping communities. Simons notes,

The initial target audience of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* was Baptists of all kinds who used hymns as a basis for their corporate worship service . . . . However, we quickly discovered that *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* connected well beyond our Baptist target and resonated with many non-denominational, Bible church, United Methodist, Lutheran and Presbyterian churches that had choirs, trained church musicians, and a hymn-based worship style.<sup>2</sup>

This broad appeal led to the publication of the hymnal in two titles: *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* and *Celebrating Grace: Hymnal for Baptist Worship*.

## Design, Format, and Organization

Each hymn features the title prominently displayed, with the general hymnal heading and specific subheadings alternating on opposing pages. Tune names and meter are located at the bottom right, along with the occasional cross-reference with other settings of the same tune in the hymnal. The authors, composers, sources, and copyright information are found on the bottom left of the page. The hymnal is consecutively numbered, including hymns and supplemental material.

*Celebrating Grace* embodies the doxological concept of God's self-revelation and humanity's response in worship. This operates on the macro and micro levels throughout the hymnal. The first section entitled "I Will Be Your God" contains hymns organized along the persons of the Trinity and are theocentric in nature. Specific hymns for the various seasons of the Christian year are found within the subsection "God the Son: The Incarnate One." This organizational feature emphasizes the Christological nature of our worship and locates the song of the people within the actions and salvific work of Christ. The second section, "You Shall Be My People," captures the worshipful responses of the people of God in light of divine revelation. The organizational structure emphasizes the communal nature of the Body of Christ, the traditional elements of Christian worship, and the church's witness to the Gospel in mission.

## Language and Textual Issues

The Text and Tunes Committee demonstrated careful attention to balance historical Baptist hymnal traditions with the range of textual concerns facing modern hymnals. As a general rule, the majority of the hymns, especially those within the hymnic core, are found unchanged or with minor adjustments. The editorial

committee elected to use a lowercase first letter of each successive line of poetry and employ lowercase pronouns for God, while capitalizing various metaphors for God. When not thoroughly ingrained in popular usage, archaic language such as "ye" and "thee" were replaced with modern alternatives. Rather than changing problematic verses of familiar hymns, the committee occasionally elected to omit stanzas (for example, stanza two of "Brethren, we have met to worship") or replace them with more suitable alternatives. One noticeable difference between *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* and *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991) is the frequent addition of stanzas. Notable examples of this practice are "Open my eyes that I may see," "O for a thousand tongues to sing," "Sing praise to God who reigns above," and "The church's one foundation." Inclusive language alternatives were used when the general meaning and original intention remained. As a whole, *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* reflects the more conservative approach common to most Baptist congregations with regards to these linguistic concerns. The hymnal finds the appropriate balance of serving a prophetic role in stimulating conversation and theological consideration while maintaining its viability as a resource for congregational song in Baptist congregations.

## Scripture Readings, Supplemental Material, and Indices

Corporate scripture readings in a variety of formats permeate the contents of the hymnal. These readings reflect the overall organization principles of revelation and response. Several helpful indices follow the musical content, including typical resources such as indices of copyrights, authors, scriptural readings, topics, first lines and titles, and meter. One notable inclusion is an Outline of the Christian Year and description of Worship and the Christian Year written by Deborah Carlton Loftis and Paul A. Richardson.

Recognizing the tremendous technological advances that have transformed music publication and performance, *Celebrating Grace* offers a variety of digital resources. The centerpiece is the Worship Matrix that allows worship leaders to plan, design, and create worship experiences. This tool incorporates various liturgical resources including lectionary readings and allows worship planners to integrate the hymnal products. Rather than having the entire hymnal orchestrated at the beginning of the publication process, the publisher has taken a measured approach in which they engage a pool of composers to create unique orchestrations for selected hymns. Many of the hymns have standard single stanza orchestrations that may be repeated as necessary, while others have anthem orchestrations that are through-composed with accompanying choral parts. Still others have final stanza "festive finishes" or handbell arrangements. The *Celebrating Grace* website makes the music available for immediate purchase and download, as well as long-term storage for purchased products.

## Contents

Having addressed the overall format, organization, and non-musical materials, it is now time to turn attention toward the musical content of the hymnal. In order to effectively evaluate the contents and song selection of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* and compare it with *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991), I entered the song titles and corresponding hymn tunes manually into a spreadsheet. There was a specific entry for each unique text/tune combination. Because of variances of hymn titles between the two hymnals, whenever the texts demonstrated broad uniformity, they were included on the same line in the spreadsheet. *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* consists of 614 unique text/tune combinations which I grouped into ten categories in order to ascertain the contents and their correspondence with the earlier Baptist hymnal.

### Traditional Hymnody

Traditional hymnody consists of hymns that make up much of the common core of English language hymnody including Lutheran chorales, psalm settings, the works of Watts and Wesley, early American folk hymnody, and Victorian hymnody. One hundred sixty-three hymns found in *Celebrating Grace* fall into this category including 111 entries common to both hymnals. One of the interesting features of the new hymnal is the setting of traditional hymn texts with different tune combinations. Although several of the text and tune pairings appear across different hymnals, a few were new to this hymnal. Milburn Price set "God moves in a mysterious way" to a new tune entitled RIDGECREST, named after the Southern Baptist retreat center in North Carolina. *Southern Harmony* provided familiar tunes for "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds" (DOVE OF PEACE) and "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult" (RESTORATION). Mark Edwards and Ralph Manuel composed new tunes for "Lo, he comes with clouds descending" (WESNATE) and "O love that will not let me go" (DONNA) respectively. Lastly, Swee Hong Lim's jubilant tune CHU LEUNG is paired with Wesley's text "Ye servants of God." "All things bright and beautiful" returns to its traditional ROYAL OAK tune, a move away from the 1991 *Baptist Hymnal* setting of SPOHR. "Christ is made the sure foundation" moves from UNSER HERRSCHER to EDEN, "In Christ there is no east or west" from ST. PETER to MCKEE, and "Jesus, Lover of my soul" from MARTYN to ABERYSTWYTH.

### Gospel Song/Sunday School Song

One of the enduring legacies of Southern Baptist congregational song has been the composition, celebration, and propagation of the gospel song throughout its hymnals. As we have seen earlier, the revivalistic Sandy Creek Tradition found an ideal pairing with Sunday School songs and gospel songs made popular throughout the 1800s and early 1900s. It is not surprising then that gospel songs made up the largest percentage of

the materials in 1991 *The Baptist Hymnal* (31%). Many of these entries speak to the need for personal repentance and conversion and featured prominently in the Baptist revivalistic worship style. As most denominations have struggled to navigate the waters of the so-called worship wars, the struggle for Southern Baptists has often been between contemporary popular styles and the gospel song, not traditional hymnody as in other denominations. It is not uncommon to hear new musical arrangements of traditional hymnody in megachurch worship services alongside contemporary worship songs. By and large, the gospel song genre is a quickly diminishing style in modern Baptist worship services.

Even a cursory examination of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* reveals a marked turn away from this genre with the omission of many of the revivalistic gospel songs. Missing from the collection are such songs as "Are you washed in the blood," "Count your blessings," "Faith is the victory," "I'd rather have Jesus," "Room at the cross," "Set my soul afire," "There is power in the blood," and "We have heard the joyful sound." Another theme prominent in many gospel songs was the emphasis upon eternal life and heaven, perhaps due to the challenging circumstances of life during the composition of these songs. Many of these hymns are missing in the hymnal and have been replaced by those with a greater emphasis upon social justice and the Church's mission on earth. This shift corresponds with the change of focus in recent decades of hymnody in general, although many Southern Baptist congregations fail to address these issues in corporate worship.

### Praise Chorus

One of the prominent features of *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991) was the inclusion of many of the most well-known choruses that emerged following the Jesus Movement and charismatic renewal of the 1960s. For the sake of this discussion, choruses were identified as short-form works limited to one or two stanzas or choruses, without great attention to poetic meter and structure. The 1991 hymnal contained 64 such choruses including "Seek ye first," "I love You Lord," and "Glorify thy Name." *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* featured the praise chorus in a much less conspicuous manner with only 38 such choruses for just 6% of the total contents. Most of these choruses are found in the 1991 hymnal, but several new choruses are included as well. Some notable examples include Ken Medema's "Lord, listen to your children praying" and Getty and Townsend's "Creation sings."

### Worship Song

There can be little argument that the popular styles that began to find their way into the song of many congregations in the latter decades of the previous century have radically transformed church music. The introduction of the acoustic and electric guitar, amplification, synthesizers, and drum sets have replaced the piano,

organ, and choirs for many congregations. Following in the footsteps of the gospel song musicians who wrote and collected songs for worship, the contemporary Christian music artist became one of the leading figures in congregational song in the latter twentieth century through the present. What began with Keith Green, André Crouch, Amy Grant, and Michael W. Smith has given way to Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Hillsongs, Paul Baloche, and many others. Beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a subtle shift began to occur in which those artists recognized the untapped market of “praise and worship” music and began writing multi-stanza songs intended for corporate worship. While these songs often do not possess the lyrical quality or musical complexity of traditional hymnody, increasingly they have become theologically sophisticated and doctrinally rich. Whereas other hymnals have widely adopted these songs in their hymnals, the editors of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* took a much more selective approach. Only 22 of the most commonly sung songs, a mere 3% of the total contents, were included in the hymnal, most notably, “How great is our God,” “Shout to the Lord,” and “You are my all in all.”

## Modern Hymnody

The twentieth century saw a worldwide explosion of new hymn composition. Through the reach of globalization, diverse musical styles and influences crossed borders with ease. In the aftermath of two world wars, the civil rights movements, and great social upheaval throughout the middle of the century, Southern Baptists struggled to incorporate music that expressed the spirit of the age. Beginning with the work of William J. Reynolds in the *Baptist Hymnal* (1975) and extending into the 1991 edition, greater attention was given to burgeoning hymn-writing of the so-called “New English Renaissance” and included works by Wren, Dudley-Smith, Kaan, and Pratt Green. To many congregations, these songs were their first musical experiences with social justice issues and the hymns challenged them to expand their view of the gospel outward from conversion and personal piety.

While it is safe to say that many of these hymns did not gain widespread popularity within Southern Baptist circles, their presence in the denominational hymnal serves a prophetic voice urging congregations into deeper theological consideration and action. For the purpose of this analysis, I classified songs as “modern hymns” if they were written in the twentieth or twenty-first century and exhibited characteristics consistent with formal hymnody; that is, lyrics with multiple stanzas with attention given to poetic and hymnic meter, rhyme scheme, and other literary devices.

*The Baptist Hymnal* (1991) contained 107 of these modern hymns including “When in our music God is glorified,” “Tell out, my soul, the greatness,” and “When Christ was lifted from the earth.” New hymnody was an obvious emphasis of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal*

as is evidenced by the inclusion of 207 such hymns, making up the largest percentage of the hymnal at 34%. David Music, editor and chair of the Texts and Tunes Committee describes some of the changes made with respect toward modern hymnody, “Texts using archaic and exclusive language for humans in historic hymns were generally altered, although not invariably. Some hymns were returned to their original forms (i.e., before their alteration in *The Baptist Hymnal* 1991).”<sup>3</sup>

Several new tunes were used for hymns included in the 1991 hymnal including some by Baptist hymn writers. Paul Richardson composed STUART for “As He gathered at his table” and Mark Edwards set “Easter people, raise your voices” to his WESNATE. Other Baptist contributions included the texts “God, our Father, you have led us” and “Living stones” by Terry York, and “Send forth your word, O God” by Milburn Price.

The modern hymns of Stuart Townend and Keith and Kristyn Getty feature prominently in *Celebrating Grace Hymnal*. The depth of these texts and singability of the tunes have fostered a renewal of congregational song in both contemporary and traditional churches. Notable inclusions by these authors include “How deep the Father’s love for us,” “In Christ alone (My hope is found),” “Speak, O Lord,” and “The power of the cross.”

## Songs for the Christian Year

In light of Vatican II and the cross-denominational worship renewal that followed, Baptist adherence to the Christian calendar is on the rise. Many congregations celebrate both Advent and Christmas, and more churches are expanding their Easter celebrations to include Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. Previous Southern Baptist hymnals reflected this lack of musical development of congregational song. *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* has sought to fill these gaps with twenty hymns for Advent, fourteen songs for Epiphany, and a substantial section of hymns for the Lenten season. The fact that the hymnal editors chose the category of Lent demonstrates the shift in attitudes among Southern Baptists toward the celebration of the church year.

## Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

Another area of historical deficiency in Baptist worship has been songs for the two recognized ordinances—baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The 1991 hymnal contains only three hymns for baptism! *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* does better with seven such hymns including new hymns such as “We are raised to newness of life” and “Come to the water.” For a denomination that identifies itself through the ordinance of baptism, the lack of music for baptism most likely speaks to a neglectful approach toward the corporate celebration of this action.

Baptism is identified most commonly as the first act of obedience of a believer following conversion and less as an entrance into the worshipping community. As such,

it is individualistic in nature and the congregants tend to be spectators rather than participants. The editors of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* sought to correct this focus with regards to both baptism and the Lord's Supper. It shows a definite shift toward this congregational approach with "Come and feast, for all are welcome" and "We are one in Christ."

## Global Hymnody and Spirituals

The 1991 hymnal included fourteen songs that can be categorized as either global hymnody or African American spirituals. *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* demonstrates a definite interest in songs from global Christianity with the inclusion of twenty-nine such entries. It marks the first time songs from the Taizé and Iona communities have found their way into Southern Baptist hymnals, with seven and two inclusions respectively. Baptists have long had a presence in Latin and South America, and specifically Brazil. Several Brazilian hymns can be found in *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* including "At the break of day," "For the troubles and sufferings," and "O sing to the Lord."

## Reception

Since its initial publication in 2010, *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* has experienced numerous printings and is now in the pews of hundreds of churches, colleges, and seminaries throughout the United States. In addition to the physical hymnal, its repository of supplemental resources continues to expand both quantitatively and qualitatively. There are now over 200 anthem arrangements of hymns by notable composers such as Lloyd Larson, Michael Cox, Robert Sterling, C. L. Bass, Cindy Berry, and Mary McDonald. *Celebrating Grace* offers a broad range of orchestral arrangements for congregational worship including extended orchestrations, a jazz series, and vocal solos. As its reception and popularity grow, the publisher of *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* continues to provide new musical resources, ensuring that the contents remain fresh and accessible to congregations of all sizes and musical tastes.

The *Celebrating Grace* brand is flourishing and extending its reach into other areas of congregational song and worship. *Growing in Grace*, its graded choir curriculum, provides biblically-based music resources developed by lifelong music educators and children's choir leaders. The *Celebrating Grace* Worship and Leadership Conference has offered training and encouragement for church musicians, pastors, and laity involved in the worship planning and music making in the local church. At the foundation of each of these endeavors is the *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* and its significant diversity of musical and textual resources.

## Observations

*Celebrating Grace Hymnal* marks an important juncture in the congregational song of Southern Baptists. Its story cannot be told without recognizing the publication of the *Baptist Hymnal* in 2008. As the *Celebrating Grace* editorial board began its initial planning sessions, Lifeway Christian Resources, the official publishing entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, announced plans for a new hymnal. Their efforts, begun and completed between the time of *Celebrating Grace*'s initial plans and ultimate publication, display great influences of popular contemporary styles. Although the two hymnals were published within years of each other, they are substantially different and serve divergent constituencies. *The Baptist Hymnal* (2008) is an updated version of *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991) and represents a considerable shift towards contemporary musical styles within Southern Baptist life. It maintains the core hymnody that is the legacy of Baptists, but limits its new entries largely to popular musical styles. It is a record of what many Southern Baptist congregations were singing at its time of publication and provides a host of resources to supplement congregational song and the music ministries that serve these churches. Likewise, the *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* lies firmly within the stream of historic Baptist hymnals. It also shows substantial influence from the numerous denominational hymnals published in recent decades. The organizing principles and its emphasis upon the church year reflect a growing awareness of historical patterns of worship and mark a departure from the revivalistic practices of earlier Southern Baptists. The churches that will use *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* are likely to incorporate liturgical elements of corporate worship and will be well served by the resources contained within the hymnal. Its distinctive nature lies in its pastoral and prophetic role to shepherd and guide congregational worship to both familiar and new musical expressions. It serves as a musical resource from which church musicians and worship leaders can educate their congregations and help them encounter hymns that reflect the global Christian community.

The hymnal editors of *Celebrating Grace* showed care in their incorporation of popular hymns and worship songs. Their selections demonstrate a concern for corporate expressions of worship rather than musical celebration of the individual's experience of worship. These songs find their place alongside historic hymns, new texts that demonstrate sensitivity and awareness of social issues, and songs of the global church. As has been previously mentioned, *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* is a significant departure from previous Baptist hymnals dominated by gospel song styles. Southern Baptists have a long history of evangelistic fervor, but as *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* demonstrates, the methodology and approach of the evangelistic efforts appears to be changing. This can be attributed to several factors including cultural change, seeker-friendly megachurch services, and a shift of emphasis toward broader social issues. The hymnal seeks to

provide a congregation with a broad repertoire of worship resources that lend themselves to more than a revival service model. The structural principles, immediately familiar to more liturgical streams of Christendom, reflect a change in approach of some Baptist congregations. Moving forward, Southern Baptist congregations will hold equally their evangelistic heritage and a growing sense of identity and unity within the larger Christian community. *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* is an effective vehicle for this transition. *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* is an important contribution to hymnology and represents a significant stream of Baptist worship practices. 

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>John Simons, e-mail message to author, June 30, 2014.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>David W. Music, e-mail message to author, October 5, 2014.

## *Lifting Hearts, Joining Hands, Raising Voices*



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