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The church musician

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literally mean (if that could be determined) and instead use the symbols as a lens to reinterpret the present world.

Jacobsen devotes a chapter each to how apocalyptic symbols construct and maintain social worlds, but he only mentions the third possibility, how they delegitimize worlds, claiming that these are “the rarest of the three stances toward world for the preacher” (64). Perhaps another chapter is needed to explain this, or to explore if the opposite is not the case – apocalyptic texts by their imagery of nature in convulsion seem to call into question all powers and principalities. Even in Mark 13, where Jacobsen convinces me that what seems fearsome is in fact hopeful, the symbols seem to function initially to delegitimize the powers of this world – which is exactly how he uses them in the first half of his sermon on this text. One of the functions of apocalypse is to pronounce a sentence upon the current age.

I was pleased that Jacobsen includes three of his own sermons. Apart from their inherent interest as strong sermons, they afford an opportunity to see this theory in practice. He really does mean that preachers should not discuss the literal meaning of symbols in apocalyptic texts; in fact one strains to hear any direct discussion of his texts. He does what he advocates, he uses the symbols as a lens to view our world. He also does something he does not discuss: each sermon has five parts and moves in similar ways. Readers may be left wondering, (a) if something other than apocalyptic texts is governing his homiletic, and (b) whether the demanding nature of his exegetical proposals will not leave the preacher too far short of a completed sermon. Still, what is offered here is an excellent roadmap for a journey not to be missed.

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The Church Musician

Paul Westermeyer

Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1997

159 pp., \$22.95 Softcover

Alas, the “worship wars” in our churches continue to claim individual and congregational victims! Often pastors and church musicians do not know where to turn for clarity and support. This is a book for all who worship, sing, and appreciate good music in the church, but especially for pastors, church musicians, and members of parish worship or music committees.

Paul Westermeyer, who teaches church music at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, provides here a second edition of his original work by the same name, first published in 1988. The revision reflects "...a harsher, less civil, more polarized time" (foreword, Martin E. Marty, p. xiii). The revision comes as a response to the growing culture and worship wars in the church.

Westermeyer, who is known among the "worship crowd" for his hard-hitting and no-nonsense approach to liturgy and music, does not disappoint here. He clearly states that the church musician is *not* an entertainer (our cultural model of the musician). He blames our seminaries' lack of teaching for the clergy's ignorance of church music.

Preferring to avoid the familiar titles of Choir Director, Minister of Music, and Pastoral Musician, he uses the resurrected image of the *cantor* to name the person who leads congregational song, and locates this image in the classic Lutheran musical heritage. "In the German Lutheran tradition, the cantor was in charge of music for the congregation, music and musical instruction in the school, and music for the city" (14). The book then elaborates various aspects of the cantor's role in the contemporary congregation.

In his initial chapters, he describes how the cantor needs to be rooted in the community she serves, and provides practical advice for dealing with compromise, conflict, and congregational tradition. He lays a heavy load on the shoulders of the cantor. The cantor leads the peoples' praise, which is pre-eminently vocal. The cantor is right-hand person to the presiding minister, aids in proclaiming the Word of God, but without preaching. The cantor must assist in ensuring that the whole story is sung. The cantor is a primary steward of God's Word in the congregation. The cantor serves, but always with grace and kindness; leads, without appearing to control. In all this, he emphasizes congregational song and music as gift and grace, rather than law and discipline.

His fifth chapter, *The Rhythm of the Cantor's Life*, the heart of the book deals with the cantor's vocation. He takes us through the weekly, seasonal, and annual routines of the cantor's life, in churches of different sizes. He stresses lectionary-based music planning. He demonstrates and encourages ways for church musicians to grow in even the smallest congregations. He discusses how and how not to introduce changes, and when to leave versus when to stay. He deals at length with the spiritual side of the job of cantor.

Later chapters deal with the important issues of congregational music tensions, and clergy-musician relationships. He identifies some sources of tension (low pay, split families, inclusive language), warning that the churches' song may grind to a halt if the tensions are too great. He discusses many of the issues which lead to clergy-musician conflict, and presents his analysis of the tasks or roles of each position as a way of easing this conflict where it occurs.

The final two chapters, “Challenges” and “Responses” represent the bulk of the additions to this edition over the 1988 version. Westermeyer discusses the current attack on “traditional” church music and liturgical worship by the “seeker-friendly” advocates. He acknowledges that church musicians are often part of the problem, but concludes that these current attacks are frequently unwarranted and mean-spirited.

Finally, he deals with youth and children in worship, the term “post-christian”, pipe organs (he is in favour), microphones (he is against), and the phrase, “why should the devil have all the good tunes?” (attributed variously to Augustine, Wesley, Luther, and General William Booth). There is a valuable refutation of the misguided idea that Luther borrowed popular barroom tunes for his hymns. Finally, he gives three criteria for good church music: “Durability, honesty, and treating people well” (136).

This is a well-written, practical, carefully thought-out book. Westermeyer deals sensitively with liturgically-oriented churches of all sizes. Pastors, buy a copy to read yourselves. Then get another copy for *your* cantor!

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Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders

Gilbert R. Rendle
Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1998
184 pages, \$22.95 Softcover

“This volume”, says Speed Leas, “is a goldmine of ideas for helping congregational leaders face or initiate change. The book synthesizes the best and most recent thinking about change and churches, presenting it in useful bite-sized increments that can be used by a group planning to help their congregation be more adaptive to the world changing around it.” I heartily agree with this assessment!

Like Leas, Rendle is a senior consultant with the Alban Institute. He is an ordained United Methodist clergyman with fifteen years of congregational experience. For the past ten years he has been consulting with congregations and judicatories helping them with leadership and change dynamics and realities. Rendle notes: “This is not a book about where your congregation is going. It is a book about how leaders can help your congregation get there.”