



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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President Moldstad informed me that your special committee will meet on January 17-18. He asked me if I, as synod secretary, knew of any materials that might be important for your discussion concerning the matter of worship and our bylaws. He urged me to forward what I could find to your committee in advance of your meeting.

✓ I have a summary of the constitutions, as compiled by E.Teigen.

✓ I am also including the final pages of an article which I wrote entitled “About the Service in God’s House,” which was printed in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* in June 1982. This was just prior to the adoption of our current constitution and makes reference to the constitution change in liturgical forms to “based upon...” The rest of the article is not pertinent to your discussion, but is available at the seminary web-site.

The above article also refers to the 1966 constitution revision (which is not included in Erling Teigen’s list of the constitutions as they were adopted). It is interesting to note that the words “or the Common Order of worship” were added to our constitution in 1966. The *Lutheran Hymnary* had included the Common Order in 1913 as did *The Lutheran Hymnal* which we published as a member of the Synodical Conference in 1941. But it was not until 25 years later that this became a constitutional addition.

✓ It also was quite interesting to look in the past *Synod Reports*. Included are a number of references.

The following is for your information. It is simply reference materials for your files as you go about your work.

Craig A. Ferkenstad, secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Information gathered from past Synod Reports:

The 1970s brought the start of the publication of a new wave of hymn books

In 1978, the *Lutheran Book of Worship* was published. During the same year, the WELS also was beginning the publication of new liturgical resources. The ELS Committee on Worship reported, in 1978 (page 104):

“After reviewing and discussing some of the liturgical practices noted in our Synod churches, and [sic] Committee suggests that, whether using the Common Service or the Danish Service, changes in the rubrics should be introduced only with proper explanation ...

“The Committee also urges pastors and congregations to try ‘The Service of the Word’ from W.E.L.S. when available.”

The following year, in 1979, an invitation was extended to the ELS “to investigate the possibility of making a contribution to the new book of worship which Concordia Publishing House would probably publish.” This was included in the President’s Report (page 30) and assigned to the floor committee on Doctrine.

The convention replied with a lengthy resolution; but especially interesting is a “Whereas,” which served as an explanation for what followed (pages 63-64/[attached](#)):

“... Whereas, the ELS has never officially adopted any hymnbook as its official book of worship but has enjoyed a freedom of use among its congregations of various liturgical services and worship materials...”

Lutheran Worship was then published by the LC-MS in 1982. The following year, 1983, the ELS Worship Committee made an evaluation of *LW* (pages 106-07). They did not recommend adoption by the synod. The rationale was ([attached](#)):

“... Assuming that any hymnal has no doctrinally objectionable elements in it, use of such a book of worship is an external matter, a matter of adiaphora, or an indifferent matter. As such, there can be no dictate against usage of any form of worship or worship resource.

“However, the question of confession does enter in. Article X of the Formula of Concord deals with such matters of indifference or adiaphora....”

At the same convention, a *Hymnal Supplement* was proposed by the ELS Worship Committee. I have a copy of the *Hymnal Supplement* on my shelves; but there is no year of publication. It is similar to what was proposed and includes the “Bugenhagen Service;” but there also is a “The Service of the Word” which appears to be a free-adaptation of the Order of Matins.

The ELS Worship Committee published the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* in 1996. The following is a chain of events:

In 1991 (page 123):

“... 1990 saw the printing and distribution of several orders of the baptismal service and ‘new’ baptismal hymns. The committee is pleased that the rites and hymns have proven to be use [sic] to congregations of the synod. The committee continues to observe the work of the WELS Hymnal Project....”

The 1991 convention response was (page 171):

“...B. Be it resolved, That the worship committee be encouraged to examine the possibility of assembling and publishing a hymnal that reflects the liturgical and hymnic heritage of the ELS.”

During the following two years (1991-93), the committee began to prepare materials and submitted tentative items to the convention. In the 1993 report (pages 159-61), they also reported ([attached](#)):

“...The committee acknowledges a wealth of recently produced worship resources available for use in our congregations including LUTHERAN BOOK OF WORSHIP, LUTHERAN WORSHIP and the forthcoming CHRISTIAN WORSHIP produced by a committee of our sister synod.

“The committee suggests that all of these resources contain elements that may be unnecessary to introduce into the worship practice of congregations of our synod. In addition, the committee maintains that certain aspects of these hymnals may be of questionable worth or value to our parishes ...”

In 1994 (pages 126-27), the committee noted:

“Keep in mind that the ‘Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary’ is not being produced to be the official hymnal of the ELS. That has never been the intention of the committee, nor has the committee ever been given the charge to create such a resource....”

The committee also noted concerning the “Common Service.”

“... There was always some light degree of difference in usage among Lutheran parishes and synods who used the Common Service, but the significant corpus of the service was identical. Contemporary revisions of this order take unnecessary liberties with either the music or the texts of this service.”

As the book approached printing, the committee reported in 1995 (page 147):

“We have three worship types in our synod today. One is based on TLH, another on TLHry and a third is based on ‘contemporary’ models (LW, CW). Those who are accustomed to TLH can use the new hymnal with a minimum of introduction ... Those who are accustomed to the old TLHry will find familiar liturgical rites ... Those who are looking for new music and new liturgical rites will find a wealth of material that is new to the ELS and the world of Lutheran liturgy. We are confident that it will serve the needs of all concerned.”

In 1997, the committee provided a summary of the project (pages 116-17); and said

“... Over the years the ELS allowed for a variety of hymnal use in the churches of the synod, and the liturgical usage was governed by the synodical constitution only insofar as the dictate that the forms of service should conform to the rites of 1) the **Danish Ritual of 1685** as it was revised by the state church of Norway in the 19th century and translated for use in the LHry and 2) the **Common Service** of American Lutheranism....

“The various rites included in the **Common Service** were used by much of Lutheranism in 1913 ... “

Most recently, in 2008, the Worship Committee reported on “Liturgical Unity in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.” It is a most interesting report (pages 126-29) which could be noted in full ([attached](#)):

“... Of all the Lutheran synods in the USA the ELS has, without a doubt, fostered the greatest degree of freedom in liturgical matters. The early Norwegian immigrants used at least three different hymnals (sometimes simultaneously in the same service) ...

“Though most of the congregations in the synod used the Hymnary ... The synod did not have an official hymnal but this did not create any unnecessary liturgical confusion, since all the congregations, in their acceptance of the synodical constitution, used the constitutionally recommended forms of the Danish Order of 1685, which can be traced to the work of Johannes Bugenhagen, and the Common Service of 1888, which was based on the common consensus of the Lutheran Orders of the 16th and 17th centuries ...