

Voices Found

INTRODUCTION

The first book of the Old Testament, the book of the origins called Genesis, tells of God's interaction with the world and gives an early ancestral history from the time of creation. In Genesis 4:20-21 (NRSV) we read an early account of the progeny of Lamech and Adah:

Adah bore Jubal; he was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and pipe.

Musicians and their art have been an important part of our Judeo-Christian heritage from the beginning and are immortalized in the Old Testament. One can envision songs of tales of tribal history and praise to God accompanied by lyre. One can hear the shepherd's pipe playing a solitary melody or joining with drums and tambourines to accompany a lively dance.

In our historic religious tradition, singing and dancing mark key events. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt is one such event. Both Moses and Miriam led their people in singing praise to God for their miraculous deliverance. (Exodus 15) In search of the homeland promised to them by God, Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness where their very existence was challenged by the lack of food and water, personal conflicts, and the insecurity of freedom. At God's command Moses led the people to the well at Beer where God provided water for them to drink. Here the people sang a song. (Numbers 21:16-18) Deborah and Barak sang of their victory over the Canaanites, (Judges 5) and women led the joyful music when David returned triumphant over the Philistines. (I Samuel 18:6-7) Judith led her people in dancing and singing a great song of praise to God after her victory over Holofernes. (Judith 16:1-18)

In the New Testament Paul writes to the Ephesians admonishing them not to become drunk with wine, but to be filled with the Spirit, and thus, "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:18-20) But scripture tells us little else about the music of the early church or those who composed and performed it. Perhaps it was considered such an integral part of worship that it warranted little comment.

We do have evidence of music that was created by women for use in convents where they sang the Offices and had freedom to create new music as needed for their regular cycle of prayer. *Voices Found: Women in the Church's Song* contains

examples of some of this early music that still exists in manuscript. One such man-

uscript extant is by a Byzantine abbess named Kassia (ca. 810 - ca. 867) who was the first woman we know who wrote music for the liturgy. She lived in Constantinople during the reign of the Emperor Theophilus. Her song, known as "The Hymn of the Repentant Sinful Woman" or "The Fallen Woman," remains part of the morning office of the Holy Wednesday liturgy in Eastern churches. Because of the improvisatory nature of Byzantine liturgical song, many versions of this song exist. Two versions of the text are presented in *Voices Found*. One is a chant with drone accompaniment currently in use in the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in North America. The other is a hymn adaptation of the text set to newly composed music.

Another major woman composer who has enjoyed recent popularity because of vocal recordings is Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). She was a powerful abbess in the twelfth century whose visions and writings were officially recognized by Pope Eugenius III at the Council of Trier during the winter of 1147-1148. An extraordinary woman, Hildegard was a poet, composer, dramatist, doctor and scientist, as well as a respected preacher and advisor to princes and clergy of her day. She was the first woman who wrote music for the Western liturgy. Her work still exists in manuscript today.

Kassia and Hildegard were exceptional in that they signed their work. Most early liturgical music was written anonymously. Much of it is believed to have been composed by women. The female vocal quartet, Anonymous 4, has recorded and popularized much sacred early music of unknown authorship. Two such chants, both in praise of Mary, are included in *Voices Found*: "O mundi domina" and "Miserere miseris." They represent the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively.

The *Codex Las Huelgas* is an extensive compilation of liturgical song used by the sisters in the Monastery of Las Huelgas de Burgos in Spain beginning in the twelfth century. In the early fourteenth century the Abbess Maria Gonzalez de Aguero commissioned the copying of these earlier manuscripts into the modern notation of the day. "Verbum bonum" is the *Voices Found* selection from the Las Huelgas Codex and represents the early polyphonic music written as conductus.

Sulpitia Cesis (1577-1619) was a nun at the Augustinian convent of St. Geminiano in Modena, Italy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. She wrote an important collection, *Motetti spirituali*, for two to twelve voices in the rich polyphonic style of her day. The two-voice motet, "Maria Magdalena et altera Maria," is included in *Voices Found* and, although a keyboard accompaniment was not part of the original, one has been provided here to fill out the harmonies. It is possible that the second voice in our version would have been played by an instrument rather than sung.

Rounding out the music by women in convents are two contemporary pieces by Sr. Elise of the Community of the Holy Spirit in New York City—"Phos hilaron" and "Nunc dimittis." She continues the tradition by writing music for her sisters to sing at the regular liturgies of the community.

Sacred texts have been contributed by other members of contemporary religious communities: Delores Dufner of the Order of St. Benedict; Rosemary Anne Benwell of the Society of St. John the Divine; Miriam Therese Winter of the Medical Mission Sisters; and Gertrude Denkabe of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

The samples here of early music by women are by no means exhaustive. Many other women wrote sacred music in the Renaissance and later periods; however, most of that music is not for congregational singing.

The nineteenth century saw a blossoming of women writing and translating sacred texts for congregational song. We have included several of these hymns because their use continues today—most notably, Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895) and Fanny Crosby (1820-1915). Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878) is considered to be the best translator of German chorale texts into English. Her adapted translation of "Tröstet, tröstet meine Lieben" (Comfort ye my people) is included in *Voices Found* as representative of her extraordinary contribution.

The twentieth and twenty-first century have provided us with a wealth of music and texts by women who represent the breadth of both amateur and professional expression. Well-known composers such as Emma Lou Diemer, Jane Marshall, Alice Parker, and Natalie Sleeth are joined by newer composers Andrea Clearfield, Bernadette Farrell, Emily Maxon Porter, Sharon Marion Hershey, and Dorothy Papadakos. Working church/synagogue musicians such as Judith Dodge, Linda Wilberger Egan, Mary Truly Erney, Deborah Friedman, Ana Hernández, and Carol Petersen join laywomen who contribute their music to the church—Betsey Mulloy, Jane McAlister Pope, and Kimberly A. Williams. Noted hymn writers Mary Louise Bringle, Susan Palo Cherwien, Ruth C. Duck, Sylvia Dunstan, Mary Nelson Keithahn, Shirley Murray, and Rae E. Whitney are joined by clergy and laity emerging as hymn writers—Beverly Easterling, Carol Gallagher, Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, and Janet Wootton.

Women will continue to bring their voices and song to the church as poets, composers, arrangers, translators, singers, and instrumentalists. As new hymns and melodies are written, the unique witness of women is shared with all. As the words and music inform our worship, God's voice is heard. Our longing hearts are filled with the Holy Spirit, and we are renewed.

Acknowledgments

Many people have assisted with the research for both *Voices Found: Women in the Church's Song* and for the *Leaders Guide*. Thanks for research and review assistance go to Donna Fournier, music librarian, Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania; James Bradford Young, music librarian, the University of Pennsylvania; and Dr. Isabelle Cazeaux, retired Professor of Musicology, Bryn Mawr College; and Dr. Norman Smith and Dr. Franklin Zimmerman, Professors *emeritus*, Music Department of the University of Pennsylvania.

Thanks for encouragement and support go to the Rev. Charles Moore, the Rev. Robert Carlson, the Rev. Frank Herron, the Liturgical Commission of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, the Board of the Women's Sacred Music Project, the Cathedral Chapter of the Cathedral Church of the Saviour, the Rt. Rev. Allen Bartlett, and the Rt. Rev. Charles Bennison, Jr.

Many thanks to Marilyn Haskel of Church Publishing; Sr. Helena-Marie, CHS, formerly at the Office of Women in Mission and Ministry; and the Rev. Winston Ching, former Director of the Congregational Ministries Cluster at the Episcopal Church Center.

And finally, thanks to my husband, Charles Thomas for patience, encouragement, and the financial support that has allowed me to devote many years to this project.

Lisa Neufeld Thomas

PREFACE

Voices Found: Women in the Church's Song is a rich collection of hymns and spiritual songs by, for, and about women. Overall, the music is written in congregational hymn style and is intended for use in the average parish church. There is also historical material and music arranged for women's voices. There are texts most appropriate for women's conferences and for children's informal activities, as this book seeks to expand the concept of congregational singing.

The goals of *Voices Found* are:

1. To affirm women's quest for spiritual and social justice
2. To broaden the repertoire of music available to the church
3. To continue a tradition of excellence in congregational singing

The international committees that produced this volume decided that a search for excellence was paramount. The first presentation of women's sacred music needed to reflect the very best texts and music available; thus, the review process was lengthy and inclusive. The result has been the discovery of a wealth of materials, new and old, that will enrich every parish with the voices of women.

In 1995, just after the twentieth anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church, a group of laywomen at St. Mark's Church, Locust Street, in Philadelphia, began to meet regularly to encourage each other to lend their voices in worship. The music and liturgy of the church had only begun to reflect women's needs. With the approval of the Rev. Charles Moore, rector, the group worshiped monthly in the Lady Chapel using newly authorized supplemental liturgical texts. They wanted to sing music by women, but found little in *The Hymnal 1982*. Lisa Neufeld Thomas, organist for the service, began searching for resources. Newer hymnals contained somewhat more music representative of women, but it became clear that a focused effort to collect and commission such music was needed—songs about women saints, women in scripture, and churchwomen. Everyone needed to learn about women's contributions to sacred song throughout history, to learn about our foremothers. Women needed role models in spiritual, liturgical, and musical leadership.

With the sponsorship of bishops Allen Bartlett, Barbara Harris, Frank Griswold, and John Howe, the following resolution was passed by the 1997 General Convention of the Episcopal Church:

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention commends the Standing Commission on Church Music for its efforts toward preparing a supplement to the Hymnal 1982; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Church Music be directed to prepare

rary; texts and music to be included which celebrate the contributions and diversity of women in scripture, women saints and churchwomen; and be it further

Resolved, That the sum of \$25,000 be appropriated in the General Convention budget of the triennium 1998-2000 for the preparation of this supplement. Unfortunately, the funding requested was not appropriated.

The Board of Directors of the Women's Sacred Music Project, an incorporated public charity which had grown out of the experience at St. Mark's, proceeded as agents for the Standing Commission on Church Music (now known as the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music) in compiling this hymnal. They were assisted by the communications office of the Diocese of Pennsylvania and given work space by Rosemont College. An ecumenical group of women, who volunteered their time and expenses, developed a review process for the overwhelming number of submissions.

Review Committee

The Rev. Virginia Doctor, The Rt. Rev. Catherine Roskam, The Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher, Lisa Neufeld Thomas, Convener Dr. Gail Ramshaw, The Rev. Paula Wehmiller, Dr. Virginia Ratigan

Subsequently some funding was provided from the Congregational Ministries budget at the Episcopal Church Center, the Rev. Winston Ching, Director.

A text committee reviewed submissions looking for texts that:

- address women in scripture
- celebrate women saints and churchwomen
- reflect racial and ethnic diversity with sensitivity
- highlight the history of women in sacred song
- provide expansive imagery for God
- prove appropriate for congregational use

Text Committee

The Rt. Rev. Allen Bartlett, Sr. Helena-Marie, CHS, The Rev. Dr. Robert W. Carlson Ana Hernández, The Rev. Dr. Lynn Collins, Dr. Virginia Ratigan Sr. Ilise, CHS, Blandina Salvador, Barbara Fairfax, Lisa Neufeld Thomas, Convener The Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher

A user group of clergy, musicians, and "women in the pew" reviewed submissions looking for texts that were:

- approachable by the average congregation
- reflective of a diversity of styles
- able to be performed with a flexible keyboard accompaniment
- representative of women's contribution to sacred music throughout history