

Catholic Teachings in the SDA Hymnal

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Our official hymnbook, the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, was produced by a nineteen-member group (called the Hymnal Committee) in the early 1980s. The objective was to improve on our previous hymnal, the 1941 *Church Hymnal*; itself a replacement of our 1908 *Christ in Song*.

I have spoken with individuals who sadly recall that, at the time the 1941 *Church Hymnal* was introduced, all our churches were ordered to gather up the *Christ in Song* books and send them to the conference office, to be burned. It was hoped that this would increase sales for the new hymnal.

The *Church Hymnal*, which, under the direction of R.A. Anderson, contained many staid British hymns (he told me so himself), was never as popular as *Christ in Song*, even though the latter had so many songs in small print.

This present study concerns the fact that the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* did something which none of our earlier songbooks dared to do: introduce Roman Catholic teachings in the songs our people would sing.

Here are some of the facts.

HOW SCRIPTURE IS QUOTED

Fully 225 passages of Scripture are quoted in the official hymnal of our denomination: the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. There are 135 responsive readings, 14 Canticles and Prayers, 36 Calls to Worship, 13 Words of Assurance, 13 Offertory Sentences, and 14 Benedictions.

Only 6.67% of the 225 Scripture passages in our official hymnal are quoted from the King James Version. Here is the complete list:

- 69 (31%) from the New International Version (NIV)
- 38 (17%) from the Jerusalem Bible
- 33 (14%) from the New King James Version (NKJV)
- 28 (12%) from the Revised Standard Version (RSV)
- 22 (10%) from the New English Bible

- 15 (7%) from the Today's English Bible (NEB)
- 15 (6.67%) from the King James Version (KJV)
- 4 (2%) from the New American Standard Bible (NASB)

It is a truly shocking discovery that, **in our official church hymnal, twice as many Bible quotations are from a Roman Catholic Bible (Jerusalem Bible) than from the King James Version!**

CANTICLES AND PRAYERS

The word, "Canticles," is the Roman Catholic name for the Song of Solomon. The new hymnal has an entire six-page section, entitled "Canticles and Prayers." But the term is not there used for the Song of Solomon; but it is for Bible passages at the back of a hymnbook, which should be jointly read in church. By order of the Vatican, all Bible passage sections in the back of hymnbooks in Roman Catholic churches must be called "canticles."

"*Canticle*. A sacred hymn whose words are taken directly from the Bible. The *Benedictus* and *Magnificat* are among the best known canticles."—*Maryknoll Catholic Dictionary*, p. 101.

Our new hymnbook includes all three words.

Someone will say, "But Vance, you yourself wrote and now sell an entire book, called *The Magnificat*." That is true, but the book is for distribution to Catholics. Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55 begins with "magnificat" in the Latin ("magnify;" *i.e.*, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"—not herself), hence the name. The book is an attempt to reach Roman Catholics with our message and the title is justified, since its first chapter is about how Mary, in ten verses in Luke 1, declares Protestant teachings!

In decided contrast, the use of the words, "canticles" or "magnificat," in our own official hymnal is uncalled for and appears to be another effort to obey the call of John XXIII at Vatican II, to "bring us together."

"Canticles have been incorporated into the Divine Office of the Church . . . [the best known are] the *Magnificat* (Lk. 1:46-55), the *Benedictus* (Lk. 1:68-

79), and the *Nunc Dimittis* (Lk. 2:29-32).”—*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 93.

Why are those three passages singled out as the best verses for Catholics to recite in church? The reason is simple enough: All three are talking either about the Virgin Mary or about her infant Son, not the grown Jesus Christ—only the Baby in the Virgin’s arms, as shown on most Catholic statues.

With all this in mind, let us turn to the “canticles” in the new hymnal. Out of tens of thousands of Bible passages, which ones were selected for Adventists to read in church? You guessed it: the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Nunc Dimittis* are included. Not only are they included, but they are placed one right after the other, just below the Lord’s Prayer; and their Catholic names are given.

Each of the three has a prominent asterisk, calling attention to the fact that the correct name of the passage is *The Magnificat* (No. 835), *The Benedictus* (No. 836), and *The Nunc Dimittis* (No. 837).

The asterisk for No. 835 leads us to “*Commonly called The Magnificat.*” For No. 836, the reader is told it is “*Commonly called the Benedictus,*” and for No. 837, we are informed it is “*Commonly called the Nunc Dimittis.*”

Although valued highly by the Catholic hierarchy, those Bible passages have not ever been “commonly called” by those names in our church! This is indoctrination! Why are we told their Catholic names in a hymnal for use only by Adventists?

Just before the Lord’s Prayer is No. 833, which is called “*the Sanctus.*” Another Catholic name.

THE HYMNS

When we turn our attention to the hymns which were selected for the new Adventist hymnal, we find that several teach Roman Catholic doctrine.

As you may know, music is a powerful way to teach doctrine. The Spirit of Prophecy mentions that the Israelites sang portions of Scripture.

The second verse of Hymn No. 402 (*By Christ Redeemed*) **teaches transubstantiation!** Here are the words:

“His broken body in our stead is here, in this memorial bread.”

It is an abomination that this arch-Catholic error, which binds men and women to the mass as their means of salvation, is in our own hymnbook!

“*Transubstantiation.* As defined by the Council of Trent, transubstantiation is ‘a singular and wondrous conversion of the total substance of bread into the body and of the total substance of wine into the blood of Christ, the external appearances only remaining unchanged.’ It is by this transubstantiation that the body and blood of Christ are present in the Holy Eucharist.”—*Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 583.

It is significant that the original author of Hymn No. 402, George Rawson (1807-1889) did not write “*is here,*” but “*is shown.*” He wrote a Protestant doctrine while our hymnbook has changed it to a Catholic doctrine! **Why are we so anxious to please Catholic hierarchy? Who is behind this effort to change the beliefs of our people?** Why are some trying to lead us back to Rome?

Ronald Cable, a faithful Australian Advent believer, has studied hymnology for decades. The present co-editor of *Anchor*, he is recognized by both Adventist and non-Adventist musicologists for his expertise in the field of religious hymns and songs. One section of the Queensland State Library is designated as *The Cable Collection*, in grateful recognition of his contributions. Cable undertook a considerable amount of the research for Dr. Edward E. White’s *Singing With Understanding*, a companion volume to our previous official hymnbook, the 1941 *Church Hymnal*. When his research findings on the dangers in the 1985 *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* was widely circulated in Australia, many local Adventist church congregations refused to use the hymnbook. So widespread was the opposition that our Australian printing house, Signs Publishing Company, had to offer free stickers to paste over defective wording in order to sell copies of the new hymnbook.

The new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* was first introduced at the 1985 General Conference Session in New Orleans. Wayne Hooper, formerly a member of the Voice of Prophecy King’s Heralds male quartet and executive secretary of the Hymnal Committee, presented it to the audience.

Although the new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* introduced a number of excellent hymns not previously used in any Adventist songbook, the strange anxiety of the Hymnal Committee to include as many Catholic errors as possible has transformed it into a book of doctrinal errors.

Unfortunately, once leadership makes a mistake, it seems rarely able to retrace its steps, lest it admit that a mistake was made.

The overarching concern to present a monolithic appearance of near-inerrancy in its decisions has resulted in errors which are not retracted, books which are not recalled, and apostate pastors and teachers who are not fired.

Hymn No. 300 (*Rock of Ages*) has been changed also. In the original (and in the Harvestime hymnbook, No. 255 in *Time for Singing*), the third verse says this:

“When I soar to worlds unknown, See Thee on Thy judgment throne.”

Compare our 1941 *Church Hymnal* (No. 474), and our 1908 *Christ in Song* (No. 654). Both have the correct wording.

But in our current official church hymnal, the verse has been changed to:

“When I soar to worlds unknown, And behold Thee on Thy Throne.”

Augustus Toplady stated it accurately. God is on his Judgment throne. **There is a judgment before the Second Advent! It is the new theology which teaches that the judgment occurred at the cross when Jesus died.**

Hymn No. 142, verse 4, teaches that we should call on dead saints to help us today. And, of course, the most important saint thought to intercede on our behalf is Mary. Here is the verse as given in the new hymnal:

“Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.”

That Catholic song was not in our earlier Adventist hymnals and songbooks. I spent months carefully going through most of them in the process of preparing our hardback leatheroid-appearing *Time for Singing*, with its 420 outstanding worship hymns, and evangelistic and children’s songs.

That song was not in such books as our *Church Hymnal* or *Christ in Song*; nor is it in *Time for Singing*—and it should not be in our official hymnbook today. **We should not be invoking the aid of Mary.**

The second verse of Hymn No. 3 also exalts the importance of Mary.

“Come, abide within me, Let my soul, like Mary, Be Thine earthly sanctuary.”

When Gerhardt Tersteegen (1697-1769), a faithful Protestant, wrote the words of this hymn in German, **he did not mention Mary at all! Instead of his sweet hymn, our church Hymnal Committee accepted a Catholic version** which exalts Mary as containing the body of Jesus.

A literal translation of the German words which he originally penned contains no reference to Mary. Why do we value Catholic changes more than Protestant originals? Translating from the German, here is what these words originally said:

“Lord, come dwell in me, Let my heart and my spirit, Be another temple for Thee.”

Everyone likes **Hymn No. 125**. But **verse 1 has**

been changed from that which Isaac Watts (1674-1748) **originally wrote** in 1719. This is what he wrote:

“Joy to the world, the Lord will come!”

Watts knew the Bible teaching about Christ’s Second Advent; and he proclaimed it joyfully. Do not think that the original wording was lost hundreds of years ago. All our earlier songbooks had the original version: *Church Hymnal* (No. 189) and *Christ in Song* (No. 895). And so does the Harvestime songbook, *Time for Singing* (No. 94).

But our Hymnal Committee adopted a version which omits the Second Advent:

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”

Are we not “advent-ists”? **Is Christ’s second advent no longer a primary feature of our faith?**

Then there is the notorious refrain of Hymn No. 403 in the new hymnal: Let Us Break Bread Together.

(See our earlier tract, *Song to the Sun* [WM-117]. Followed later by *Sun Worship Hymn Now Official* [WM-129], after protests about its inclusion in the new hymnbook was refused attention.

According to this blasphemous—yes, blasphemous—worship song, we sing our praises to worship on our knees with our faces toward the rising sun, in order to receive God’s merciful forgiveness and acceptance!

Here are these astounding words of sun worship, repeated twice in the refrain:

“When I fall on my knees, With my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.

“Let us praise God together on our knees.

“When I fall on my knees, With my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.”

It is abomination even to repeat the wording here once, much less twice. You will not find this idolatrous song in any earlier Adventist hymnal or songbook, nor in our large 448-page *Time for Singing*.

There is a historical origin to this form of worship, which traces back into the early years of Catholicism and extends back into Old Testament times. There is not sufficient space in this brief tract to do more than summarize the Biblical and historical data. Sun worship, the oldest form of idolatry, was practiced in Bible times (*Lev 26:30; Isa 17:8; 2 Kgs 21:3, 5; 2 Kgs 23:5, 11-12; Zeph 1:5; Eze 8:16-17*) as well as in Egypt, the Near East, and Imperial Rome. Roman soldiers would rise early each morning and pray toward the rising sun. Sunday, the day of Mithra—the sun god, was especially important in this rising sun worship.

Hymn No. 471 has a monotonous repetition

and is in four languages (Latin, English, French, and Spanish). **Apparently, the Hymnal Committee was anxious that all our people, everywhere in the world field, learn this song.**

This hymn is essentially the same as the hymn sheet handed out in the Vatican Square when the Pope blesses the assembled crowds. In four different languages, thousands of faithful Catholics, with their eyes fixed on their “holy father” standing in the distant window, intone their worshipful prayer to him. Consider the Latin version of what they tell him, as written in our new hymnal:

“Dona nobis pacem, pacem; Dona nobis pacem. Dona nobis pacem. Dona nobis pacem. Dona nobis pacem. Dona nobis pacem.”

It makes your head swim. That is what it is supposed to do: confuse the mind. The grand edifice of Roman Babylon (“babylon” means confusion) is founded on confusion. The constant repetitions are mind numbing. Are you aware that Pentecostals teach novitiates that the “spirit” gives them the gift of tongues as they repeat a word or phrase mindlessly? Spirits probably invade minds as they chant “*Dona nobis pacem*” over and over again. Here is the English of this, as given in the new hymnal:

“Father, grant us, grant us Your peace; Oh, loving Father, grant us Your peace. Grant us, grant us peace; Grant us, grant us, grant us Your peace. Grant us, grant us peace; Loving Father grant us Your peace.”

French and Spanish are two other world languages. Here are the mind-captivating phrases for these in other stanzas of that same hymn:

“Acoordenous ta paix, ta paix; Acoordenous ta paix. Acoordenous ta paix. Acoordenous ta paix. Acoordenous ta paix. Acoordenous ta paix.”

“Padre, danos tu paz, tu paz. Padre, danos tu paz. Padre, danos tu paz. Padre, danos tu paz. Padre, danos tu paz.”

It is important that you recognize that our Adventist congregations are not to sing just one stanza—but all four! This is the way it is done in Vatican Square. We should do likewise.

First, you are to sing it in Latin, then English, then French, and then Spanish. Twenty-four times you pray to the “father” to send you peace, with most of the prayers said in an unknown language. Not one word about obedience or even the grace of Christ.

How is that for brainwashing?

On October 18, 1998, on Polish television, the

cardinal had many in the nation praying this prayer to the Pope, over and over again, in Polish. One speaker stated the thoughts of many when he said, “The Pope is as important to us as God.”

As mentioned earlier (bottom of p. 2), the leadership of the South Pacific Division (SPD)—the most new theology division of all!—virtually admitted that there are serious errors of doctrine in certain hymns when they provided free stickers for several hymns.

Here are the changes made on these stickers:

The first is **Hymn No. 194**. It is a peculiar song, called “*Sing We of the Modern City*,” which has a strange message. The last line of the second verse says:

“Jesus Christ is every man”

Can you believe it?! This is incredible, a species of pantheism; yet it is in the current official hymnal of the church. The SPD changed it on the sticker to: “Jesus Christ for every man.”

Another odd phrase is **Hymn No. 243** third verse, last line:

“Ev’n eternity is too short to extol me.”

If possible, that is even more astonishing! **This song teaches us that we will spend eternity praising ourselves!** The hymn has been sung in churches for over 300 years; so it could not originally have said that. But our faithful Hymnal Committee managed to insert a corrupted version of the words.

The SPD changed it on the sticker to: “Ev’n eternity is too short to extol Thee.”

Hymn No. 402 (mentioned earlier), the first line of the second verse is:

“His broken body in our stead is here, in this memorial bread.”

In order to remove transubstantiation from this hymn, the SPD changed it on the sticker to: “His broken body in our stead is seen, in this memorial bread.”

However, frankly, the changed wording is about as bad. Christ’s body is not in the bread, neither is it seen in the bread.

The sun worship hymn, **Hymn No. 403**, one of the most notorious of all, has:

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun.”

The SPD change on the sticker is: “When I fall on my knees, with my face to the Risen Son.”

But the change is so much like the well-known idolatrous original, it would be better to remove that worship hymn entirely.

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