INTRODUCTION: A New Reformation?
Diana Butler Bass:
“the last forty years mark the most significant change in the Christian faith since the Protestant Reformation” (220)

Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening (NY: HarperOne, 2012)

Pew Religious Landscape Survey


The Christian life of theologians, churches, and human beings is faced more than ever today with a double crisis: the crisis of relevance and the crisis of identity. . . . The more theology and the church attempt to become relevant to the problems of the present day, the more deeply they are drawn into the crisis of their own Christian identity. The more they attempt to assert their identity in traditional dogmas, rights, and moral notions, the more irrelevant and unbelievable they become. (7)

I. IDENTITY:

Michael Schultz, “The Future of Worship in the WELS from the perspective of a new hymnal project” (2013), quoting:

“Every time there has been a decline in distinctive Lutheran liturgy and hymnody and the church has accommodated the prevailing culture, the church’s theology has also been compromised.” (p. 16, n 16)

1. Honor distinctive denominational identity . . .

Shared by LCMS and ELW: ________
Shared across ELCA (and predecessor) hymnals [1958, 1978, 2006]: ________
Shared across LCMS (and predecessor) hymnals [1941, 1982,2006]: ________
Shared LSB/GtG/ELW: ________

2. Make more of our heritage accessible with new translations.
3. Fill in the gaps of the lectionary.
4. Interpret texts in the musical vernacular of our day.
5. Keep before us the heart of the gospel.

IDENTITY meets RELEVANCE in a theology of the cross
Moltmann again (*The Crucified God*):
Reflection upon the cross leads to the clarification of what can be called Christian identity and what can be called Christian relevance (7):
Solidarity with the alienated of this world, imitating the identification of the crucified Christ with the abandoned (25)

A sung example: “Rejected and Despised” (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)
Theological reconsideration of atonement

II. RELEVANCE

A. ISSUES

David Kinnamon in *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith* (2016), reporting data gathered by Barna Research Group

The “nones” and “dones” report being disaffected from the church because it:
1. feels unfriendly to those who DOUBT.
   Contrast Jane Laurie Borthwick (1898) and Susan Palo Cherwien (1996).
2. appears antagonistic to SCIENCE.
   Creation / Ecology
   CAUSE: the “leading edge of our connection with a lost world . . . arresting their attention and enlisting their participation in community and relationship” (99)
3. does not connect to REAL WORLD PROBLEMS.
   Topical collections: *Hymns in Times of Crisis; Singing Welcome: Hymns and Songs of Hospitality to Refugees and Immigrants* (www.thehymnsociety.org)
4. seems afraid of the beliefs of OTHER FAITHS.

A sung example: “Commonwealth Is God’s Commandment”

B. FORM (Short + Hybrid: Stanza/Refrain)

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C. VENUES

Beckoning vs. Venturing (Bernard Braley)
(Denis Duncan, “Church without Walls,” *Daily Telegraph*, Feb 15, 2003: 29)
JESUS CHRIST: PASSION AND DEATH

222 Rejected and Despised

Capo 5: (A) (Dm) (A) (Dm) (A7) (Dm)
D Gm D Gm D7 Gm

1 Re- ject-ed and de-spi ed by men and wom- en of our
race, he bears trans-gres-sion’s wound-ing weight and an-guish
march his face. This Man of Sor-rows, born to loss, ac-
sin-a-bused: as-cend-ing on a cross to die, de-
quaint-ed with our grief: this Christ of God now
scend-ing in-to hell; in tor-ment, suf-fering,
cru-ci-fied as-ton-ish-es be-lief.

2 In all the vic-tims of our age, the bat- tered and the
bruised, Christ lives a-gain, a-like with them by hu-
loss, in order to reveal and scorch; and in his stripes we

3 For-give us, Lord, as you for-gave with your ex-pir-ing
breath the ones whose guilty hands, like ours, re-quired a
depth of grace re-vealed: in scourge-marked flesh, we
find our Christ, and by his stripes are healed.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

Since apostolic times (see Acts 8:26–39), Christians have seen parallels between the Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13–53:12) and Christ’s Passion. This reflection on that passage reminds us how the suffering Christ continues to be present in the victimized people of our own day.

TEXT: Mary Louise Bringle, 2000
MUSIC: William P. Rowan, 1990
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Commonwealth Is God's Commandment
Commissioned for the 30th Anniversary Gathering of the Alliance of Baptists

1. Commonwealth is God’s commandment; common goods are meant to share.
2. Sharing lavish gifts and blessings, love that not one mite withholds,
3. Genders, races, tribes, and nations, hear the Holy One who calls,

Tables set and doors wide open, welcome angels unaware.
Stretch out arms to friends and strangers: God has sheep of many folds.
Bidding all to work together, bridging lives and breaching walls.

Refrain

Plead for the peace of all creation. Pray for a place where grace is found.

Shanti, pax, shalom, maslah: common good is holy ground.

Shanti is the word for "peace" in Hindu and Buddhist traditions.
Maslah is a concept in Islamic law connoting the "common good."

TEXT: Mary Louise Bringle, 2017
MUSIC: William Walker's Southern Harmony, 1835