

Rev. Paul F. Bosch offers his reflections on the recent Anglican Lutheran National Worship Conference held in Victoria, BC. Paul is a retired ELCIC pastor and liturgy professor, a recipient of the Companion of the Worship Arts, and writes a monthly essay on all topics relating to worship. These essays can be found at www.worship.ca, the worship website of the ELCIC.

1 The recent Lutheran-Anglican Worship Conference in Victoria, BC, was outstanding. Brilliant speakers, mind-stretching workshops, terrific opportunities to meet and chat with people who share your own enthusiasms. And a glorious setting on Victoria's lovely harbour. But I came away, as I have at almost every one of these Conferences, slightly disappointed.

2 My disappointment arises not so much from what was done as what was not done. In a word: I miss The Tradition, the catholic (small c) fulness, that Holy Communion, Matins, Vespers, and the Suffrages provide. I noted with pleasure that worship planners often used these traditional forms as scaffold for experimentation. But I missed singing the *Benedictus* in Matins, for example. I fear that Matins will be completely forgotten by pastors and people alike, if we do not use them. At events like this! When else? Where else?

3 And that Tradition includes hymns. Contemporary and pop hymns have their place in our worship. But not an exclusive diet of them. Let's sing the widest possible variety of hymnody. I have complained after almost every previous Worship Conference about missing my favourites: the German chorales. Hey, in Victoria I even missed Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley.

4 These – the German Chorales, the hymns of Watts and Wesley and others – are masterpieces of text and music. We ignore them to our spiritual diminishment.

5 And the Chorales are a distinctly Lutheran gift to the ecumenical treasury. Let's teach them to our Anglican friends. Or at the very least, show our Anglican friends that we Lutherans treasure them.

6 It is no co-incidence that these worship forms – in 2 and 3 above – have fed the human soul for generations. For a major national Worship Conference to ignore them is an unfortunate omission.

7 I favour worship experimentation. But attempts to be relevant – or to

illustrate Conference themes – are often well-intentioned, but misguided. An example: Our own *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymn collection includes no fewer than eight hymns of lament, for example – an entirely new category in most hymnals. See hymns 697 and following. I cannot recall Conference worship including any of them!

8 Nevertheless, I found the whole Conference enormously soul-satisfying! Where else – when else – can you find such an exciting group of people!