

The Hymnal Revision Feasibility Study

*A Report to the Standing Commission on
Liturgy and Music*

Contents

I.	Introduction.....	3
	Part One: A New and Different Context	3
	Part Two: Are We What We Sing? Identity and Aspiration in the Debate Over a New Hymnal.....	4
II.	Methodology	6
	Materials.....	6
	Participants	7
III.	Analysis of Data	14
	Congregation Members' Opinions about Hymnal Revision.....	15
	Clergy Opinions about Hymnal Revision.....	20
	Music Directors' Opinions about Hymnal Revision.....	23
	Significant Factors Indicating Support for Hymnal Revision	27
	Affordability of a Revised Hymnal	36
	Hymnal and Supplement Frequency of Use and Satisfaction	37
	Musical Styles: Frequency of Use and Preferences.....	39
	Singing, Musical Programming, and Congregational Vitality	41
	Worship Experience	47
	The Purpose of the Hymnal.....	49
	Integration and Segmentation.....	54
	Medium of Musical Display	60
IV.	<i>The Hymnal 1982</i> in Province IX.....	61
V.	Seminary Faculty Perspectives on <i>The Hymnal 1982</i>	62
VI.	Conclusion	65

The Hymnal Revision Feasibility Study

A Report to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music

I. Introduction

Part One: A New and Different Context

It is perhaps human nature to look back to previous eras as simpler and less complicated times, but the context in which the creation of *The Hymnal 1982* took place was clearly radically different from 1940, when the previous hymnal had been launched. During this period, there was profound change in the socio-religious environment, with the founding of the World Council and National Council of Churches, Vatican II, the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the beginnings of the movement towards equality for gays and lesbians. These sweeping movements of ecumenicalism, liturgical renewal, and social equality provided not just a backdrop, but a sense of directionality for those contemplating the revision of *The Hymnal 1940* in the late 1970s.

Between 1982 and today, much has also changed, but perhaps the most profound change is how the directionality provided by the grand narrative of modernism that still existed in the late 1970s is so clearly absent. We now live in an era shaped by the “posts” that rose to intellectual prominence during the 1980s: a society that is post-modern, post-structural, post-denominational and — some would argue — post-Christian. With a uni-directional progress narrative one can think that a modernization of the Church's music would be appealing to younger members, but today we are dealing with a younger generation whose views are distinctly eclectic, that eschews simple categorization, being characterized by sociologists as cultural omnivores who move easily between

different forms, and for whom the very difference of church from their regular lives is part of its attraction. Finally, even with some strong sense of direction, considering the revision of a hymnal in a world characterized by fragmentation and segmentation, where once-powerful central denominational authority structures are a shadow of their former selves, is considerably more complicated. Thus while we might see the rhythm of roughly 40-year cycles of revising the Hymnal, the nature of the changes in these periods differ markedly and present radically different contexts in which we consider this question. The present context calls us to a perhaps even more careful discernment of where The Episcopal Church is being called to go in this matter than was the case for those considering this question in the late 1970s.

Part Two: Are We What We Sing?

Identity and Aspiration in the Debate Over a New Hymnal

In this study we asked the question as to whether the current authorized resources offered to The Episcopal Church meet the needs of the Church. As of the end of August 2011, over 12,500 people had filled out the online hymnal survey and of those, over 7,000 left comments. Clearly, this is a topic that generates a considerable amount of energy and passion within the Church, with strong opinions on all sides. We have done our best to honor the time taken by the respondents by not just doing the analysis, but in reading through as many of the comments as possible. Moreover, the written comments gave us a useful set of lenses through which to understand what respondents were trying to tell us through the checked boxes on the surveys.

Part of the reason we believe why emotions can run so high is that such a broad question is open to many interpretations. As we looked through the responses that we received, it became clear that respondents interpreted this question in a number of ways, as indeed we hoped they would. For many, the question centered around one of identity. For these respondents, a hymnal says a lot about who we are, and to change the book is to change who we are. Asking the question in this manner solicited a range of opinions — both from those who felt that nothing should be changed because the Hymnal represented who we are in a positive sense, and from those who feel that the Hymnal as it is prevents us from becoming who we wish to be. For those for whom the Hymnal represents a sense of who we wish to remain, what they saw as the timeless quality of much of *The Hymnal 1982* defines what it means to be an Episcopalian grounded within the Anglican tradition. By contrast, for others the Hymnal as it is today both does not represent who we have become and, more importantly, prevents us from becoming who we would like to be. The Hymnal in this view is narrowly European, looking backwards into the nineteenth century and not forward into the twenty-first; it does little to represent the cultural diversity of our Church, placing the music of those outside the older European tradition into hymnal supplements, not within “The Book,” creating a two-tier system of worship resources.

As we have looked through the detailed written responses given by respondents, this sense of the question of the Hymnal as being one about Episcopal identity is most prevalent in the responses from congregants.

A second way in which respondents approached this question was to view the Hymnal as a means of inculcating the faith, and responses varied as to how successful the Hymnal was in doing this. Thinking of the Hymnal in this way was most prevalent among the music directors. Their understanding of hymnody as an integral part of the transmission of faith and meaning that takes place during worship is clearly a key part of how they define their mission and function in the Church, although a full appreciation of this was largely missing in the comments of congregants.

A third way of viewing the question was more basic and yet also gets to the heart of the matter: The core purpose of a hymnal is that it is a vehicle of worship through singing; thus, the most basic question is, given the Hymnal to use, are people singing? This sees the Hymnal as a tool for congregation building and is about “what works” in terms of attracting and retaining members. Basic questions as to whether congregants are capable of singing a particular piece regardless of musical merits come up in this context. Related to this theme are questions of whether or not a new hymnal is affordable in the current economic climate and whether printed books are the best medium to deliver new musical resources. This more pragmatic approach was most prevalent among clergy respondents.

These are clearly quite different ways of approaching the question and there is no “right” question or right answer to these questions. Despite these differences, there is a common backdrop to each and that is the declining numerical strength of the Church, declines in membership and attendance that amount to more than 20 percent in the last ten years. Whether a new hymnal would help or hinder the Church’s need to reverse this trend is part of many justifications for and against revision. Modifying a hymnal in order to attract new members is always a high-risk venture. Those within the Church who like the music as it is, while perhaps a gradually shrinking number, nevertheless make up the core of the Church’s strength in terms of both membership and finances. Those whom new music is supposed to attract are composed of an unknown population of hoped-for new members, but there is no guarantee that they will actually decide to show up. The danger is that decision-makers in the Church will decide that most current church members will simply accept new musical innovations and so that the worst outcome of musical innovation would be that the Church remains where it was before any innovations took place and that there is no risk to innovation. Doing nothing, on the other hand, while less risky, nevertheless does nothing to help stem the gradual decline taking place within the Church. There is little evidence to suggest that the constituency for traditional hymns is a growing one and with a preference for traditional hymns having a significant correlation with age, there is a decreasing population as this constituency dies off. Hence a large part of the debate on the merits of a new hymnal is based upon the assumptions of both sides concerning the potential growth or decline

outcomes and, in fact, neither side has a particularly strong basis for its scenarios.

The structure of this report will follow these basic themes and will also address some additional questions of interest and importance to the Church. First, we look in detail at the key question as to whether the Church believes that there needs to be a revision of *The Hymnal 1982*, and we will break down these responses by multiple variables. Second, we will look at whether the usage of different music resources and styles within the Church is related to congregational growth or decline. Are there particular worship styles and practices that are attracting new members? Is music a key part of attracting new members and, if so, is it music that is sung by the congregation, or music performed by a choir in which the congregation becomes an audience? Third, we will look how congregants and clergy view the purpose of the hymn singing and if any particular usage patterns correlate to measures of spiritual vitality. What is it that congregants sing well and what are the best ways to deliver new resources to congregations? We will also examine these questions in the particular context presented by our overseas dioceses.

II. Methodology

Materials

The primary instrument for this study was an online questionnaire with three separate, role-specific versions: one for congregation members, one for clergy, and one for music directors. This instrument in its various versions was created by the Church Pension Group Office of Research team in consultation with the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, Episcopal research colleagues, and subject-matter experts. Spanish translations of the surveys were created and made available online.

The surveys covered these major content areas:

- congregational details (location, languages, and staffing)
- worship music resources (book availability, book and style frequency of use)
- personal worship and worship music experiences
- opinions on current music resources and styles
- individual demographics (age, gender, race, general musical tastes)

All surveys included a free-text comment section at the end to capture qualitative information

participants wished to share. Similar but more role-specific online questionnaires covering the same fundamental content areas were created for and administered to bishops and seminarians.

In addition to the online survey instrument, several measures of structured interviews were created. These measures were necessary to capture information from two distinct populations — seminary faculty and clergy and musician leadership in non-domestic dioceses — for whom the standard online survey instruments were deemed inappropriate or insufficient.

Participants

Interviews

In order to address specific populations of The Episcopal Church, the research team conducted in-person structured interviews. One portion of these interviews were conducted in focus groups with seminary faculty members at the seminaries of The Episcopal Church. Seminaries which participated included Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Episcopal Divinity School, Nashotah House, Seminary of the Southwest, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, and Virginia Theological Seminary.

The research team also sought to study the unique culture and musical experience of worship in Province IX. Members of the research team visited a selection of Province IX dioceses (Puerto Rico, Ecuador Central, and the Dominican Republic). During these visits, team members conducted interviews with bishops and with clergy and music leaders of parishes in the dioceses (12 interviews), attended parish worship services (five visitations), video-recorded the various musical styles experienced in different parishes, and gained perspective on the cultural climate of these dioceses in terms of musical tradition, worship, and the environment in which the Church ministers.

Online Survey Participants

In order to achieve a well-rounded representation of the domestic dioceses of The Episcopal Church, the research team surveyed congregation member, clergy, and music director users of *The Hymnal 1982* and authorized hymnal supplements. There were two phases of online survey participants. The first phase was a stratified random sample based on the proportionate number of total members across the Church according to parish size. Using this stratification, 1,400 parishes were invited to participate in the study. Of those 1,400 parishes, 404 parishes sent back affirmative responses to the invitation to participate, and of those 404 parishes, 258 parishes participated in the survey. From these 258 parishes, 3,645 congregation members, 290 clergy, and 192 music directors completed role-specific surveys.

The second phase was a “snowball” or viral sample, in which the survey was opened up to all clergy, music directors, and congregation members who wished to participate. Information about the survey was disseminated widely through articles and news releases on Episcopal News Service and by the Episcopal Church’s Office of Public Affairs, through the Episcopal Communicators network, by members of the SCLM contacting stakeholder groups directly, by a broadcast e-mailing to all clergy for whom the Church Pension Fund had an e-mail address on record, and through a dedicated page on the CPG Office of Research’s area of the CPG web site. In this “snowball” phase, 2,282 clergy, 940 music directors, and 5,305 congregation members responded. A total of 2,802 parishes were represented in the responses in the “snowball” sample.

Between the stratified random sample and the “snowball” sample, responses were received from 9,016 congregation members, 2,575 clergy, and 1,139 music directors, representing 3,060 congregations (roughly 40 percent of all parishes). Additionally, 55 bishops completed the dedicated bishops’ survey, and 102 seminarians completed the dedicated seminarians’ survey. Given the symmetry observed between the sample respondents and known population parameters of The Episcopal Church, we are confident that the results presented in this study are characteristic of the wider population they summarize.

Geography

The geographical distribution of survey responses from congregation members, clergy, and music directors are summarized by region in table 1 and are compared with the regional distribution of average Sunday attendance (ASA) figures for parishes in the United States.

Region	Member Respondents	ASA, 2009	Clergy Respondents	Active Clergy	Music Director Respondents	Distribution of Parishes
Northeast	24.6	24.0	26.3	26.6	27.2	27.7
Midwest	17.5	13.5	16.7	15.3	18.3	18.8
South	40.4	47.0	38.3	41.5	38.4	36.8
West	17.5	15.4	18.7	16.6	16.1	16.6

Table 1. Regional distribution of survey responses, congregation member, clergy and music director samples. All figures are percentages. ASA figures and distribution of parishes figures are derived from The Episcopal Church’s 2009 Parochial Report. Active clergy figures are derived from Church Pension Group compensation data. Region definitions from the US Census Bureau are used.

As table 1 suggests, a plurality of respondents to the congregation member survey belong to parishes in the South, which represents over 40 percent of responses. Congregation members from the Northeast constituted the next-largest group in the congregation member sample, with nearly one-quarter of the responses in the survey. Respondents from the Midwest and West each made up

17.5 percent of the sample. In large part, this distribution reflects that of the Church as a whole, as Southern parishioners make up nearly half of Episcopal average Sunday attendance (ASA), followed by the Northeast at 24 percent. The responses from clergy and music directors mirrored this same pattern with few distinctions. Overall, the sample population of this study is remarkably consistent with the known parameters of The Episcopal Church, as noted above.

Table 2 displays the same figures disaggregated by provinces of The Episcopal Church. As suggested by the regional distributions presented in table 1, parishioners from Province IV figured prominently in the congregation member, clergy, and music director surveys, constituting nearly one-fifth to one-quarter of responses. The second-largest group in the music director sample, Province III, made up 15 percent of survey respondents.

Province	Members	Clergy	Music Directors	ASA, 2009
I	9.6	10.3	10.9	8.5
II	10.7	11.5	11.9	11.4
III	13.7	14.4	15.0	15.4
IV	24.3	19.6	20.8	25.6
V	13.1	11.5	12.8	9.7
VI	4.0	5.5	5.2	4.6
VII	8.6	11.2	9.8	12.1
VIII	15.9	15.9	13.5	12.7

Table 2. Regional distribution of survey responses. All figures are percentages. ASA figures are derived from The Episcopal Church’s 2009 Parochial Report.

For members and clergy, however, the next-largest represented province was Province VIII. In large part, response rates for members by province reflect average Sunday attendance figures for the Church; however, response rates were slightly lower than expected in Province VII, and higher than expected in Provinces V and VIII.

The research team also tabulated the distribution of survey responses by the location type of the parishes that respondents attend; these figures are found in table 3.

Location type	Members	Clergy	Music Directors	ASA, 2009
Urban	42.6	31.0	31.9	32.7
Suburban	35.5	33.1	34.6	38.9
Small town/rural	21.9	35.9	33.5	28.4

Table 3. Survey responses tabulated by location type. All figures are percentages. ASA figures are derived from The Episcopal Church’s 2009 Parochial Report.

Over 42 percent of responding congregation members attend urban parishes, followed by suburban parishioners, who constitute just over one-third of the congregation member sample.

Close to 22 percent of respondents attend parishes in small towns or rural areas, making up the smallest group in the survey. Responding clergy and music directors, however, are much more evenly split across the location types. Table 3 also shows that this distribution reflects the contemporary metropolitan character of The Episcopal Church, as urban and suburban parishes contributed to over 70 percent of the Church’s average Sunday attendance in 2009.

Size	Members	Clergy	Music Directors	ASA, 2009
Family (0-75)	16.9	36.1	29.2	18.3
Pastoral (76-140)	25.9	26.2	30.2	24.4
Transitional (141-225)	22.0	19.2	18.8	23.2
Program and Resource (226+)	35.1	18.4	21.8	34.1

Table 4. Distribution of survey responses by parish size. All figures are percentages. Parish size is determined by average Sunday attendance. ASA figures are derived from The Episcopal Church’s 2009 Parochial Report.

Table 4 provides percentages for survey responses by parish size. As the table indicates, over one-third of respondents in the congregation member survey attend very large (Program- and Resource-sized) parishes; however, this reflects attendance figures for The Episcopal Church at large. Respondents from Pastoral- and Transitional-sized congregations make up nearly one-quarter each of the sample, followed by members of Family-sized parishes at just under 17 percent.

Demographics

Table 5 includes figures on the age distribution of respondents in the congregation member survey. Respondents age 50 and older are heavily represented in the sample; over 42 percent of respondents are between the ages of 50 and 64, and another 31 percent are age 65 or above. In part, this reflects the age structure of The Episcopal Church. As shown in table 5, 56 percent of Episcopalians are age 50 or older. Although parishioners younger than 50 make up a smaller portion of the sample, these proportions tend to mirror these groups’ representation within the Church. Respondents age 19 and younger are the exception, however; while this population constitutes 15 percent of the membership of The Episcopal Church, they make up less than 1 percent of survey respondents.

Age Group	Members	Clergy	Music Directors	Episcopal Church ¹
19 and younger	0.9	NA	NA	15
20-34	9.6	5.7	11.8	10
35-49	16.8	17.6	19.9	19
50-64	42.2	47.8	46.2	26
65 and older	30.6	28.9	22.1	30

Table 5. Survey responses tabulated by age group. All figures are percentages.

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents' gender. There is a clear difference between the gender distribution of member respondents and clergy and music director responses. While over 60 percent of responding members were female, 60 percent of responding clergy and music directors were male. According to the US Congregational Life Survey from 2005, the female/male actual breakdown of Episcopal attendees is the same as that found in the Hymnal study member sample.

Gender	Members	Clergy	Music Directors	USCLS 2005 ²
Female	61.1	37.3	37.6	61
Male	38.9	62.7	62.4	39

Table 6. Survey responses tabulated by gender. All figures are percentages.

Table 7 provides the breakdown of survey responses by major racial and ethnic groups, in comparative context with The Episcopal Church as a whole. Of respondents who elected to share their racial/ethnic background, over 95 percent of respondents self-identified as white.

Race/Ethnicity	Members	Clergy	Music Directors	Episcopal Church
White	95.4	94.2	95.3	86.7
Black/African American	1.9	1.9	2.2	6.4
Hispanic/Latino	0.8	0.6	0.3	3.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.8	0.3	0.4	1.4
Native American	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.8
Multi-racial	0.3	2.7	1.5	1.2

Table 7. Survey responses by race and ethnicity. All figures are percentages.

The second-largest group, black/African Americans, makes up just under 2 percent of respondents; all other major racial and ethnic groups represent under 1 percent of responses. While the relative size of each population group in the survey does reflect the demographics of The Episcopal Church, whites are proportionally over-represented in the sample, whereas other groups are proportionally under-represented.

Table 8 summarizes respondents' denominational affiliations prior to joining their current church (for those who have attended more than one church in their life). Just over 56 percent of respondents were previously members of The Episcopal Church; therefore, slightly fewer than 44

percent of respondents came to The Episcopal Church from other faiths or Christian denominations. Among respondents who were not previously Episcopalian, the largest group represented is former Roman Catholics, who make up just over 10 percent of the sample, followed by former Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, who all come in at over 5 percent.

	Members	Clergy	Music Directors	RLS 2007 ³
Episcopal	56.3	42.8	19.0	54.7
Other Anglican Communion provinces	0.9	4.1	3.1	NA (Included in Episcopal)
Baptist	5.0	7.8	15.2	7.8
Lutheran	4.3	3.0	12.4	2.5
Methodist	7.6	9.4	17.9	6.6
Non-denominational	4.0	3.7	5.2	2.1
Presbyterian	5.3	6.3	10.2	5.4
Roman Catholic	10.1	11.5	12.0	11.1
United Church of Christ	1.9	2.5	3.2	0.9
None	2.6	2.8	1.0	1.5
Other (Protestant)	1.0	2.3	0.5	17.8
Other (General)	1.0	3.8	0.4	24.1

Table 8. Survey responses by previous denomination attended. All figures are percentages.

It should be noted that the survey respondents in the congregation member sample overwhelmingly grew up attending Christian services. Over 93 percent of respondents grew up attending worship services; further, less than one-half of 1 percent of respondents were raised in non-Christian faiths.

Musical staffing

To assess the extent to which Episcopal congregations are staffed musically, clergy were asked a series of questions concerning their congregations' musical staff and the general musical resources available at their parishes.⁴

Congregations with music directors	80
Is music director paid?	93
Is music director full-time?	20

Table 9. Congregations with music directors. All figures are percentages.

Congregations with non-music director organists	40
Is organist paid?	82
Is organist full-time?	9

Table 10. Congregations with organists who are not music directors. All figures are percentages.

Overall, approximately four-fifths of congregations have music directors on staff (see table 10). Most music directors are paid, while only 7 percent of music directors are volunteers. However, a relatively small share — approximately 20 percent — of parish music directors are employed full-

time by their congregations. Forty percent of congregations have an organist on staff. By and large, these organists are also paid by their congregations, as fewer than 20 percent of staff organists are volunteers. However, only 9 percent of congregations employ full-time organists.

Pipe organ	60
Electronic organ	38
Piano	72
Synthesizer	33
Amplifiers	22
None	1

Table 11. Congregations with organ-like instruments available. All figures are percentages.

Musical staffs at Episcopal Church congregations make use of a variety of organ-like instruments for worship activities. Sixty percent of congregations have a pipe organ, and another 38 percent have an electronic organ (see table 11). Three-quarters of congregations have a piano for use during worship; synthesizers and amplifiers, however, are less common. Only 1 percent of congregations report having none of these resources available to them.

Musical groups at parish	67
Special occasion choirs that are entirely paid	3
Special occasion choirs that are entirely volunteer	70
Regular musical groups that are entirely paid	1
Regular musical groups that are entirely volunteer	70
During your time as cleric, has recruitment for the choir become more or less difficult?	Less difficult: 20 Same: 63 More difficult: 17

Table 12. Prevalence of choirs or musical groups in congregations. All figures are percentages.

Overall, approximately two-thirds of congregations have musical groups at their parishes (see table 12). By and large, these groups are composed exclusively of volunteers; 70 percent of regular musical groups and special occasion choirs are all-volunteer, whereas only 3 percent of special occasion choirs and 1 percent of regular choirs are entirely paid. Generally speaking, the difficulty of choir recruitment has remained static during the tenure of clergy who responded to the survey, as 63 percent report no change in recruitment difficulty.

Further, according to clergy, approximately 41 percent of congregations have youth choirs (see table 13). Recruiting youth choir members, however, presents some difficulties to parishes; nearly 60 percent of clergy surveyed respond that recruitment is at least “somewhat difficult.” Further, nearly

60 percent of congregations experience scheduling and participation conflicts with their youth choirs on at least a frequent basis.

Youth choir at parish	41
How difficult is recruiting?	Very difficult: 14 Somewhat difficult: 44 Somewhat easy: 31 Very easy: 11
How frequently does your youth choir experience participation conflicts?	Rarely or never: 12 Occasionally: 29 Frequently or always: 59

Table 13. Prevalence of and difficulty in recruiting and scheduling youth choirs. All figures are percentages.

III. Analysis of Data

The key focus of the Hymnal Revision Feasibility Study was to assess the extent to which Episcopalians desire a new, revised version of *The Hymnal 1982*. To determine this, congregation members, clergy, music directors, bishops, and seminarians were asked the question, “Do you think that a new, revised version of the Hymnal is needed?” Participants were asked to respond using a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being “not at all,” 3 being “neutral,” and 5 being “completely.” Table 14 summarizes their responses.

	Congregation members	Clergy	Music directors	Bishops	Seminarians
Against	48.4	35.7	33.8	37.6	33.3
Neutral	27.2	23.4	22.3	27.1	18.5
In Favor	24.4	40.9	43.8	35.4	48.2
Average Score (1-5 scale)	2.6	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.3

Table 14. Distribution of opinions of congregation members, clergy, music directors, bishops, and seminarians regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

On average, the five church constituencies examined in this study express quite different levels of support for Hymnal revision. In the congregation member sample, respondents express a preference to forego revision by a ratio of nearly 2 to 1. Clergy, music directors, and seminarians, however, tend to support the opposite view. Nearly 41 percent of clergy express a desire to revise the Hymnal, while fewer than 36 percent of clergy feel that revision is unnecessary. Seminarians are the group most supportive toward Hymnal revision, with nearly half of the sample responding in favor. Music directors are similarly favorable toward revision, with nearly 44 percent of those surveyed supporting a revised Hymnal. Bishops are nearly evenly split between opinions to revise or not revise, although

a slight plurality is against revision. Despite these between-group differences, however, other factors, such as religious background or choir quality, may be more significant in determining a given person’s support or opposition to hymnal revision. This will be evident in the analyses presented below.

Congregation Members’ Opinions about Hymnal Revision

Although there are variations in congregation members’ opinions across the demographic areas described below, it is important to note that all of the categories yield an average score of *less* than 3.0, where 3.0 represents a “neutral” response to the question of revision.

Age

	29 or younger	30s	40s	50s	60s	70 or older
Against	49.8	43.8	44.3	46.3	49.3	54.9
Neutral	30.9	29.4	28.3	27.0	25.1	27.2
In Favor	19.3	26.8	27.3	26.7	25.5	17.9
Average Score	2.52	2.74	2.71	2.67	2.60	2.42

Table 15. Opinions of congregation members, by age, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

For congregation members age 30 and older, there is an inverse relationship between respondent age and desire to revise the Hymnal (see table 15). While congregants in their 30s and 40s are the least opposed to revision, the preference for a new hymnal tends to decrease with age. Among all age groups, however, the clear outlier is the group of respondents age 29 and younger. Nearly 50 percent of these respondents express an unfavorable view of hymnal revision, trailing only respondents age 70 and older.

Gender

	Female	Male
Against	47.4	50.3
Neutral	28.0	25.6
In Favor	24.5	24.1
Average Score	2.61	2.59

Table 16. Opinions of congregation members, by gender, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Both male and female member respondents largely oppose revision, with less than one-quarter of respondents of both genders in favor of revision.

Race

	Asian/ Pacific	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American	White/ Caucasian	Multi-Racial
Against	49.2	34.7	47.6	38.2	48.7	45.8
Neutral	29.5	32.0	20.6	25.5	27.1	20.8
In Favor	21.3	33.3	31.7	36.4	24.1	33.3
Average Score	2.61	2.91	2.71	2.93	2.60	2.75

Table 17. Opinions of congregation members, by racial/ethnic category, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

As previously discussed, whites make up a significant majority of respondents in the congregation member sample; nonetheless, the data suggest some variation of opinion among major racial and ethnic groups. White and Asian respondents, on average, are the least in favor of hymnal revision, with around 49 percent of each group expressing opposition. The groups most favorable toward revision are African Americans and Native Americans; over one-third of each group in the sample holds a positive view of a revised Hymnal.

Geographic Region

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Against	47.5	45.6	52.2	44.0
Neutral	28.0	29.0	25.9	27.7
In Favor	24.5	25.4	21.9	28.2
Average Score	2.61	2.67	2.50	2.75

Table 18. Opinions of congregation members, by geographic region, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Parishioners in different regions of the United States also hold slightly different views about hymnal revision, on average. While congregants in all four major US regions expressed a mostly negative view of hymnal revision, this attitude is most prevalent in the South, where over 52 percent of respondents were against the idea. In contrast, Western congregants are most supportive of revision, although they still express an unfavorable view by a margin of 44 percent to 28 percent.

City Type

	Small Town/Rural	Suburban	Urban
Against	45.5	46.3	51.6
Neutral	24.8	27.8	28.1
In Favor	29.7	26.0	20.3
Average Score	2.50	2.66	2.71

Table 19. Opinions of congregation members, by city type, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

While congregants who attend parishes in different types of cities all tended to oppose hymnal revision, the data reveal differences among these different groups. Congregation members who attend urban parishes, for example, are the most opposed to revision, with over half of this group responding unfavorably and only 20 percent holding a positive view of revision. This stands in some contrast to the responses of congregants who attend rural or small-town parishes. While a plurality of this group opposes revision, nearly 30 percent of rural parishioners support a revision, a figure that is nearly 10 points higher than that of urban parishioners.

Parish size

	Family	Pastoral	Transitional	Program	Resource
Against	41.7	42.4	49.5	55.0	55.3
Neutral	28.7	27.5	27.2	27.2	25.1
In Favor	29.5	30.1	23.2	17.8	19.6
Average Score	2.77	2.79	2.57	2.40	2.44

Table 20. Opinions of congregation members, by parish size, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Although congregants in all parish size categories tend to oppose revision rather than holding favorable or even neutral views, the degree of opposition varies by parish size. Specifically, opposition to a revised Hymnal tends to increase with parish size. Smaller parishes (Family- and Pastoral-sized) are the least opposed to revision, with around 30 percent of congregants in each category expressing support for a revised Hymnal. In contrast, over 50 percent of parishioners who attend Program or Resource-sized parishes are opposed to revision, and fewer than 20 percent of each group expresses support.

Denomination/faith tradition to which respondents previously belonged (before current congregation)

	Episcopal	Non-Episcopal
Against	52.6	43.0
Neutral	26.7	27.8
In Favor	20.6	29.2
Average Score	2.49	2.75

Table 21. Opinions of congregation members, by previous denomination, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Age and previous denomination

Episcopal Church

	29 or younger	30s	40s	50s	60s	70 or older
Against	56.2	51.9	49.5	49.6	53.1	57.5
Neutral	28.8	29.3	29.4	25.9	25.4	26.1
In Favor	15.0	18.8	21.1	24.5	21.6	16.4
Average Score	2.36	2.51	2.56	2.59	2.48	2.36

Table 22a. Opinions, by age, of congregation members who attended an Episcopal church prior to attending their current congregation, regarding Hymnal revision. Figures are percentages.

Non-Episcopal Churches

	29 or younger	30s	40s	50s	60s	70 or older
Against	43.4	37.2	38.5	42.3	43.8	50.2
Neutral	32.8	28.8	27.2	28.5	24.8	29.0
In Favor	23.8	34.0	34.3	29.3	31.4	20.8
Average Score	2.70	2.94	2.89	2.77	2.77	2.52

Table 22b. Opinions, by age, of congregation members who attended a non-Episcopal church prior to attending their current congregation, regarding Hymnal revision. Figures are percentages.

The above tables display variations in attitudes toward hymnal revision by respondents' history in The Episcopal Church. As demonstrated in table 22a, respondents who previously attended Episcopal congregations are more opposed to revision than respondents who came to The Episcopal Church from another faith tradition or denomination. This gap is even more distinct when the sample is stratified by age. While all age groups in the "previously Episcopal" group strongly oppose revision, some age brackets in the "previously non-Episcopal" group express more favorable views. In fact, over one-third of respondents in their 30s and 40s who came to The Episcopal Church from elsewhere support Hymnal revision.

“I’m a refugee from a non-denominational church where the ‘praise band’ was very emotional, very repetitive, and very oriented toward the congregation energetically telling God how much they loved him, needed him, would set aside everything to serve him, etc. That might seem admirable but often when you come to church, you’re running on fumes—you’re dry, hurting...I belong to a message board for evangelical mothers and let me tell you—there is a rising trend among evangelical women of finding church to be empty, tiring, and irrelevant. There is a rising interest among them of either going to a ‘house church’ (for community) or a traditional church (for depth and transcendence). Please don’t give them nothing to find when they come.”

— Congregation member respondent

Length of time respondent has attended his/her current congregation

There also appears to be a relationship between the length of time congregants have spent in their current congregation and their desire for Hymnal revision (see table 23). Opposition to revision tends to increase with the amount of time a parishioner has spent in her or his congregation; conversely, new congregants support revision at a higher rate. For example, over half of congregants who have been in their current parish for over 20 years oppose a revision of *The Hymnal 1982*, whereas around 30 percent of members who have attended their congregations for fewer than five years are in favor of a revision. This relationship between duration of attendance and opinions regarding Hymnal revision holds up as statistically significant in multivariate models that control for both congregation members’ demographic characteristics and the characteristics of their parishes.

	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Against	41.5	43.4	42.4	47.0	49.7	53.7
Neutral	28.4	27.0	27.2	27.9	26.4	27.2
In Favor	30.1	29.6	30.4	25.1	23.8	19.1
Average Score	2.76	2.77	2.79	2.65	2.58	2.43

Table 23. Opinions, by length of time congregation members have attended their current congregation, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Clergy Opinions about Hymnal Revision

As with congregation members, clergy were asked to rate their level of support for Hymnal revision using a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being “not at all,” 3 being “neutral,” and 5 being “completely.” Overall, clergy respondents tend to show more support for hymnal revision than congregation members.

Within the sample of clergy respondents, however, support is also divided by specific demographic categories. In particular, there is a large difference of opinion between male and female clergy on the question of hymnal revision. While congregation members largely oppose revision regardless of their gender, female clergy are much more supportive of revision than their male colleagues. Specifically, whereas about 37 percent of male clergy are in favor of revision, the corresponding figure for female clergy is nearly 50 percent. Notably, this gender difference remains statistically significant even within a multivariate model that controls for the effects of age, tenure, and position type (e.g., rector, assistant, etc.)

Age

	29 or Younger	30s	40s	50s	60s	70 or Older
Against	61.5	36.8	36.0	29.9	33.6	46.5
Neutral	7.7	22.0	19.3	22.1	24.6	26.9
In Favor	30.8	41.2	44.7	48.0	41.8	26.6
Average Score	2.54	3.07	3.06	3.24	3.09	2.71

Table 24. Opinions of clergy, by age, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Though clergy tend to favor revision slightly more than congregation members, support or opposition to revision varies by age in a similar manner within both groups. Specifically, both the youngest and oldest clerics tend to be more opposed to revision, while middle-aged clergy are more favorably disposed. Clergy who are younger than 30, in fact, are nearly two-thirds in opposition to revision. As with the pattern of clergy gender differences described above, this age-dependent pattern of response variance remains statistically significant within a multivariate model.

Gender

Gender	Female	Male
Against	23.4	42.6
Neutral	28.1	20.4
In Favor	48.5	37.0
Average Score	3.34	2.89

Table 25. Opinions of clergy, by gender, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Race

	Asian/ Pacific	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American	White/ Caucasian	Multi-Racial
Against	NA	31.6	25.0	NA	35.4	44.4
Neutral	NA	13.2	25.0	NA	23.4	20.4
In Favor	50	55.3	50.0	NA	41.2	35.2
Average Score	3.17	3.34	3.17	2.50	3.06	2.83

Table 26. Opinions of clergy, by race, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

As with the sample of member respondents, most clergy who responded to the survey were white/Caucasian. That said, opinion about the need for revision does appear to vary somewhat between clergy of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. Black or African American clergy are the most in favor of revision, with 55 percent reporting support. However, the relatively small number of non-white clergy respondents who completed the survey makes statistical inference about specific these specific clergy populations difficult. In fact, within the larger multivariate model of clergy support, race does not appear to be a significant factor when other characteristics are controlled, such as age and region.

Geographic Region

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Against	40.0	30.9	37.3	29.9
Neutral	23.4	26.2	23.2	22.6
In Favor	36.6	42.9	39.5	47.5
Average Score	2.92	3.19	2.99	3.24

Table 27. Opinions of clergy, by geographic region, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

City Type

	Small Town/Rural	Suburban	Urban
Against	35.3	33.5	38.3
Neutral	23.4	23.8	23.8
In Favor	41.3	42.7	37.9
Average Score	3.08	3.09	2.97

Table 28. Opinions of clergy, by city type, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Across the United States, clergy in the Midwest and West report the highest levels of support for revision, while clergy in the Northeast were the least favorable toward revision. However, these patterns of spatial difference are less pronounced when comparing clergy who serve in rural, urban, and suburban locations. Specifically, clergy serving in these three types of locations express comparable opinions about revision. In addition, none of these geographic factors — region or location type — achieves full statistical significance in the more rigorous, multivariate test of clergy opinion presented in the section to follow.

Parish Size

	Family	Pastoral	Transitional	Program	Resource
Against	35.2	28.6	37.7	44.2	46.7
Neutral	24.8	26.3	22.0	24.4	26.7
In Favor	43.0	45.0	40.3	31.3	26.7
Average Score	3.06	3.24	3.03	2.80	2.67

Table 29. Opinions of clergy, by parish size served, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

As with congregation member respondents, clergy serving in larger parishes generally express less support for revision. Notably, clergy support for revision in Family-sized parishes is 27 percent higher than the corresponding figure for clergy serving in Resource-sized parishes.

Childhood Denomination

	Episcopal	Non-Episcopal
Against	36.3	35.3
Neutral	24.1	22.8
In Favor	39.6	41.9
Average Score	3.01	3.08

Table 30. Opinions of clergy, by childhood denomination, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Whereas in the member sample, growing up in an Episcopal church was highly related to opinions about Hymnal revision, the same pattern is not present among clergy. That is, clergy who grew up

in the Episcopal tradition show only slightly less support for revision than clergy who did not grow up Episcopalian. Moreover, this marginal difference is not statistically significant within the more multivariate test of clergy opinion presented later.

Years in Current Position

	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Against	27.8	37.1	33.8	35.1	36.3	42.6
Neutral	29.2	22.0	23.4	22.7	25.1	26.9
In Favor	43.1	40.9	42.8	42.2	38.6	30.6
Average Score	3.08	3.05	3.10	3.06	3.01	2.81

Table 31. Opinions of clergy, by length of time in current position, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

In keeping with the findings regarding respondents’ historical religious identity, the longer a cleric has been in his or her position at a given parish, the more likely they are to oppose revision. However, this difference does not reach statistical significance in the larger, multivariate model, suggesting that opinions are more directly influenced by factors such as one’s age cohort, gender, and natural music tastes.

Music Directors’ Opinions on Hymnal Revision

As with congregation members and clergy, music directors were asked to respond using a 1-to-5 scale, with 1 being “not at all” in favor of Hymnal revision, 3 being “neutral,” and 5 being “completely” in favor of Hymnal revision.

After seminarians, music directors who responded to the survey were the most supportive of Hymnal revision. As music directors regularly and, arguably, engage the most with the Hymnal, official supplements, and other sacred music material, it is understandable that they would have some of the strongest opinions about the subject.

Age

	29 or Younger	30s	40s	50s	60s	70 or Older
Against	37.7	52.9	32.5	30.6	31.1	34.9
Neutral	24.6	14.7	19.9	25.0	21.7	24.8
In Favor	37.7	32.4	47.7	44.4	47.1	40.4
Average Score	3.10	2.70	3.22	3.17	3.21	3.05

Table 32. Opinions of music directors, by age, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

For music directors, support for a revised hymnal varies across age groups in a manner similar to that which was observed among clergy and congregation members. Although it is not the youngest category of music directors that most greatly opposes revision, respondents in their thirties are strikingly less supportive of revision than those in their forties, fifties, and sixties. Those age 70 and older seem to follow a trend similar to member and clergy respondents, but their decline in support is less dramatic. Unlike the clergy model, age is not a significant predictor of music director support after controlling for other factors.

Gender

	Female	Male
Against	31.2	35.8
Neutral	22.0	22.3
In Favor	46.8	41.9
Average Score	3.26	3.05

Table 33. Opinions of music directors, by gender, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Although we do not observe the large gender difference characteristic of the clergy sample, female music directors appear to be slightly more likely to support revision than their male colleagues. This difference, though somewhat less pronounced than the clergy sample, remains statistically significant even when other factors are controlled within a multivariate model.

Race

	Asian/ Pacific	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American	White/ Caucasian	Mixed Race
Against	NA	36.4	NA	NA	33.9	20.0
Neutral	NA	18.2	NA	NA	22.7	20.0
In Favor	NA	45.5	NA	NA	43.5	60.0
Average Score	3.25	3.09	4.00	NA	3.12	3.47

Table 34. Opinions of music directors, by race, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Due to the small number of non-white music directors, it is difficult to make any meaningful conclusions about differences of opinion on hymnal revision. Nonetheless, the race/ethnic distribution of music director opinions is presented for heuristic purposes in table 34.

Geographic Region

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Against	36.5	33.3	35.5	27.3
Neutral	21.8	28.7	22.0	17.4
In Favor	41.7	37.9	42.5	55.3
Average Score	3.04	3.06	3.12	3.35

Table 35. Opinions of music directors, by geographic regions, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

City Type

	Small Town/Rural	Suburban	Urban
Against	35.3	33.5	33.4
Neutral	21.6	20.6	25.2
In Favor	43.1	45.8	41.4
Average Score	3.09	3.16	3.13

Table 36. Opinions of music directors, by city type, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

Turning to geographic patterns of attitudinal variation among music directors, a similar pattern emerges wherein directors in the West, like clergy and congregation member respondents, express higher levels of support for revision. Conversely, music directors in the Midwest express tend to express less support for revision than their southern and northeastern colleagues, a pattern which reverses the trend of regional support measured in the clergy sample.

As with the member and clergy samples, no statistically significant differences in support or opposition emerge relative to the music director’s location type (i.e., rural, urban, or suburban).

Parish Size

	Family	Pastoral	Transitional	Program	Resource
Against	33.7	34.5	35.4	32.2	34.4
Neutral	17.5	22.4	27.1	22.6	29.7
In Favor	48.8	43.1	37.5	45.2	35.9
Average Score	3.16	3.16	3.02	3.17	2.98

Table 37. Opinions of music directors, by parish size served, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

As with the clergy sample, music directors of larger parishes are less likely to support Hymnal revision than those serving smaller congregations. This difference is statistically significant, but only when comparing the music directors of Family-sized parishes to the music directors of larger churches.

Childhood Denomination

	Episcopal	Non-Episcopal
Against	40.1	32.2
Neutral	22.6	22.3
In Favor	37.3	45.5
Average Score	2.97	3.18

Table 38. Opinions of music directors, by childhood denomination, regarding Hymnal revision. Average scores appear in bold; all other figures are percentages.

As we have seen with congregation members and clergy, music directors who did not grow up in the Episcopal or Anglican tradition are more likely to favor revision than those who did grow up in these traditions. It appears that, regardless of one’s role in The Episcopal Church, denominational affiliation greatly impacts opinions about *The Hymnal 1982* and the prospect of its revision.

Significant Factors Indicating Support for Hymnal Revision

It is common for researchers to cite the adage “correlation is not equal to causation” when studying complex social processes such as opinion formation. In the context of the present study, we do well to reflect on this adage because many factors, such as regional trends in *congregant* opinion, appear to be significant when viewed in isolation. At the same time, these factors are not *statistically* significant once other factors are considered simultaneously. For example, within the member respondent data there is a significant, negative correlation between support for Hymnal revision and the respondents’ assessments of the quality of their church’s musical offerings. Intuitively, this finding seems to make sense: members who perceive the quality of their church’s music to be low might well be expected to support Hymnal revision. At the same time, this somewhat intuitive finding does not remain statistically significant when a host of other factors such as race, urban setting, and one’s religious upbringing are considered.

In an attempt to control for many of the factors that account for one’s opinion about Hymnal revision, the research team employed a widely used statistical procedure, logistic regression, to construct a multi-variable model predicting the odds that a given respondent would support Hymnal revision. Due to the large number of attitudinal and demographic factors assessed by the surveys, the team’s resulting models were quite robust, correctly “predicting” the response of nearly 80 percent of member respondents, 75 percent of clergy respondents, and 69% of music director respondents. That is, and taking the member survey as an example, the team found that controlling for 33 dimensions of a given member’s responses produced a model that was able to correctly “predict” that member’s opinion about Hymnal revision nearly 80 percent of the time. Substantively, the predictive strength of the overall model, as well as the large number of significant variables the team identified (presented below), strongly suggest that the models are well-specified and descriptive of the populations they summarize. In addition, it should be noted that differences observed across different constituencies — i.e., clergy, music directors, and congregants — support the research team’s stratified approach to measuring opinion. That is, the differences observed among these several groups suggest that opinion formation is driven by different demographic and experiential factors for clergy, music directors, and congregants. For example, whereas region is a significant predictor of music directors’ opinions about revision, this same variable is not statistically significant in the clergy and member sample.

Modeling Member Opinions about Hymnal Revision

Table 39 presents a summary of the multi-variable model of *member opinions* about Hymnal revision. While the complete model of member opinion included 33 demographic and attitudinal variables, here we report only those variables, such as race and age, which are statistically significant when all of

these factors are considered simultaneously. That is, each variable described in table 39 is significant even when the impact of the other 32 variables is accounted for.

Overall, the results from the member survey suggest that an individual's opinion about Hymnal revision develops in response to a variety of demographic factors, idiosyncratic musical preferences, and personal history within The Episcopal Church. Among demographic factors, African American race/ethnicity, the average age of one's congregation, and urban location all significantly predict member opinions about revision. Notably, regional variation in opinion (with the West, for example, being more supportive of revision) is not statistically significant when controlling for other factors. Conversely, the length of time a member has been affiliated with The Episcopal Church significantly impacts their opinion about revision, with "long-time" members expressing weaker support for revision than those who joined the Church within the last 10 years. Similarly, members who previously worshipped within a different denomination are generally more supportive of revision than cradle Episcopalians. Together, these findings suggest that newer members of The Episcopal Church, and/or those with more diverse religious affiliations, express more support for the idea of revision.

In addition to demographic and biographical factors, the data suggest that member experience of worship significantly influences opinions about Hymnal revision. Specifically, those who describe a generally "positive" Sunday worship experience are more likely to oppose Hymnal revision, while those who report higher levels of boredom or frustration during worship are more supportive of the idea. Put simply, this finding suggests that one's opinion of revision (whether for or against) is directly related to how well a person "enjoys" the act of worship within the parish community. In a related vein, the data also suggest that those who feel strongly that the purpose of worship is to express emotion were less likely to support revision. The fact that this variable is negatively related to a favorable opinion about revision suggests that a segment of the Church desires a more expressive, emotionally "charged" style of Sunday worship. It is also possible that this desire, for some respondents, mirrors broader trends in American religious expression; in particular, the growth of charismatic and evangelical Christian denominations.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the member respondent model also suggests that attitudes toward revision are mediated by one's opinion about authorized Hymnal supplements already in use within the Church. Analyzing respondent opinions about authorized supplements, the research team found that members who expressed a more favorable opinion about certain supplements (*Wonder, Love, and Praise* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*) also expressed a more positive opinion about Hymnal revision. Similarly, respondents who reported higher levels of change in their musical tastes over time, as well as respondents who expressed more openness to "new" music during worship, were more likely to support revision of the Hymnal. Taken together, these findings suggest that an important aspect of support (or opposition) to Hymnal revision is what might be termed the fluidity of one's

tastes in religious music. Those who have more stable religious music preferences are more likely to oppose revision, while those who are more likely to enjoy new musical experiences in church express greater support.

Also significant in the multi-variable model is one's involvement in church musical programs. Specifically, members who sing in the choir and/or assist in hymn selection are less likely to support revision than members who are not involved in these ministries. This finding is understandable, perhaps, given the significant energy and time that choir and music team members invest in their church's musical offerings. That is, the prospect of revision is not only a denominational project, of course, but something that potentially impacts the function and processes of the many thousands of music teams and choirs throughout the Church.

Finally, and building on the discussion of lifestyle "segmentation," there is a statistically significant relationship between the desire for worship music to reflect personal tastes and one's opinion of hymnal revision. At the risk of oversimplification, the data suggest at least two "types" of Episcopal Church congregants: those who favor a worship experience that is in sharp contrast to "everyday" life and cultural experience ("segmentation"), and those who favor a more unified experience wherein personal musical tastes and the quality of Sunday worship to some extent "mirror" each other ("integration"). Members who are more inclined toward the latter, "integrated" experience of life/worship express more support for Hymnal revision. This finding is understandable in light of the disjunction between the more classically inspired melodic and lyrical expressions of the Hymnal and the overall tone of contemporary rock, pop, country, and other forms of popular music. The challenge for the Church, however, is that this apparent disjunction is experienced quite differently among its members. Some find the distinctive nature of the worship experience integral to the process itself, while others prefer styles of worship that more closely resemble "everyday" experience. This difference, undoubtedly, is a perennial challenge within the Church that also assumes broader theological connotations. That is, it is possible to evaluate the Church's music not only in terms of its unitive properties, but also in terms of the extent to which it facilitates the experience of "being in this world, but not of it."

Predictive Variable	Interpretation
Black/African American	Even when controlling for demographic factors, experience with the Church, and musical preferences, African American respondents were <i>more likely</i> to support hymnal revision than respondents of a different race/ethnic background.
Age above or below 50 (negative)	Consistent with the “bimodal” age distribution regarding Hymnal revision, churches with an average congregant age significantly above or below 50 were less likely to support revision. Middle-aged Episcopalians are more supportive of revision than younger and older Episcopalians.
Urban congregation (negative)	Parishioners from urban parishes are less supportive of Hymnal revision.
Long-time TEC member (negative)	The longer a person attends Episcopal congregations, the <i>less likely</i> s/he is to support revision.
Previous church non-TEC	Members who previously attended a church <i>not</i> in the Episcopal/Anglican tradition are <i>more likely</i> to support Hymnal revision.
Opinion of Hymnal supplements	Members who express favorable views toward Hymnal supplements (e.g., <i>Wonder, Love, and Praise</i> or <i>Lift Every Voice and Sing</i>) are <i>more likely</i> to support revision.
Negative worship experience	Members who often experience “boredom” or “frustration” during their worship experience are more likely to support revision of the Hymnal.
Positive worship experience (negative)	Members who often experience “positive” feelings during worship (e.g., joy, inspiration, or a sense of God’s presence) are <i>less likely</i> to support revision of the Hymnal.
Worship as affective expression	Members who believe that the purpose of church music is to express emotion are more likely to support hymnal revision
Changing musical tastes	Episcopalians who report higher levels of change in their musical tastes, over time, are more likely to support revision than members with more fixed church music preferences.
Reaction to change	Members who express more “openness” to new musical material they encounter during worship are more supportive of revision.
Participation in church’s selection of hymn/music (negative)	Respondents with first-hand experience assisting (or leading) the process of hymn selection in their church are <i>less likely</i> to support a revision of the Hymnal.
Participation in the choir (negative)	Respondents who serve as members of the choir are <i>less likely</i> to support Hymnal revision.
Desire for worship music to reflect one’s musical tastes	Members who would like worship music to better reflect their <i>personal tastes</i> (e.g., classical, rock, country, etc.) are more like to favor revision of the Hymnal.

Table 39. Significant variables in analysis of congregation members’ opinions on Hymnal revision.

Hymnal Support Variability within the Parish

Whereas the statistical models presented above focus primarily on the individual musical preferences and it is also instructive to examine these factors at the congregational level. Specifically, it is possible to examine the variability within a parish regarding support or opposition to Hymnal revision.

Toward this end, the research team estimated — for parishes with at least four respondents — a composite measurement of the degree to which a congregation’s members share similar perspectives on hymnal revision. For example, congregations whose survey respondents all share identical views on revision (whether they be positive or negative) would score “0,” while congregations where there is disagreement would have a positive score of increasing value commensurate with the overall level of difference. Within this framework, we are no longer modeling support for and opposition to Hymnal

revision, but rather the approximate level of congregational *agreement* or *disagreement* about this endeavor. One advantage of this approach is that it allows us to model, if approximately, the kinds of congregations where disagreement and/or conflict over revision is more likely.

Predictive Variable	Interpretation
Proportion non-TEC	Congregations with a higher proportion of respondents whose previous church affiliation was not in The Episcopal Church will have more disagreement over the question of hymnal revision.
Worship and personal tastes	Congregations with a higher proportion of respondents who would like worship music to better reflect their personal tastes will have more disagreement over hymnal revision.
Opinion of <i>LEVAS II</i> (negative)	Congregations with a more favorable impression of the Hymnal supplement <i>Lift Every Voice and Sing II</i> have less disagreement about the question of hymnal revision. Additionally, parishes with a more favorable opinion of <i>LEVAS II</i> tend to support hymnal revision, suggesting that congregational agreement is mostly in the direction of support.
Religious music outside of the congregation	Congregations with a higher proportion of respondents who listen to religious music outside of the parish have more agreement on the question of revision.

Table 40. Significant variables predicting congregational variability and disagreement regarding Hymnal revision.

Compared to the individual preference models, above, fewer variables significantly predict congregational variability and disagreement. Table 40 describes the four variables that reach statistical significance even when controlling for other factors, such as parish location, race, and gender. Most notable, perhaps, is the relationship between disagreement over revision and the number of congregational members who were previously affiliated with a different denomination, or religion. Specifically, congregations with a larger proportion of respondents previously affiliated with a non-TEC church express significant variability on the question of revision. While having a larger proportion of previously non-Episcopal Church congregants is not correlated with overall parish growth over time, the finding does suggest that more religiously diverse congregations will have more disagreement over revision.

Also significant is the proportion of a congregation’s respondents who would like church worship music to better reflect personal tastes. Given the aggregate nature of the variance models we cannot say for certain which types of musical tastes most represent this feeling, but it is possible, for example, that within parishes where more members would like rock or contemporary music during worship there will be greater disagreement over revision. Similarly, parishes with a more positive impression of *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* express less difference about the question of revision. Conversely, this finding also suggests that congregations with a lower opinion of the Church’s supplemental hymnody will have a greater variety of opinions about revision.

Lastly, the variability model suggests that congregations whose members often listen to religious music outside of church have significantly *less* disagreement about the question of Hymnal revision.

Building on the concepts of segmentation and integration described above, this finding suggests that congregations with a more “integrated” religious experience have less disagreement on the question of revision.

Predictors of Clergy Support for Hymnal Revision

Table 41 presents a summary of the multi-variable model of *clergy opinions* about Hymnal revision. As with the member results, here we report only those variables (such as gender and age) that are statistically significant when all factors are considered simultaneously.

Although clergy completed a different survey than congregation members, their responses, like those of members, suggest that opinions about Hymnal revision develop in response to a host of demographic factors, idiosyncratic musical tastes, and personal history within The Episcopal Church. Similar to the member model, cleric age is a significant predictor of opinion about revision. Specifically, priests whose age is significantly above *or* below 50 are more likely to oppose revision. Also like members, clergy who express a more favorable opinion of existing Hymnal supplements (e.g., *Wonder, Love, and Praise*) are more likely to support revision.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the member and clergy model is the impact of gender within the latter model. Whereas member respondents of both genders report comparable levels of support for revision, female clergy are *significantly* more likely than their male colleagues to support revision. Specifically, the odds that a given female cleric will support revision are about one-and-a-half times that of a male cleric when controlling for other factors. While the quantitative components of the clergy survey do not allow us to directly assess the reasons for this observed difference, “open-ended” responses from female clerics suggest that at least some part of this difference relates to differences among male and female clergy about the importance of gender-neutral language. One female cleric, for example, wrote:

“I want my girls to grow up singing hymns that they hear themselves in — that’s why my hope is for the language in the Hymnal to be less male. I don’t want to lose the traditional hymns, but they can be updated.”

While one response cannot describe the entire population of female clergy, of course, it is nonetheless quite probable that opinions about the importance of gender neutrality within the Hymnal partially explain the different levels of support for revision among male and female clergy.

With respect to a cleric’s church position, the research team found that rectors were about one-and-a-half times more likely to support Hymnal revision than priests serving in other capacities. Given

the many ways that ministerial duties are divided in different parishes (with some rectors assuming a more active role in the music program than others, for example), it is difficult to identify the specific reasons underlying this observed difference. To the extent that differences in opinion among rectors and assistants are driven by budgetary impressions, the team also found, unsurprisingly, that clergy who reported that their parish could afford to purchase new hymnals were significantly more likely to support revision. Conversely, clergy who rated the quality of their parish’s choir *highly* were *less* likely to support revision. This finding probably reflects both an “if it ain’t broke...” perspective, as well as a personal preference for the kinds of music found within the existing hymnal.

Examining respondent-specific tastes, clergy responses (like those of members) suggest that clergy with changing tastes in worship music, and/or clergy who would like worship music to better reflect their personal tastes, are more likely to support Hymnal revision. Additionally, clergy who enjoy listening to many kinds of music are more likely to support revision than those who listen to a narrower range of musical styles. Finally, the data indicate that clerics who grew up singing from *The Hymnal 1940* were significantly *less* likely to support revision. This finding, similar to the significant effect associated with cleric age, is suggestive of differing generational preferences.

Predictive Variable	Interpretation
Female gender	Even when controlling for other demographic and attitudinal factors, female clergy are more likely to support Hymnal revision than male clerics.
Age above or below 50 (negative)	Similar to the member model, clergy whose age is significantly above or below 50 are less likely to support revision.
Rector	Priests functioning as the rector of their congregation are more likely to support Hymnal revision.
Opinion of <i>Wonder, Love, and Praise</i>	Clerics who express favorable views toward the Hymnal supplement <i>Wonder, Love, and Praise</i> are more likely to support revision.
Choir quality (negative)	A cleric’s subjective assessment of the quality of their congregation’s choir is negatively related to his/her opinion about Hymnal revision. Those who evaluate their choir more positively are <i>less</i> likely to support revision.
Congregational openness	Clergy who self-report higher levels of “openness” to new music within their parish are more likely to support Hymnal revision.
Desire for worship music to reflect cleric’s musical tastes	Clergy who would like worship music to better reflect their personal tastes (e.g., classical, rock, country, etc.) are more like to favor revision of the Hymnal.
Changing tastes in worship music	Clergy who report higher levels of change in their worship music preferences over time are more likely to support Hymnal revision.
Variety of musical tastes	Clergy who listen to or enjoy many kinds of music are more likely to support Hymnal revision.
Affordability	Clergy who believe their congregation can afford a new Hymnal are more likely to support revision.
Grew up with <i>The Hymnal 1940</i> (negative)	Clerics who grew up singing from <i>The Hymnal 1940</i> are less likely to support Hymnal revision.

Table 41. Significant variables predicting clergy opinions on Hymnal revision.

Predictors of Music Director Support for Hymnal Revision

Assessing the opinions of music directors on Hymnal revision was essential in addressing the feasibility of revision. Music directors arguably have the closest relationships with the material in the Hymnal and therefore can provide a unique perspective on this issue. It is evident from the primary analysis that music directors are the most supportive of Hymnal revision as compared to clergy and member respondents. That said, not all music directors support revision, and by using the logistic regression method described previously the research team was able to evaluate specific characteristics and opinions of music directors that predicted this Hymnal revision support, or lack thereof. These demographic characteristics and individual opinions that are significantly predictive of support are shown in table 42:

Predictive Variable	Interpretation
Female gender	Female music directors are more likely to support revision than their male counterparts.
Western region	Music directors in the western region of the United States (AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY) are more likely to support Hymnal revision than those of any other geographical region.
Family-sized parish	Those music directors in Family-sized parishes are more likely to support hymnal revision.
Raised Episcopalian (negative)	Music directors who were raised in The Episcopal Church are not likely to support revision.
Graduate degree in music (negative)	Music directors with graduate-level degrees in music were more likely to <i>not</i> support revision as compared to those without graduate-level musical degrees.
Membership in AAM (negative)	Music directors who are members of the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM) are largely not in favor of revision.
Membership in AGO (negative)	Music directors who are members of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) are largely not in favor of revision.
Opinion of <i>The Hymnal 1940</i> (negative)	Music directors with a high regard for <i>The Hymnal 1940</i> are not likely to support revision of <i>The Hymnal 1982</i> .
Perceived openness of congregation to new music	Those music directors who rated their congregation members as more open to and accepting of new musical material during worship are more likely to support Hymnal revision.
Desire for worship music to reflect one's musical tastes	Music directors who reported a high desire for worship music to match their personal music tastes are more likely to support Hymnal revision.
Affordability of a new hymnal	Those music directors who believed that their congregation could afford a set of new hymnals within the next 10 years are more likely to support revision.

Table 42. Significant variables in analysis of music directors' opinions on Hymnal revision.

The model correctly predicts nearly 70 percent of all music directors' responses to the question of Hymnal revision. To unpack these results, it is important to remember that these are the significant characteristics that emerge as predictive of support for Hymnal revision above and beyond other music director characteristics of interest, such as city type, different regions, race or ethnicity. That

said, it is evident from the model that female music directors are more likely to support Hymnal revision than male music directors. This result mirrors the gender effect seen in the clergy model. This seems to indicate that regardless of one's leadership position in a parish, a female will, by and large, have a more favorable outlook on Hymnal revision. In addition to gender, an individual-level demographic indicator, there are also significant larger sociological demographic characteristics that predict support for Hymnal revision. These included region and parish size. The regional effect revealed that those music directors residing in the West are more supportive of revision. The parish size effect revealed that music directors in Family-sized parishes are more likely to support revision than those in other-sized congregations. This may be explained in part by the fact that while most music directors do not prefer contemporary hymns or praise music, those music directors in Family-sized parishes are less averse to these styles of music than those serving in other-sized congregations, and a preference for music styles other than the traditional hymns found in *The Hymnal 1982* is indicative of a tendency toward support of revision.

While the factors described above indicate a significant positive relationship for support for Hymnal revision, other variables reveal significant negative relationships. One of the more obvious negative relationships regarding Hymnal revision support is that of one's opinion of *The Hymnal 1940*. Naturally, those who prefer the more traditional *Hymnal 1940* are loath to support a revision twice removed from the hymnal they most favor. In a similar vein, music directors who grew up in The Episcopal Church tend to be opposed to Hymnal revision. Many people have strong preferences and great senses of nostalgia for the experiences and music of their youth. This common-knowledge trend is expressed by the result indicating that those music directors who grew up in The Episcopal Church with either *The Hymnal 1940* or *The Hymnal 1982* have a resistance to revision, opting to retain the song book(s) from their personal worship history. Another predictor with a negative relationship with support for Hymnal revision is slightly less intuitive. Music directors who have completed graduate-level degrees are not in support of revision. It is difficult to pinpoint why this effect may be so. It could be that pursuing an advanced degree in music influences one's tastes, or those with specific tastes are more likely to pursue advanced degrees in music. In a similar vein, those music directors who are members of the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM) and the American Guild of Organists (AGO) are not supportive of Hymnal revision. This effect, along with what is seen in those music directors with graduate degrees, may reveal that those with opportunity to gain a higher respect for the intentionality and craft that went in to the construction of *The Hymnal 1982* are less enthusiastic about undertaking a revision that might produce a resource that is less theologically or musically rigorous.

This issue of musical tastes underscores what we have seen thus far regarding music directors' negative opinions on revision; it also underscores positive predictors of revision opinion. Those music directors who report that their tastes in worship music have changed over time are more likely to

report favor for hymnal revision. So, those music directors who have experienced an evolution of taste in worship music seem to be open to the Hymnal undergoing a similar evolution. This openness as predictive of support for Hymnal revision extends not only to the music directors themselves, but also to music directors' opinions of their congregation members' openness to new material. Directors who report that their congregation members are open to and easily accept new material also report support for Hymnal revision. It is a wise music director who pays attention to their congregation members' appetites for new material.

Finally, awareness of congregational musical tastes is not the only consideration for music directors. The most influential variable that affects support of Hymnal revision is whether or not the music director believes the congregation could afford to purchase new hymnals. Ultimately, though personal taste and experiences are largely predictive of support, practical issues have the greatest influence in predicting support for the revision of *The Hymnal 1982*.

Affordability of a Revised Hymnal

One of the key questions embedded in debates around Hymnal revision concerns affordability. Given the increasing fiscal strains that confront many Episcopal Church congregations, it is crucial to consider whether or not a hymnal revision project would be economically sound for the Church and its parishes. To address this issue, the questionnaires for both clergy and music directors asked respondents to indicate if they felt that their congregations would be able to afford to purchase a revised Hymnal in the next five to ten years. Overall, both the clergy and music directors surveyed tend to respond in the affirmative, as summarized in table 43.

	Clergy	Music Directors
Overall	70	77
Region		
Northeast	65	65
Midwest	68	68
South	74	80
West	73	82
Parish Size		
Family	63	69
Pastoral	73	78
Transitional	76	78
Program	79	82
Resource	73	92
City Type		
Urban	72	74
Suburban	69	82
Rural	71	73

Table 43. Confidence of clergy and music directors in congregations' ability to afford to purchase a revised Hymnal. Figures are percentages.

As was seen in the logistic regression models used in evaluating support for Hymnal revision, affordability played the most influential role in predicting Hymnal revision support by both clergy and music directors. Those who said they could not afford to purchase new hymnals did not support revision, while those who felt they could afford to replace their hymnals expressed support. We have already discussed how both music directors and clergy are, on average, more supportive of revision than congregation members; in light of understanding the relationship between perceived affordability and support for revision, it is unsurprising that we find that, by and large, clergy and music directors report that they could afford to purchase copies of a new hymnal. This is counter to the conventional understanding of parish budgets in the current financial climate.

In the full samples, 70 percent of clergy and 77 percent of music directors feel that their congregations would be able to purchase a new, revised version of the Hymnal (see table 43). Given that economic circumstances can vary significantly from parish to parish, the research team broke down responses to this question along the lines of several geographical and parish characteristics. While a majority of all sub-groups of clergy and music directors responded affirmatively, there are some noticeable differences, especially between different sizes of parishes and along regional lines. In the South and West, close to three-quarters of clergy and over 80 percent of music directors feel that their congregations can afford a new hymnal. However, in the Northeast and Midwest, around one-third of both clergy and music directors state that their congregations would not be able to make this purchase. Interestingly, regional differences stand out as more significant than do the differences that exist by city type. Variations in affordability responses among urban, suburban, and

rural clergy are negligible; further, while suburban music directors express the least concerns about their congregations' ability to afford a revised Hymnal, this figure is substantially higher than that of suburban clergy, who return the lowest clergy figure at 69 percent.

When broken down by parish size, the survey results for both music directors and clergy suggest that larger parishes would have an easier time affording a revised Hymnal than smaller congregations. Around three-quarters or more of both clergy and music directors at parishes that are Pastoral-sized and larger respond that they could afford the Hymnal; in particular, music directors at Resource-sized parishes stand out, with 92 percent responding affirmatively. However, clergy and music directors at Family-sized parishes clearly express greater reservations about the economic soundness of Hymnal revision for their congregations, with only 63 percent of clergy and 69 percent of music directors suggesting that their congregations can afford to purchase a revised Hymnal.

In addition to the aforementioned parish characteristics, the research team analyzed how affordability varies based on parish finances. As anticipated, clergy and music directors at wealthier parishes are more likely to respond that they would be able to afford a revised Hymnal than those at parishes with less favorable financial situations. These data are summarized in table 44.

	Would your congregation be able to afford a revised Hymnal?	Average operating revenue, 2009	Average percent change in operating revenue, 2005-2009 ^s	Average plate & pledge revenue, 2009	Average percent change in plate & pledge revenue, 2005-2009
Clergy	Yes	\$439,225	+1.9%	\$348,945	-2.0%
	No	\$345,501	-0.4%	\$248,936	-3.6%
Music directors	Yes	\$479,428	+1.9%	\$369,316	-0.4%
	No	\$322,918	+1.4%	\$246,315	-2.1%

Table 44. Clergy and music directors' perceptions, by average parish revenue, of affordability of revised Hymnal.

Among clergy, survey respondents who answer that their congregations would be able to afford a revised Hymnal serve parishes that have both average operating revenues and average plate and pledge revenues that are around \$100,000 greater than the parishes of clergy who believe that their congregations cannot afford this purchase. For music directors, the gaps of \$157,000 in average operating revenue and \$123,000 in average plate and pledge between these two groups are even greater. Further, relatively speaking, clergy and music directors who believe they could afford a new Hymnal serve more financially stable congregations. Since 2005, these respondents' parishes experienced more operating revenue growth, and less plate and pledge decline, than those of respondents who believe that a new Hymnal would not be affordable to their congregations.

Hymnal and Supplement Frequency of Use and Satisfaction

	Less than once per month	At least once per month	At least once per week
<i>Hymnal 1982</i>	2.7	1.7	95.5
<i>El Himnario</i>	97.8	0.7	1.5
<i>LEVAS II</i>	70.1	21.9	7.9
<i>My Heart Sings Out</i>	98.7	1.0	0.4
<i>Voices Found</i>	97.1	2.4	0.4
<i>Wonder, Love, & Praise</i>	66.7	27.1	6.2
<i>Hymnal 1940</i>	93.0	2.5	4.5

Table 45. Frequency of Hymnal and supplement use, as reported by congregation members. Figures are percentages.

As reported by congregation members, *The Hymnal 1982* remains the medium of choice for worship music in The Episcopal Church. Over 95 percent of congregants report using *The Hymnal 1982* at least once per week for worship service. The preeminence of *The Hymnal 1982* stands in contrast to the relatively low utilization of the authorized supplements. *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* and *Wonder, Love, and Praise* are only used at least once per month by 30 percent of congregants, whereas *El Himnario*, *My Heart Sings Out*, *Voices Found*, and *The Hymnal 1940* are rarely used.

	<i>Hymnal 1982</i>	<i>El Himnario</i>	<i>LEVAS II</i>	<i>My Heart Sings Out</i>	<i>Voices Found</i>	<i>Wonder, Love, & Praise</i>	<i>Hymnal 1940</i>
Congregation members	4.00	1.96	2.94	2.01	2.03	2.98	3.03
Clergy	3.92	1.63	2.93	2.05	2.19	2.98	2.16
Music directors	4.03	1.59	2.90	2.06	2.29	3.00	2.73

Table 46. Satisfaction with *The Hymnal 1982* and supplements. Average scores based on a 1-to-5 scale.

When asked to rate how their current hymnal or hymnal supplements satisfy their congregation’s needs on a 5-point scale (1= “Not at all,” 3 = “Neutral,” 5 = “Completely”), congregation members, clergy, and music directors responded similarly. The most favored resource of all three groups is *The Hymnal 1982*, with an average rating of nearly 4. By and large, however, congregation members, clergy, and music directors all view hymnal supplements much less favorably in terms of the supplements’ ability to satisfy their congregations’ needs; in particular, no supplement has a mean score higher than 3 in any sample. Although the mean scores are largely consistent across the different samples, there is a large gap between the slightly favorable impression held by congregation members of *The Hymnal 1940*, and the distinctly unfavorable responses of clergy members.

Music Styles: Frequency of Use and Preferences

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Traditional	0.4	1.5	4.3	40.4	53.4
Praise	34.9	23.1	23.0	14.7	4.3
Contemporary	14.7	26.5	41.5	15.1	2.0
Folk Mass	56.0	25.0	14.6	3.7	0.8
Sung Psalms	11.4	10.7	17.6	33.0	27.3
Classical	5.3	7.5	21.1	36.9	29.2
Chant	26.9	25.7	31.4	13.9	2.1
Multicultural	21.9	36.2	33.5	7.6	0.8
Gospel	19.4	31.7	40.3	8.1	0.6

Table 47. Frequency of music style used in worship service, as reported by congregation members. Figures are percentages.

Congregation members respond that traditional hymns are the most frequently sung form of music at their worship services, as nearly 94 percent of members sing traditional hymns “frequently” or “always” at their congregations (see table 47). Additionally, both classical music and psalms are sung “frequently” or more by over three-quarters of congregants. While less commonly present in worship services, several other music styles are sung at least occasionally by significant proportions of congregation members. Nearly 60 percent of congregants sing contemporary hymns at worship service at least “occasionally,” and at least 40 percent sing praise music, chants (e.g., Taizé, Iona), world music, and gospel music occasionally or more. Of the categories provided, Catholic/folk mass is the least frequently sung music style, as over three-quarters of respondents report singing this style “rarely” or “never.”

	Traditional	Praise	Contemporary	Folk Mass	Sung Psalms	Classical	Chant	Multi-cultural	Gospel
Members	4.29	2.6	3.08	2.38	3.61	4.02	2.94	2.99	3.12
Clergy	4.02	2.64	3.38	2.6	3.78	3.87	3.5	3.21	3.32
Music directors	4.33	2.12	3.25	2.27	4.01	4.37	3.04	3.05	3.17

Table 48. Music style preferences. Scores are means.

The survey results additionally suggest that traditional hymns remain a preferred music style of congregation members, as well as clergy and music directors. When asked to rate their preference for the aforementioned styles of music on a 5-point scale (1 = “Not at all,” 3 = “Neutral,” 5 = “Completely”), all samples return an average score of at least 4 out of 5 for traditional hymns. In fact, traditional hymns are the most favored music style of congregation members and clergy, and

are second only to classical music for music directors. Classical music also gets high marks from congregation members and clergy, and all groups rate sung psalms highly. The music styles that received the lowest ratings are Catholic/folk mass and praise music, which scores especially low (nearly 2 out of 5) among music directors. Interestingly, in an analysis of data from the congregation member sample, the research team found that style preference is closely related to style frequency. For congregation members, there is a large and significant correlation between the frequency with which congregants sing each respective music style and their preference for that style. For example, even though praise music receives a low rating from congregation members, almost 80 percent of parishioners that “always” sing praise music rate their preferences at least a 4 or 5 out of 5 (with 4 = “Very much” and 5 = “Completely”).

Singing, Musical Programming, and Congregational Vitality

A major line of investigation in this project concerns the quality of congregational musical programming. As any decision concerning whether or not to undertake a hymnal revision project would be grounded in part on the premise that musical programming bears some relationship to congregational vitality and stability, the research team has sought to examine the role of worship music in influencing attitudes toward Hymnal revision, and its role in helping or hindering the efforts of congregations to recruit and retain members. The first part of this section concerns congregants’ perceptions of their congregations’ musical programming, as measured by both the quality of singing by both congregations and their choirs. The second section then investigates how music influences congregants’ decisions to attend particular parishes, and looks broadly at potential relationships between music quality, parish growth and decline, and the financial health of parishes.

As part of the survey, congregation members, clergy, and music directors were asked to rate how well their congregation sings different styles of music on a 1-to-5-point scale, where 1 means the respondents felt “the congregation does not sing well at all” and 5 means respondents felt “the congregation sings extremely well.” The average scores for each music style are found in table 49.

Style	Traditional	Praise	Contemporary	Folk Mass	Sung Psalms	Chant	Multi-cultural	Gospel
Members	4.01	2.99	3.00	2.59	3.36	3.07	2.68	2.96
Clergy	4.04	2.99	3.23	2.84	3.22	3.32	2.57	3.06
Music directors	4.37	3.79	3.43	3.93	3.64	3.79	3.36	3.53

Table 49. Congregation members, clergy, and music directors’ perceptions of congregational singing quality (Neutral = 3). Scores are means.

Traditional hymns register the highest ratings for each sample, recording an average above 4 on the 5-point scale for each group. Sung psalms and chants additionally receive ratings above 3 from each group. Conversely, both congregation members and clergy point to some difficulties within the congregation singing styles such as praise, folk mass, and world music, which receive ratings below 3 from these groups. Music directors rate congregational singing the highest, giving average scores of above 3 to their congregations for each music style.

Participation in church musical programming is very important to parishioners, as suggested by survey results. Congregation members were asked to rate the extent to which they preferred singing church music as opposed to listening to their church’s choir. Overwhelmingly, they prefer to be active participants. Over 62 percent of congregants in the sample prefer singing to listening; only just over 11 percent would rather listen than sing. However, as table 50 demonstrates, these responses do vary by parish type.

	Prefer singing	Neutral	Prefer listening
Overall	62.2	26.6	11.2
<i>Parish type</i>			
Family	68.6	22.3	9.1
Pastoral	65.3	25.8	8.9
Transitional	63.8	25.8	10.4
Program	56.7	29.6	13.7
Resource	55.7	29.5	14.8
<i>City type</i>			
Urban	58.0	28.4	13.6
Suburban	63.4	26.2	10.4
Rural	69.0	23.7	7.4

Table 50. Congregants’ preferences for singing vs. listening, by parish size and city type. Figures are percentages.

As suggested by these figures, while parishioners overall prefer singing to listening, those who attend smaller parishes are more likely to prefer singing than those who attend larger parishes. For example, the share of parishioners at Family-sized parishes that prefer singing to listening is nearly 13 percentage points higher than the figure for Resource-sized parishes. Similarly, congregants at rural or small-town congregations prefer singing to listening at a noticeably higher rate — nearly 70 percent — than their urban and suburban counterparts.

The apparent relationship between a preference for singing as opposed to listening and both parish and city size may be explained in part by the quality of music offered at different types of parishes. To investigate this further, the research team analyzed congregation members’ opinions concerning the quality of their congregations’ choirs, broken down again by parish size and location type. In the survey, congregation members were asked to rate their choirs based on the following

questions, “Do you feel spiritually enriched when you listen to your choir?”, “To what degree do you enjoy listening to your church’s choir?”, and “Do you feel that your choir has a high quality of musicianship as a whole?”, again on a 5-point scale. The average scores are found in table 51, below.

	Choir is spiritually enriching	Enjoy listening to your choir	Choir has high quality musicianship
Overall	3.73	3.99	3.99
Parish type			
Family	3.50	3.73	3.48
Pastoral	3.53	3.78	3.69
Transitional	3.76	4.00	4.05
Program	3.96	4.24	4.34
Resource	3.94	4.23	4.42
City type			
Urban	3.91	4.17	4.28
Suburban	3.66	3.92	3.88
Rural	3.47	3.72	3.57

Table 51. Congregants’ rating of spiritual enrichment by, enjoyment of, and opinion of choir’s musicianship, by parish size and city type. Scores are means.

On average, congregation members rate their choir highly, with average scores nearing 4 out of 5 on both “To what degree do you enjoy listening to your choir?” and “Do you feel that your choir has a high quality of musicianship?” These ratings, however, are not consistent across parishes. Parishioners in Family-sized congregations rate the quality of their choir’s musicianship almost one full point lower than parishioners in Resource-sized parishes; further, choir quality increases consistently with parish size. These gaps in quality appear to impact the effect choirs have on their congregations, as congregants in smaller parishes report lower levels of spiritual enrichment when listening to their choirs. The same pattern of responses is present when the sample is stratified by location type. Urban parishioners rate their choirs the highest and report the highest levels of spiritual enrichment, whereas rural parishioners returned the lowest scores.

The relationship of individuals to their choirs influences much more than spiritual enrichment within the Church, as suggested by the multivariate analyses conducted by the research team predicting support for a revised Hymnal. As detailed earlier, congregation members who are also members of their church’s choir are significantly less likely to support a revision of *The Hymnal 1982*, independent of other factors. Additionally, these analyses suggest some variability in the relative support for Hymnal revision among clergy and congregants based on perceptions of the quality of their choirs. Table 52 details breakdowns of attitudes toward Hymnal revision based on perceptions of choir quality. In this table, choir ratings of 1 or 2 out of 5 are coded as “No,” 3 is coded as “Neutral,” and 4 and 5 are represented by “Yes.”

	Choir: Spiritually enriching			Enjoy listening to choir			Choir has high quality musicianship		
	No	Neutral	Yes	No	Neutral	Yes	No	Neutral	Yes
Against revision	38.3	40.5	52.6	34.5	38.4	52.5	37.7	42.1	51.8
Neutral	18.7	28.6	27.2	19.2	26.5	27.4	21.1	29.2	27.2
In favor of revision	43.0	30.9	20.1	46.2	35.1	20.0	41.3	28.7	21.0

Table 52. Relationship between choir quality and desire for Hymnal revision, congregation members. Figures are percentages.

	Enjoy listening to choir			Choir has high quality musicianship		
	No	Neutral	Yes	No	Neutral	Yes
Against revision	10.2	20.5	69.3	19.6	26.8	53.7
Neutral	8.9	17.1	74.1	16.3	30.8	52.9
In favor of revision	14.9	22.6	62.4	24.3	31.6	44.1

Table 53. Relationship between choir quality and desire for Hymnal revision, clergy. Figures are percentages.

The above cross-tabulation suggests that congregants’ responses regarding hymnal revision vary with their perceptions of the quality of their choirs. Overall, 48.4 percent of congregants oppose Hymnal revision, in contrast with 24.4 percent who are in favor. However, among congregants who rate their choirs poorly (a score of 1 or 2, meaning “Not at all” or “Not very much,”) over 40 percent favor a revision to *The Hymnal 1982*, and outnumber those who oppose revision as well as the neutral group. For those who rate their choirs highly (a score of 4 or 5, either “Very much” or “Completely,”) over 50 percent are against a revision of the Hymnal. While clergy tend to rate their choirs higher than congregation members, their opinions regarding Hymnal revision also vary by perceptions of choir quality. Specifically, while over half of clergy opposed to or neutral towards revision rate their choirs highly, less than half of clergy in favor of revision responded in this way.

In order to determine the extent to which choir quality has an independent effect on attitudes toward Hymnal revision, the research team constructed composite “choir quality” variables based on responses to the questions detailed in the tables above. For clergy, the multivariate analyses found that perceptions of choir quality have an independently significant effect on their attitudes toward Hymnal revision. Simply put, as clergy ratings of their choirs increase, the odds of favoring Hymnal revision tend to decline. For congregation members, while we did observe some effect of choir quality on the extent to which they support a revised Hymnal, this relationship just missed statistical significance — meaning that it is in part explained by other factors (e.g., choir quality tends to be better in urban parishes, whose parishioners are more likely to support a revised Hymnal). These findings do suggest

— especially for clergy — that opinions on Hymnal revision do not exclusively concern content, but also are embedded in the larger musical context that they experience at church. For example, support for a revised hymnal may reflect in part a broader dissatisfaction with the quality of congregational musical programming, prompting support for any sort of change concerning music.

Additionally, the research team found that choir quality may have broader influence in parishes beyond musical programming. The section below outlines a series of measures employed to assess relationships between choir quality and congregational vitality. Table 54 summarizes responses to the question, “Did music play a role in choosing the congregation you currently attend?” broken down by parish size and location type:

	Yes	No
Overall	52.8	47.2
Parish size		
Family	32.5	67.5
Pastoral	43.5	56.5
Transitional	58.6	41.4
Program	66.4	33.6
Resource	63.3	36.7
City type		
Urban	63.7	36.3
Suburban	49.8	50.2
Rural	36.0	64.0

Table 54. Did music play a role in choosing the congregation you currently attend? Congregation members, by parish size and location type. Figures are percentages.

Overall, over half of respondents in the congregation member sample answer that music influenced the selection of their current congregation. Responses to this question vary widely, however, by both parish size and location type. Parishioners in smaller congregations tend to respond that music did not play a role in their choice of parish; for example, only one-third of congregants at Family-sized parishes stated that music played a role. This contrasts sharply with the experiences of parishioners in larger congregations, as around two-thirds of those attending Program- or Resource-sized congregations responded that music helped guide their congregational choice. Similar gaps exist between urban and rural parishioners; whereas nearly two-thirds of urban congregants chose their current parish in part based on music, nearly two-thirds of respondents in rural areas did not.

These substantial gaps may be a function of the relationships between population and congregational density, choir quality, and congregation choice. As urban areas tend to have a greater concentration of parishes within a reasonable commute for parishioners, urban parishioners may be more likely to choose their congregations based on factors that are independent of proximity to home, such as musical programming. Conversely, for parishioners who reside in less densely populated rural

areas, proximity may have a much larger role to play (and music less so) given the smaller number of parishes within a commutable distance. The similar gaps between parish sizes may also be a function of the same phenomena, given that large parishes are overwhelmingly metropolitan, and a majority of Family-sized parishes are found in small towns or rural areas.⁶ Further, the higher reported quality of choirs by congregation members in larger, metropolitan parishes likely contributes to the greater role of music in congregants' parish choices.

These findings suggest a potential relationship between the quality of congregations' musical programming and their ability to attract members. Table 55 summarizes average percent change in average Sunday attendance (ASA) between 2005 and 2009 for respondents' parishes by response to the choir quality questions.

	Choir is spiritually enriching	Enjoy listening to your choir	Choir has high quality musicianship
Not at all	-10.5	-12.1	-13.5
Not very much	-8.2	-9.5	-7.3
Somewhat	-6.7	-7.3	-7.7
Very Much	-6.0	-6.3	-6.4
Completely	-6.0	-5.2	-5.0

Table 55. Change in ASA by choir quality responses (congregation member sample). Figures are percentages.

As the data in the table suggest, congregants who rate their choirs highly are more likely to attend parishes experiencing less ASA decline. This distinction is starkest for the musicianship quality variable: whereas parishioners who rate their choirs the poorest generally attend rapidly declining parishes (with an average ASA decline of 13.5 percent since 2005), the average ASA decline for congregants who rated their choirs the highest was only 5 percent.⁷

In order to assess whether this ASA change–choir quality relationship is statistically robust (and not explained by other factors), the research team fit a multivariate model designed to tease out the role of musical programming in congregational vitality, while accounting for the influence of parish characteristics such as size and geographic location. Overall, this analysis revealed that musical practices (e.g., the use of Hymnal supplements) in large part do not play a role in attendance change. However, the multivariate model did reveal that choir quality has a *small but statistically significant effect* on ASA change within congregations. As such, congregations whose members (on average) rate their choirs highly tend to be declining less than congregations with more poorly rated choirs. Although it may not be a magic formula for ensuring congregational stability, this research suggests that investments in the quality of congregational musical programming can play a role in a broader strategy designed to retain members and bring in new congregants.

Worship Experience

As part of the Hymnal study, the research team asked congregation members a series of questions designed to measure the quality of congregants’ worship experiences at church. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they experience a series of emotions and feelings during worship services at their congregations on a 5-point scale, with 1= “Never” and 5= “Always.” The mean scores for each query are summarized in table 56.

Worship metric	Mean	Hymns metric	Mean
A sense of God’s presence	3.87	Feels spiritually enriched by hymns	3.99
Inspiration	3.82	Feels moved by the lyrics in hymns	3.55
Boredom	2.24	Feels moved by the music in hymns	3.77
Awe or mystery	3.18		
Joy	3.75		
Frustration	2.18		
Spontaneity	2.59		
A sense of fulfilling my obligation	3.02		

Table 56. Congregation members’ reported experience of emotions and feelings during worship. Scores are means.

As suggested by the data in the table, congregation members tend to rate their worship experiences well, with mean scores well above the “neutral” rating of 3 for “A sense of God’s presence,” “Inspiration,” and “Joy,” and scores near 2 for “Boredom” and “Frustration.” Additionally, congregants report relatively favorable experiences with hymns during worship services, as average ratings for each of the three questions exceed 3.5.

A multivariate statistical analysis of congregants’ “worship experience” responses revealed significant correlation between several experiential factors. The internal consistency between these variables justified the creation of two composite variables: one that measures congregants’ positive experiences during worship services, and another that assesses the extent to which congregants experience negative emotions at church.⁸ Figure 1, below, is a graphical illustration of the relationship between congregant opinions toward Hymnal revision and overall worship experience. Positive scores reflect experiences that are *above the congregant average*, as reported in the survey; negative scores are *below the congregant average*.

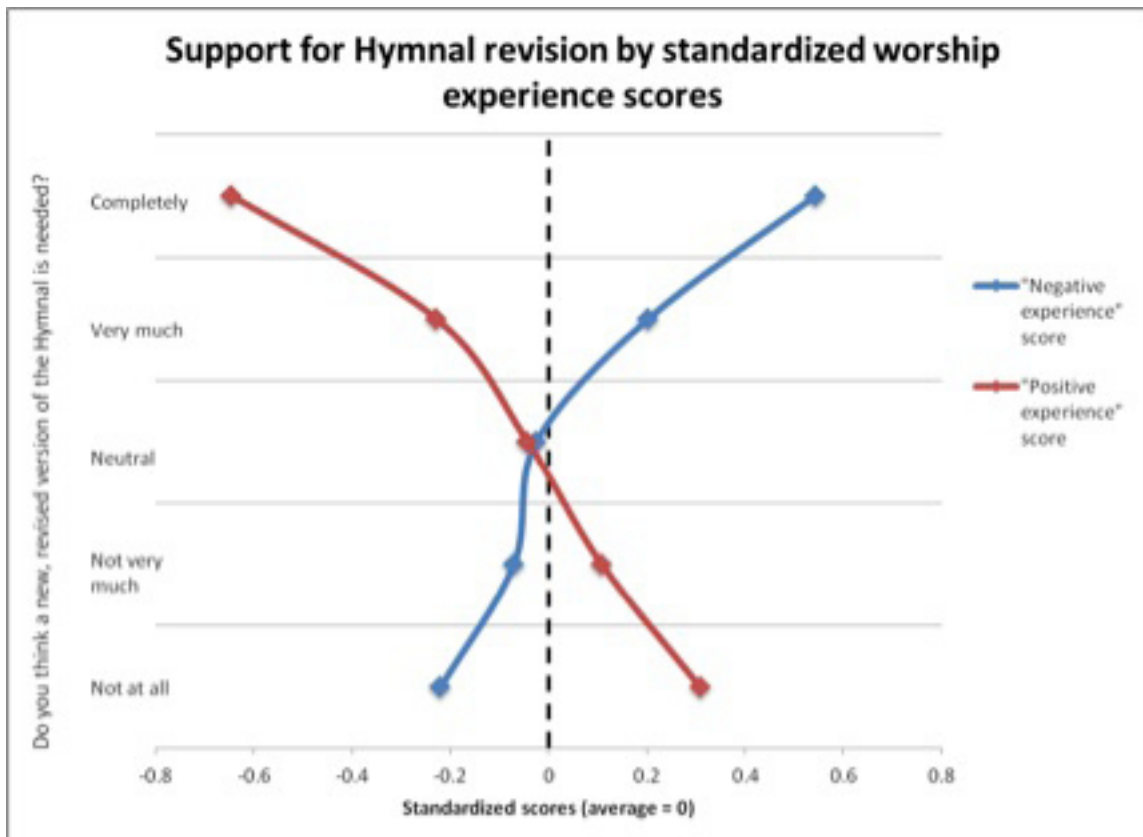


Figure 1. Overall worship experience and opinion on Hymnal revision.

As Figure 1 suggests, negative feelings during worship service tend to be associated with a greater desire to revise the Hymnal. On average, congregants who favor Hymnal revision — represented by a “Very much” or “Completely” response — also express greater than average feelings of boredom and/or frustration during worship service. Conversely, congregants who responded “Not very much” or “Not at all” to the need for Hymnal revision tend to self-report experiencing more positive emotions during worship services and when singing and listening to hymns.

As mentioned earlier, the multivariate statistical modeling reveals that the relationships suggested in the graphic hold up as statistically significant contributors to congregants’ attitudes toward a revised Hymnal, independent of the demographic characteristics and music tastes of the congregant.

As such, we suggest that attitudes toward a hymnal revision project are in part a function of one’s general experiences at church. Congregants who are less satisfied and less inspired at their congregations are clearly more likely to support a revised hymnal. In part, this may reflect the importance of the Hymnal as a symbol of the worship experiences available in The Episcopal Church. Given the relatively high levels of self-reported worship experience among congregants (see table

56), this finding suggests that a relatively large proportion of Episcopalians derive significant joy and inspiration from the worship services offered by their congregations, and in turn are reluctant to accept a revision to a Hymnal which could, in their views, dilute or diminish these experiences. However, the analysis does also point to a segment of the Church that may feel uninspired or even alienated by the current worship offerings in the Church, and view Hymnal revision as a means to effect broader change within their worship services.

The purpose of the Hymnal

Purposes of participating in worship music

	Praise God	Maintain tradition	Spiritually enrich	Express emotion	Sense of beauty	Christian formation	Reflect ILectionary
Members	4.41	3.59	4.29	3.74	3.94	3.66	NA
Clergy	4.34	3.29	4.10	3.05	3.80	3.50	3.94
Music Directors	4.56	3.54	4.26	3.42	3.94	3.75	4.38

Table 57. Degree to which members, clergy, and music directors feel a given purpose is the purpose of participating in worship music. Scores are means.

Though all purposes for the Hymnal put forth in the surveys were rated highly by all respondents, by and large, the purpose of worship music that respondents endorsed most was to praise God through music. The second-most endorsed purpose by congregation members and clergy was that of providing spiritual enrichment. The second-most endorsed purpose by music directors was to reflect the themes of the lectionary. Interestingly, both clergy and music directors endorsed expressing emotion the least in terms of the purpose of worship music, in contrast to parishioners. This might indicate a possible difference in how employees of the church view worship music and the Hymnal as opposed to the attendees of the church. Clergy and music directors may have a more functional outlook on worship music, while parishioners may have a more experiential outlook on worship music. When the research team assessed congregation members' responses regarding the purpose of worship music it was found that the purposes of expressing emotion, cultivating a sense of beauty, and experiencing spiritual enrichment were highly related. Ultimately these form a larger factor, one which expressed that the purpose of worship music was to produce a larger, affective experience encompassing these three components. This overall worship experience factor was predictive of those members who support revision of *The Hymnal 1982*. This underscores that *The Hymnal 1982* was constructed with more of a focus on theology and musical quality, and with less focus on the experiential effect it would have on those members singing the hymns. Contemporary hymns and praise music, on the other hand, are often less theologically sophisticated but are very emotionally infused. Those who prefer contemporary hymns and praise music are more favorable toward Hymnal revision; this may help to

explain the apparent connection between a belief that worship music should serve an affective and experiential purpose, and support for Hymnal revision.

Reasoning behind hymn choices

	Liturgical season	Lectionary readings	Theological message	Member favorites	Member requests	Desire for variety
Clergy	4.19	4.03	2.77	2.98	2.35	2.83
Music Directors	4.38	4.31	2.92	2.93	2.50	3.08

Table 58. Clergy and music directors’ rating of the factors influencing hymn choices. Scores are means.

The rationale behind hymn choice emphasizes the contrast between members’ focus on emotional experiences of music and clergy and music directors’ focus on the functionality of worship music and hymns. Clergy and music directors were asked to what degree various factors influenced their choice of hymns, with 1 being “Not at all,” 3 being “Somewhat,” and 5 being “Completely.” As can be seen in table 58, clergy and music directors appear to be essentially of one mind concerning the contributing factors. Both groups of respondents resoundingly agree that the primary determining factor for hymn choice is the liturgical season, followed by the influence of the lectionary readings. All other factors pale in comparison. That said, clergy and music directors are largely in agreement as to the relative standing of the remaining factors. Both groups acknowledge that though members’ favorite hymns only somewhat influence hymn choice, they are a relevant factor in the process. Music directors, however, report that striving for variety holds more sway in hymn choice than catering to member favorites.

Worship music’s effect on formation, evangelism, and congregational unity

Response (mean)	Christian formation	Worshiping/praising God	Attracting members	Uniting the congregation	Keeping/maintaining members
Clergy	3.8	4.4	3.4	3.7	3.6
Music Directors	4.0	4.6	4.0	4.0	3.9

Table 59. Clergy and music directors’ ranking of the degree to which hymns and music choices have an influence on various outcomes. Scores are means.

In order to assess the impact of a church’s musical offerings on community/religious life, the research team asked clergy and music directors to what degree music influences a variety of measures, including congregational unity, Christian formation, and attracting of new members. Using a 5-point scale where 1 represents “Not at all,” and 5 represents “Completely,” both music directors and clergy rated the influence of music on congregational life quite highly. Overall, mean scores for each aspect of community life were quite high, ranging in value from 3.4 to 4.6. Similarly, very few clergy or music directors rated music as “not at all” or “not very” influential to community life. In keeping

with responses regarding the purpose of worship music, “praising God” receives the highest score of the outcomes influenced by music, as this is the primary function of music during worship services. The context that has framed this hymnal revision debate, however, does not deal with this primary musical function of praising God, but rather is concerned with what role music has in stemming the tide of attendance decline that is seen across The Episcopal Church. The argument made (regardless of one’s music style preferences) is that the music played during church services can save or sink the church. And though we see that clergy and music directors still rate attracting members and keeping and maintaining members above neutral, these are the least highly rated outcomes for both groups. While these results are merely descriptive and not predictive of Hymnal revision opinion or change in church attendance, they do suggest that worship music may not provide a silver bullet to the current climate of decline in the church.

Openness to New Material

Congregation members’ appetites for new musical material during worship is a key factor in any consideration of Hymnal revision. To measure this level of appetite, congregation members were asked to report on their personal levels of acceptance of new material. Members were asked which of the following statements best describe their feelings when new music is introduced into worship services: “I do not enjoy new material,” “I will try, but I do not prefer new material,” “I accept new material with difficulty,” “I slowly accept new material,” “I easily accept new material,” and “I greatly enjoy new material.” The same question was asked of clergy and music directors regarding their perceptions of their congregation members’ reactions to the introduction of new musical material during worship.

The self-reporting of openness to new material by congregation members has an interesting positive skew, where 59 percent of congregation members report that they “easily accept new material” to “greatly enjoy new material,” and have an average score on the five-point scale of 4.46, which falls above “slowly accept” and just below “easily accept.” Music directors and clergy report a similar perception about their congregation members, but to a slightly lesser degree. Some 37 percent of music directors and 31 percent of clergy report that their congregations “easily accept” to “greatly enjoy” new material, with averages of 4.01 (music directors) and 3.81 (clergy) respectively.

“Our congregation pretty much hates new music. There isn’t a high level of musical literacy outside the choir, so they don’t sight-read happily... a lot of contemporary hymn tunes are too musically complicated for us. The congregation really struggles with meter changes and unusual rhythms.”

— Clergy respondent

The research team looked at this issue of openness to new material as differentiated by distinct groups of people, and thus compared degrees of openness based on different age bands, region of the country, city type, and parish size.

The prevailing “common knowledge” hypothesis concerning age and openness to musical variety in worship seems to be that younger groups of parishioners will be more open than older groups of parishioners. The results of this study cannot substantially support this claim. The research team used the following age categories: 29 and younger, thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, and 70 and older. Those in the 29 and younger group rated themselves slightly higher than some other age groups, though not significantly so. Those in their 50s rated themselves the highest on openness to new musical material, and those 70 and older rated themselves significantly lower on the scale.

The research team also checked for the presence of any differences regionally or by city type in openness to new worship music material. Congregation respondents in the West reported the highest levels of openness (4.54 on average), while those in the South rated themselves lower on openness than the rest of the regions (4.40 on average). When looking at city type (urban, suburban, and small-town/rural), the trends are quite interesting as well. The respondents with the lowest reported levels of openness are those in urban areas; small-town/rural respondents fall in the middle; and suburban respondents report the highest levels of openness.

Differences in degrees of openness to new material are also present depending on a congregant’s parish size. There is an inverse relationship between the size of parish and level of openness, where the members of the largest parishes report the lowest levels of openness and the members of small parishes report the greatest amounts of openness (4.54 on average).

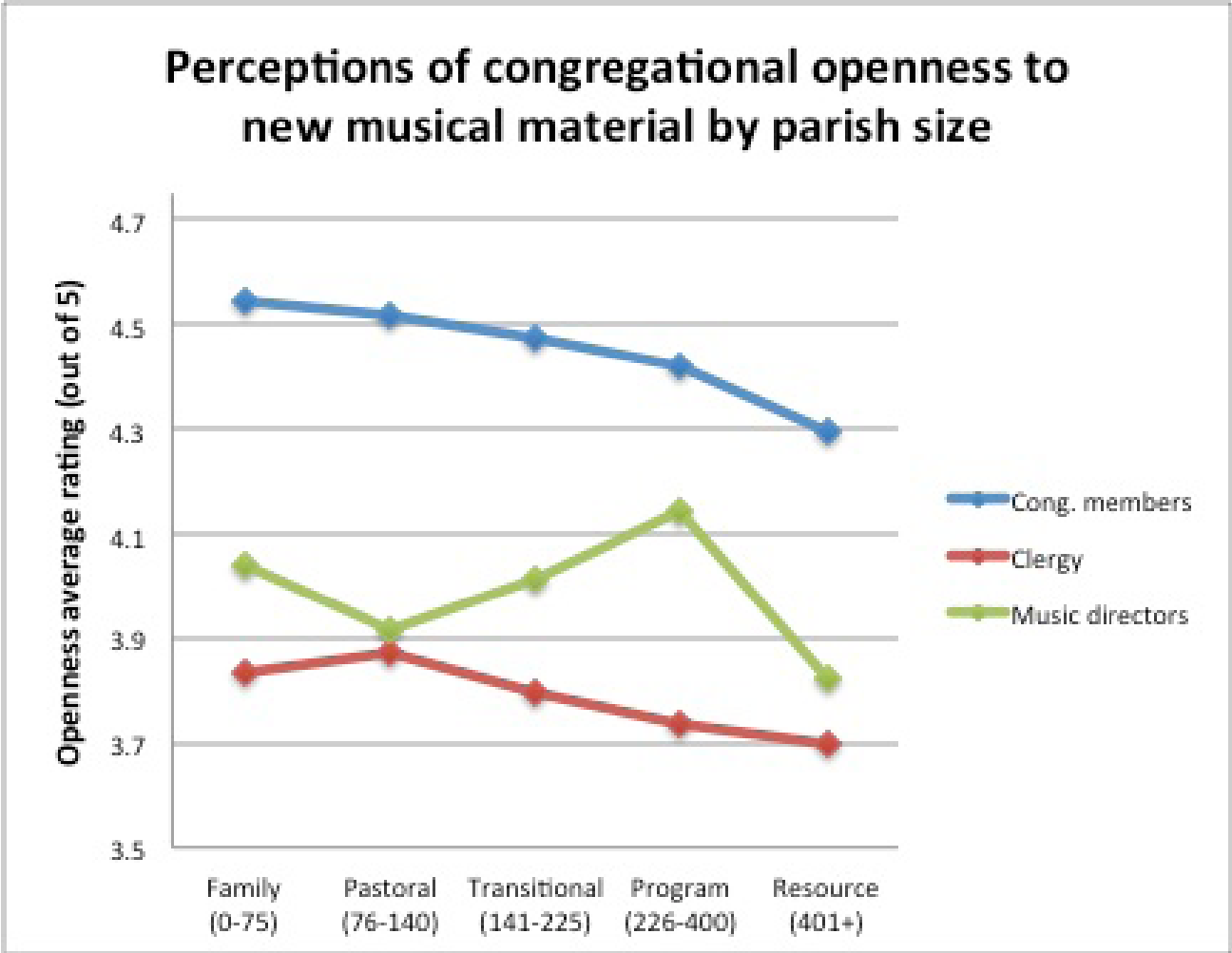


Figure 2. Openness to new musical material during worship, by parish size.

Finally, to understand the prevalence of new material in worship services, the study asked congregation members, “About how many new or unfamiliar hymns do you sing each month?” with possible answers including: “None,” “1 to 2,” “3 to 5,” “6 to 9,” and “10 or more.” Interestingly, the reports of what occurs in congregations in practice do not fit well with how congregation members report their own levels of openness to new material. The analyses show that for congregation members, more unfamiliar hymns sung per month corresponds with less satisfaction with the variety of music during a typical worship service, and lower levels of self-reported openness to new material.

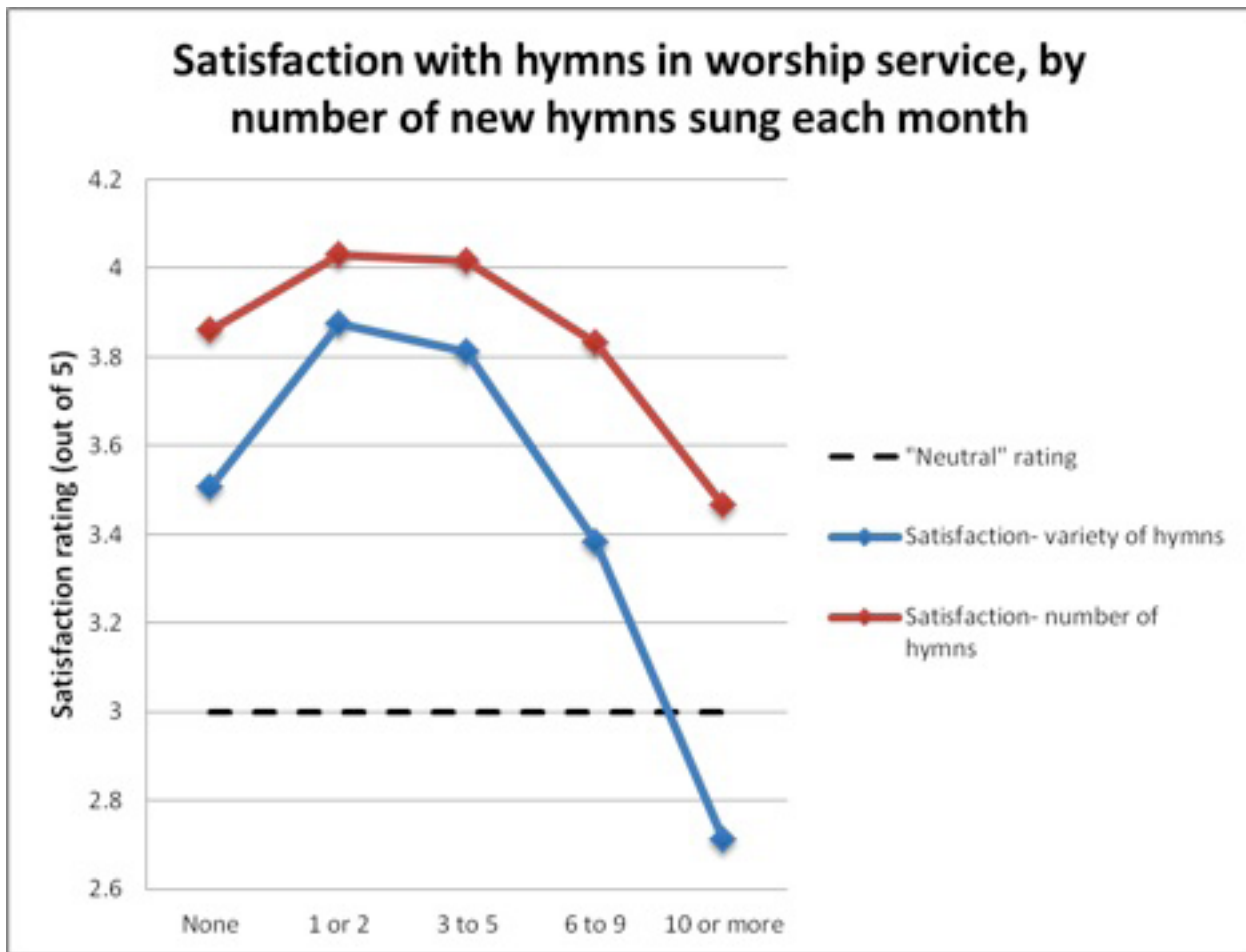


Figure 3. Congregants’ satisfaction with hymns in worship services based on number of new hymns sung per month.

Integration and Segmentation

Through interviews, focus groups, and reading survey respondents’ comments, the research team began to see a pattern relating not just to music in the church, but to different Christian life styles. This framework can be broadly described as “integration vs. segmentation.” Integration reflects when church community and Christian identity permeate and touch all aspects of one’s life, whereas segmentation reflects the ways by which different aspects of one’s life are kept in their respective social realms. Segmentation can best be exemplified by the idea that one comes to church in order to get away from the mundane, common, and everyday hustle and bustle, and enters a sacred space which facilitates spiritual connection and experience. These themes are specifically apparent in approaches to worship music. The integration approach takes the position that worship music should be of the same ilk as popular non-worship music styles, whereas the segmentation model holds the opposite position: that worship music should stand apart from popular non-worship music styles.

To test these hypotheses, the research team included questions for congregation members such as “To what degree does the non-worship music you listen to reflect your beliefs or ideals?” and “Do

you wish the music during worship services were more reflective of your personal musical tastes?”
 The following tables show results for all congregation members.

Not at all (1)	Not very much (2)	Neutral (3)	A little bit (4)	Very much (5)	Average Score
7	16	26	27	24	3.44

Table 60. Degree to which non-worship music that congregation members listen to reflects their beliefs and ideals. Figures are percentages.

Not at all (1)	Not very much (2)	Neutral (3)	A little bit (4)	Very much (5)	Average Score
20	16	31	22	11	2.88

Table 61. Degree to which congregation members wish music during worship services were more reflective of their personal musical tastes. Figures are percentages.

While there is a more positive slant to respondents reporting that their non-worship musical tastes do, to some degree, reflect their ideals and beliefs, an overwhelming desire for worship music to mirror personal musical style preferences is not seen.

Specific trends emerge when these results are compared across age groups. For different age groups, there are significant differences between younger age groups and older age groups on these questions.

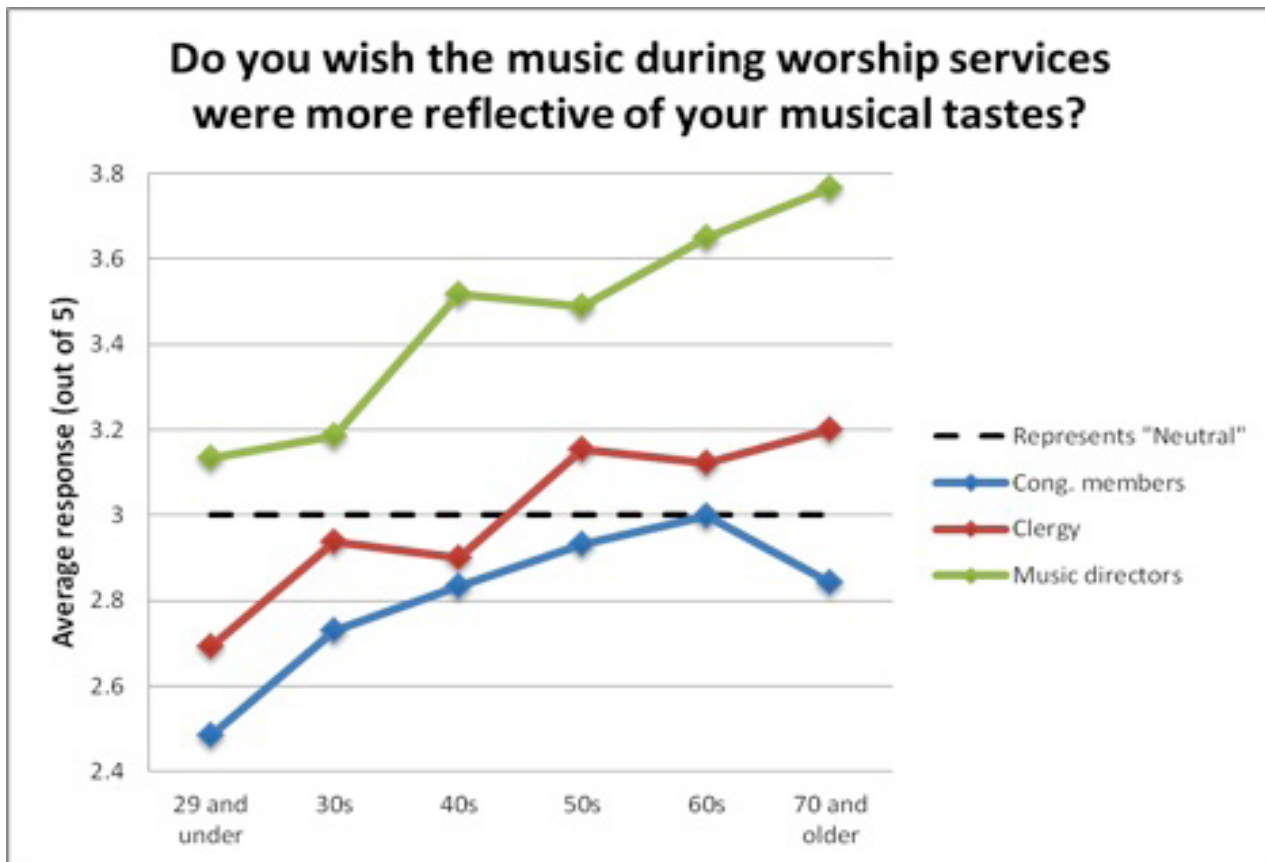


Figure 4. Degree to which non-worship music reflects respondents' beliefs and ideals, by age category.

Figure 4 shows that those in their twenties, thirties, and forties listen to non-worship music that reflects their ideals and beliefs to a significantly lesser degree than those in their fifties, sixties, and older do.

Younger respondents continue to differ from older respondents when questioned about whether they wish worship music reflected their general musical tastes.

“I think there is a huge assumption made that the younger generation wants guitar- and piano-based praise and worship music. ...What we want to hear in a Sunday Eucharist are the classic hymns played on organ. And occasionally we want to chant. Church is the one place where our musical taste is not based upon fad, but instead links us with a much more important, more elegant tradition. If I wanted to listen to acoustic guitar and piano, I’d pick up Dave Matthews or Ben Folds. If I wanted rap, I’d listen to Lil Wayne. ...For worship, I want music that connects to me a world outside of the in and out of my daily life.”

— 22-year-old congregation member respondent

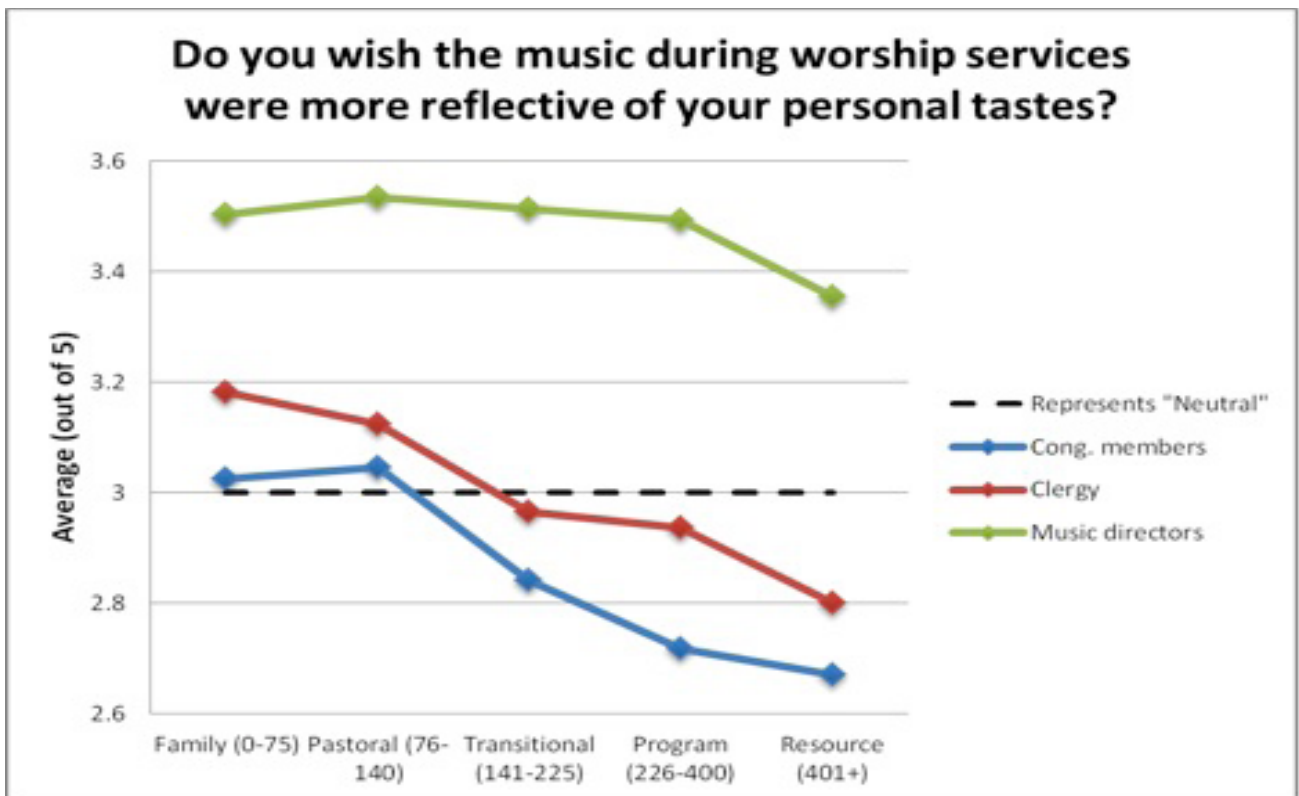


Figure 5. Degree to which respondents wish worship music were more reflective of personal musical tastes, by parish size.

Respondents in their twenties and younger are statistically different than the rest of the respondents, reporting the least interest in desiring worship music to reflect their personal musical tastes. This proves counter to the “common knowledge” theory that younger congregants are looking for a more modern or popular-music experience at church. Furthermore, these results suggest that younger congregants fall more into the segmentation-leaning group when it comes to worship experience.

Differences in respondents' levels of integration and segmentation are also evident based on parish size and city type. Respondents from larger parishes report significantly lower levels of preferring worship music to match their non-worship musical tastes.

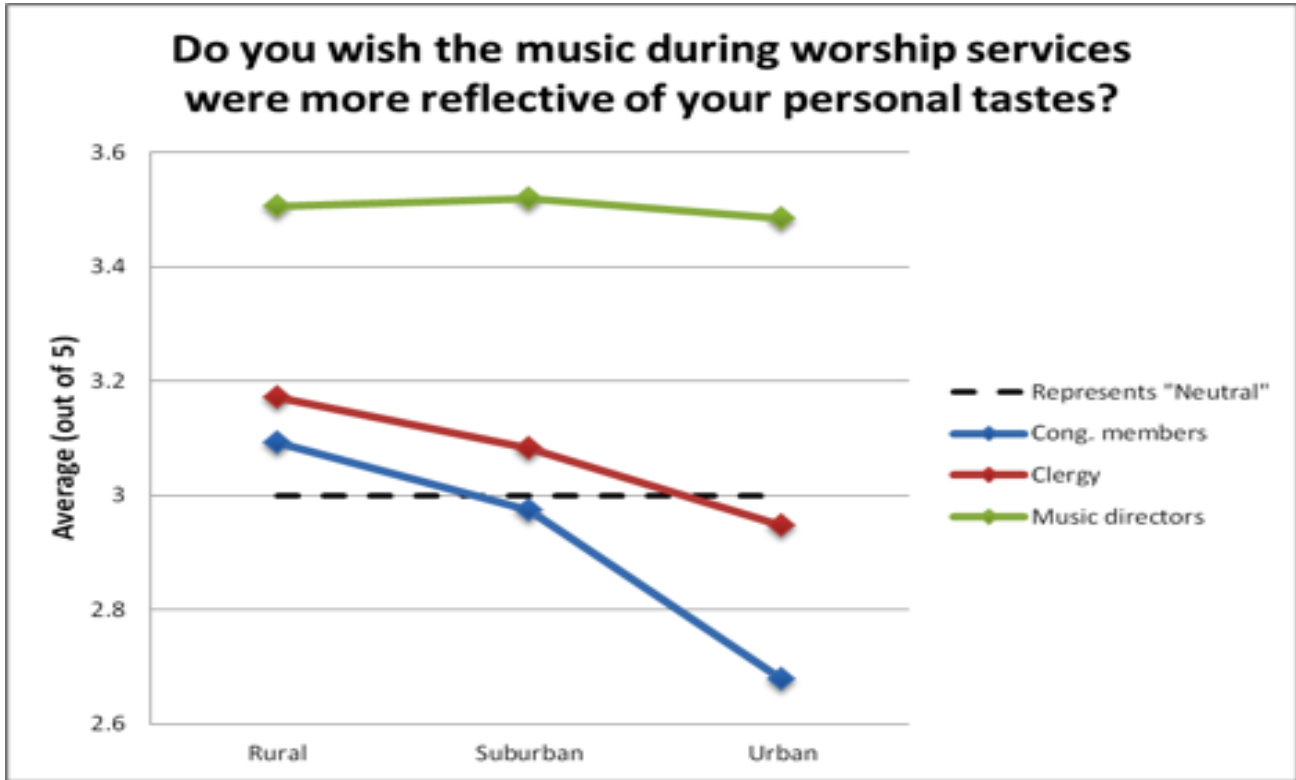


Figure 6. Degree to which respondents wish music during worship services were more reflective of their personal musical tastes, by location.

Unsurprisingly, as larger-sized parishes tend to be located in more dense and urban areas, results show that as cities increase in size, respondents report less preference for worship and non-worship music style matching (see figure 6).

Finally, it is important to explore this dichotomy of musical integration and segmentation across different demographic categories, but also to relate these differences to worship music style preferences. Toward this end, the research team observed significant positive relationships between the desire for music in worship to reflect personal tastes and the preference for praise music, contemporary hymns, and contemporary Roman Catholic hymnody/folk mass. This finding suggests that those who greatly prefer these worship music styles also greatly prefer that music during worship reflect general personal tastes. This is somewhat intuitive, in that these worship music styles reflect a larger endeavor to modernize Christian worship music. we can infer that those who prefer these styles generally prefer modern popular music, and seek musical integration between their worship lives and the lives they lead outside of the sanctuary.

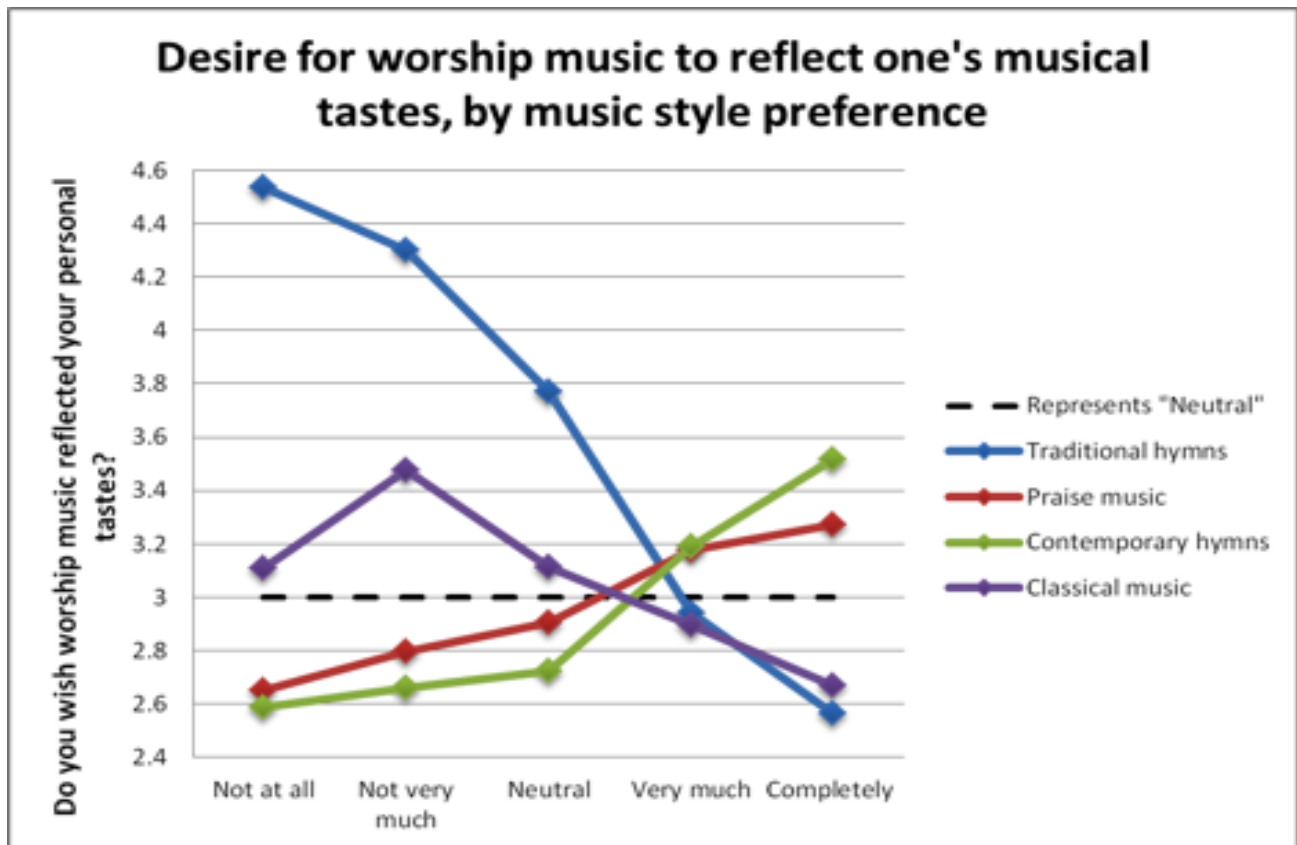


Figure 7. Degree to which respondents wish music during worship services were more reflective of their personal musical tastes, by musical style preferences.

Similarly, the research team found a significant negative relationship between “integration” and the preference for traditional hymns, classical music (including instrumental, organ, motets, anthems or chorales), and sung responsorial psalms. This relationship reveals that the more a respondent prefers traditional worship music styles, the less s/he desires the integration of modern popular music into the worship setting. This finding is indicative of the “segmentation” outlook, in which one seeks an experience during worship service that is distinctive from one’s everyday life.

Medium of Musical Display

In an age of ever-increasing technological advancements, the research team thought it prudent to see what mediums of hymn and music display are currently being used in congregations, and also to ask congregants what their personal preferences are for hymn and music display. Eighty-five percent of clergy and 91 percent of music directors report using some degree of printed supplements, bulletins, leaflets, or electronic display in addition to *The Hymnal 1982* and/or hymnal supplements. Conversely, 11 percent of clergy and 9 percent of music directors report using *The Hymnal 1982* and/or the hymnal supplements exclusively. Seven percent of both clergy and music directors report using alternative forms of display to *The Hymnal 1982* and/or supplements.

Clergy and music directors were also asked what kind of electronic hymn and music sources they are using, if any.

	Rite Song	Rite Stuff	Rite Series Online	Rite Worship	Sundays & Seasons Online	Other
Clergy	22	23	4	6	3	50
Music Directors	38	19	4	4	3	45

Table 62. Percentage of clergy and music directors using electronic hymn and worship music sources, and type of resource.

Congregation members report resoundingly that they prefer a physical hymnal for hymn and worship music display.

Hymnal	Service leaflet or bulletin	Projection screen	Hymnal leaflet bulletin (no projection)	All of them/No preference	Other
81	12	3	2	1	1

Table 63. Congregation members' preference for medium of hymn and worship music display. Figures are percentages.

Among those who left comments regarding this question, there were some unique concerns and interesting points of view. There was a marked indication that projections screens are disliked by many. A few people brought up a desire for downloadable hymns to be made available on e-readers and iPads. Several respondents brought up the issue of needing options with larger, more readable type. Finally, in addition to comments submitted in the online survey instruments, the research team received several e-mails stating the need for Braille hymnals.

“When I see a PowerPoint screen go up in the sanctuary for the purpose of displaying praise music lyrics, I am out of here.”

— *Member respondent*

Most interestingly, when the research team looked at changes in average Sunday attendance (ASA), those congregations that were distributing service bulletins exclusively were more likely to experience membership growth. Though this group of parishes was a very small subsection of the sample, this finding deserves consideration. While many respondents who submitted comments alluded to the fact that the physical book is valuable as an object representing Episcopal identity, the positive effect of bulletin use on ASA still emerges. It may be that while *The Hymnal 1982* as a physical book encapsulates Episcopal identity, it is also functioning as an exclusionary symbol to some visitors in search of a new church home. Bulletins may function as a more inclusive tool than the Hymnal or the authorized supplements. These issues and requests provide ample fodder for continued conversations about how to provide worship music within the congregation in a manner that does not estrange the newcomer.

IV. The Hymnal 1982 in Province IX

In the course of the Hymnal Revision Feasibility Study, members of the research team visited three of The Episcopal Church’s Province IX dioceses: Puerto Rico, Ecuador Central, and the Dominican Republic. The context for ministry is entirely different in these locations from that of the domestic dioceses in The Episcopal Church in ways that are hard to fully describe. In economic terms alone, the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Dominican Republic and Ecuador is one-tenth of that of the United States, and Puerto Rico’s is one-third of the US GDP. Moreover, while The Episcopal Church domestically has tended to attract a preponderance of members from higher income brackets, the Church in these dioceses tends not to be the church of the elite, but appeals to people from middle and lower socio-economic classes who feel alienated from the Roman Catholic Church. In the major cities, especially at the cathedral congregations, the congregations’ make-up comes closer to approximating to the socio-economic level found in the United States, but in the poorer neighborhoods and rural areas, The Episcopal Church is the church of the poor. As well as the Roman Catholic context on the one side, Episcopal Church congregations — particularly in the Dominican Republic — are competing with a strong Pentecostal presence whose lively worship style stands in contrast to what The Episcopal Church feels it can offer. This pressure for a livelier worship style is felt most in the congregations that reach out to the poorer members of society, particularly those in rural areas or those who have moved into the city in search of work as the countryside

depopulates. For these congregations, *El Himnario Provisional*, the only authorized song book that the research team found in use in the Dominican Republic, was rarely used. Clergy complained that they did not have instruments to play the music or a congregation that was interested in singing those hymns. The appreciation of *El Himnario* went up with the economic level of the congregation, with clergy appreciating the sound theology that is contained in the book and being concerned as to the theological thinness of the more popular devotional songs that many congregants favored. Nevertheless, our observations, even at the cathedrals, was that the congregation members only really sang with enthusiasm when they were singing songs that either came out of the Latin American Roman Catholic charismatic tradition or were contemporary Christian songs made popular by the Pentecostal churches. Clergy from all types of congregations wanted a resource that would combine the best of *El Himnario*, Latin American charismatic music, and the new music of the Pentecostal movement. Most importantly, they wanted something that their congregations could afford and named a price range of \$3 to \$4 a copy, one-tenth of what a hymn book would cost in the United States, but which would make sense for societies in which the GDP per head is one-tenth of what it is in the US. It is clear that within this cultural context, what is currently authorized and offered fails to meet the needs of these dioceses. The research team perceived a strong need and desire for new material to be developed and, most importantly, to be available at a cost that would make it realistically obtainable by congregations that serve the poorer members of those societies. It was clear that this work should begin immediately.

V. Seminary Faculty Perspectives on *The Hymnal 1982*

As with the dioceses in Province IX, the research model for the Hymnal Revision Feasibility Study took into account the insufficiency of online survey instruments in capturing the thinking of theological educators on the role of hymnody in the liturgical life of the Church, in general, and the need for or desirability of a new hymnal, in particular. Thus, the research team, aided by consulting facilitators, conducted on-site focus groups with faculty at several Episcopal seminaries during the spring and early summer of 2011. Faculty focus groups were held at Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Seminary of the Southwest, Nashotah House, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, Episcopal Divinity School, and Virginia Theological Seminary.

The worshipping communities in seminaries are deeply engaged with *The Hymnal 1982* and the various authorized hymnal supplements. The discipline of daily corporate worship in an environment that can lend itself to more concentration, experimentation, and innovation than even the most liturgically focused congregation means that faculty and students are able to experience the breadth of the resources currently available and can implement them in a variety of formats. Seminary

chapels and classrooms generally contain and use the spectrum of authorized resources, and liturgical coordinators may make use of various liturgical software products to create bulletins and service leaflets that include hymns and service music from all of the published resources, in addition to bound copies of the Hymnal and supplements they may have available. Field education placements for students also provide a wide variety of “real-life” liturgical experiences in which planning and execution of worship is accomplished with the resources available at a given parish. The next generation of ordained leaders in The Episcopal Church are being educated for ministry using a wide variety of musical resources.

Across the theological and liturgical spectrum, faculty members interviewed at Episcopal seminaries demonstrated a remarkable level of commonality of thought. In their observations and views about the role of hymns and the Hymnal, the contribution made by hymns to congregational health and vitality, and the need for formal and meaningful training for church musicians and members alike in the art of congregational singing, far more unites these theological educators than divides them.

The role of hymns in faith formation

Several faculty members at different seminaries described the role of hymns as conveying, using poetry, the theology that the Church is trying to proclaim. Along with the Book of Common Prayer, the Hymnal becomes for many people a prime resource for being able to sing what our faith is all about. Some educators characterized the Hymnal as providing the treasury of the Church’s tradition over history, as supporting the tradition of the Church, and helping to solidify the Anglican identity of the Church.

One educator related an anecdote, attributed to Martin Luther, in which Luther held up a Bible in one hand and said, “This is the word of God.” In the other hand, so the story was told, Luther held up a hymnal and said, “And this is how people remember it.” Although the tale may be apochryphal, the point is well-taken: music — in particular, hymns — can function as a mnemonic device, enabling listeners to remember a tune and the lyrics associated with it. Educators noted that the power of music, in terms of memory, is very strong, and the vocabulary and theology that are conveyed in hymns can become part of the fabric of people’s everyday theological resources.

Seminary educators also commented on the role of the Hymnal as a beloved object. As they travel around the Church, they routinely observe what kinds of literature and resources are available in congregations, considering that to be a glimpse of what a community says about itself and what it values. Some noted that even when a congregation produces service leaflets or bulletins that embed the full text of the liturgy, the readings, and the hymn and service music graphics, the Book of Common Prayer and *The Hymnal 1982* often retain their place of honor in the pew racks.

Educators also noted, with some caution, that any hymn book can serve as the guardian of the aesthetic of a group of worshipping people. Thus what is allowed in, or not, is indicative of who the community is. When the language or music of the hymns, or the format of the hymnal in use, is not easily accessed by the congregation, visitors or new members of the community may experience that as inhospitable. As well, the challenge for newcomers and long-time members alike of juggling the prayer book, hymnal, and one or more supplements was often cited as a physical and emotional barrier to hospitality and accessibility.

Hymnody and the spiritual health and vitality of congregations

One seminary faculty member observed that in his experience, every vital congregation with which he was familiar has had music as a key part of that vitality. “If a church is thriving, growing, is involved in mission, is involved in education, the music demonstrates that.” It was impossible for this educator to imagine that all of those things could be in place and going well without a strong music component to the congregation’s life. The music could be of almost any style, he noted, but the common denominator among these congregations is that they expressed the vitality of their faith musically.

Another seminary educator commented, “There’s a real power in the way hymns unite a congregation in song, and so it becomes a physical expression of a community gathered together. There is the blending of voices, the literal breathing together, the joining together that is a critical part of formation, as well.”

Need for training and education

Liturgists and chapel music leaders at the seminaries noted the challenge of musical education and training for church musicians and for congregants alike. One musician noted that there are people in congregations who may say that they don’t like music, and thus they may choose to attend a worship service that has no hymns (e.g., the classic 8 a.m. Rite I Eucharist, without music), or may choose not to join in congregational singing. In many cases, this musician observed, their reluctance often exists because they have no training in singing, they think they sing badly, or they have been told they sing badly and thus shouldn’t sing. Any effort to engage the congregation in singing hymns must take into account the fact that many people are uncomfortable with singing. Thus, seminary educators noted the need for a substantive training component, and acknowledged that provision is seldom made for that component. And, as importantly, they expressed a strong and enthusiastic desire for their schools and their faculties to be part of any formal Church-wide formation effort that could aid in the education and training of musicians and members and in raising up the centrality of congregational singing in the life of the Church.

VI. Conclusion

The creators of *The Hymnal 1982* set a high bar for those contemplating revision. Our research suggests that *The Hymnal 1982* has become a firmly established preference even among those who were only just born when it started to appear in the pews of Episcopal churches. While among clergy and music directors, a plurality favor hymnal revision, sentiment among congregation members runs 2-to-1 against revision and there is no demographic category that is in favor. Patterns of support and opposition are sociologically eclectic. Age is important, but not, as we have shown, in a unilinear relationship to the desire for a new Hymnal. Gender is strongly correlated to views on Hymnal revision among clergy, and with some relationship among music directors, but gender has no effect on the views of the laity. Region was statistically significant in terms of the views of music directors, but not in terms of the views of clergy and laity; a combination of urban location and congregation size was an important factor, but it was hard to determine exactly the role it was playing.

Even for those who do favor revision, an examination of their comments fails to point to a consistent direction that a revision would take. Perhaps most significantly, there is no pattern in which youth correlates with a particular movement towards new forms of musical expression. To revise the Hymnal must in some way be a project that is a gift to the next generation. Gaining some clearer sense of what the worship music of that generation will look like will require a longer and more careful period of discernment.

While these results do not point towards an immediate revision of *The Hymnal 1982*, no denomination that has experienced the type of attendance and membership losses that have occurred in The Episcopal Church over the last ten years can afford to suspend a process of critical self-examination simply because the existing membership is content with the status quo. And while the data do not point towards revision, the results of this study indicate the need to begin an in-depth process of discernment as to what new sacred music beyond the current set of authorized resources will inspire and revitalize our congregations. A liberal process of carefully observed and rigorously measured trial use of music that is beyond what is currently authorized would be at the heart of this discernment. Sowing widely, the Church — through the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and those whom the Commission might authorize to perform this task — needs to see what takes root and truly flourishes.

Those new resources should come from other parts of the Anglican Communion, whose members are immigrating to the United States in increasing numbers. For those whom the Church wishes to welcome from other parts of the Communion or beyond its traditional European constituency, it is perhaps not enough to offer another supplement. Being in “The Book” itself represents being at the core of the Church and not on the periphery and would express a true sense of welcome, a sentiment

expressed in interviews with minority clergy and music directors. This new music may also come from traditions beyond Anglicanism or even mainline Protestantism. Nevertheless, the test will be in their ability to enhance the vitality of the congregations where they are seeded. We believe that the era in which new forms of worship can be imposed by the leadership cadre of a denomination has passed, and that success will come by seeing what is working at the grass roots. Only when this process has established a sense of where a revision would lead would it seem that the formal process of revision should begin.

“The Episcopal Church is becoming more and more multicultural and the Hymnal needs to reflect that. ...Music is indeed the universal language and I can think of no better way to love and praise God and bring the world together, than through song.”

— Clergy respondent

That 13,000 people took the time to complete a lengthy survey on the question of hymnal revision shows how central *The Hymnal 1982* is to the life of The Episcopal Church. This should give us pause. A rush to revise the Hymnal could seriously undermine and weaken the Church, alienating those who have remained with The Episcopal Church through difficult times. Nevertheless, to do nothing threatens the long-term viability of the denomination. And so while we do not see this report as giving a green light to hymnal revision, nor do we believe it is a red light. Rather, it is a signal to proceed with caution before a decision is taken to go full speed ahead.

“Please don’t change the Hymnal too much. We Episcopalians like our tradition—and church and music is something that can be a real anchor in people’s lives. It’s hard when the rug is pulled out from under you, and changing the overall format of the Hymnal, as well as making major changes to the service music and to the hymns, would be a really hard thing to take right now. It would be nice if the changes could help bring us all together, rather than pull groups apart. It’s a challenging time for a change like this—please be careful and mindful of the congregants, and not needlessly modernize just for the sake of modernization. I love the music we sing in church, and would hate to lose something I count on so much for fulfilling worship.”

—Member respondent

A notable and important exception to this sense of caution occurs in the context of Province IX, where the resources currently offered by The Episcopal Church are clearly inadequate to meet the needs of the congregations in those dioceses. Here we observe the need for the immediate development of new resources with a strong sensitivity to the economic constraints faced by those congregations.

While we have not recommended a Hymnal revision at this time, we do believe that the survey reveals a number of findings which may have important implications as to the place of worship music in congregational life. We see that while congregants state a preference for singing over listening to music, choir quality is related to congregational vitality and while The Episcopal Church is far from rich in resources right now, quality music does appear to be an important factor in maintaining the vitality of congregations. We note that while congregants profess to be open to new musical offerings, the introduction of new music does not appear to be an easy process and some sense as to why this is happening would be useful. Finally, we also wonder if the rich liturgical resources that we do have are not being made readily accessible to those who are walking into the door of our congregations. The finding that those congregations which are using full service bulletins, as opposed to an order of service along with prayer book and hymnal, experience greater growth in average Sunday attendance is intriguing. By presenting worship materials in a way that is accessible, these congregations are making it possible for those sampling Episcopal worship for the first time to fully appreciate its content and not become frustrated by the navigational challenges presented by multiple books and orders of service. This is not to propose that we eliminate the use of books, because they clearly are constitutive of our identity as Episcopalians. But if that identity presents itself to newcomers as a closed system of ritual practices, then the possibility of discovering an appreciation for the Church's rich liturgy becomes diminished. So while the book itself is important, our survey reveals that the practices and patterns of usage of that book are perhaps just as important in terms of fostering congregational vitality.

.....

Notes

¹ Data in this column are drawn from “Episcopal Church Congregations Overview: Findings from the 2010 Faith Communities Today (FACT) Survey,” published by the Episcopal Church’s Research Office. Available online at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/episcopal_overview_fact_2010.pdf (accessed April 19, 2012). FACT is a multid denominational survey conducted through the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

² Data in this column are drawn from the US Congregational Life Survey (USCLS), a 2005 survey of 40,000 worshipping Episcopalians.

³ Data in this column are drawn from the Pew Research Center’s “Religious Landscape Survey” (RLS), an extensive study of the changing characteristics of religion and religious affiliation in the

United States. Of the study's 35,000 respondents, approximately 1.4% were Episcopalian/Anglican congregants in the "mainline tradition" (~490). Data from these respondents are used in this table for comparative purposes.

⁴ The researchers elected to utilize the responses of clergy in this section for the following reasons: First, the researchers felt that clergy would be very likely to have a good grasp of the specific resources available at their congregations. Second, the clergy sample is over twice as large as the music director sample, allowing for greater representativeness of responses. To derive the percentages in this section, the research team restricted the clergy sample to one cleric per parish. As such, the use of the term "congregations" in this section reflects the responses of clergy who represent their congregations.

⁵ Change in constant (inflation-adjusted) 2009 dollars.

⁶ According to the 2009 Parochial Report, 94.2 percent of open Resource-sized parishes and 83 percent of Program-sized parishes are located in either urban or suburban areas; conversely, 64.4 percent of open Family-sized parishes are located in small towns or rural areas.

⁷ Between 2005 and 2009, for open parishes in 2009, the average change in congregational average Sunday attendance (ASA) was a 7.9 percent decline.

⁸ To create the composite variables, the research team conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the 11 worship and hymn experience variables and retained these two factors. The "positive experience" factor is a composite of the three hymn metrics as well as the variables "A sense of God's presence," "Joy," "Inspiration," and "Awe or mystery," whereas the "negative experience factor" is composed of responses to "Boredom" and "Frustration." All factor loadings exceed 0.6. Factor scores were derived in Stata using the regression method, and are centered with a mean of 0.

Acknowledgments

The Church Pension Fund Research Group gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following people, without whom the Hymnal Revision Feasibility Study could not have been accomplished:

- The Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers, Chair of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, and Ms. Jeannine Otis, member of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and SCLM project chair for the study, for their guidance and support;
- The Rev. Dr. William Roberts, Professor of Church Music at Virginia Theological Seminary, and Ms. Martha Johnson, former President of the Association of Anglican Musicians, for their subject-matter expertise in developing the music directors' survey;
- The Rev. Dr. Paula Nesbitt, Ms. Mary Parmer, the Rev. Rodger Patience, and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Stewart-Sicking for conducting faculty focus groups at Episcopal seminaries;
- The Rev. Canon Patricia Collier, Church Pension Group Chief Ecclesiastical Officer, for her sponsorship of this work and her encouragement.

As well, we are thankful to the nearly 13,000 people who took the time to participate in the online surveys and to tell us, often in great detail, about the role of hymns in their spiritual lives.

Church Pension Group contributing authors: Matthew J. Price, Derek Y. Darves-Bornoz, Susan T. Erdey, Anne L. Hurst, Kyle E. Walker.

