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**Introduction to**

***SING TO THE LORD***

(provisional)

**For Ministers and Musicians**

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**Including hints on musical accompaniment**

***All music should be for the glory of God and  
refreshment of the spirit. J. S. Bach***



## Preface

This handbook grew out of our work as a committee in preparing a new selection of Psalms and hymns for our Churches. We realised that one needs to be wise in introducing people to new things. We all tend to resist change! Furthermore, as we worked together over the years, we realised that a guide to the art of accompanying congregational singing could be very helpful to the musicians in our Churches. “If it is worth doing, it is worth doing well” applies to the worship of God more than anything else in the world. He is worthy only of our best. Hence we have tried to do two things in this Handbook:

- i) to provide a guide to introducing this new Psalm selection to our people. Parts one and two cover this. **ALL ministers (and elders leading worship services) and musicians should read Parts one and two.**
- ii) to provide a general guide to the accompaniment of congregational singing. The whole handbook covers this. **ALL musicians should become thoroughly familiar with the whole handbook.**

We trust the handbook serves this purpose that we may indeed worship the Lord with beauty and holiness.

Our hearty thanks to Mrs Alieda Brooks, organist of the Reformed Church of Hamilton, for her many hours of hard work writing this handbook.

Your Committee



# SING TO THE LORD

Singing is a vital part of the worship of the congregation.

The role of the musician is to *assist* God's people in singing and meditation as they worship Him. This should enable the congregation to honour, adore, praise and thank Him for all His goodness, shown to them in Christ Jesus.

Musicians are servants, both of the Lord and of the congregation. In their service their role is not to draw attention to themselves. Rather the musician desires to have the congregation focus on the Lord – this is worship.

As their service is both to the Lord and to the congregation, the musicians ought to strive for a standard of excellence, seeking to give their very best to God and thereby leading the congregation to the best of their ability.

## **Accompanying is a balance between leading and following.**

For an accompanist who assists the congregation with presenting praise and worship to God, there are few more exciting experiences than to lead an enthusiastic group of singers in rousing song. You can unite and inspire a congregation when you lead them effectively, just as you can unsettle the congregation by being ineffective as you play. It is important, therefore, that as a musician you spend the time to prepare your music with prayer, thought and care.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with some hints on how to make you more effective in your role as a musician with the hope that this will result in greater benefit for the congregations. The hints are covered under the following headings:

1. Introducing the Psalms
  - i. Tunes
  - ii. Psalm texts
  - iii. Some guidelines for specific Psalms
2. Introducing new music
3. Rhythm
4. Introduction (also called the Playover)
5. The tone (Registration)
6. Playing the notes

# 1) Introducing the Psalms

In Christian worship, psalmody holds the first place... Psalms and biblical canticles rank before all lyrical compositions of merely ecclesiastical origin, since they are the inspired word of God. This is why they have always been given a special preference, as is shown by the dominant place they hold in all the offices of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

This 20<sup>th</sup> century statement is similar to one expressed by John Calvin four centuries earlier. Although this claim is very broad, there is no doubt that the Psalms have been widely used and loved by Christians throughout the ages.

The Psalms come to us from the Jews and, although many of them were written by David, it is not always clear which ones he actually wrote and which were written in the same style but by others. We don't really know how the Psalms were used in temple worship, but we do know they were used by the Levites with instrumental accompaniment and singing. We can surmise from sources that:

They were

- Part of a highly formalized liturgy.
- Closely associated with the sacrifice.
- Performed by the Levites (that is, by highly trained, "professional" musicians).
- Accompanied by stringed instruments (that is, by the softer instruments that could support the singing but would not drown out or obscure the words).<sup>2</sup>

After years of decline in Psalmody, there has been a remarkable resurgence of Psalm singing which began in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nearly every denomination which has produced a new hymnal in the last 25 years has increased the Psalm selection. We have not necessarily increased Psalm selections in *Sing to the Lord*, but we have included the whole Psalm in each of our selections.

The Psalm versions with new texts were selected to meet the Synodical mandate to:

*1. Select Psalm versions that are as faithful as possible in content and form of expression to Scripture, granting proper room for poetical necessity.*

2. *Psalm and Bible song selections are to be evaluated for the soundness of their paraphrasing against the relevant sections in the synodically approved Bible versions (NIV and NASB).*

## **i) Tunes**

You're probably wondering how to start introducing such a large book. You may find our categories of tunes in the section below to be useful, but for a quick start, we suggest that you introduce a mix of new tunes and known tunes.

Many of the tunes for the Psalm selection in *Sing to the Lord* you will know and also much of the text. Although we have altered some of the texts to make them more understandable, we have tried to keep the familiar texts to as many as possible. In some cases only one line or word has been changed in order to make better sense of the words or make the text more accurate according to the Bible.

New tunes have been included from *Sing Psalms*, the Psalm collection produced by the Free Church of Scotland 2003, as well as some from other sources. Most of the Psalms are set to tunes originally composed for other texts.

### **Introductions**

Introduction suggestions are given for each Psalm by way of brackets, i.e. [ ], above the staves. They are given as guidelines only but have been carefully placed to ensure that the congregation will be able to sing the tune with confidence. However, if the tune is unfamiliar, we would suggest that you play the whole tune through as the introduction. Mostly the first and the last lines or phrases have been suggested, but sometimes if these lines are repetitive another suggestion is given, e.g. Psalms 1b, 8, 19, 49 and 52.

Just one that needs mentioning here is the suggested introduction for Psalm 145, which needs to be played with confidence. If you feel in any way unsure of it, then we suggest that you play the first and the last lines of the words, i.e. "I will exalt my God and King...the mighty wonders you have wrought", as the introduction instead. We would also suggest that you don't play the interlude between each verse, it does become rather monotonous; instead use it immediately before the last verse only.

### **New tunes**

All the new tunes have been selected with a view to the dignity, strength and melody, as well as appropriateness for the mood of the Psalm. The committee has included a number of contemporary tunes which it felt

were appropriate for Psalm versions in contemporary language, e.g. Psalms 87, 131 and 139.

**You will find new tunes** for Psalms 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16b, 17, 18, 21, 22, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 51, 52, 53, 54, 60, 64, 68, 70, 73, 79, 81, 83, 86, 87, 88, 89 Parts 1, 2 and 3; 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 118 Parts 1 and 2; 119:25–32b, 119:41–48, 119:161–168, 119:169–176 (same tune as 119:41–48), 120, 129, 131, 137b, 139, 149 and 150.

**Tunes which are new to some but others might know** – Psalms 13, 72, 85, 91, 98, 102, 103, 119:73–80, 119:105–112, 119:137–144, 128, 143, 145, 150 and hymn 153.

**More than one tune for the words** – There are suggested alternate tunes for Psalms 7, 51b, 68b and 107.

**More than one version (known as ‘b’ versions)** – Psalms 1, 16, 19, 22, 25, 39, 42, 43, 47, 51, 57, 63, 68, 69, 73, 78, 86, 89, 95, 98, 100, 103, 105, 118, 119:25–32, 137, 139 and 150.

**Minor keys** – Psalms 4, 5, 6, 10, 14, 16b, 20, 28, 37, 38, 39, 39b, 40, 44, 53, 59, 60, 64, 65, 68, 77, 79, 83, 86, 88, 89 Part 3, 109, 119:41–48, 119:169–176, 120, 129, 137b, 141 and hymn 153. Psalm 87 ends in a minor key.

**Easier new Psalms** – 10, 14, 21 (repetitive lines), 22, 38, 51, 52, 53, 54, 59, 73 and 86.

**More practice needed** – Psalms 7, 16b, 64, 79, 87, 105, 129, 137b, 139 and 149.

**Tunes modified for our use** – Psalms 14, 18, 37, 53, 64, 70, 89 Part 3, 103, 105, 119:161–168, 131 and 139.

**Unison tunes** – Psalms 5, 7, 14, 16b, 52, 57b, 79, 86, 87, 119:25–32b, 120, 131, 137b and 145.

### **Descants**

If you don't have sopranos who can sing the descants, we suggest that you use a flute or another solo instrument. Alternatively, if the congregation is very familiar with the melody, you could play the descant on the piano or organ (use a solo stop) instead of the melody. Descants are provided for Psalms 23, 89 Part 1, and hymn 156. Instrument only descants are provided for Psalm 81 and hymn 152.

**Alternate last verse tune arrangements** – Psalms 100b and 89 Part 1.

## ii) Psalm Texts

Since we previously used the 1957 and 1987 Psalter Hymnals, a number of those texts have been retained – although some have been altered and updated. Altogether some 118 new Psalm versifications have been selected or prepared for the 2008 *Sing to the Lord* Psalter Hymnal.

In the text on some Psalms where two syllables should be sung to one note and the words are outside the stave, both syllables have been underlined with an inverted circumflex ◡ e.g. Psalm 68 stanzas 11, 17 and 18.

Hyphens or grave accents are used occasionally to make it clear when a word is to be sung using all the syllables. We have attempted to do this only in cases where it would otherwise be confusing to the singer.

**Words specifically written for our use** – There are some new or partly new Psalm versions which have been specifically composed for *Sing to the Lord*. They are Psalms 5, 11, 19 (the words for this are drawn from different sources to give the completed version), 28, 54, 71, 77, 87 (the music was composed specifically for our use) and 119:25–32b (also composed specifically for our use), 119:73–80, 119:153–160, 139:4–11 and 150b.

**Length** – As in Scripture, some Psalms are very long. We have included the whole Psalm. Of course, it is anticipated that you will sing only a selection of the verses at one time, and there are a number of ways in which you could make it more interesting to sing these.

Antiphonal singing of the longer Psalms, e.g. 18, 22, 37 and 68, is a practice which could be useful. This means that you use two or more alternating groups to sing the Psalm. In its simplest form, you could alternate verses between men and women, or you could have one half of the congregation sing one verse and the other half another, etc. It is thought that this was used for corporate worship, as described in Psalm 24:

The people outside would call out to the temple gates to open up and let the King of glory in. From inside, the priests or another group would ask, “Who is this King of Glory?” Outside, the people would respond in unison, “the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.”<sup>3</sup>

Other Psalms which are long are 10, 35, 55, 78, 102, 105, 106 and 107.

Three Psalms have been divided into sections. Psalm 89 has been divided into three separate parts with different tunes – Part 1 covers

verses 1-18 in 9 stanzas with the theme “The Lord’s Covenant Faithfulness in Nature”; Part 2 covers verses 19-37 in stanzas 10-19 with the theme “The Lord’s Covenant Promises to David”; and Part 3 covers verses 38-52 in stanzas 20-26 with the theme “Call for the Lord to Remember His Covenant Promises”. Psalm 118 has been divided into two parts with different tunes. Psalm 119 has been divided into all its parts with the Hebrew title given. There is no summary to cover this Psalm.

### **Genevan Psalms and Tunes**

Calvin was pivotal in versifying the Psalms for congregational singing. He was involved in the development of several collections, and the entire Psalter was completed in 1562. We have included several of these in the new Psalter. The Genevan Psalm tunes follow the same rhyming schemes as the original French tunes. At the time when the tunes were first chosen, Calvin insisted that they should have “weight and majesty and not be light and fluffy”. Whatever tunes were used were adapted to meet Calvin’s principles of congregational singing.

In the Genevan tunes there are generally only two note values – long and short. We have mostly used crotchets and minims; semibreves have been used at the end of some phrases instead of rests. Usually the crotchets are in pairs, but in Psalm 47 they are in groups of three, which enlivens the tune by introducing syncopation.

Genevan tunes are generally melodic in motion with a range limited to one octave. These tunes were written to be sung by congregations and designed so that the text is clear and not obscured by the music. The 16<sup>th</sup> century congregation sang these tunes unaccompanied with a cantor or strong voice leading the singing. A tempo indication for Renaissance music states that “the beat should equal the pulse rate of a quietly breathing adult.”<sup>4</sup>

The Genevan Psalms in *Sing to the Lord* are 6, 25b, 42, 43, 47, 65, 77, 100b, 105b, 116b, 118b, 124, 134, 150b.

### **Imprecatory Psalms**

These are Psalms that include a call to God to deal with our enemies. The writers of the Psalms freely spoke their minds to God, giving full vent to the hurt at injustice done to them. They also called on God to give them justice, even at times expressing hatred. Yet the hatred is not and may never be merely personal. It is an emotional expression of covenantal opposition to those who hate God. We take our stand with Christ and his kingdom and necessarily, therefore, against those who side with Satan and his.

These Psalms are included for us to learn from too. As musicians it pays to be aware of these when we accompany the congregation as they sing the verses. They are Psalms 10, 28, 35, 59, 69, 109, 137, 139 and 140. This means that we need to know the words of the Psalms so that when we play them we do so sensitively.

There are also some Psalms which are not imprecatory but do speak about the plight of the unbeliever. In some cases, the Psalm concludes with this and therefore it is more appropriate to sing the last verse in a more somber or quiet tone, e.g. Psalm 1.

### **iii) Some Guidelines for Specific Psalms**

We started this guide with the quote, “All music should be for the glory of God and refreshment of the spirit.” It is useful for us as musicians to remember this when we are teaching new Psalm versions too. We have already outlined some simple steps which you could use to make this more meaningful for you and the singers. Here are some further notes on various Psalms which are not covered under the headings above but which you may find beneficial. The list is not exhaustive, and maybe you have other ideas how it can be done. But we hope this is a start.

**Psalm 1b** – Note well the words which describe the plight of the ‘wicked’. If you use many instruments you could consider a solo instrument or stop playing at this stage if the congregation knows the tune well (even a drum beat could be effective), then the whole group plays again when the words say “but God knows...”

**Psalm 8** – The words for verse 4 use the first two lines of music only.

**Psalm 9** – The tune and the words are very familiar but we have not included a refrain for the Psalm.

**Psalm 12** – Check out those words of the last half of verse 3 – they are a sad indictment of those who don’t seek the LORD. When you play this part, consider doing so quietly.

**Psalm 14** – Verse 3 ends on a major chord. This is a way of drawing the attention of the singer to the joy that Jacob’s tribes show for the LORD’s help.

**Psalm 16b** – Given to be sung in unison, this is a very different contemporary tune. Musicians need to take special care with the rhythm. It would be useful to teach this to a small group first and then introduce it gradually to the congregation by getting them to join in with the refrain to start with.

**Psalm 18** is a long Psalm, but the new tune has repeated phrases which should help when learning it.

The tune for **Psalm 21** has different melody lines for verses 4 and 7, but for the other verses the music for the lines 1 and 3 are the same and lines 2 and 4 are the same.

**Psalm 34** – Verse 7 words use the music from the second half of the Psalm marked with the musical ‘Dal segno’.

**Psalms 36 and 37** finish on the somber note of the plight of the godless or wicked.

**Psalms 41 and 72** – The last verse of both of these Psalms comes at the end of a section of the Psalms in Scripture. Here too they finish on an ‘Amen’. You should slow the last line down a bit to ensure the ‘Amen’ can be anticipated and given the full measure of assent.

**Psalms 42 and 43** – Verse 3 of Psalm 43 is the same as verses 3 and 6 of Psalm 42. This is not a mistake, Scripture does the same. They both use the same tune here, and there are ‘b’ versions of both Psalms following.

**Psalm 49** – The words for verse 7 are sung to the second half of the tune. As in Psalm 36, the words end this Psalm on a more somber tone.

**Psalm 51b** – Two familiar tunes with familiar words. Together they make up the complete Psalm too.

**Psalm 53** – Verse 4 words are sung to the second half of the tune and it finishes on the Tierce de Picardie (the major chord).

**Psalm 60** – This minor tune is one that could also lend itself well to finishing on an F major chord. To ensure this works effectively, you also need to play the second-to-last bar in the major key. (Yes, you will need to practise this.)

**Psalm 68** – Consider singing the last verse a little more broadly so that the singers can give proper voice to the words “to God be praise!”

**Psalm 72** – See note above at Psalm 41.

**Psalm 79** – This ends in the given major chord (Tierce de Picardie).

**Psalm 81** has an instrumental descant for a trumpet or flute for verse 1 only – it is the call to ‘sing for joy’.

**Psalm 87** is quite different from what we are used to. It would be useful to teach this tune to a small group first.

**Psalm 89 Part 3** – If your congregation is easy to teach, you might like to try the suggested ending, for verse 26 only, which ends on a major chord. Slow down a bit on the last line to ensure the words “But ever let the LORD be praised! Amen” can be sung without rushing them.

**Psalm 95** – Verse 4 ends on a somber ‘note’: “You so long my spirit grieving, never in my rest can share.” You can draw the congregation’s attention to the gravity of the words by reducing the volume of your accompaniment during the last stanza.

**Psalm 105** – A long descriptive Psalm which talks about the Israelites in Egypt, it specifically recounts the plagues and God’s judgment on the Egyptians. You could possibly have some verses read whilst the tune is softly played or try singing some of the verses antiphonally.

**Psalm 119:129–136** – The last verse is one which describes the psalmist’s bitter tears because God’s law is not obeyed.

**Psalm 122** – The words are the same as we now sing, but the tune is changed to another well-known tune, one which reflects the joy and excitement of the text.

**Psalm 125** – Verse 3 repeats the last half of the tune.

**Psalm 129** – This Psalm gives confidence in time of persecution. It also serves to remind us of the curse on those who do not trust the LORD; give it the sobriety it deserves.

**Psalm 132** – We have omitted the repeated line of music and words.

**Psalm 133** – A great tune for these words. Picture in your mind the precious oil pouring out on Aaron’s head, running down over his beard.

**Psalm 135** – The melody for verse 7 is different from verses 1–6; in fact it is the refrain of what we usually sing.

**Psalm 136** – This Psalm is easily used as a responsive Psalm, i.e. a solo or group sing the first half of each line and the congregation sings the ending of each line. It should not be difficult to teach this kind of song.

**Psalm 137** – The last verse of this Psalm is harsh – and so it is in Scripture. The psalmist uses the phrase “he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks”. It is the psalmist’s cry to the LORD for judgment on the Babylonians and the way the Israelites were treated. As mentioned before, this needs to be played or led sensitively.

**Psalm 137b** – The homesickness of the exiles is easily and simply conveyed in this plaintive tune. It should not be hurried.

**Psalm 145** needs to be played with confidence. If you feel in any way unsure of the introduction, then we suggest that you play the first and the last lines of the words, i.e. “I will exalt my God and King...the mighty wonders you have wrought”, as the introduction instead.

**Psalm 149** is a great tune, but you need to be careful you don't play it too fast. It would be useful for you to sing the words as you play the tune to find the correct speed, and if you can't fit the words in neither will the congregation. It is a lively tune but take care to learn the tricky rhythm correctly. You might consider slowing the last line in the last verse only, to emphasize the words. When we sang this with our choir, we used the music starting above the words “people of Zion be glad in their King” as an interlude between the verses; i.e. you don't hold the last crotchet for the full pause but begin playing the interlude whilst the congregation holds the note for the word ‘King’. It worked well for us.

## 2) Introducing New Music

Here are some ideas on how to introduce new tunes and music to your congregation. The list is not exhaustive and perhaps you have some other ways of doing this successfully. Ensure that music is available for all those who want to follow the tune. This is especially helpful if you use the projector a lot during the service.

### i) Psalm/Hymn of the Month

**The Purpose:** To teach the congregation at least one new Psalm/hymn or a new tune per month. This will increase the number of songs which the congregation can sing with meaning during worship services.

**The Process:** Generally one new song/tune a month, sometimes two if the song is vaguely familiar. The new tune is used:

Week 1 – as a postlude (at the end of the worship service).

Week 2 – during the offering if the text of the song is appropriate for thanksgiving. Give a short explanation of the song text in the bulletin, with the words of verse 1 also printed.

Week 3 – sung together before the evening service.

Week 4 – sung together before the morning service.

It is an advantage if all musicians learn the new tune during the month, whether they are playing or not. This ensures that at any time they will feel comfortable to lead with the singing of the new tune, as required.

## ii) Other Voices

### Solo or Group

Teach the tune to a group of singers and then have them sing the new song before the service and include the congregation for the final verse. This helps the congregation to understand how the music goes. The group will also disperse throughout the congregation and can then help it when it sings the new tune at other times. Once again I would reiterate that you have music available for people who want to see the tunes. This is especially helpful if the tune contains a lot of melismas (singing more than one note for a single syllable).

A solo singer can be helpful if the person has a clear voice and is able to sing the words clearly.

When you are teaching the new tunes, resist the temptation to play the accompaniment too loudly. Concentrate on the melody line – it doesn't matter whether you use a solo instrument or play the melody only for starters. The purpose is to teach the new tune.

## 3) Rhythm

In our Reformed Churches there are no conductors for the singing, and it helps if you show firm leadership as the accompanist. The rhythm is the most important tool you have for this. It means that you set an appropriate and steady *tempo* with a consistent metre and that you also give clear indications to the congregation when to *breathe*.

### i) Tempo

The metre is a cycle of strong and weak beats, e.g. two beats in the bar or three beats in the bar.

Read the words of the song to be sung first: e.g. "Dear Lord and Father of mankind" clearly suggests a slower *tempo* than "Give me joy in my heart". How do you decide what *tempo* to use? Check by singing the hymn yourself: if you need to take extra breaths, it suggests that your *tempo* is too slow; and if you get to the end with a racing heart, it indicates your *tempo* is too fast.

Keep your *tempo* consistent, and don't slow down at the end of each verse as this usually results in the song getting slower and slower with each subsequent verse. Of course it is fine to slow down at the end of the last verse, and sometimes the whole of the last verse could be sung more

slowly and grandly as in Psalm 145, or it could be sung slightly more quickly as in Psalm 130.

## ii) Breathing

Do you long for your congregation to start promptly at the start of each verse and phrase? An accompanist can achieve this by showing clearly where the congregation should breathe. A breath is indicated by silence.

1. At the end of a phrase give one complete beat of silence. Find this one-beat silence by releasing the previous chord early.
2. Where there is no apparent place between phrases for this to happen, insert a silence by cutting short the note at the end of the phrase.
3. There are no rules on how many silences are appropriate or how long the silence should be, but if you stay consistent your congregation will be happy.
4. Between verses always give the congregation a beat of silence which feels natural to the singer. The best way to do this is to try to sing or practise with a singer or wind instrument and listen carefully to the breathing. Ensure the accompaniment is silent for the duration of the breath.

## 4) Introduction (Playover)

It is helpful to think about what the purpose of the Introduction is:

To stimulate and initiate the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

In congregational singing we generally use the simplest form of introduction which serves to provide the starting pitch. To make the best use of the introduction play the melody line clearly.

In *Sing to the Lord* you will find suggestions to use for the introduction. These are indicated by the brackets [ ] above the musical line at the beginning and end of the introductions. These are only suggestions and naturally you can change these if you like. If you play something different, you should ensure that what you play is in the same tone mode as the song which follows, e.g. major or minor.

Here are some basic guidelines to help you:

1. In the interest of clarity it is generally a good idea to start the introduction at the beginning of the tune. This ensures that the congregation hears where they are to start.
2. If it is an unfamiliar tune, play the verse through completely.
3. Ensure that you play the introduction at the speed you wish the congregation to sing the song.
4. If there are unexpected leaps or changes in harmony, you could highlight these during the playing of the introduction.
5. The introduction can be as long or as short as you like. A variety of lengths may keep your congregation alert.
6. The congregation will know when to start singing if you release the notes neatly and provide them with a 'breath' silence before the first verse. Sometimes you can make the last note of the introduction a bit longer, but be careful not to compromise the metre/beat. Remember that one of the purposes of the introduction is to set the *tempo* so don't slow it down.
7. The introduction should also alert the congregation to the type of song it is. A quieter prayer should be introduced more sensitively.

## 5) The Tone Colour (Registration)

Choose the tone colour for the music which will lead the song with sensitivity for the message it brings, e.g. a prayer can be played more quietly whereas a song of victory can be played with exuberance. The tones of the introduction should indicate the mood of the hymn. It is best to use the same tone colour for the introduction as you will be using for the first stanza.

When you select the tone colour for songs, ensure that the melody is clear with good articulation. If you have an instrument which can play the bass notes, ensure that it is balanced at an appropriate volume for the other musical instruments. A variety of different types of introduction may encourage your congregation to be more reflective of the text of the song they are about to sing.

It is also good to add variation to the tone colours of the various stanzas that are sung. This will mean that you need to read the text of each stanza and plan your tone colours accordingly when you practise.

## 6) Playing the Notes

While you practise, find a method of playing the notes which feels comfortable for you. If necessary write the fingering in pencil over the notes. With time, this will become easier.

At times it is appropriate to omit some notes, either due to the difficulty of the music or because it is more musical not to play all repeated notes on weaker beats. What *is* important is that the accompanist plays rhythmically and musically. When the congregation is singing, it will generally not notice whether you are playing all the notes. It will not even notice whether you are playing all the notes correctly, although it is obviously important to want to play these accurately, especially as many people like to join in with the harmony.

When you are comfortable with the notes, you could consider the texture of these: should they be *legato* or detached? Hymns are usually played *legato*, with the repeated notes in the melody line separated, never tied. If you play the organ, you will probably want to play only some of the repeated notes of the alto, tenor or bass lines and tie others, unless they are at the beginning of the poetry line; also the bass should always be played on a strong beat.

*Legato* helps the congregation to sing musically, although if your congregation falters with the tempo you could try to play more staccato. This will help people to hear the beat.

It is important to look carefully at the words of every verse, because there may be times when you want to carry the musical line through to make sense of the poetry line, as in Psalm 2, stanza 3, line 3, "Ask of me, and you I'll make heir to earth and nations all". To help the congregation make sense of the words you could sing the line through with a breath break after "Ask of me," and then not after "make..."

We hope that you will find all of the tunes selected in this hymnbook set at a key which is comfortable for the average congregation to sing, i.e. not too high or too low. However, there is nothing to stop you altering the pitch of the songs to enhance the singing, e.g. you could try raising the key of a last verse of a triumphant song. This is easily done by playing the dominant seventh chord of the new key, immediately after the completion of the penultimate verse, e.g. if the song is in G major, you would play the E<sup>b</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> chord and then play the next verse in A<sup>b</sup> major. You will find that the congregation will sing the new key quite naturally.

...and so to the **final note** of the song! It should be played according to its function – which is to bring the composition or song to its conclusion

(much as a full stop does in speaking). The length of the final note should be such that the singers and the listeners know the music is over.

Sometimes an 'Amen' can be added, e.g. after the doxology or if the song is a sung prayer. The 'Amen' involves an IV–I cadence.

### **Accompanying is a balance between leading and following.**

Accompanists should be aware of what is happening in the service, and they should be familiar with the liturgy. This calls for a high degree of cooperation between the minister and the musician. It is advantageous for the musician/s to have an order of service so as to avoid surprises.

In conclusion we come back to the quote from J. S. Bach at the beginning, "All music should be for the glory of God and refreshment of the spirit." The role of the musician is to *assist* God's people in singing and meditation as they worship Him. This should enable the congregation to honour, adore, praise and thank Him for all His goodness, shown to them in Christ Jesus. Our prayer is that you will be able to do so with joy.

1– Joseph Gelineau, S. J., *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1964), p. 67.

2 – Calvin R. Stapert, *Singing Psalms from Bible Times to the Protestant Reformation*, as quoted in *Psalter Hymnal Handbook* (CRC Publications, 1998), p. 14.

3 – Footnotes on Psalm 24:7–10 from the New International Version, 1983, *Life Application Bible*.

4 – Extensive quotations from "The Genevan Psalter", an essay by Emily R. Brink, in *Psalter Hymnal Handbook* (CRC Publications, 1998), pp. 28–35).

5 – Other reference: "The Art of Hymn-playing" by Anne Marsden Thomas, published in *RSCM Church Music Quarterly*, September 2003, pp. 21 and 22.