

## Week 1: Paraphrase

### Hymns as Paraphrase

- Using scripture as a basis for music has a long tradition in the Christian church, from Jewish synagogue singing through medieval chants, but its best-known proponent is the protestant reformer John Calvin, who wrote:

In truth we know by experience that singing has great force and vigor to move and inflame the hearts of men to invoke and praise God with a more vehement and ardent zeal. Care must always be taken that the song be neither light nor frivolous; but that it have weight and majesty... We shall not find better songs nor songs better suited to [worship] than the Psalms of David which the Holy Spirit made and uttered through him.

(Preface to the *Genevan Psalter*, 1565)

- Calvin took a hard line against adapting secular songs and limited all church music to the singing of psalms.
  - The basis for this choice (called “exclusive psalmody”) was the reformation principle of *sola scriptura* (“scripture alone”), applied to the music of the church in addition to its doctrine and liturgy.
  - This is a different approach from his contemporary Martin Luther, who (though he shared many of Calvin’s ideals) authored many of his own original hymns and even used tunes borrowed from secular songs.
- In 1562, Calvin published the *Genevan Psalter*, a translation of all 150 psalms with tunes written mainly by Louis Bourgeois, many of which are still in use.
  - The complete psalter was over 20 years in the making, evolving from an initial publication of just 19 psalms in 1539
  - The tunes are written in a simple style, without the rhythmic variety found in Lutheran tunes, or the elaborate ornamentation of the Catholic church.
  - The most famous tune still in use is OLD HUNDREDTH, typically used today for the singing of the doxology “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”.
  - English-speaking churches created their own psalters for use as well, including the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* and *Scottish Psalter* used in Presbyterian churches.
- Today, we’ll look at three paraphrases of Psalm 23. Read the psalm aloud as a class.

### The King of Love My Shepherd Is

Text: Henry Williams Baker (1821–1877), 1868

- Son of a Vice Admiral in the British Navy, educated at Trinity College, Cambridge
- Entered the ministry immediately after his graduation, and became ordained at age 24
- Following the writing of his first hymn in 1852, realized a need to standardize hymns in the Anglican church
- Eventually, this led to his editing the very influential *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861)

Tune: Traditional Irish

- For its initial publishing, John Bacchus Dykes wrote an original tune for this text named DOMINUS REGIT ME
  - Copyright issues prevented editors of *The English Hymnal* (1906) from using Dykes’ tune, choosing to adapt the traditional Irish ST. COLUMBA instead
  - Despite the split, both tunes remain popular choices for this hymn
- The mark of a good paraphrase is one that stays true to the meaning of the text, but still retains the unique voice and perspective of its author. In what ways does Baker’s text strengthen or expand on the original scripture?
    - Addition of New Testament references not explicit in the Old Testament psalm
      - Stanza 1: see John 10:28
      - Stanza 2: “living water” instead of “still waters”, referring to John 4:14 and John 7:37-39
      - Stanza 3: connection to the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7)
      - Stanzas 4-6: explicit reference to the cross, chalice, and “Good Shepherd”
      - Stanza 5: the word “unction” means “act of anointing”

- i. (recall “extreme unction” is one of the sacraments of the Catholic church)
- ii. Together “unction grace” bridges the Old Testament practice of anointing with New Testament “grace”

## He Leadeth Me

Text: Joseph H. Gilmore (1834–1918), 1862

- Temporarily preaching at the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Gilmore prepared a sermon on Psalm 23
- While talking after the service, Gilmore jotted the verses on the back of his sermon notes
- Without his knowledge, his wife sent the text to *Watchman and Reflector* magazine, who published it
- Gilmore only discovered this in 1865 while visiting a Rochester, New York church and saw it in their hymnal

Tune: William Bradbury (1816–1868), 1864

- As a child, studied music in Boston with Lowell Mason (known for tunes to “Joy to the World”, “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”, and others)
  - Followed Mason’s footsteps in advocating music education for children, organizing popular singing festivals
  - After seeing Gilmore’s text in *Watchman and Reflector*, composed AUGHTON to match
  - Following some alterations (including expanding the refrain), published the result in 1864
1. Rather than paraphrasing the whole of Psalm 23, the text is really a simple expansion of verse 2 only. Given its simplicity, why do you think this hymn has remained so popular over the years? What is it about the text and tune that contribute to its lasting popularity?
    - a. Though it was written when “gospel hymns” as a genre were in their infancy, it follows a standard “gospel” formula
      - i. Use of repetition (plus refrains) make it easy to remember and sing
      - ii. Focus on heaven is a common gospel hymn theme (stanza 4) — crossing the Jordan to reach the promised land is taken as a metaphor for us crossing into heaven
    - b. Written in the “darkest hour of the Civil War” (Gilmore’s words), it’s universally applicable to both good times and bad
    - c. Melody is shaped nicely for emphasis at the end of the third line, falling for the first half and then rising to its peak
      - i. “whate’er I do” / “where’er I be”, strengthens the pairing of the two
      - ii. “by waters calm” / “o’er troubled sea”, lends contrast between the two
      - iii. “e’en death’s cold wave **I will not flee**”, emphasizes the phrase to become a pledge, almost defiant

## The God of Love My Shepherd Is

Text: George Herbert (1593–1633), 1633

- Born into a prominent, wealthy family, but whose father died when he was three
- Herbert’s mother believed in the arts, and was a patron of the poet John Donne, among others
- After graduating from Trinity College, Cambridge, was elected Public Orator for the university and hoped for a career in politics
- However, death of his main supporters in 1625 (including King James I) caused him to pursue ministry instead
- Wrote a considerable amount of poetry on top of his regular duties as rector at a rural church
- Having suffered from poor health most his life, died of consumption just three years after his ordination

Tune: Roy Hopp (1951– ), 1992

- Graduate of Calvin College as well as Michigan State and Concordia universities
  - Served as Director of Music in churches across Colorado and West Michigan
  - Over 80 tunes have been published in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain
1. Compared to Gilmore’s “scenes of deepest gloom”, Herbert’s “shady black abode” seems more cool and quiet than it does scary. Is it easier to wander away from God when you’re surrounded by trials and tribulations or when things are calm and “not that bad”?
    - a. From one perspective, when life is “okay”, we often forget that we still need God

- i. How many people cry out to God during a crisis and promptly forget Him afterward?
  - ii. The temptation of sin is that it “doesn’t look so bad”; the drift away from God is often slow and gradual
- b. On the other hand, panic can cause us to lose sight of our priorities
  - i. Falling behind while we’re trying to keep up with life can just cause us to try harder and keep tighter control
  - ii. Letting go can be one of the hardest things to do when you’re scared, but it’s necessary in order to give your life to God