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Fresh Sounds (Book Review)

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Book Reviews

by John M. Zinkand

Fresh Sounds by Betty Pulkingham and Jeanne Harper, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, \$4.95, 192 pages. Reviewed by Gary Warmink, Associate Professor of Music.

The attractive paper cover, sturdy spiral binding, and readable six by nine inch size distinguish **Fresh Sounds** from the large mass of paper-covered songbooks which, like **Fresh Sounds**, are "fresh collections of songs for Christians including many of the bright new sounds of the religious faith idiom" (quotation from the cover).

While it does, indeed, allow one to "explore some of the infinite variety and musical resourcefulness of God's creative Spirit," 80 of the 108 selections could be classed as religious folk or occasional-use pieces. Thus, while ideal for individual expression or folk group, less than one third are singable by large or congregational groups.

Compilers Pulkingham and Harper begin their foreward as follows: "The flow of new songs as God's Spirit renews His church today is such that no printing press can hope to keep pace. We offer...**Fresh Sounds**, to convey the freshness of many new songs."

Among the exciting fresh sounds, eleven traditional hymns and nine new hymn settings

can be found. Four hymns, including "Crown Him with Many Crowns," have pleasant descants. Several hymns, notably No. 30, "Jesus the Very Thought of Thee," and No. 49, "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say," use the more desirable "Windsor" and "Kingsfold" tunes, and there is a most delightful four-part John Ireland setting of a Samuel Crossman text, "My Song is Love Unknown," as well as J. H. Hopkins' "Grand Isle" to a Lesbia Scott text, "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God."

Several very good new selections, such as page 42 (No. 23), "Glory" by Mimi Farra and page 74 (No. 44) "Doxology" by Jimmy Owens, include optional descants or four-part settings along with helpful performance suggestions.

Many of the arrangements are indeed fresh, most include guitar chords, and several use strong or traditional texts. These include a blues setting of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and a "Calypso Doxology."

Following the current trend toward personalization and a more individualized "down to earth" expression, many selections may lack the confessional depth, literary durability, or musical integrity to ensure longevity. However, since this may not be the intent, such songs as "Pullin' Weeds Lord," "Jesus Loves Kriste," "Sanna," "Hallelujah," "Gonna Sing All About It," "Jesus, I Love You Jesus," "Jesus, The Man of Galilee," "Wind, Wind," "Jesus is a

Drivin' Out Satan," "Put on Your Boots," and "Moto Imeaka" could appeal to children, folk singers, folk groups, youth gatherings, or even a congregation eager to experiment.

The Choir Master's Guide and the topical and title indices located at the back of the book are helpful but confused by the table of contents, which lists page numbers that do not coincide with the song numbers in the book. This double number system is a problem throughout.

Whereas most stanzas are printed between the staff lines, most voice ranges are reasonable, and many selections are written in good keys for guitar.

Often selections are not easily sung because the words appear on a different page from the music, because of excessively low ranges (Numbers 74, 76, 99, and 104 extend down to Bass Clef A and many to Bb), and also because the text appears with only one voice part, while the other parts are either absent or non-syllabled.

In general, guitar chords are appropriate, and arrangements include interesting accompaniments. Most accompaniments, however, are not appropriate or are difficult for organ and require guitarists or accompanists with considerable ability.

As a source of recently composed religious folk music suitable for individual use and for such groups as the "Fisherfolk, who have sung, taught, experimented with, improved upon and shared many of these songs," *Fresh Sounds* is to be recommended. While some selections can be found which could have considerable durability and could be useful for general worship, a large proportion of the selections will probably prove to be inappropriate for public worship.

What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? A Communication Strategy for the Church and World Evangelism, by James F. Engel and H. Wilbert Norton, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1975, 171 pages, \$3.95. Reviewed by James A. De Jong, Associate Professor of Theology.

The central thesis of this study of evangelism strategy is that many are looking for Gospel answers to life's questions but that they are not getting them from the church because

she persists in presenting her message in a manner that does not get through to modern man. The church faces an "effectiveness crisis" or a "communication breakdown."

Both authors are associated with Wheaton College. Engel is director of the Billy Graham Graduate Program in Communications and has a strong background in marketing and consumer research. Norton is dean of the Graduate School of Theology. Their joint look at evangelism from their respective disciplines is a fine idea. But the result is not entirely successful.

The authors develop their argument by noting the weaknesses of one-way, sermonistic communication and the orientation towards program maintenance in most churches. As an alternative they propose their "adaptive strategy," which they less-than-convincingly argue is not Madison Avenue but New Testament in character. Essentially, the strategy sets forth a number of calculated steps for effective evangelism, argues for sensitive and personal attention to others, and pleads for program flexibility from local church to local church.

Many helpful, practical suggestions for planning and executing an evangelism program in modern America are found in this book. It goes beyond the suggestions in the "Key '73" material, with which many readers of this review are familiar. It is a title, therefore, which pastors and members of church evangelism committees could read with profit.

Theologically, however, the book is a disaster! What little theology of evangelism is found here is exegetically mangled. To "make disciples of all nations" in Matthew 28, for example, comes off as a mandate to "persuade the unbeliever" (italics mine) (page 44). When the "objective of persuasion is to lead to regeneration" (page 51), one is obviously dealing with an Arminian theology that looks like a throwback to Stoddardism. No awareness is shown of the redemptive historical and covenantal character of the Proverb citations moralistically quoted as guidelines for modern evangelism (page 39). Using the *Living Bible* paraphrase to substantiate theological arguments hardly instills confidence in their weight!

Yet, for its practical suggestions and its attempt to bring theology and communication theory to bear on this important topic, the book deserves notice. Zondervan is to be encouraged in its production of new titles in its Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives series, of which this book is one; however, the publisher should