John Wesley's interest in hymnody and singing is well-known. With preaching and praying, singing formed the core of Methodist worship. Wesley compiled his first hymnal in Georgia in 1737, even before his conversion experience, and went on to produce a dozen more hymnals over the next fifty years. In his “Directions for Singing” (1761) he admonished all Methodists to sing *lustily, in time*, and above all *spiritually*, “so as to make one clear melodious sound,” and the Methodists quickly became known, first throughout Britain, then in early America, for the spirituality and sweetness of their singing.\(^1\)

Jacob Albright (1759-1808), the founder of the Evangelical Association (*Evangelische Gemeinschaft*), was attracted to the Methodists by their preaching and their *Discipline*, not their singing. In all the hagiographies there is no mention, with all the testimonies to his forceful preaching and radiant spirituality, of his singing voice. His calling was to preach to an indifferent, even hostile, people, the Pennsylvania Germans. Only after his preaching had born fruit in little Methodist classes could his disciples join in praise and song. Yet, Albright surely sang the English hymns of Wesley and Watts in Isaac Davis’ Methodist class, which he joined after his conversion in 1791. From the very first, the meetings of the Albright People including singing, mostly the seventeenth-century Pietist chorales (hymns) of their Lutheran and Reformed heritage.

Soon, however, a new century brought a new form of worship and outreach, the camp meeting, and a new form of sacred song, the camp meeting or “bush-meeting” spiritual, ideally suited to the Methodist and Evangelical spirit.\(^3\) If the early Methodist societies were characterized by their sweet singing, the camp meetings were distinguished in making singing lively.\(^4\) The Methodists quickly spread the new ways from the Kentucky frontier (1800-1801), where they started to southeastern Pennsylvania

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\(^4\) Warren, 97.
(1804), and the third (1810) Annual Conference of the Albright People organized the first two German camp meetings in the world. Just as quickly, the simple yet rhythmic choruses and songs with choruses sung around the camp fires were translated, adapted, and extended by the Evangelicals.\(^5\)

Moreover, if Albright was not notably musical, his first assistant, the “Beloved Disciple” John Walter (1781-1818) was. Walter wrote many devotional songs in the new style, including the two most popular German hymns ever written in America: “Kommt, Brüder, kommt, wir eilen fort” and “Wer will mit uns nach Zion gehen?” (Who will with us to Zion go?). He wrote the former while riding horseback over snow-covered mountains between preaching appointments in western Pennsylvania in 1806.\(^6\) The first three verses of the original ten have been translated as follows:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Come, brethren, come, we'll journey on} \\
\text{To the new Jerusalem;} \\
\text{Oh! see you not the golden gates,} \\
\text{That just before you gleam?} \\
\text{Unto that goal direct your eyes,} \\
\text{Hold Jesus’ faithful word,} \\
\text{Keep watchfulness and prayer in mind,} \\
\text{So the Journey won't be hard.} \\
\text{Here is a mighty wilderness,} \\
\text{Through which we all must go,} \\
\text{Here taste the heavenly manna sweet,} \\
\text{Oh! then no murmur know.}
\end{align*}
\]

Its message of encouragement on life’s pilgrimage was common to most of these early spirituals.\(^7\)

**The First Generation of Evangelical Hymnbooks**

Early Evangelical **Disciplines** affirmed that:

Singing always constituted among the pious a part of public and private worship, and is no inconsiderable incitement to the mind. . . . This singing is to be performed . . . not only with the mouth, but . . . with the mouth and the heart.\(^8\)

Already in 1810, when it numbered only 528 members, the little band of Albright People published its first hymn book, Walter’s *Eine kleine Sammlung alter und neuer Geistreichen Lieder* (A Small Collection of Old and New Spiritual Songs). Its 56 pages were a paradigm of German

\(^6\)Yoder, 354.
\(^7\)Albright, 98-99.
\(^8\)The Doctrines and Discipline of the Evangelical Association (New Berlin, Pa.: H. Fisher for the Evangelical Association, 1848), 30-31.
Evangelical hymnody for the rest of the century, an amalgam of traditional Pietist hymns from the *Vaterland*, translations of English Methodist hymns, and original Evangelical compositions. Six years later, with membership almost tripled to 1401 the Annual Conference commissioned its chairman, the new Presiding Elder, John Dreisbach (1789-1871), and its secretary, Henry Niebel (1784-1877), to compile an official denominational hymnal. Four months later, the first General Conference of the Evangelical Association ordered the printing of their work, the 436-page *Das Geistliche Saitenspiel* (The Spiritual Lyre), at the newly established Evangelical Publishing House. This book contained mostly traditional German Lutheran chorales. Soon afterward (1818), Dreisbach and Niebel produced a second hymn book, *Die Geistliche Viole* (The Spiritual Viola). This collection of 192 texts matched to 33 (mostly popular or folk) tunes included many more translations of English camp meeting solos and original compositions from Walter’s earlier book. Finally, in 1821 the Evangelische Gemeinschaft published *Eine Sammlung neuer Geistlicher Lieder* (A Collection of New Spiritual Songs), a little (42 pages) collection made by Dreisbach and Daniel Bertolet (1781-1867), a prominent Evangelical layman from Berks County, Pennsylvania, chiefly from their own compositions and translations. This book is important as the first German hymnbook to include choruses with hymns, written evidence of the way the German revival groups were actually singing from their hymnbooks.9

**Early Evangelical Hymn Singing**

The first generation of Evangelicals did not have church buildings in which to worship, and even after churches were built in the 1830s and 1840s they could not afford to place hymnals in pews. Every member was expected to buy and bring a hymnbook to church. Most did not, and at least a certain percentage of every congregation would not have been able to read a hymnal if they had bought one.

The older Lutheran and Reformed churches relied on “lining out” their hymns, and Evangelical churches did the same for the longer hymns, like those in the *Saitenspiel*, that the preacher might choose for use before and after his sermon. In this practice, the preacher or a lay precentor (Vorsänger) would sing the hymn one line or couplet at a time, and the congregation would repeat as best they could follow or remember. Or the preacher might read a line of text and the precentor pick a likely tune and lead the congregation in singing each line after it was read. This system had obvious disadvantages. Tunes were often started too high or too low. If the preacher used an unfamiliar tune, he might get no answering repetition, or each person might simply sing the tune he or she knew best. Words

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9 Albright, 98, 122, 130-132; Yoder, 356, 393.
were mumbled and mangled, when people misunderstood or forgot the end of a phrase. Tempos dragged, and vitality was lost.10 "How many," asked an Evangelical in 1848, "in congregations, who while they are singing with their lips, their eyes are roving, and seem to see all that is going on. Again, to make singing interesting and lively, the whole congregation should unite in raising their voices in praise of God; yet it is sometimes left to be done by a few, while the greater part are idle."11 Yet, "lining out" persisted in Evangelical churches through the late 1870s.12

The only alternative in the absence of hymnbooks was singing by memory. This is where choruses came in. After the sermon and exhortation, early Evangelicals would gather around the altar railing to sing, pray, and testify until the assembly "got happy," shouting, laughing, jumping, and dancing in the Spirit. (Mocking neighbors called these Evangelicals "Stravelers," dancers.) With joy the brothers and sisters sang the testimonies in their hearts, encouraging one another and rescuing sinners from the fires of hell. Choruses were admittedly lean on theology:

Veer eilen, veer eilen,  
Glory, holle-looya!  
Veer eilen fort, veer sin boll dott,  
Glory, holle-looya!  
Halle-lujah, halle-lujah!  
So sallich oon so hollich, halle-lujah!  
Halle-lujah, halle-lujah!  
So sallich oon so hollich, halle-lujah!  

We're hastening, we're hastening,  
Glory, hallelujah!  
We're hastening on, we'll soon be there,  
Glory, hallelujah!  
Halle-lujah, halle-lujah!  
So blessed and so happy, halle-lujah!  
Halle-lujah, halle-lujah!  
So blessed and so happy, halle-lujah!

But, they were easily internalized and charged with emotion.13 In addition, they could be sung alone, or added to any one of a variety of hymns, or even interpolated line by line between lines of a hymn verse.14 They gave voice to a people ill-equipped and unlearned but intensely spiritual, and the people bellowed them out with the thunder of many waters. As Jacob Hertzler, editor of the Evangelical Messenger, reminisced years later, "Those were men and women of strong frames and loud voices, whose bursts of inspiring song would have swept away like a tempest the fashionable pipings and mumblings of a modern choir."15

The Second Generation of Evangelical Hymnbooks

The first Evangelical Publishing House failed in 1821, but the printer, George Miller, continued to print new editions of the Viole for the Associa-

10 Yoder, 125-230.  
12 "Lining Hymns," Evangelical Messenger, February 3, 1876, 36.  
13 Yoder, 56-61, 238, 323.  
14 Ibid., 13-18.  
15 Jacob Hartzler, "Music in Church and Home," Evangelical Messenger, December 20, 1877, 404.
tion. Quickly established as a standard hymnbook of Pennsylvania German revival groups, it went through thirteen editions in 37 years. The basic text remained basically intact after the 1833 Eastern Conference ordered additions, revisions, reorganization, and redistribution of hymns between the Saitenspiel and the Viole for the fifth (1835) edition. However, new songs, many first circulated as broadsides or pamphlets, were constantly added, and old texts were further revised. The Viole was last published in 1855 and bound with Das Evangelisches Gesangbuch (the Saitenspiel renamed in 1850).

The 1835 edition of the Viole included 149 hymn texts, with a heavier emphasis than in earlier editions on invitation, repentance, and revival (the first Evangelical protracted revival meetings were being held about this time). A few hymns translated from English retained their English tunes, but most of the tunes suggested for use with these texts were old German chorales, with over half of the hymns matched to just four tunes: Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend (1628), Ringe recht (1745), Mein Gott, das Herz (1693), and Es ist gewisslich (1529).

The final edition contained 204 hymns and 46 miscellaneous choruses in 233 pages. The texts reflect the aging of the first generation of Evangelicals in a greater emphasis on death and peace. Slightly greater use was made of Pennsylvania spiritual tunes, but the same German chorales continued to be recommended for most of the hymn (though, of course, not chorus) texts.

Das Geistliche Saitenspiel was also reprinted in 1836, after the 1835 General Conference ordered a new edition, and in 1840. The 1843 General Conference appointed Adam Ettinger (1787-1877), editor of the German church paper, Der Christliche Botschafter, and John Reissner (1795-1877), a hymn-writer/translator (and first emigrant-German Evangelical preacher), to condense and combine the Viole and the Saitenspiel, but their work did not meet with approval at the next General Conference, so a new committee composed of Dreisbach, Bishop Joseph Long (1800-1869), and William W. Orwig (1810-1889) was appointed. Das Evangelisches Gesangbuch was finally published in 1850 with 506 hymns (15 more than the old Saitenspiel). As would be expected in an official church hymnal,

16 Albright, 203; Yoder, 393-396.
18 Yoder, 394.
20 Geistliche Viole, 12th ed. (Cleveland: Carl Hammer for the Evangelical Association, 1855).
the Gesangbuch contained more doctrinal, seasonal, occasional, and didactic texts than the more experiential Viole. For all these texts a grand total of 38 tunes were recommended, with five tunes (“Es ist gewisslich” — 1529, “Wer nur den lieben Gott” — 1657, “Schaffet, schaffet” — traditional, “O Gott, du frommer Gott” — 1693, and “Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend” — 1628) matched to 305 texts!\(^{22}\)

Meanwhile, the Sunday School had been introduced into the Association in 1832, and the 1835 General Conference had mandated German Sabbath Schools in all Evangelical congregations. This created a demand for a new type of Evangelical song, and Orwig prepared a little (48 pages) Sunday School songbook (Evangelisches Liederbüchlein für Sonntagschulen) for publication in 1840. The 1845 edition doubled in size (104 pages), and the 1853 edition doubled again (192 pages). The final (eighth) edition (239 pages) was published in 1866. Later editions included a wider variety of both texts and tunes.\(^{23}\)

The First English Hymnals

Jacob Albright imbued his disciples with his vision for bringing the Gospel to the “poor neglected” German people in America. (Methodist Episcopal Church preaching in German was only organized in 1835.) In the words of the Association’s second bishop, John Seybert (1791-1860):

> The English-speaking people were already amply provided for in this particular by other churches. The Germans are in special need. Our church should work among them, and for their benefit. If the Evangelical Association does not help the Germans in the United States, nobody else will.\(^{24}\)

A few of the Evangelical classes did begin using the English language in the 1820s and 1830s and English-speaking ministers were accepted into the itinerancy, causing dissension in the young church. The 1830 General Conference acted to prohibit the acceptance of any more non-German-speaking preachers and within a year the English-language work was dead.\(^{25}\)

With some realization of their mistake, the 1833 Eastern Conference appointed Joseph Saylor and John Leib a committee to compile an English hymnal. The 1834 Conference added Orwig, Ettinger, and Joseph Hammer to the committee, and A Collection of Hymns Selected from Various Authors, for the Use of the Evangelical Association was published in 1838.\(^{26}\) This book contained 333 hymns with no indication to suitable

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\(^{22}\) Evangélisches Gesangbuch.

\(^{23}\) Albright, 482.

\(^{24}\) S. P. Spreng, The Life and Labors of John Seybert, First Bishop of the Evangelical Association (Cleveland: Lauer & Mattill, 1888), 151.

\(^{25}\) Albright, 238.

\(^{26}\) Yeakel, 217.
tunes, only meter. All were standard hymns of Englishmen, like Charles Wesley (over one-third of the total), Isaac Watts, William Cowper, and John Newton, found in Methodist hymnals of the period, not translations of German chorales or spirituals. The 1843 General Conference, which reauthorized English preaching in the Association, also attempted to encourage the English work by ordering an enlargement of the English hymnal. Little was done, however, probably because the Publishing House had a large supply of 1838 hymnals to sell. Finally, the 1855 General Conference appointed a committee to revise and enlarge the English hymnal and a new *Evangelical Hymn Book* was published in 1857. This book contained 716 hymns (301 from the 1838 hymnal) plus ten doxologies, with meter only, not tune, indications. Hymns added to this hymnal emphasized doctrine, evangelism, and seasons of the church year. They were also English Methodist standards (7 more by Watts, 5 more by Wesley, 4 more by Philip Doddridge and James Montgomery). The hymns in the English hymnbook were not translations of those in the German hymnals. When individuals and congregations changed language and hymnal, they effectively left German sectarianism for the American Protestant mainstream.

**Evangelical Singing at Mid-century**

"Lining out" was never a good solution to the lack of hymnals. Most Evangelicals relied, instead, on memory to sing the few hymns they thought worth memorizing. By mid-century the singing of the old choruses had become lifeless and "formal," and the repertoire of hymns had dwindled to a very few favorites, sung week after week and sometimes more than once in the same service. Elisha Albright Hoffman (1839-1929), son and son-in-law of prominent Evangelicals, listed a total of nine hymns and choruses that English-speaking Evangelicals of his day sang: "Alas, and Did My Saviour Bleed," "When I Can Read my Title Clear," "A Charge to Keep I Have," "Come, Thou Fount," "There is a Fountain," "When Shall I See Jesus," "On Jordan's Stormy Banks," "Jesus My All to Heaven is Gone," and "I'm Glad that I am Born to Die." Bishop Thomas Bowman (1836-1923) said that the church of his youth could sing but three hymns: "When I Can Read," "Jesus, my All," and "A Charge to Keep."
At the same time, a new generation of wealthier, better-educated, more urbanized Evangelicals were beginning to place a greater emphasis on decorum and propriety than the “animal excitement” of the early years. “As society advances,” explained the Evangelical Messenger, “decorum chastens our exhibition of emotion and the cultivation of the intellect, and the refinement of taste, while they deepen our better feelings, soften their expression.” Along with the old “Evangelical shout,” the “vain, trifling, and frothy singing” of choruses came in for harsh criticism. One Evangelical compared the “disgusting” singing of “unintelligible choruses” to the “braying of a mule or the music of a farce.” Many of the texts, wrote another in 1848, have no meaning whatever, and abound with ambiguity. Indeed—if some of the choruses, which are frequently sung, were critically examined by the rules of our language, and with good commonsense, they would appear nonsensical and inconsistent in the extreme—too inconsistent and absurd for any Christian community to make use of in any way whatever.

As for the music, a critic in 1856 complained that,

The old tunes which have been sung fifty years ago, some of which never expressed any musical sense, are drummed over and over. To some hymns, a genius (?) has composed a chorus between every line, and that often a non-sensical one, which must then be repeated time and again to the disgust and pain of the well-cultivated ear.

The first Episcopal Address to General Conference in 1863 summed up the situation:

In reference to singing in our congregations, there is still in many places, a great defect apparent, at many places but few hymns are used in the public worship of God, and as a consequence of it, many take no part in this part of the service, or else the singing is, before the preacher rises, as also after the first prayer and after the sermon, confined to a few hymns and verses which the people have learnt by heart, unless the preacher himself commences a hymn, and hence it is, that barely the one-hundredth part of our richly spiritual songs are used, except so far as the minister makes use of them. In addition to this, there is a custom prevalent in many places, of allowing almost any one who desires to do so, to select the hymns, verse, tune and all, and thus, according to his own notion, conduct this important branch of the public service, in consequence of which the devotion and solemnity of the worshipers is seriously disturbed, and the proper object remains unattained. And the singing of senseless or absurd choruses, to irreverent tunes, we are sorry to say, is still prevailing in many places, to an extent that seriously disturbs the solemnity of the worship.

34Upsilon, 54.
35Musicus, “Thoughts on Singing,” Evangelical Messenger, August 8, 1849, 58.
36Quoted in Yoder, 147.
37An Amateur, 171.
A New Generation of Hymnbooks

Church leaders tried to improve singing by continual tinkering with the church hymnals. Many were dissatisfied with the 1857 English hymnbook from the start, and in 1859 the next General Conference authorized a replacement. 39 Not only were the old hymns poorly arranged, but the new hymns of William Bradbury (1816-1868) and Robert Lowry (1826-1899) were already noticeable by their absence. In a series of “Suggestions to [the 1863] General Conference” the editor of the church’s English paper, The Evangelical Messenger, T. G. Clewell, espoused a new collection with more hymns, shorter hymns, a wider variety of hymns (including more modern ones), more national hymns [the influence of the Civil War], more hymns of Christian duty, and suggestions for appropriate tunes. He felt that a theologian and a musician, not a committee of preachers, should be responsible for the new work, 40 but the Conference’s response was a new committee, with Clewell as chairman! He “could at no time succeed in having all the members meet to work upon the revision,” so he, with some assistance from Reuben Yeakel (1827-1904), editor of the Association’s English Sunday School literature, worked four years to produce The New Evangelical Hymn-book, Adapted to Public, Social, and Family Devotion, and Designed for the Members of the Evangelical Association and all Lovers of Jesus. It included tune names, topical and first-line indexes, and 1262(!) hymns (including eight doxologies). 258 of the hymns in the 1838 hymnal and 362 of the hymns added in 1857 remained; 642 hymns were added. 95 hymns dating back to the 1838 hymnal were dropped, along with 197 from the 1857 book. Many of the additions were more modern hymns from the popular Sunday School hymnbooks, but there were also some additional Wesley and Watts hymns and a few translations of German chorales (mainly by way of English hymnals). The collection contained a “somewhat unusually large number” of hymns, but the “old book was confessedly meager in hymns suited for social worship, for the prayer meeting, or revival occasions.”

While new hymns would continue to appear, the committee flattered “themselves, that they have so well succeeded, in the present collection, to combine the lively with the grave and stately, and in selecting only such hymns of the former class, as have not only the merit of being new, but such intrinsic merit of their own, as will make the devout unwilling to let them die, or to demand any changes very soon.” 41

41 “Our new Evangelical Hymn-Book,” Evangelical Messenger, April 27, 1864, 132; Evangelical Association, The New Evangelical Hymn-Book (Cleveland: Charles Hammer for the Evangelical Association, 1867), V-VIII.
Unfortunately for the committee's hopes of immortality, Protestant hymnody was even then on the threshold of an explosion of creativity in a new form of sacred song, the Gospel Hymn. The Association's own Elisha Hoffman wrote over 2000 hymns in the new style. In his own denomination he unleashed a flood of song-writing and publishing surpassing even the early years: Jubeltöne (edited with Yeakel, 1871), the first German Sunday School hymnbook with musical notes; The Evergreen (176 pages, 1873), the first Evangelical English-language Sunday School songbook; Glaubens Lieder (262 translations, 1876); Happy Songs (160 pages, 1876); and Sunday School Songs (160 pages, 1880). Hoffman left the Association, but the new books continued to come: Hosiana, ein Liederbuch für Sonntagsschulen (mostly texts by William Horn, editor of the German Sunday School literature, with music by J. M. Bierman, 158 pages, 1876); Gesanglehre (J. M. Bierman, 1878); Hallelujah, Liederbüchlein für Sonntagsschulen (edited by C. A. Thomas, later first president of the Evangelical Young People's Alliance; 176 pages, 1883); Echoes of Praise (compiled by H. J. Bowman, assisted by a committee appointed by General Conference, 156 pages, 1883); Gospel Jewels (edited by Professor R. E. Hudson for the Evangelical Board of Publication, 141 songs, 1885); Gebet- und Danklieder (edited by Horn, Thomas, and Yeakel, 213 songs, 1886); Crystal Fountain (by R. B. Mahaffey, 96 pages, 1889); and Tried and True (by E. S. Lorenz of the United Brethren Church and J. C. Hornberger, 1892).

Unlike the Viole and Sammlung sixty years before and Ein Liederbüchlein thirty years before, Jubeltöne and Hosiana, Glaubenslider and Gesanglehre made a new and popular style of American sacred song accessible to German Evangelicals and in so doing stimulated a burst of indigenous Evangelical song production. Unlike previous generations of Evangelical songbooks, this outpouring was truly bilingual. It neatly reflects the shift in emphasis from the camp meeting to the Sunday School as the main "recruiting office" of the church.

Meanwhile, the leadership continued to tinker with the church hymnals. General Conference had shown interest in a new German hymnal as early as 1859. In 1871 it appointed a committee to compile a new book, but the press of official duties delayed work on the project. A new committee (Bishop J. J. Esher, William Horn, and Martin Lauer, editor of Der Christliche Botschafter) was appointed in 1875, and this group published Das Gesangbuch der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft in 1877. The

new book, including an edition with music, an Evangelical Association first, contained 980 hymns set to 116 tunes, mostly German chorales. Only 342 (of 506) hymns were retained from the 1850 Gesangbuch; only 136 were retained from editions of the Viole. A mere 42 texts remained from the first edition of the Viole, and most of these were altered, “purified of... unbiblical triflings,” like “too familiar conversations with God and Christ.” The editors strove to include more German hymns (“the achievements of the Godly men and holy women of the church of the Reformation”) and more original contributions of Evangelical preachers, as well as translations of newer English-language hymns. Over one-half of the hymns had not appeared in any previous Evangelical hymnal.44

The 1875 General Conference also appointed a committee to produce a new English hymnal, but the compilers could not agree on whether to produce a large and expensive book, like the Gesangbuch, that might soon be outdated or a smaller, more easily revised collection. The next General Conference (1879) rendered a decision in favor of a large collection (up to 1000 hymns) and appointed a committee consisting of the three bishops (Esher, Bowman, and Rudolph Dubs), H. B. Hartzler (editor of The Evangelical Messenger), H. J. Bowman (editor of the English Sunday School literature), William Horn (editor of Der Christliche Botschafter), and C. A. Thomas (editor of the German Sunday School literature), with music editing by Professor Alfred Arthur.45 The Evangelical Hymn and Tune Book was published in 1882 with 875 hymns printed in 391 blocks under appropriate tunes plus 16 doxologies and 13 pages of Anglican chant. 163 of the hymns survived from the 1838 hymnbook, 165 more from the 1851 book, and 187 from the 1867 book; 360 were new to this Evangelical hymnal. The old standards of Watts, Montgomery, Wesley, and Luther were joined by the best of the later hymns (e.g., “I Need Thee Every Hour,” “More Love to Thee,” “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”) and by hymns of Evangelicals (Hartzler, Bowman, Orwig, Byers), with more worship hymns of all styles.46 “The long dreary songless years of waiting are over at last,” exhulted one Evangelical. “In the Evangelical Association the singing has been vitiated by the introduction, under forced circumstances, of all sorts of undevotional, light, superficial poetry, and flippant music. The new Hymn-book, with Tunes is just the right character to do away entirely with that stuff, but it comes none too soon.”47 Evangelical worship, you see, was in grave danger of being taken over by its greatest enemy, choirs.

44Evangelical Association, Gesangbuch der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft (Cleveland: W. F. Schneider, 1877), 3-4.
46Gesangbuch der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft.
Music in the Post-Civil War Era

The Evangelical Association never officially opposed the use of instruments in worship, but the spontaneous chorus singing and hymn "lining-out" of the early church did not lend themselves to instrumental involvement. Moreover, instruments were expensive before the Civil War and most Evangelicals were poor. Many societies did not even have meeting houses until the 1840s and 1850s. In the prosperous Gilded Age, however, Evangelicals began purchasing reed organs for their parlors and having their children taught to play them. Soon, fine new churches began to list organs among their rich appointments, and reports of Sunday School Christmas programs casually extended credit to the "expert performer on the organ." Or course, conservatives fought the introduction of organs into Sunday Schools, then regular church services, and pianos were still too closely associated with the saloon to pass muster in the house of God, but the latter years of the century even saw the organization of orchestras in larger Evangelical churches, and instruments were never a major source of contention.

Choirs, however, were a major source of contention. Pressure from the better educated, more progressive, more cultured segment of the Association for permission to organize "mixed" choirs began in the 1850s, when many congregations did not even allow men and women to sit "mixed" on the same side of the church. The 1859 General Conference tried to thwart this dangerous innovation with an amendment to the Discipline. Approval by the Annual Conferences was swift, and after final ratification of the amendment in 1863 the Discipline advised congregations that: "to confine singing in public worship to choirs, we deem ... improper and injurious.

Evangelical pastors with musical sensitivity, however, knew that "if we would avert the threatening danger, we must remove the cause of the danger." Elisha Hoffman warned that congregational singing was so anemic that if congregations did not buy hymnals and learn new hymns, "individual members, failing to secure the cooperation of the whole congregation, will band together, practice, and establish a choir." "I can recall three different places," he wrote in 1869, "where congregations were compelled to substitute the first of these two ways to destroy already established

51 An Amateur, 171; Albright, 250-251.
52 Evangelical Association, Die Glaubenslehre und Kirchenzuchtordnung der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft (Cleveland: Evangelical Association, 1864), 37.
choirs." Conservatives saw a real danger that in congregations with a "hankering for the fashionable fleshpots of Egypt" the people would be robbed of their song by the modern "improved[?] style of proxy singing by choirs." Some Evangelicals, impressed by D. L. Moody's soloist, Ira D. Sankey (1840-1908), even advocated vocal soloists to root out choirs. Yet, Sankey himself was an advocate of choirs, not as performers of sentimental ballads or replacements for the congregation, but as leaders and enablers of congregational song. "Let the leader, seated at the organ, with a few good singers nearby, conduct the songs in a hearty manner," he wrote. In an age of volunteer clubs, volunteer town bands, volunteer militias, and volunteer fire departments, volunteer choirs would not be stopped. In the twenty years after the Civil War they spread rapidly through the denomination, and by the end of the period even men's, youth, and children's choirs were common. In time, church leaders, while rightly condemning inattentive choir members, "fashionable, mincing, lisping, mouthing performances," and compensation for choirs to perform in place of the congregation, came to see choirs as a key ingredient, with pipe organs and the new generation of hymnals, in a revitalization of Evangelical worship.

CONCLUSION

The Evangelical Association was a child of the Second Great Awakening, the revival that swept in over the young nation from the frontier in a blaze of religious fervor. "New measures," like the altar call, the "anxious bench," camp meetings, protracted revival meetings, and spiritual choruses, were very effective in fanning emotions to white-hot intensity. For millions of German immigrants to America, who had known Christianity only as a dead system of state dogma and empty ritual, Evangelical spontaneity and freedom remained a life-giving revelation throughout the century. The emotional thrill was harder for second- and third-generation Evangelicals to maintain, however, after the novelty wore off, and by the 1850s in the Evangelical heartland the early fires of spiritual power had cooled to dying embers of lifeless routine. In many places, the same few brothers and sisters prayed the same old prayers and gave the same old testimonies. The same families pitched the same tents at the same camp

53 Hoffman, 25.
54 Iota Lambda, "Church Music," Evangelical Messenger, May 6, 1869, 137.
56 See, for example: "From the Monument City," Evangelical Messenger, February 23, 1888, 73; "Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor District Convention," Evangelical Messenger, November 5, 1890, 358-359.
57 "Instrumental Music in Church," 300; Saylor, 393.
meetings and got their winter doses of religion at revival meetings. The same choruses and hymns were sung in the same cold and "formal" way. The church was primed to accept the new emphases and methods of the third awakening, the City Revival that began among the businessmen of eastern cities in 1857-59 and spread first in the holiness meetings of Phoebe Palmer and then after the Civil War in the evangelistic crusades of D. L. Moody.

Quickly, Evangelical churches close to the new communication and transportation networks were transformed. John Inskip in the National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness (1867) provided a new model for a revitalized Evangelical camp meeting. Moody in his crusades provided a new model for revival/evangelistic services. Francis Clark in *Christian Endeavor* provided a new model for small group empowerment and lay training to replace the old class meeting. Big city Methodist, Presbyterian, and even Episcopal churches provided a new model for a more "refined" style of church music and worship suited to more sophisticated Evangelical tastes. Hymnals found their way into pew racks, and pipe organs and choir lofts found their way into Evangelical churches with pew cushions, thick carpets, and stained-glass windows.

As the Evangelical Association lurched toward schism in 1891-1894, there were country churches in both camps little touched by the changes of the last thirty years, still singing choruses spontaneously without the help of organ or choir. There were also city churches in both camps where paid soloists and choirs performed anthems and Anglican chants as fine as any in the city. Most Evangelical churches were somewhere in between: organ, choir, and hymnal Sunday morning, and possibly Sunday evening, *a cappella* chorus singing Wednesday evenings and at revival meetings. This new model of Evangelical worship would last in many places for the next fifty years. With both sides in the Evangelical civil war claiming to

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61See Albright, 326-329; Terry M. Heisey, "Immigration as a Factor in the Division of the Evangelical Association," *Methodist History* 19 (October 1980), 41-57.
be the true sons of Albright, the genuine trunk of the Evangelical tree, however, nostalgia for the choruses of the Association’s natal years was on the rise, even as the abandonment of the Pennsylvania German dialect spelled the end of the bush-meeting spiritual as a live tradition. The first hymnals, German *Evangelisches Gesangbuch. Die Kleine Palme;* 1897 and English *(Hymn Book;* 1897), of the United Evangelical Church (formed by the Dubsite “minority” party in the Association) would be the first Evangelical hymnals to include choruses (those in the *Hymn Book* translations from the Pennsylvania German, a reversal of the previous pattern). This was done for the convenience of singers at social and revival meetings but also that the “heritage from the fathers” might be preserved.62

In a sense, then, we have come full circle: from the birth of one church (The Evangelical Association) to the birth of another (The United Evangelical Church), from the first German Evangelical songbook to include choruses (1821) to the first Evangelical hymnals to include chorus spirituals (1897), from one spurt of Evangelical fervor and musical creativity to another. Yet, of course, the Evangelical Association of 1814 and its music were far different from the Evangelical Association of 1894 and its music. What we see is not so much a circle as the continuing efforts of the Evangelical Association to provide people through all the changes of a tempestuous century with a sacred song that was both faithful to Albright’s original calling and relevant to changed conditions in the church and the world.

62 For the arguments over which side was genuinely Evangelical see: S. P. Spreng, “Desperate Measures,” *Evangelical Messenger,* February 18, 1890, 104; A. Stapleton, “The True Evangelical Association,” *The Evangelical,* July 22, 1891, 225 and subsequent issues; for the choruses see: Yoder, 414-415.