

## Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology

By Richard J. Mouw, Mark A. Noll




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While many evangelical congregations have moved away from hymns and hymnals, these were once central fixtures in the evangelical tradition. This book examines the role and importance of hymns in evangelicalism, not only as a part of worship but as tools for theological instruction, as a means to identity formation, and as records of past spiritual experiences of the believing community.

Written by knowledgeable church historians, *Wonderful Words of Life* explores the significance of hymn-singing in many dimensions of American Protestant and evangelical life. The book focuses mainly on church life in the United States but also discusses the foundational contributions of Isaac Watts and other British hymn writers, the use of gospel songs in English Canada, and the powerful attraction of African-American gospel music for whites of several religious persuasions. Includes appendixes on the American Protestant Hymn Project and on hymns in Roman Catholic hymnals.

#### Contributors:

Susan Wise Bauer  
Thomas E. Bergler  
Virginia Lieson Brereton  
Esther Rothenbusch Crookshank  
Kevin Kee  
Richard J. Mouw  
Mark A. Noll  
Felicia Piscitelli  
Robert A. Schneider  
Rochelle A. Stackhouse  
Jeffrey VanderWilt

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### Editorial Review

Review

#### Joel Carpenter

"At least since the time when Paul and Silas sang from the depths of the Philippian jail, praising God with hymns has been central to the Christian faith. Isn't it odd, then, that so little careful study has been devoted to popular hymnody? True religion, Jonathan Edwards once said, can never be doctrinal knowledge only, 'without affection.' Vital faith is rather 'a ferment, a vigorous engagedness of the heart.' Few human acts can so powerfully fuse heads, hearts, hands, and voices like singing, and these authors show how multidimensional vocal praise has been. For American Protestants, hymn singing is nearly sacramental; it also can be political. Hymn singing expresses theological ideas, challenges common wisdom, defines and enacts community, and roots the gospel in culture. *Wonderful Words of Life* models the kind of scholarship we need for every time and place where Christianity has gone, to understand the powerful effects of ordinary people singing praise to God. "

#### John Wilson

"Collections of scholarly essays typically gather dust, their spines hardly cracked, their pages pristine and unread. By contrast, copies of this superb book will soon be as well-thumbed as your grandmother's hymnal. If you want to understand the evangelical stream of what gets called 'religion in practice' these days, there's no better place to start. "

#### William Hutchison

"This stimulating collection provides much-needed coverage and enrichment in a neglected sector of American religious experience. The thoughtful and thought-provoking essays do not 'their own appointed limits keep,' but venture in illuminating ways beyond the American scene and beyond evangelical Protestantism. Teachers of cultural and religious history will be indebted to these authors."

#### *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

"A welcome addition to our knowledge and evaluation of important strands of American hymnody."

From the Back Cover

Foreword by John D. Witvliet

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Written by knowledgeable church historians, under the supervision of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, "Wonderful Words of Life explores the significance of hymn-singing in many dimensions of American Protestant and evangelical life. The book focuses mainly on church life in the United States but also discusses the foundational contributions of Isaac Watts and other British hymn writers, the use of gospel songs in English Canada, and the powerful attraction of African-American gospel music for whites of several religious persuasions. Includes appendixes on the American Protestant Hymn Project and on hymns in Roman Catholic hymnals.

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#### About the Author

Richard J. Mouw is president and professor of Christian philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. His many other books include *Uncommon Decency*, *Praying at Burger King*, and *Abraham Kuyper: A Short and Personal*

Mark A. Noll is Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame.

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#### Gale Taylor:

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that at times many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a guide your ability to survive boost then having chance to remain than other is high. For you who want to start reading the book, we give you this Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology book as basic and daily reading guide. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

**William Delacruz:**

The reason why? Because this Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will jolt you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who have write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

**Mary Norman:**

This Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology is great book for you because the content and that is full of information for you who all always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This book reveal it details accurately using great organize word or we can say no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read the item hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but challenging core information with wonderful delivering sentences. Having Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology in your hand like having the world in your arm, info in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no reserve that offer you world within ten or fifteen minute right but this reserve already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hi Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt that?

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