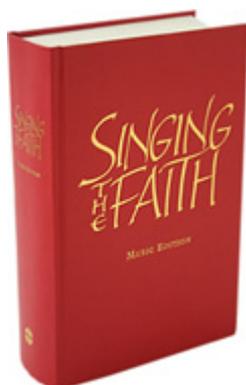


The story of Singing the Faith



Singing the Faith is the most recent authorised hymn book of the Methodist Church in Britain. Published in the autumn of 2011, it was seven years in the making. The story of that process is told in the following timeline-account.

June 2004

The Methodist Publishing House was directed by the Methodist Conference to bring forward a proposal for a supplement to *Hymns & Psalms* (published in 1983). The Music Resources Group (MRG) was appointed to assist in this work. The Conference also endorsed the concept of a 'rolling resource' of recommended contemporary hymns and songs. The MRG began the huge task of sifting through literally thousands of hymns and songs.

June 2007

Following a discussion on the status of a supplement and its relative value, the Conference directed the MRG to prepare a new 'baseline' collection of authorised hymns and songs in succession to *Hymns & Psalms*. This was in addition to a rolling resource of commended contemporary and topical material.

November 2008 – January 2009

A draft list of hymns and songs was published in the Methodist Recorder, the independent Methodist newspaper, and on the Methodist Church in Britain website. A considerable number of responses were received and these were evaluated by the MRG with the assistance of the Revd Brian Hoare, who had been on the editorial team behind *Hymns & Psalms*,

June 2009

The original MRG was disbanded and replaced by several smaller groups. Peter Brophy was appointed as Editor-in-Chief. Having taken account of the comments received through the 2008/09 consultation process, the MRG worked hard to produce a revised list of hymns and songs. Additional material was sought to produce a complete and balanced collection.

September 2009

The full words of the revised collection were submitted to the Church's Faith & Order Committee and Network for scrutiny. The Committee and Network examined the collection word for word, to ensure that the whole collection speaks effectively of Methodism today.

At the same time a number of independent experts were recruited to examine the proposed collection from non-theological perspectives, including such matters as the use of language and clarity of expression.

The Devotional Resource Sub Group analysed the collection from the perspective of personal devotional use. The same group also advised on the selection of psalms and canticles.

The Music Sub Group examined each set tune and determined where new arrangements or tunes were needed. Their guiding principle was to produce settings suitable for congregational singing and musicians of all abilities.

The Appendices and Indexes Sub Group began its work, focusing on the biblical index.

The Production and Marketing Sub Group began meeting and identified the optimal publication process following the closure of the Methodist Publishing House in 2009. Three commercial publishers were invited to tender for the contract of producing and distributing the collection. Plans were also put in place to achieve a wide take-up among Methodist churches.

November 2009

The Faith & Order Committee met and gave detailed consideration to the comments submitted to it by the Faith & Order Network Resource Groups. This resulted in a lengthy report to the MRG, identifying both generic issues and specific concerns relating to individual hymns and songs.

December 2009

The Content Selection Sub Group worked intensively to address the issues raised through the scrutiny. At the end of this process the MRG and the Faith & Order Committee reached an agreed position.

April 2010

Hymns Ancient & Modern was selected as the publishing partner of choice.

June 2010

The proposed contents list was presented to the Methodist Conference and was formally authorised.

August 2010

Hymns Ancient & Modern received the proposed words and a large proportion of the musical arrangements for engraving.

November 2010

The contract between Hymns Ancient & Modern and the Methodist Council was signed. Musical engraving and typesetting continued and the copyright clearance process began. The Music Sub-Group delivered the last few remaining musical arrangements.

December 2010

As the engraving of the music edition continued, the detailed process of proofreading the music edition began.

July 2011

The MRG made its final report to the Conference and was formally thanked for the work it had completed since its formation in 2004. A cake was baked to mark the occasion and the Good News Singers, based in the Chorley and Leyland Methodist Circuit, sang a selection of hymns and songs from the collection.

The majority of copyright permissions were received by early July. The engraving and proofreading of the music edition continued.

August 2011

Both the music and printed words editions were signed off by Editor-in-Chief, Peter Brophy, and sent to print.