

From *Tenth Presbyterian Church: 175 Years of Thinking and Acting Biblically* (Philip G. Ryken, ed.) Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R, 2004.

### **Music at Tenth: A Short History**

By Dr. Paul S. Jones, Organist and Music Director<sup>1</sup>

Fine church music has been closely linked with the pulpit ministry at Tenth Church for many years. When visitors speak of the church usually two things are mentioned: the powerful expository teaching ministry and the excellent music. Such impressions are based on a tradition of great church music stretching back to the early days of Tenth Church, and of the strong preaching that has always been central to its ministry.

Shortly after the founding of Tenth Church in 1829, during the era when Henry Boardman was Senior Minister and then Pastor Emeritus, music played an important role in the worship service, and Tenth had a similarly important role in providing musical leadership for the Presbyterian Church in the United States. While there have been decades when the significance of music within Tenth declined, overall it has remained a strong force. There has also been a substantial amount of hymn-related activity associated with the church, including (in addition to singing and playing) compiling, editing, hymnology, authoring texts, and composing tunes.

#### **Boardman's Hymnal (1833-1876)**

Henry Boardman compiled a hymnal entitled *Hymns of Praise*, which was prepared as a supplement to the standard *Psalms and Hymns* used by the Presbyterian Church.<sup>2</sup> The new hymnal added more than 500 Greek, Latin, German, and other hymns that had been translated into English since the publication of *Psalms and Hymns*. In the preface Boardman made clear what he believed to be the true purpose of hymn singing:

Let it suffice to say here, that the fundamental idea which underlies this Collection, is that the singing of Hymns is an office of WORSHIP. This does not import that every Hymn must be throughout a direct address to the Deity. For there are songs of Zion eminently fitted to nourish devotional feeling, and breathing the very spirit of praise, which could not bear this test. . . . Still, the *principle* is a sound one: and the neglect of it has turned many Hymn-Books into repositories of mere descriptive and hortatory poems, which lack the first element of WORSHIP.

Boardman also articulated the purpose of the new hymnal, with Tenth Church obviously in mind: "In the preparation of this volume, the Compiler has had a special eye to the wants of his own pulpit and people. He is not without the hope that it may prove an acceptable offering to some other congregations, and to private Christians. It is now humbly commended to His blessing, who is at once the Object and the Inspirer of all true Worship, and who has said, 'WHOSO OFFERETH PRAISE GLORIFIETH ME'." Boardman made certain that a healthy selection of hymns for family worship and private devotion were added as well, and the hymns were printed in their original form, with all stanzas fully intact.

A paid choir existed at Tenth at least as early as 1857 and there were pipe organs in both the Tenth Presbyterian Church and the West Spruce Street Presbyterian Church (whose building became the site of the unified Tenth Presbyterian Church in 1893). By 1858 the Session determined that it had sufficient funds “to procure a first-class instrument.” The organ’s installation was completed the next year by Jardine and Son of New York and was “universally admitted by disinterested and competent judges to be at least equal to any instrument heretofore erected in this city.” George Jardine personally superintended the installation at a total cost of \$3800. Building a large instrument required considerable alterations in the gallery, which could also accommodate a large number of singers. Twenty years later the organ was altered with a new hydraulic blower, revoicing, the addition of some stops, cleaning and repair so that it was again “one of the very finest instruments in our city or state.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Breed through Brownson (1856-1924)**

During Boardman’s tenure another important figure in the history of Presbyterian hymnody grew up in the congregation. Louis Fitzgerald Benson (1855-1930) has been described as “the foremost hymnologist that America has produced.”<sup>4</sup> His father, Gustavus S. Benson, a successful businessman and trustee of Princeton Theological Seminary, was a long-serving elder of Tenth Church and is memorialized in one of the large plaques at the front of the present sanctuary. Louis abandoned a legal career at age 32 for seminary, and later left the pastoral ministry to become a hymnologist. He amassed an enormous collection of old hymnals, sheet hymns, and other information on the history of hymns. His personal library of 9,000 volumes is one of the world’s greatest collections of hymnological literature (now The Benson Collection at the Speer Library, Princeton Seminary, where he lectured from 1903).<sup>5</sup>

Among Benson’s most important books were *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (1915) and *The Hymnody of the Christian Church* (1927). Benson also contributed to the second edition of John Julian’s *Dictionary of Hymnology* and was responsible for locating accurate and previously lost information on many hymns in their original forms. In addition, he edited at least seven hymnals, including *The Hymnal* (1933) of the Presbyterian Church that was used at Tenth throughout the Barnhouse and Di Gangi pastorates. Benson’s historical research became the basis for large parts of the *The Hymnal*, and at least eight hymns appear that he translated or revised.<sup>6</sup>

Little is known about the performance of music at Tenth before 1857, other than that there was a pipe organ in the Spruce Street loft. There has never been a music program at Tenth to dwarf the pulpit ministry as has happened in many other churches. It has long been understood that the music ministry is the “handmaiden” of the pulpit ministry. In 1876 William Breed asserted that the singing gallery had not been yielded up to “the musical artist, according to whose creed the chief end of the church is the organ loft and the chief end of the performers there is to display their accomplishments, sing their own praises, and gratify a cultivated musical taste.”<sup>7</sup> The Lord has blessed Tenth with talented musical artists and a cultivated musical taste, even among its congregants, but there is no boasting, except in the great God from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things (Rom. 11:36).

In 1894 the pipe organ from the old Tenth Church building on Walnut Street was installed in the chapel (now know as Reception Hall) of the building on West Spruce Street. Later a choir was

formed to sing in the chapel during Wednesday evening services. As of 1908, the salary for the choir was set at \$2450 (the minister was then paid \$5000); the pianist and the leader of the music for the Sunday School and the Prayer Meeting were also paid for their services. In 1914 the Board of Trustees decided to rebuild what was by then the "old organ" in the sanctuary. Philadelphia's C. S. Haskell rebuilt the instrument for a little more than \$4000. Tenth's music ministry took a major step forward in the 1925 budget, which added organ cleaning, Easter music, Christmas music, special music, the Princeton Chorus, and Service Song Books to the regular list of priorities. By 1929 the organ was again in need of repair, and Owen J. W. Burgess and Son were contracted to service the instrument.

Many talented musicians played and sang at Tenth during these years. Mr. Ellis Clark Hammann served as Organist and Choirmaster from 1901 to 1907. Hammann was succeeded by Mr. Stanley Addicks, and then by Mr. Gilbert R. Combs, who played at the church from 1908 to 1915. Mr. John Woods, Jr., played for the Sabbath School and Wednesday evening prayer meeting until 1911. At least by 1910 there was a paid quartet of soloists (choristers) who served as section leaders for the choir. The music program seems to have progressed largely without incident, except for an occasion when "The attention of the Session was called to the fact that our Sabbath School Anniversary May 1<sup>st</sup> (1910), the singers of our choir left the church before the last two hymns were sung. The Clerk was directed to notify the choir that the Session was grieved at this action, and trusts it may not be repeated."<sup>8</sup>

In 1918 the church treasurer was authorized to purchase 100 copies of the *New Collection of War Hymns* at a price of \$5. Beginning her twenty years of service to Tenth in October of 1919, Mrs. Elizabeth Porter Earle was hired as soloist for \$550 per annum. Then something that would change the course of music at Tenth for several decades occurred. The congregation expressed the desire to have a Precentor instead of a choir to lead congregational singing. So in September 1922 the choir was disbanded, with Mrs. Earle retained as Precentor.

### **Music under Barnhouse (1927-1960)**

The Music Committee hired Miss Ella E. Day as organist in 1927 at a salary of \$800 per year, with one month for vacation. Miss Day played for Dr. Barnhouse's installation and served as organist during his early years at Tenth. She played serious classical organ music for preludes and postludes each Sunday, including works by Guilment, Bach, Borowski, Dubois, Gounod, Wagner, and Bizet. Traditional hymns from *The Hymnal* were sung in services, but not necessarily all of the stanzas. Mrs. Earle, who had formerly served as a chorister and Precentor, was the staff soloist from 1931-39, and she sang the offertory at all morning and evening services.

In 1928 Barnhouse was authorized to purchase 300 new hymnals for the evening service and to donate the old ones to a needy church. It is unclear whether he did this, however, because in 1932 400 copies of "Greatest Hymns" were purchased for evening use. Other music went on in the church as well, including a Bible School Christmas Program from 1938 forward. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 1936, the salaries of the organist, soloist, music supplies and instrument maintenance totaled \$2,110 (the total church budget that year was \$22,611).

Each year the Music Committee (a committee of Session) would recommend to Session whether Miss Day and Mrs. Earle's contracts should be renewed. In 1936 the committee was authorized to continue their services on a monthly basis, "pending further developments." This was because

Dr. Barnhouse wanted to engage a full-time minister of music “to develop this phase of the church work in all its departments, including the Sunday services.” Barnhouse first tried to lure Mr. Carleton Booth to move to Philadelphia from Providence, Rhode Island. When this failed, the church eventually hired Mr. Douglas Davies, whose arrival meant the end of Mrs. Earle’s long tenure at the church. Mr. Davies served in 1940 and 1941 and was ordained during his second year at Tenth. He placed a “Song Service” at the beginning of evening worship, which started at 7:45 pm in those days. He also served as soloist, singing sacred classical works and expanding the hymn repertoire of the congregation.

There was a marked increase in the use of male soloists as well. Apparently, after more than twenty years of hearing the same soprano, the congregation was ready to hear some men sing! Mel Dibble succeeded Mr. Davies, and served as music director and soloist from late 1941 into 1945. Lily Orr began her lengthy tenure as organist in September of 1943, playing the prelude, hymns, and postlude each week, and accompanying the various soloists who sang the offertory, as had her predecessor.

Donald Grey Barnhouse, Jr. was listed next as staff soloist, serving from 1945 to 1949. He had begun to sing prior to this, while still a student at Harvard, and was also the leader of the evening Song Services. For a period of three months while Barnhouse’s father was preaching in California (January to March, 1947), the famous Scottish minister J. Sidlow Baxter filled the pulpit. On Thursday evenings he gave a Bible lecture and the young Mr. Barnhouse would sing one of Baxter’s original musical compositions.

With Dr. Barnhouse at the height of his popularity, Tenth was characterized even more exclusively as a “preaching” church. Music became more an indentured servant than a handmaiden. According to previous accounts, Barnhouse rid the church of its pipe organ, drained the music budget, and banished any idea of having a choir.<sup>9</sup> However, this is not the full story. In truth, Barnhouse loved the pipe organ—which was used regularly during his early years at Tenth—but it had fallen into such disrepair that the Session voted to disassemble it. Removing the organ did not go over well with everyone in the congregation, and efforts were made to raise enough money to make the necessary repairs. However, the repairs were never made, perhaps because the organ was—as the Trustees put it—“entirely out of use.” In 1946 the pipe organ was removed and replaced with a Hammond Organ that Mr. Walter H. Dilworth had purchased from Wanamaker’s department store for \$5000.

The congregation made its first attempt to purchase a new pipe organ in 1952, when Bob Grasberger chaired a committee “to induce other members of the church to pledge enough money to reach the \$25,000 required to purchase the organ as per provisions of a former resolution.” The resolution read as follows: “That the meeting now in session hereby instruct the Board of Trustees to proceed with the purchase and installation of a pipe organ for a sum not to exceed \$45,000, if and when signed pledges to the amount of \$25,000 have been received.” The following April the congregation called for an appraisal of the four-manual Casavant organ put up for sale by the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. The congregation also wanted to know if the Moeller company, which made the original bid for the reactivation and installation of the pipe organ, was still willing to do the work for \$35,000. If so, the church was prepared to offer not more than \$5,500 for the organ. By February 1953 pledges totaled more than \$20,000, and the congregation made a formal bid. Unfortunately, by then the First Presbyterian Church

had already sold the organ to someone else. Seeing no alternatives, the Trustees returned the monies they had raised.

Pursuing a pipe organ was in keeping with Dr. Barnhouse's musical interests. Barnhouse was a renaissance man who wanted a more prominent music program and regularly exhorted evangelicals "to rise above artistic philistinism."<sup>10</sup> He prized the arts, loved singing hymns, and played the piano for personal enjoyment. He also encouraged his family to experience music by taking piano lessons, attending operas and The Philadelphia Orchestra, singing hymns as a family, and hosting Jorge Bolet, the soon-to-be famous pianist who was then studying at the Curtis Institute. Barnhouse also tried to encourage his church to appreciate excellent music. After one trip abroad he suggested acquiring the pipe organ from the Erlen Theatre in Philadelphia, but the people of Tenth resisted. In the past he had convinced them to put their money into missions rather than into any "frills," and they balked at the expense. This was one of the few times that the congregation said "no" to Barnhouse. His primary motivation was not primarily musical, but evangelistic, and he viewed music as a means to save souls. He also wanted his good friend Robert Elmore to come to Tenth as organist and concert director, but Elmore declined because the church had no real organ for him to play.<sup>11</sup>

Some have said that the decline of the music program could be explained by Barnhouse's neglect, but there is little evidence of this. In fact, there was real consistency in having a paid organist and soloist performing sacred classical church music throughout his pastorate. Still, one wonders why the music budget did not increase for more than 30 years. But as Elmore noted in his 1980 annual report, it was Barnhouse who taught him that Jesus Christ "sings" with us according to Hebrews, chapter two. And when Barnhouse wrote about church music in the bulletin, his desire was to teach the proper perspective on worship for a church musician:

Church music can be anything from reverent worship of God to carnal exhibitionism, and in musical quality may be anything from a joyful noise to an artistic musical presentation. It goes without saying that a good voice is better than a bad one for church music, provided the hearts are equally yielded to the Lord. If the hearts are not yielded, the curse on unspiritual music is stated very definitely in the Bible. It is hateful to the Lord. Of many a cantata and many an Easter day it might well be written, "I hate, I despise your feast days . . . take thou away from me the noise of thy songs" (Amos 5:21, 23).

These thoughts were emphasized recently in the choir room of a certain church. The pastor had typewritten a letter addressed "To the Members of the Choir." . . . He wrote in part: "You can be a great asset to the worship hour when you realize your first duty is not to sing but to worship. . . . Let this hour be a holy hour and let your example be wholesome and helpful. Cease everything that would distract from the purpose of the hour, which is to worship God in the beauty of holiness."<sup>12</sup>

Although records are sketchy from 1952-57, Gordon Curtis was listed as Minister of Music, a unique title in the history of Tenth. If Barnhouse had banished any thought of a choir it surely was not evident when Mr. Curtis started a choir to sing the morning offertory each week and to rehearse on Thursday evenings following Prayer Meeting. This choir tackled many great, traditional anthems, including works by Stainer, Mozart, Bortniansky, Bach, Goss, and Grieg. The choir began to sing in both morning and evening worship in September of 1959, but ceased to exist after Mr. Curtis's departure at the end of the year. Rodney McWherter was the staff

soloist up to this time. Upon McWherter's leaving near the end of November 1958, many different soloists were engaged—a new pattern for the church. A quartet of singers was prominent by 1960, and by 1962 a quartet and octet were sometimes heard as remnants of the earlier choir.

### **The Di Gangi Years (1961-1967)**

During Mariano Di Gangi's six-year tenure as senior minister, the music program changed from what it had been under his predecessor. Di Gangi was troubled by the atrophied state of the music ministry and initiated several things to enliven it. The music program was seriously underfunded, as is evidenced by the fact that in 1961 more was spent on advertising than on the entire music program (salaries, instrument maintenance, and music supplies included). This pattern held true through 1964.

One thing Di Gangi desired was to get, once again, a grand pipe organ for the church. To help get around entrenched critics, he proposed to call it the "Donald Grey Barnhouse Memorial Organ." Funds were collected into 1965, and a special appeal was printed regularly in the bulletin, but the congregation apparently did not agree with the need or urgency of this project. As of the end of 1965, \$3,800 existed in this account, but a year later only \$677 more had been given. The congregational thinking was that there was no need for an elaborate music program, so in 1967 these funds were disbursed to other endeavors, notably the building fund and renovations to Fellowship Hall.

While Di Gangi never got his pipe organ, he made other inroads to establishing a positive attitude toward church music. In 1964 he had the following statement printed at the beginning of each bulletin: "Let the Organ Prelude be your call to worship. Prepare for the service by meditation on the words of today's hymns, and by prayer for the pastors, your fellow worshippers, and the world." Previously Di Gangi had added "Organ Interlude/Silent Prayer" to the order of service before the sermon and following the reading of the Scripture text. He brought in a string quartet from the Curtis Institute for Good Friday services. He invited touring choral groups to sing on several occasions, including the Student Nurses' Choir of the Presbyterian Hospital, the Philadelphia College of Bible Chorale, the Columbia Bible College Choir, and the Gordon College Chorale. These choirs sang multiple anthems in either morning or evening services, with a sermon or meditation offered by Di Gangi. He also re-implemented a Song Service to begin Sunday evening worship services—three hymns each week. To supplement the existing hymnal, he introduced a new one: *Inspiring Hymns*, which featured more gospel-style hymnody. The use of this second hymnal gradually increased until it was used almost exclusively in the evening service.

In 1965 Miss Miriam Zito (later Mrs. Zito-Hermosa), mezzo soprano, began serving as staff soloist and evening music director. Walter Emery joined her as a staff soloist in 1967. During this period concerts were advertised in the bulletin such as one given by Daniel Majeske (Cleveland Orchestra) and William Dawson (a Curtis Institute student). The Campus and Career Club started a choir in February 1965 and rehearsed John Stainer's oratorio, *The Crucifixion*. As of Di Gangi's resignation in 1967 there were no soloists on staff, but Zito was once again the evening music director. November of that year marked Nancy Nicks's first appearance as soloist, and by the time James Boice came, Miss Nicks was the soloist for all regular services, morning and evening.

## A New Era in Music (1968-1985)

When James Montgomery Boice became senior minister he purposed to revolutionize the music program. He began initiating changes at the end of 1968, when Lily Orr retired after twenty-five years of service (the longest serving Tenth staff musician) that spanned three pastorates. On March 2, 1969, Dr. Robert Hall Elmore became Organist, with Joel Krott serving as Assistant Organist. Nancy Nicks and Miriam Zito were named “morning soloist” and “evening soloist” respectively. In 1968 the entire budget line for music had been \$2,724. For 1969 this increased to \$20,498, paid for by significant donations toward the launch of an enhanced music ministry.

Under Boice’s leadership, and with help from elder Robert Grasberger, the Session had hired one of America’s most prominent organists and church composers. Grasberger had known Dr. Elmore from their college days at the University of Pennsylvania and was aware of his availability following a thirteen-year tenure in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Elmore was not a stranger, having played for the wedding of Donald and Margaret Barnhouse, and having reviewed recordings for *Eternity* magazine, of which Barnhouse was editor. As a young man Elmore studied piano, organ, and composition for eight years with the famous organist and composer Pietro Yon. He earned the Licentiate degree from London’s Royal Academy of Music in three subjects: organ, concert piano, and piano accompaniment—an achievement unprecedented in the institution’s history. He also held two honorary doctorates for his outstanding contributions to church music. Prior to service at Tenth, Elmore held posts at Central Baptist Church, Wayne, PA (1925-33); Arch Street Methodist, Philadelphia (1933-38); Holy Trinity Episcopal on Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia (1939-55); and Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem, PA (1955-68). He brought a rich performing background as well as intimate familiarity with Moravian church music.

One of Elmore’s conditions in coming to Tenth was that the church invest in a good organ, which it did with the purchase of a four-manual Allen Organ at the cost of \$64,000. The new Allen organ was paid off within three years. Many organists questioned Elmore’s decision to come to Tenth because of its woefully inadequate music program for an artist of his stature, and in particular, his decision to endorse an electronic instrument. However, Elmore was aware that this was the means of birthing a serious church music program at Tenth, particularly in light of the congregation’s views about spending money on music. The largest electronic instrument in the world at that time, the new Allen organ was designed to Elmore’s specifications and touted by the company as “the Elmore organ.” It was installed in June of 1970 in the choir loft at the back of the sanctuary, with speakers in the former organ chambers and antiphonal speakers in the pulpit area cleverly hidden beneath the apse. A series of three dedicatory concerts was given, featuring Elmore playing Bach, Reubke, Bingham, Duruflé, and Elmore.

Boice and Elmore brought immediate and long-lasting changes to Tenth’s music ministry. From Elmore’s first Sunday (which coincided with Dr. Boice’s first day on the air with “The Bible Study Hour”) the bulletin was noticeably different, having all the preludes and postludes listed. The first Sunday Elmore played Bach for the morning and Mendelssohn for the evening. And so it began—organ music of Franck, Messiaen, Karg-Elert, Buxtehude and many other masters brilliantly executed and regularly heard at Seventeenth and Spruce. Elmore expanded the soloists’ repertoire to include Schubert, Sowerby, Handel, and Bach. His second Sunday celebrated the introduction of *The Trinity Hymnal* to Tenth Church. On the fourth Sunday the

bulletin included a lengthy explanation of the organ service music for the week, written by Elmore. By Good Friday/Easter all texts (solo and choral) appeared in the bulletin, without any deletions. On May 11, 1969, there was a performance (in the evening service) of the Fauré *Requiem* by the Philadelphia Academy of Music Chorus with Krott on the organ, and then Boice preached. Musical prominence of this kind was groundbreaking for Tenth Church. By 1973 the music ministry was considered significant enough to merit a page in the annual report. Here Elmore thanked the regular and occasional choir members and stated his gratitude for contributions toward music at Tenth from both inside and outside the church. He then wrote, "But above all we ask for your prayers, that our ministry may be not only artistically valid but filled with and energized by the Holy Spirit."

It was Elmore who founded the choir in 1969 and engaged paid soloists as section leaders. Among these were John Corbin, tenor, Marjorie Camp, soprano (later replaced by Carol Corbin), and Albert Smith, baritone, as well as Mimi Zito-Hermosa, mezzo soprano, and later, Nancy (Nicks) Bucklin. Soloists would sing in the morning while the choir participated in the evening, a unique arrangement among church choirs. This permitted area singers who were members elsewhere to participate in Elmore's choir, which numbered 40 singers by 1973 and 60 by 1976. The choir rehearsed initially on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm, but soon began the tradition of rehearsing on Monday evenings (rare among church choirs) and Sunday evenings before the worship service, a practice that continues to the present day.

On Christmas Eve 1969, Elmore had brass and percussion join him as his cantata *Wondrous, Divine Child* was sung by the choir and soloists with Donald Barnhouse, Jr. as narrator. Christmas Eve 1970 marked the first service of lessons and carols with five choral anthems. Boice preached at these services until 1974, when he expanded them to include eight anthems and more Scripture readings but omitted the sermon. For Boice, the Christmas Eve Candlelight and Carol Service was one of the most significant services of the year. He loved Christmas and chose Christmas carols for worship throughout December, whereas his predecessors selected them only for the Sunday preceding Christmas Day. Elmore almost always began the Christmas Eve service with either Holst's "Christmas Day" or Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on Christmas Carols," and a chorus from his cantata *The Incarnate Word* was often included.

The Tenth Choir presented four concerts annually, in addition to the special service each Christmas Eve. Sunday afternoon programs at 5:00 pm were a means of outreach to the unchurched community, which might come to hear a choral masterwork like Handel's *Samson*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Brahms' *A German Requiem*, Liszt's *Thirteenth Psalm*, Debussy's *The Prodigal Son*, or Rossini's *Stabat Mater*. Following the performance there was a buffet supper and then the evening worship service. And there were performances of many of Elmore's own compositions as well, his cantata *Psalm of Redemption* being a particular favorite. By 1970 there was a Junior Choir, and April 1971 witnessed Tenth's first Latin text sung by the choir, with an English translation provided in the bulletin.

Elmore frequently engaged brass and percussion players from The Philadelphia Orchestra to play with him for special services, as well as members of the Concerto Soloists Chamber Orchestra and students from the Curtis Institute. Elmore had the respect of these players because he was the organist for The Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. He also brought string soloists to Tenth as well as brass players, and in later years, flute and classical guitar. Preludes to both morning and evening services were 15 minutes in length.

Elmore always had at least one assistant organist working with him, many of whom went on to considerable posts of their own. Among these assistants were Joel Krott (1969-71), Norman D. Mackenzie (1971-81), and Jeffrey J. Shuman (1981-90). Elmore was noted for his hymn improvisations and modulations, paying particular attention to the text of the hymns. His rendition of “Onward, Christian Soldiers” gained attention for his treatment of its march-like character, complete with flourishes and multiple key changes. Elmore contributed numerous articles, reviews and essays for journals and magazines, including *Eternity* magazine, where he reviewed recordings on a monthly basis from 1958 through 1965, and in which he repeatedly urged excellence in sacred music. Many of his essays dealt with the relationship between theology and music, with such titles as “Art for the Lord’s Sake” and “The Place of Music in the Christian Life.”<sup>13</sup>

For the children’s choir Elmore wrote an anthem at the request of director Millie Stockdale. Elmore’s music was widely published, especially choral anthems, cantatas, and music for organ and brass. His *It Began at Breakfast* was the first American opera to be televised. In 1979 the Tenth Choir performed Elmore’s *Psalms of a Pilgrim People* for the church’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Leopold Stokowski (The Philadelphia Orchestra) and Frank Black (NBC Symphony) were among the major conductors who programmed Elmore’s orchestral and choral compositions. A number of his pieces are still performed regularly, and many of the organ works have been recorded by his prodigious student, Robert Plimpton.

In conjunction with the birth of the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology (PCRT) in 1974, the Westminster Brass assumed a prominent place in the music ministry. By 1987 it was a resident performing ensemble at Tenth Church, enlivening morning worship once each month (September thru June) and playing for special services on Christmas Eve and Easter, as well as at PCRT and other events. The five long-standing members of the Westminster Brass include James Hala (director), Dr. Kenneth Laudermilch, Dr. Dan McCartney, Thomas Elliott, and Dr. Timothy Witmer.

Dr. Stuart Sacks, who served on the Tenth staff as Assistant to the Minister from 1975, was the force behind founding the Tenth Chamber Orchestra that same year. The Chamber Orchestra was comprised largely of college students from area music schools. Two of its stated purposes were to provide an outlet of ministry for talented young people and to bring unsaved musicians into the church to hear the gospel (“edification of Christians and evangelization of the lost”). Several musicians came to know the Lord through participation in this ensemble, which played at special events like PCRT and about three times annually during worship services. Mark Laycock conducted the ensemble from 1978 until 1985 and in addition to Mozart, Handel, and Haydn symphonies and concertos, enjoyed programming late 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century composers such as Debussy, Strauss, Stravinsky, Copland, Prokofiev, and Delibes. Laycock increased the group’s appearances to five times annually. Numerous Tenth musicians were involved, as well as players from outside the church. Although unpaid, the musicians came out in good number. The only reported conflict was that some would not return because the congregation talked through their prelude music!

From 1983 to 1986 a Bible study comprised of artists from various disciplines met on a weekly basis. This eclectic group of individuals, which was started by Mark Laycock and Marshall Taylor, forged strong relationships and contributed to the strength of the arts community at

Tenth. They alternated topics by week, had guest speakers on Christianity and music, and did chapter studies from books in the Bible.

### **Elmore's Worthy Successors (1985-2000)**

Robert Elmore died suddenly on the afternoon of Sunday, September 22, 1985 after playing the morning worship service. Within a short time Dr. Boice called his old friends Marlan and Kathy Allen, who immediately uprooted from Chicago and moved to Philadelphia to fill the need. Bringing over 30 years' experience as a church musician in New York, California, and Illinois, Marlan began serving as interim organist the Sunday after Elmore died. He accepted the Session's appointment as Organist and Music Director at the end of the year, and with the church's subsequent switch to two morning services, had increased responsibilities.

Allen made a point of not having paid section leaders in the choir, which he felt allowed a better tonal blend and promoted a better *esprit de corps*. In 1987 he had fifteen new vocalists sing solos in the morning services. He did a fine job of maintaining the overall quality of the music program, although the choir's repertoire changed. The big choral works and concerts did not continue; however, Allen used the choir more during regular services. At the end of his first complete year he outlined some of the changes: "1. We have moved to a totally volunteer choir, with no more paid section leaders and additional paid 'ringers.' 2. We have introduced seasonal 'mini-concerts' of 10-15 minutes duration within the evening service, scheduled on Communion Sundays, and have retained the Sunday afternoon 5:00 pm Annual Spring Music Festival. 3. The choir is singing two anthems instead of one each Sunday [evening], the texts being scripture, almost exclusively. 4. Four 'single occasion' choirs have rehearsed and presented anthems in Sunday morning services." In addition, a greater variety of vocal and instrumental soloists participated in morning offertories to, as Allen put it, "encourag[e] the talents of our own proficient singers and instrumentalists."

During his five-year tenure Allen expanded the music program by adding a Men's Choir and considerably increasing the choral library. The Men's Choir began in 1988 with about fifteen members and sang one Sunday morning each month. It rehearsed in the Tower Choir Room (which also served as the music office) following the second morning service. Allen also had portions of the organ expanded, digitized, and renovated. This was paid for by a single anonymous gift, and in 1988 the organ console was rebuilt, redesigned, and converted to solid-state electronics. Allen also restarted informal Hymn Sings on the new Bechstein grand piano as the prelude to evening worship. The Westminster Brass took a more significant role during his tenure as well, particularly from 1987, when the quintet began playing at Tenth monthly.

Allen brought Daniel Doody (Howe) (1987-89) and then Douglas Wimer (1989-90) on as his assistants. Mr. Doody was Assistant Organist and directed, briefly, a Motet Choir. The Children's Choir during these years was directed by Georgia Hogeland and accompanied by Karen Sharrar. In 1988 Gloria Hague became the director. The Children's Choir, numbering about 15 members, rehearsed between the morning services in the Tower Music Room and sang six times a year. Mr. Allen left Tenth after Easter 1990 and went on to serve at St. John's Episcopal Church in Huntingdon Valley.

Tenth's next master musician was Robert Carwithen, who taught organ at Westminster Choir College for more than 45 years and who was Organist-Choirmaster of First Presbyterian Church,

Germantown, for over 25 years (1960-86). Carwithen was a student of Alexander McCurdy at The Curtis Institute as well as Mme. Marie Madeleine Duruflé-Chevalier, André Isoir, and Xavier Darasse in France. He was the Wanamaker organist for three years (1960-62), and also served as Organist-Choirmaster at Wayne Presbyterian Church (1986-88) and then at First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia (1988-90).

During his seven-year tenure at Tenth, which began in December of 1990, Carwithen strengthened the adult choir. He brought with him not only years of church choir experience, but also years as conductor of the Westminster Symphonic Choir, where he prepared choruses for legendary conductors Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, and Leonard Bernstein, among others. Under Carwithen the Tenth choir grew again to more than 50 members. Carwithen reinstated Elmore's tradition of performing major choral works annually by conducting performances of *Creation*, *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Mass in G Minor* and *Lobegesang*, and the Rutter *Requiem*. He involved a large number of musicians in the music ministry and especially encouraged college-age musicians to participate. Carwithen was known for his exciting reharmonizations and energetic hymn playing, which Dr. Boice especially appreciated. In 1997 Carwithen and Boice transformed the Spring Choral Service into an integrated evening service of musical psalms, with Boice preaching.

Carwithen named choirs according to their role, with some overlapping members. Among these choirs were the Evening Choir, the Morning Choir, the Oratorio Choir, and the Choraliers (a small ensemble of 9-12 people that sang in the morning or evening until 1995). Carwithen arranged numerous anthems for the Tenth Men's Choir. With Boice he instituted an evening prelude of classical/sacred music called *Soli Deo Gloria*, which featured excellent Christian musicians playing and singing for God's glory from the front of the sanctuary. This was partially to compensate for the reduction of evening choir anthems from two to one per service to make way for Dr. Ryken's weekly "Window on the World." "Hymn Sings" were a regular part of this evening prelude, carrying on a tradition from earlier years.

The Children's Choir (from at least 1992-95) was directed by Gwen Griffith and accompanied by Evelyn Larter. The children sang about six times annually in morning worship services. From 1996-98, Deborah Rojas was its director. Evelyn Larter served in a variety of musical capacities during Carwithen's years at Tenth. She organized music for the Lenten Services, directed music for City Light, and served as substitute organist for worship services and weddings. Doug Wimer continued as an assistant for a while, but Carwithen generally preferred to conduct from the keyboard. He also took several aspiring church musicians under his wing to fulfill their undergraduate internship requirements.

### **New Directions in Music Ministry**

In the autumn of 1997 Carwithen asked Paul Jones to be his associate and then "stepped aside" at the end of the year, announcing his desire for Jones to become his successor. Jones was born in Canada and came to Pennsylvania for undergraduate study in Bible and music. In addition to theological training, he received degrees in piano performance, studying with Samuel Hsu, Martin Canin, Edward Auer, and Menahem Pressler. His doctorate in choral conducting from Indiana University included a thesis on the theology of J. S. Bach as displayed in his Leipzig cantatas. Jones also studied voice, composition, organ, and chamber music.

After serving a four-month period as interim while a search was conducted, Jones was called by Session as Organist and Music Director beginning the first Sunday in April 1998. At age 28 he was the youngest music director in Tenth's history—a new direction for the church since his three immediate predecessors were all veteran church musicians. Boice made a point of reminding Session of the fact that he himself, like Barnhouse before him and Philip Ryken after him, were called to Tenth Church at a similarly young age. Jones previously had served at Chambers-Wylie Memorial Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia (1989-1992); The Blue Church (Lownes Free Church) Springfield, PA (1993-1995), and Arlington Methodist Church, Bloomington, IN (1992-93 and 1995-97).

Since 1998 the music ministry has expanded in several ways. The staff has increased considerably, the budget has doubled, and the role of the music director has been enlarged. Dr. Jones regularly attends pastoral staff meetings and retreats and speaks about hymnody each week to the children attending Bible School. He has given sessions on music and worship to various groups in the church including parishes, adult classes, Tenth College Union, the Pastoral Ministry Roundtable, and new members' classes. He speaks regularly at conferences for pastors, musicians, and educators on the role of church music and musicians and has written articles, book chapters, and radio programs on similar topics.

About 125 musicians now make up the church's musical roster. All three choirs have grown (Tenth-65 members, Men's-35, Children's-50), and a chamber orchestra was reborn in 1999—the Tenth Chamber Players. This group is comprised primarily of Tenth members and college students from area music programs who attend Tenth church, and it plays for morning worship services bimonthly. Themed hymn services, presented once monthly, have replaced hymn sings during the evening prelude. An annual Reformation Hymn Festival began in the year 2000, as Boice and Jones had planned. This was the occasion for the first use of their hymnal, *Hymns for a Modern Reformation*. The Festival was structured around the five “solas” of the Reformation and successive years focused on one “sola” in rotation.

Each year the Spring Choral Service includes choral masterworks as it did with Elmore and Carwithen, but with full orchestral accompaniment. These services are fully integrated worship services where choral music, hymns, and sermon align on one topic. Programs in recent years have centered on scripture-based settings of the *Gloria*, *Magnificat*, *Sanctus*, and *Te Deum*. The Fauré *Requiem* was performed at a Hope concert on May 1, 2001, in memory of James Montgomery Boice. The choir still primarily sings at evening services as it has since Elmore founded it, although it has an expanded role in Communion services.

In 2002 the Tenth Concert Series was launched as an outreach into the cultural community of Philadelphia. The same year a music program website ([www.tenth.org/music](http://www.tenth.org/music)) was posted. New instruments have been purchased, including percussion instruments and four pianos. At this writing a harpsichord and pipe organ are part of current planning. Tenth Choir members participated in a choral missions trip in 2002 to Odessa, Ukraine. A Sunday evening “singing school” for children ages 4-12 began in September 2003 to provide solid musical education for young people from Tenth and elsewhere.

As one of the few conservative, evangelical churches in the United States with a traditional, classical approach to sacred music, Tenth wants to help other churches, musicians, and ministries offer music of the highest order to our Creator. Many churches are embracing a return

to great church music but have limited experience in doing so. The contemporary music movement affords little in the way of musical and theological substance, particularly in the biblical demand for beauty; yet churches with Reformation heritage have more than 500 years of excellent church music on which to draw. Elmore put it well in his annual report for 1983:

Our purpose is to show forth the praise and glory of God with music of variety and beauty, both instrumental and vocal. For some reason, in this country there is a tradition that if a church is evangelical and the truth is preached, it is coupled with inferior music; liberal churches often have better music. This is not the case at Tenth. The gospel is preached with power from one end of the auditorium. It is sung and played with power from the other end. The greatest music ever written does not begin to exhaust the greatness of our God. But it is the least we can do while here on earth.

It is incumbent upon those who have been blessed with a wonderful musical heritage—both from the Reformation and from our own congregational history—to share it with others. Dr. Boice noted that periods of real Christian reformation have always witnessed great hymnody and music accompanying the biblical preaching. This is our desire and prayer for the music ministry at Tenth: to be part of a Reformation within Christian worship, alongside the clear teaching of the Word, to the praise and glory of God alone.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank the following persons for their assistance with interviews, information, and editing: Manfred O. Garibotti, who served for 50 years as an elder; Gordon Palmer, who served as a trustee and then elder from 1961; Nancy Bucklin, soloist for many years; Robert Carwithen, former organist and music director; Hughes Oliphant Old, Tenth member and Princeton Seminary professor for access to the Boardman hymnal; Barbara T. Harder, Dennis & Cheryl Sanfaçon and Martin Troutman, long-serving choir members; Linda Boice, member since 1968 and wife of former senior minister James Montgomery Boice; Russell Bird and Dot Boersma for research assistance; Elizabeth Mosebrook, who found the helpful article on Louis Benson; and Philip Moyer and Philip Ryken, who did the final editing. The author also acknowledges the assistance of staff at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> *Hymns of Praise*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1867).

<sup>3</sup> Information and quotations come from Session minutes at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia.

<sup>4</sup> Address at Memorial Service in the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, PA, on November 2, 1930. Published in *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.*, Vol. XIV (December, 1930), p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> See Morgan P. Noyes, “Louis F. Benson, Hymnologist,” in *The Papers of the Hymn Society XIX*, James Rawlings Sydnor, ed., which has provided much of the information given here on Benson.

<sup>6</sup> See also *Handbook to The Hymnal*, ed. by William Chalmers Covert and Calvin Weiss Laufer (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1935).

<sup>7</sup> See *Making God’s Word Plain: One Hundred and Fifty Years in the History of Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia*, ed. by James Montgomery Boice (Philadelphia: Tenth Presbyterian Church, 1979), *Making God’s Word Plain*, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> From the 1910 Session minutes at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia.

<sup>9</sup> See *Making God’s Word Plain*, p. 93.

<sup>10</sup> Russell T. Hitt, “Barnhouse of Philadelphia” *Eternity*, Vol. 26 (April, 1975), p. 17, as quoted in *Making God’s Word Plain*, p. 68.

<sup>11</sup> Details about Dr. Barnhouse’s involvement in music and the arts come from Donald Grey Barnhouse, Jr., in personal correspondence to Paul S. Jones, April 4, 2003.

---

<sup>12</sup> Tenth Church Bulletin, October 17, 1943.

<sup>13</sup> See Pauline Fox, abstract of "The Robert Elmore Collection at the University of Pennsylvania," a paper read at the Northeast Chapter of the College Music Society (April 17, 1993), p. 4.