

Blending Hymns with Modern Worship: Don Chapman

Should hymns be used in contemporary worship? Yes, says Sally Morgenthaler in her book *Worship Evangelism*.

Aside: Modern Hymn Movement: Gettys, CityAlight, Sovereign Grace Music, Matt Boswell & Matt Papa, Stuart Townend, and Indelible Grace. Each contributes theologically rich, congregationally friendly songs that stand apart from mainstream megachurch worship trends.

If you must use traditional hymn arrangements (hymnal): Isolate them. Traditional hymnal arrangements don't work with guitars and praise band, so they don't fit well in the middle of a contemporary worship set. Hymnal arrangements are best used in isolated spots:

- Call to Worship
- Offering
- Benediction

Horizontal hymns work best with contemporary worship as opening songs, offertories and benedictions. *A Mighty Fortress* talks about God.

Vertical hymns like *I Surrender All* and *Holy, Holy, Holy* work well at the end of a praise set. An upbeat version of *Come, Thou Fount* can open your set.

3 ways churches are using hymns today:

1. Contemporary arrangements.

Hymncharts.com (everything) Worshiphymns.com (modern arrangements only)

2. Hymn hybrids: traditional hymn melodies with new, added choruses.

The Wonderful Cross / Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

3. Traditional hymn texts with new melodies.

Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me) Casting Crowns

It Is Well (Peace Like a River) **FREE: hymncharts.com/expo**

This Is Christ the King (What Child Is This) **FREE: hymncharts.com/expo**

Changing or updating words: (Adapt public-domain hymn texts freely. Don't alter copyrighted lyrics!)

Hymn texts are not sacred: they vary greatly from denomination to denomination!

Wrong:

My Jesus, I love You, I know You are mine,
For You all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior are Thou:
If ever I loved You, my Jesus, 'tis now.

"Thou" can't be changed because it's a part of the rhyme scheme.

Right:

Have Your own way, Lord! Have Your own way!
You are the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Your will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

No archaic words in the rhyme scheme.

Switch tunes:

Check out your hymn tune index in the back of most hymnals. Example: *Come Thou Fount with Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* (both have a meter of 8.7.8.7.D.) The "D" stands for doubled, meaning that the four-line pattern of 8 syllables, 7 syllables, 8 syllables, and 7 syllables is repeated twice, resulting in a verse of eight lines.

Tell their stories! Hymndex.com for bios, Hymncharts.com for hymn histories, Worship planning at Worshiphymns.com (call to worship, blending suggestions).

Music Evolution: My, how times have changed!

- Folk-Praise Roots (Jesus Movement): 1969–1983 / Seek Ye First, I Love You Lord, As the Deer
- Label Led Live Recordings: 1984–1995 / Don Moen, *Give Thanks, God With Us, Shout to the Lord*
- Pop/Rock Worship: 1996–2003 / Paul Baloche, Sonicflood, Delirious
- Arena Anthems: 2004–2012 / Soaring hooks for big rooms / Hillsong United, Tomlin, Passion
- Church Brands: 2013–2019 / longer forms, dynamic builds, spontaneous moments. Bethel, Elevation, Jesus Culture
- Collab Era: 2020-Present / cross-ministry albums, Elevation, Maverick City Music, Brandon Lake is everywhere :)

How I've Changed My Style: *All Creatures of Our God and King*: **FREE: hymncharts.com/expo/**

- Repetitive chord patterns
- More minor chords
- All worship band (cello / violin for color)
- Ambient pads (synth and/or guitars)
- Cut the tags 🎵 (*Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faaaaaaithfulness*)

My top 4 tips for making hymns sound contemporary:

1. Change the key. Hymnal arrangements take the melody too high. Lower the key if possible. Avoid Eb, Db, flats - stick to C, D, E, F, G, A (guitar friendly).
2. Streamline the chord structure. Classical hymnal harmonization usually has a different chord on each beat - bad for guitars.
3. Substitute minor chords when possible.
4. Avoid the 5th (i.e. in the key of C major, the 5th is G)

Some hymns just won't work in modern worship: *How Sweet and Awful is the Place* (Isaac Watts 1707)

*Here every bowel of our God 🎵
With soft compassion rolls;
Here peace and pardon bought with blood
Is food for dying souls.*

Start with the top hymns:

<i>Amazing Grace</i>	<i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i>	<i>Fairest Lord Jesus</i>
<i>Blessed Assurance</i>	<i>It Is Well with My Soul</i>	<i>Doxology</i>
<i>Old Rugged Cross</i>	<i>Be Thou My Vision</i>	<i>Come Thou Fount</i>
<i>Just As I Am</i>	<i>What a Friend We Have in Jesus</i>	<i>A Mighty Fortress</i>
<i>Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee</i>	<i>I Surrender All</i>	<i>Crown Him with Many Crowns</i>
<i>Praise to the Lord the Almighty</i>	<i>All Hail the Power</i>	<i>Great Is Thy Faithfulness</i>

Song Pairings (Hymn Links)

Great Things celebrates God's mighty **acts** ("You free every captive..."). **Great Is Thy Faithfulness** confesses God's unchanging **attributes**. Use the move from what God does to who God is. Open your worship with the upbeat *Great Things*, close your set with *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*. **TIP: Use hymndex.com for a quick hymn lyrics search!**

Holy Forever → *Holy, Holy, Holy* *Gratitude* → *Doxology* *Trust In God (Carnes)* → *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*
Firm Foundation (He Won't) → *The Solid Rock* *Same God* → *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*

➔ **FREE SHEET MUSIC DOWNLOADS FOR THIS CLASS: <https://www.hymncharts.com/expo/>**