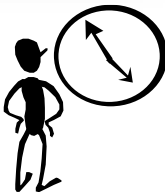


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### Time of Assembly



#### **Sunday:**

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
(every other week)	

#### **Wednesday:**

Bible Study	6:30 p. m.
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## Reflecting on "Hoods in My Hymnal"

By Matthew W. Bassford

The other day, Steve Wolfgang sent me a link to this article, "Hoods in My Hymnal." In it, the author points out that James D. Vaughan, founding father of the Southern gospel genre of hymnody (though not the author of "Love Lifted Me", despite what the article implies) was a leading figure in the local Ku Klux Klan. James Rowe (who was the author of "Love Lifted Me") wrote racist lyrics for temperance-movement songs.

This is not terribly surprising. We are talking about Southern gospel, after all, a worship-music movement that flourished in the states of the former Confederacy a hundred years ago. By modern standards, both the ones who wrote those hymns and the ones who originally sang them were dyed-in-the-wool racists. The author implies that we need to "have a conversation" about whether those hymns should remain in the repertoire, the kind of conversation that ends with things getting canceled.

Really, though, the issue that the article raises is much larger than racism. How do we handle hymns that were written by people with significant spiritual problems? From the perspective of New Testament Christianity, the most famous hymnists of all time come with baggage that is as bad or even worse.

Isaac Watts, the author of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and many other great hymns, was a hyper-Calvinist minister. Charles Wesley, who wrote "Love Divine", was the brother and partner of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church. Among modern writers, Keith and Kristyn Getty, the authors of "In Christ Alone", are staunch and vocal Calvinists. I could say much the same about the authors of literally hundreds of the hymns in our repertoire.

Scripturally speaking, is the false teacher to be preferred to the racist?

One response is to say, “We should not sing such things.” Unless we approve of your life, we aren’t going to sing your hymn. However, if we follow through on such a conviction, our repertoire shrinks by at least 95 percent. Everything from “Abide with Me” to “As the Deer” — gone. Off to the bonfire, it all goes!

I think most brethren would consider such a solution a trifle. . . extreme. The alternative, which is what all of us do in practice, is to separate the hymn from the hymnist. I don’t have to agree with everything Isaac Watts stood for to sing “When I Survey.” I only have to agree with “When I Survey.” Nor, indeed, am I endorsing anything about Isaac Watts other than the words that I am singing.

So too, I think, with Southern gospel hymns written by authors with murky pasts. Yes, they believed and in some cases wrote some awful things. However, if our minds are on the human author when we sing a hymn, our minds are in the wrong place.

Those hymns are not memorials to Confederate generals or leaders of the KKK. They are memorials to God. If we use them for their intended purpose, we are glorifying Him. To that, what Scriptural objection can be raised?

## Once for All Delivered

By Terry Wane Benton

*"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3).*

This last phrase means the faith, the teaching we are called to believe, has been delivered and it is once for all people and all time delivered. This was affirmed by Judas before the first century came to a close. Peter said “*all things pertaining to life and godliness*” had already been given (II Peter 1:3). There was no waiting for later church tradition to complete the needed knowledge. It was complete already! Paul affirmed to the brethren at Colossi that they were already “*complete in Christ*” (Colossians 2:10). Later human traditions would not complete them. They already had all the needed resources. The faith was once for all time delivered to the saints in the first century. Later centuries and traditions would not add to the completion. Paul said that the scriptures made the man of God “*completely furnished*” (II Timothy 3:16-17) unto every good work. Later traditions would not complete the incomplete man of God. All was provided and completely furnished the man of God in the first century.

This all means that what completely furnished the man of God in the first century would also completely furnish the man of God in the 21st century. It was “once for all” people and once for all time delivered to the saints.

All 27 books of the New Testament were in play in the first century and were

revealed and confirmed for the benefit of all people for all time. Jesus had promised His apostles that they would be guided “*into all truth*” (John 16:13). They would not die and leave that promise unfulfilled. It was promised to them and they saw that mission complete before they all died and that century ended. They saw it “once for all delivered.” They knew the brethren for all time to come had the complete testimony of Jesus providing the knowledge of Christ Jesus and “all things” pertaining to life and godliness (II Peter 1:2-4). What they had in the first-century scriptures was enough for all people for all time.

The apostles had declared “*the whole counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27), which means there were no missing parts that would later give a larger and improved version of God’s revelation. Paul got it by revelation of the Spirit and wrote it down for all to read and learn all that Paul knew, which was the whole counsel (Ephesians 3:3-5).

They had all they needed without the Quran that came five centuries later. They did not have the Book of Mormon, nor the creeds and traditions so vital to later churches like the Orthodox church or the Roman Catholic church. They did not need the Westminster Confession of Faith. They had all they needed in the scriptures. They only had the responsibility to “*contend earnestly for the faith*” that was once for all delivered. We don’t contend earnestly for the faith by compromising it and adding to it or trading it off for the doctrines and traditions of men. Believe, enough is provided in the Scriptures and then dedicate your heart and life to contending earnestly for it.

## My Friend, A. W. Dicus

By Rick Lanning

It was August 1971. My parents were with me that Sunday morning as we entered the Temple Terrace church building across the street from Florida College. I was entering my freshman year the very next day. I saw my dad start talking to someone he obviously knew from his past. He soon introduced him to me as one of his old college professors at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, Tennessee. “Rick, I want you to meet brother Dicus, my former physics teacher.” I politely said to this very old gray-haired man, “Hello sir, nice to meet you.” But I was far more interested in seeing if there were any pretty girls. Soon worship began. J. D. Evans was the song leader that day. He announced we would sing “Our God, He Is Alive.” I turned to the page. I happened to notice the writer of the song was some man named A. W. Dicus. We began singing this beautiful hymn. Suddenly I looked at my dad, who was singing while looking at brother Dicus. He looked at me and just smiled, then nodded as if to say, “Yes, he is the author.” Whoa. Now that’s pretty cool. I sat with him many times for the rest of that year. A grand man!

Aaron W. Dicus was born in 1888 near St. Louis, Missouri. His family soon

moved to Indiana where he spent his growing up years. He was born with an incredible curiosity for the sciences and his education and career moved in that direction from an early age. In 1912 he received his Bachelor's degree from Marion Normal College, then later was awarded the Master's and Doctorate degrees from the University of Indiana. He taught science in both high school and college for several years before becoming a science professor at Indiana University until 1930. He then accepted a professorship and was made Head of the Physics Department at Tennessee Tech University until 1950. During that time he became President of the Tennessee Academy of Science and a member of the Southern Association of Physicists.

He was a preeminent scientist who actually trained a number of the physicists who worked at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which helped develop the atomic bomb for the famous Manhattan Project. This helped end World War 2. His keen intellect, fueled by curiosity, led to his inventions of such things as the automobile turn signal, the electric pencil sharpener, the automobile speed governor (which limits how fast a car can drive), and the electric skill saw. So if you drive, write, or build things then your life has been impacted by this man more than you know.

I wanted to give you his technical background so that you would better appreciate some of the hymns he wrote late in his life. Brother Dicus was baptized at the age of 20 and remained a faithful Christian until his death in 1978. During his 70 years as a disciple of Christ, he made his life's priority, not the fame of an inventor, nor the notoriety of a scientist, or the prestige of a university professor, but as a preacher of the gospel. Nearly every Lord's day he would drive somewhere to preach. "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*" was his main vocation in life (Matthew 6:33). Having known him, I knew how well he loved God's word and studied it daily.

At the encouragement of his wife Flora, he spent the last years of his life writing gospel hymns. He wrote about 38, among them "Lord, I Believe" and "Our God, He Is Alive." He wrote them to counter our age of skepticism and secularism that shouts, "God is dead!" Dr. Dicus understood that just as an invention must have an inventor, so must creation have a Creator. He read Hebrews 3:3-4 and drew the natural conclusion that all rational people can clearly see. It says: "*For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*" Being a nationally recognized physicist he did not let his academic achievements override his common sense. A design must have a designer. Duh.

I saw old gospel meeting posters of him where he preached on the Evidence of God. He focused on scriptures like Romans 1:20-21, which reads, "*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful,*

*but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

This humble Christian, with a great scientific mind, saw no contradiction between the Bible and Science. Truth and Science are compatible. This led him to write two hymns which became popular in the Lord’s church and are now sung throughout the world.

## Lord, I Believe (©1970)

When we behold the wonders of creation, The flowers that bloom, the raindrops as they fall;

The spacious skies, and life’s perpetuation, We cannot doubt that God controlled it all.

(Chorus)

No finite mind by mortal calculation, could frame the truths revealed within His Word, In every trace of nature’s operation, Thy voice, O God, in mystery can be heard.

(Chorus)

When we perceive the state of alienation, in which the soul from Thee, O God, was lost, We must believe, by heaven’s ordination, our Lord redeemed and paid the bitter cost.

(Chorus)

Some days are filled with joy and expectation, some days are dark with cares we are beset,

In hours of joy, or hours of tribulation, be with us Lord, lest we, lest we, forget.

(Chorus)

**Chorus:** Lord I believe, yes I believe, I cannot doubt, or be deceived

The eye that sees each sparrow fall, His unseen hand is in it all.

## Our God, He Is Alive (©1966)

There is, beyond the azure blue; A God, concealed from human sight. He tinted skies with heav’nly hue, And framed the worlds with His great might.

(Chorus)

There was a long, long time ago, A God whose voice the prophets heard.

He is the God that we should know, Who speaks from His inspired word. (Chorus)

Secure, is life from mortal mind, God holds the germ within His hand, Though men may search, they cannot find, for God alone does understand. (Chorus)

Our God, whose Son upon a tree, A life was willing there to give, That He from sin might set man free, And evermore with Him could live. (Chorus)

**Chorus:** There is a God, He is alive, In Him we live and we survive; From dust our God created man, He is our God, the great I Am.

Go back and read the words again. Slowly. Carefully. Prayerfully. Let them sink in. Make them a personal creed (which simply means “I believe”). Say it, then sing it, “There **IS** a God! Lord, I **BELIEVE!**” I pray these two great hymns, from this one great man, will become trapped in your memory today and cause you to repeatedly sing your faith in a living God who is the great I AM. God will be listening, and smiling.