

New dictionary of hymnology published

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The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology – the first attempt for more than a hundred years to replace *A Dictionary of Hymnology*, the standard historical reference book for pre-twentieth century Christian hymns – will be published this October by the Canterbury Press.

The result of ten years' research by a team of editors headed by Professor J.R. Watson of the University of Durham and Dr Emma Hornby of the University of Bristol, the *Canterbury Dictionary* contains over 4,000 entries, totalling 2 million words, written by more than 300 authors from around the world, including the USA, Canada, South Korea, France, Brazil, New Zealand and Australia.

The Canterbury Dictionary covers hymns of the Judaeo-Christian tradition from the earliest years to those written today, with entries on individual hymns, authors from many countries, hymnals, hymn tunes and their composers.

The first [dictionary](#) devoted to the subject – *A Dictionary of Hymnology* – was published in 1892 and was the work of a Yorkshire vicar, John Julian (1839-1913) who then published an update in 1907. It filled two volumes and boasted more than 1,750 pages of entries containing biographical and historical notes on the history of hymns and hymn writers.

During the intervening 100 years or so a number of editors attempted an update, but, for various reasons, were unable to complete the task. Now, Professor Watson and Dr Hornby have brought the project to the point of publication.

Dr Hornby said: "It was an enormous challenge to get *The Canterbury Dictionary* to this stage, involving hundreds of experts from across the globe, dedicated to making the Dictionary as comprehensive and compelling as possible.

"It will be published online in the first instance to allow for additions and corrections – and for updates at regular intervals in the future. Hymn-writing doesn't stand still so the Dictionary will endeavour to represent the best of new hymnody as well as incorporating new discoveries relating to older subjects."

The new Dictionary will be an essential reference work for scholars of global hymnody, with information on the hymns of many countries and languages, and a strong emphasis on both the historical and the contemporary.

Dr Hornby said: "As well as being of interest to literary scholars, musicians, church historians and theologians, we hope the Dictionary will also delight all those who love hymns and want to know more about this rich and varied art form."

The Dictionary will be launched during an international conference on hymnology on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 October, co-hosted by the University of Bristol, St Mary Redcliffe Church and the New Room, John Wesley's Chapel in Broadmead.

Philip Burnett, PhD student at the University of Bristol and one of the conference organisers, said: "The New Room is a particularly apt place in which to hold such a conference. Charles Wesley, the co-founder of Methodism and writer of around 9,000 hymns, lived in Bristol – in Stokes Croft – and wrote many of his well-known and best-loved hymns here. He is widely regarded as the 'Father of Hymnody' which makes Bristol an important place in the world of hymnody."

The conference will feature an international line up of speakers including some of the world's most eminent hymnologists. It will be of interest to theologians, musicologists, scholars of literature and anyone involved in liturgy, hymns and hymnody.

The conference will conclude with a festal evensong celebrating the traditions and eras of hymnody at St Mary Redcliffe Church, Bristol on Sunday 20 October at 6.30pm.

More information: www.bris.ac.uk/arts/birtha/events/hymnology/

Provided by University of Bristol

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