

Let Justice Sing, by Paul Westermeyer

reviewed by [John Worst](#) in the [May 5, 1999](#) issue

Let Justice Sing

By Paul Westermeyer. Liturgical Press, 118 pp.

Paul Westermeyer explores the relationship of justice to hymnody in this slender volume loaded with keen insight and good advice. The book is part of a continuing series titled American Essays in Liturgy.

Westermeyer writes primarily as a pastor-liturgist, but also as a theologian, historian and musician. He analyzes references to issues of justice in 11 recent hymnals and examines the presence of justice themes throughout the history of the church's corporate worship and song. Scripture itself is full of calls to act justly, to love mercy, to respect the land. Especially in the Psalms does God demonstrate his deep concern for justice.

But does justice sing? Westermeyer finally answers this question rhetorically. Given God's history of dealing with his people justly as well as mercifully, and God's demands that his people do likewise with each other and the rest of creation, is it possible for justice *not* to be a theme of Christian hymnody? Isn't hymnody too integral a part of Christian life and corporate worship for it to neglect this theme?

Westermeyer continues to get at vital liturgical issues in his writing. He writes economically, in a clean, clear style. This book makes wonderful reading and will inform and delight clergy and laity alike.