

Books

NEAL CAMPBELL

Stanley R. McDaniel. **Servanthood of Song: Music, Ministry, and the Church in the United States.** Eugene: Cascade Books, 2024. ISBN: 978-1-6667-5593-0, 815 pp., \$37.90.

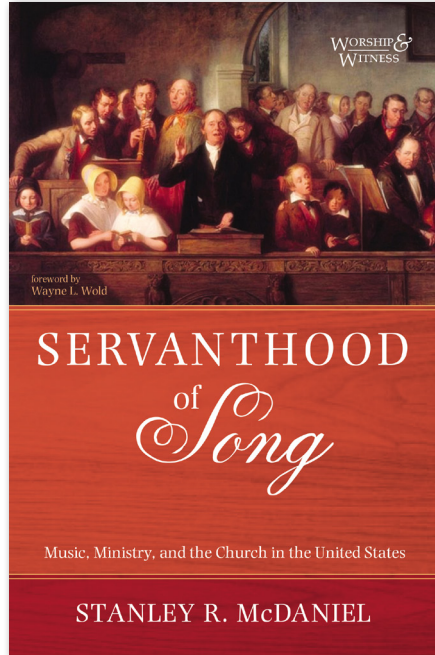
AUTHOR BEVERLY CLEARY famously said, “If you don’t see the book you want on the shelves, write it.” In his foreword, Wayne Wold writes that when Stanley McDaniel shared the manuscript of his book for review, he said something similar: “I have tried with *Servanthood of Song* to write the book I wish I had had in mentoring church musicians at a critical time in our history.”

This book is also one you will want to have, and maybe wish you had written for your own edification and knowledge, to share with your clergy or committee chairs, choristers of all ages, students, really anyone who doesn’t quite get the point or who wishes to understand more fully what is going on in the music ministry today and how we got here. It is remarkably complete for a single volume, although it does come in at 800-plus pages, including a comprehensive bibliography and index.

Published in 2024, this compendium represents not only the current state of church music and its history in America but also methodically places each historical topic covered (in this case, beginning with the 18th century) within the social and historical context of the era it represents. To me, this is one of this book’s great strengths and is something that sets it apart. It is an invaluable attribute to be able to document not only what was done and what happened, but to explain why simultaneously. This book is far more than just a historical account.

The author is a seasoned church musician and college professor, and he clearly focuses his work through the lens of a minister of music; his observations clearly align with the tasks we all face. In his prologue, he states:

Servanthood of Song was conceived based on several core beliefs arising



out of years toiling as a music ministry professional, a teacher of American music history and sacred music studies at the graduate level: That music in the church must be understood as a ministry largely different in focus from that of secular society.

I titled this book as I did because I believe music must be understood as a ministry of the church. All ministry is servanthood. All ministry is pastoral. A theme in American church music history that keeps appearing from the 1830s onward is the idea that music in the church must be viewed as a ministry. Unlike his or her secular counterpart, the minister of music is *equal parts* [emphasis mine] musician, pastor, and teacher.

Presumably, McDaniel is taking his inspiration here from Alec Wyton’s famous quote that we are called to be “pastors, teachers, and performers *in that order*.” I like McDaniel’s quote better and would be glad if it were adopted as our new go-to admonition. Alec could be provocative in his pronouncements! He once said to a class in my presence that since the Prayer Book indicates that the orders of ministers are bishops, priests, deacons, and lay, he saw no reason why a lay person couldn’t be called to be the rector of a church – an interesting concept, but rather pointless in reality.

Perhaps at one time it was important to place the emphasis on the pastoral role we all share, but I think we all get that now. I once even challenged Alec about the “in that order” part of his pronouncement. He didn’t correct me! I do think that *equal parts* says it better for our own day. But I digress.

This work has an ecumenical point of view, which will be of considerable interest to church musicians, clergy, and students across a wide spectrum of denominational affiliations and musical styles. Blended and pop worship is covered seriously and thoroughly, as are Gospel and camp meeting, Sunday School and revivals, and the various Roman Catholic eras and documents. Having said that, the music of the Anglican liturgical tradition is covered fully in not one, but two chapters. In terms of mainstream Protestant and Episcopal church music, this new book is the logical successor to Leonard Ellinwood’s *History of American Church Music*, 1953; Robert Stevenson’s *Protestant Church Music in America*, 1966; and Kenneth Long’s *Music of the English Church*, 1971 – each are seminal resources surely known to AAM members and obviously included in this book’s bibliography.

As with any good compendium, each chapter and subheading is worthy of further extended study and commentary. Chapter 6 on African-American Music and Worship stands out and represents, within my sphere of reference, new scholarship and is comprehensive in its discussion of music and worship styles of varying African-American communities. It extends far beyond the typical chapters in similar histories, where the content is more or less limited to Spirituals. Taken as a whole, continuing through Chapters 7 and 8 on the Civil War and the era that followed, there emerges a logical unfolding of church music history leading into the 20th century, and familiar churches and institutions emerge, such as Plymouth Church in Brooklyn and Peddie Memorial Church in Newark, Broadway Tabernacle, and Calvary and Trinity Episcopal Churches in New York.

Toward the end of his prologue, the author laments that of necessity some influential traditions are omitted, such as those of the Mormons, the Bohemian Brethren, and Moravians.

REVIEWS

To that I would add Christian Science. Though a denomination of diminishing membership and influence at present, at one time it was hugely influential, and music – and especially that of the organ, played a big part in its presence, and its use and scope were defined at the outset by its founder, Mary Baker Eddy. Doctoral candidates in need of a research topic take note.

This new work should be in the holdings of all serious church music students and practitioners, regardless of age or denomination, especially seminary and university faculty and their related libraries. ❖