

Press Release:

Help Us to Help Each Other: Hymns for Life and Ministry with the Poor by Charles Wesley, eds. S T Kimbrough, Jr. and Carlton R. Young (Madison, NJ: The Charles Wesley Society, 2010), 48 pages, \$7.95, ISBN 978-1-882339-06-8. Order from Cokesbury.com or 800-672-1789.

This collection of hymns reminds people of faith that no one is to be left behind either at the Lord's Table or in daily living. They summon Christians to use their resources justly by sharing with the poor. They emphasize that the poor are Christ's best friends and when we serve them, we serve Christ. Charles Wesley affirms that such service is not optional, rather the Christian's duty.

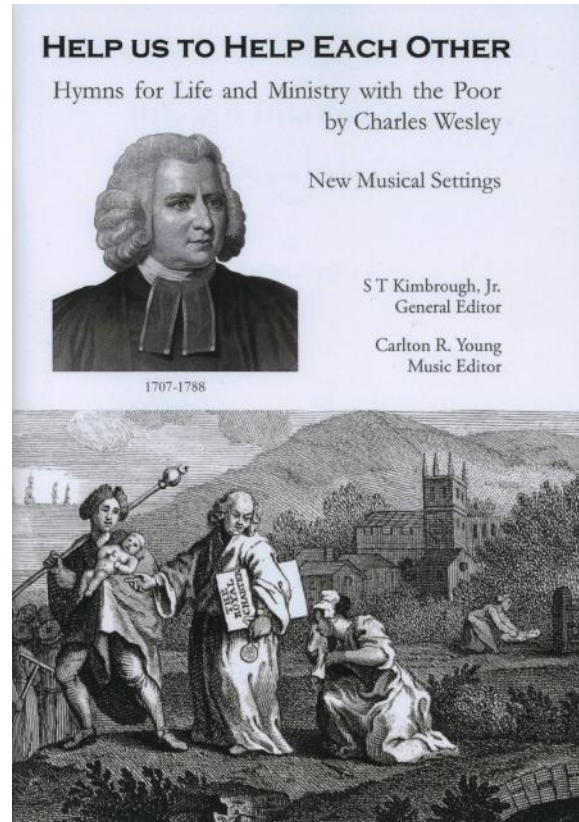
Among the extensive poetry by Charles Wesley left unpublished at his death is a series of hymns and poems that address life and ministry with and among the poor. Eight of the fifteen hymn texts included in this new songbook, *Help Us to Help Each Other*, were first published by S T Kimbrough, Jr., and Oliver A. Beckerlegge in volume two of *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon/Kingswood, 1990). They are combined with hymns from other Wesleyan hymn collections of the eighteenth century that have not appeared in the standard repertory of Methodism or other denominations. Only three hymn texts have appeared previously in some hymnbooks: "Help us to help each other, Lord," "Come, sinners, to the gospel feast," and "O Christ, the gift divine I know."

While John and Charles Wesley were actively engaged in life and ministry with the poor, it is interesting that generally this was not celebrated in the hymns of the Wesleyan movement. The texts in this songbook, however, make clear that Charles Wesley eloquently addressed this theme in his hymn writing.

Two previous printings of many of these texts with music were published in 1993 (*A Song for the Poor*) and 1997 (*Songs for the Poor*) for congregational use by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. In those publications, with one exception, only tunes composed prior to the twentieth century were used. In the new collection, *Help Us to Help Each Other*, composers from around the world have written new musical settings for Wesley's texts that grow out of their own cultural contexts (e.g., Pablo Sosa [Argentina], Swee Hong Lim [Singapore], I-to Loh [Taiwan], George Mulrain [Trinidad & Tobago], Patrick Matsikenyiri [Zimbabwe], Ludmila Garbuzova [Russia], Tomas Boström and Per Harling [Sweden], David Pluess [Switzerland]). Hence, the global message of life and ministry with and among the poor is expressed in diverse indigenous rhythmic, harmonic, and musical styles appropriate to twenty-first century worship. In this collection some texts have been revised and additional Wesley texts added.

In *Help Us to Help Each Other* all of the hymn texts are musically scored but also appear in block texts that are preceded by biblical passages to which Wesley responded in his poetry. This enables pastors and laity to explore in depth both Scripture and Wesley's texts to enrich worship, theology, and faith practice.

Here is a collection that links the historical missional outreach of the Wesley brothers to the twenty-first century mission of the church. The lively settings and stimulating texts provide a way to awaken the consciousness of the church today to a new and vital ministry with and among the poor.



Cover of Songbook:
William Hogarth print, *The Foundlings* (1739)

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