

When something has been “emended” that means (according to Webster’s) it has been edited or changed in order to be freed from faults, corrected.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the new hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has freely emended – not retranslated -- many of the psalms particularly to remove masculine language for God; this congregation’s primary objections to the policies and practices of the ELCA have to do with the authority of Scripture and the holiness of the Name of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let’s look at how three of the laments, Psalms 22, 31, 69 have been emended. I choose these three because they are used extensively by the Synoptic writers.

Psalm 22:7-9 in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW):

All who see me laugh me to scorn;
They curl their lips; they shake their heads.
“Trust in the Lord; let the Lord deliver;
Let God rescue him if God so delights in him.”
Yet you are the one who drew me forth from the womb,
And kept me safe on my mother’s breast.

Psalm 22:7-9 in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV):

All who see me mock at me;
They make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
“Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—
Let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”
Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
You kept me safe on my mother’s breast.

Psalm 31:21-24 in ELW:

Blessed are you, O Lord!
For you have shown me the wonders of your love when I was under siege.
I said in my alarm, “I have been cut off from the sight of your eyes.”
Nevertheless, you heard the sound of my plea when I cried out to you.
Love the Lord, all you saints;
The Lord protects the faithful, but repays in full those who act haughtily.
Be strong and let your heart take courage.
All you who wait for the Lord.

Psalm 31:21-24 in the NRSV:

Blessed be the Lord,
For he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me
When I was beset as a city under siege.
I had said in my alarm, “I am driven far from your sight.”
But you heard my supplication when I cried out to you for help.
Love the Lord, all you his saints.
The Lord preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily.
Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
All you who wait for the Lord.

69:30-33 in ELW:

I will praise your name, O God, in song
I will proclaim your greatness with thanksgiving
This will please the Lord more than an offering of oxen,
More than young bulls with horns and hoofs.
The afflicted shall see and be glad;
You who seek God, your heart shall live.
For the Lord listens to the needy
And does not despise the prisoners.

69: 30-33 in the NRSV:

I will praise the name of God with a song;
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.
This will please the Lord more than an ox
Or a bull with horns and hoofs.
Let the oppressed see it and be glad;
You who seek God, let your hearts revive.
For the Lord hears the needy,
And does not despise his own who are in bonds.

Finally, let's look at Psalm 23:

Psalm 23 in the NRSV:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters;
He restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley I fear no evil;
For you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Psalm 23 in ELW:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.
The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures
And leads me beside still waters.
You restore my soul, O Lord,
And guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
For you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.