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Praise Our Songs And Hymns By Singspiration Music Of The Zondervan Cor

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Introduction: A Timeless Collection for Congregational Worship

For generations, the sound of a congregation lifting its voice in unison has been a cornerstone of Christian worship. At the heart of this tradition lies the humble yet powerful hymnbook—a curated collection of songs and hymns that shape theology, express devotion, and unite believers. Among the most beloved and enduring of these collections is **Praise Our Songs And Hymns By Singspiration Music Of The Zondervan Corporation**. This volume, compiled during a golden era of evangelical hymnody, represents more than just a book of lyrics and musical notes; it is a theological document, a historical artifact, and a practical tool for worship that continues to resonate with choirs, congregations, and individual believers. In this article, we will explore the origins, structure, musical significance, and lasting impact of this remarkable hymnbook, examining why it remains a treasured resource for worship leaders and music ministries across the globe.

The Legacy of Singspiration Music and Zondervan

To fully appreciate **Praise Our Songs And Hymns**, one must first understand the powerhouse behind its creation. Singspiration Music, a division of the Zondervan Corporation, emerged as a leading force in evangelical music publishing during the mid-20th century. Founded by renowned evangelist and musician **John W. Peterson**, Singspiration became synonymous with high-quality sacred music that blended traditional hymnody with contemporary gospel songs of the era. Peterson himself was a prolific composer of hymns and choruses, and his vision for Singspiration was to provide churches with music that was both doctrinally sound and musically accessible.

Zondervan, already a giant in Christian publishing, provided the infrastructure and distribution network that allowed Singspiration music to reach millions. The collaboration between Singspiration's creative output and Zondervan's publishing prowess resulted in a series of hymnals and songbooks that set the standard for evangelical worship music. **Praise Our Songs And Hymns**is perhaps the most iconic of these publications, representing the culmination of decades of careful selection and arrangement. This collection was not merely a commercial product; it was a carefully crafted tool designed to serve the spiritual needs of local churches, missionary organizations, and Christian schools.

An Overview of Praise Our Songs And Hymns

First published in the late 1960s or early 1970s—exact dates vary by edition—**Praise Our Songs And Hymns** is a comprehensive hymnal that typically contains over 500 individual selections. The book is arranged to serve

a wide variety of worship contexts, from formal Sunday morning services to informal youth gatherings and revival meetings. The contents are organized into thematic sections that cover the full spectrum of Christian doctrine and experience: adoration and praise, the Trinity, salvation, the Christian life, the church, missions, and eschatology, among others.

What sets this hymnal apart from many of its contemporaries is its deliberate blend of classic hymns and contemporary gospel songs. Alongside timeless standards like "Amazing Grace," "Holy, Holy, Holy," and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," the book includes a generous selection of gospel songs from the revivalist tradition, many of which were written or arranged by John W. Peterson himself. Songs like "It Took a Miracle," "Heaven Came Down," and "So Send I You" became staples of evangelical worship in large part because of their inclusion in this collection. The book also features responsive readings, Scripture passages for worship, and indexes by title, first line, topic, and Scripture reference, making it a practical tool for pastors and music leaders.

Structure and Organization

The organizational logic of **Praise Our Songs And Hymns**reflects careful pedagogical and liturgical thinking. The opening sections focus on the nature and attributes of God, leading the worshiper into a posture of reverence and adoration. Subsequent sections move through the narrative of redemption: the person and work of Christ, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the experience of salvation, and the life of discipleship. Later sections address the church, its mission, and the hope of Christ's return. This progression is not accidental; it is designed to lead the congregation through a complete worship experience that mirrors the narrative arc of Scripture itself.

Musically, the hymnal employs four-part harmony (SATB) for most selections, with piano or organ accompaniment in mind. However, the arrangements are simple enough to be sung a cappella or with guitar, making the book adaptable to a wide range of musical contexts. The keys are chosen for congregational singability, and the melodic lines are memorable and singable—hallmarks of the Singspiration editorial philosophy.

Musical and Theological Significance

The theological content of **Praise Our Songs And Hymns**is unapologetically evangelical and broadly orthodox. The hymns and songs reflect a high view of Scripture, the centrality of Christ's atoning work, the necessity of personal conversion, and the urgency of world missions. Yet within this framework, there is remarkable diversity of expression. The collection draws from multiple streams of Protestant hymnody: the Lutheran chorale tradition (e.g., "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"), the Anglican hymnody of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, the American frontier gospel songs of Fanny Crosby and Ira Sankey, and the mid-century gospel songs of Peterson and his contemporaries.

This theological breadth makes the hymnal a valuable resource for discipleship. Singing through the book over the course of a year would expose a congregation to the major doctrines of the Christian faith in a form that is both memorable and emotionally resonant. The music itself reinforces the message: triumphant melodies accompany songs of victory, tender melodies accompany songs of devotion, and rhythmic energy accompanies songs of joy and celebration.

Hymnology and Craftsmanship

From a hymnological perspective, **Praise Our Songs And Hymns**exemplifies the best practices of hymnbook compilation. The editors took care to preserve the original texts and tunes of classic hymns while also including new compositions that had already proven their worth in congregational use. The book does not shy away from older language and poetic forms, but it also embraces the simpler, more direct language of the gospel song tradition. This creates a rich tapestry of worship expression that can appeal to multiple generations within a

single congregation.

One of the most notable features of the collection is the inclusion of many songs by John W. Peterson. Peterson possessed a rare gift for writing music that was both artistically satisfying and accessible to ordinary congregations. His songs often feature memorable choruses, strong biblical imagery, and a sense of narrative movement. "It Took a Miracle," for instance, tells the story of personal salvation with vivid language and a soaring melody that congregations can learn quickly and sing with conviction.

Impact on Congregational Worship

The influence of **Praise Our Songs And Hymns By Singspiration Music Of The Zondervan Corporation** on evangelical worship in the latter half of the 20th century can hardly be overstated. For decades, this hymnal was the standard resource in thousands of churches across the United States and around the world. It was used in Sunday morning worship services, Sunday school classes, youth groups, camps, and Bible conferences. Its songs were sung at weddings, funerals, ordinations, and revival meetings. The book became a shared reference point for generations of believers, creating a common repertoire of sacred song that transcended denominational boundaries.

The hymnal also played a significant role in the training of church musicians. Many music directors and pianists learned to read music and accompany congregational singing using the four-part arrangements found in this book. The responsive readings and liturgical materials in the back of the hymnal provided pastors with a ready resource for leading worship that was both theologically sound and liturgically varied.

Reception Over Time

As worship styles evolved in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the use of printed hymnals like **Praise Our Songs And Hymns** declined in many churches, replaced by projection screens and contemporary worship sets. However, among traditional and blended worship communities, this hymnal remains a cherished resource. Its songs are still sung in churches that value the doctrinal depth and musical craftsmanship of the older hymn tradition. Furthermore, many contemporary worship leaders have rediscovered the rich theology of hymns and have begun incorporating songs from this collection into modern arrangements.

Online communities and hymnody enthusiasts continue to discuss and celebrate the enduring value of this hymnal. Used copies are sought after by collectors, and digital versions are available for those who wish to access the content in modern formats. The legacy of Singspiration Music and Zondervan lives on through the continued use of this collection in homes, retirement communities, and churches that appreciate its timeless contributions to worship.

Notable Hymns and Songs Included

A detailed exploration of the contents of **Praise Our Songs And Hymns** reveals a wealth of treasures. Among the classic hymns included are:

- "Amazing Grace" by John Newton – The quintessential song of personal testimony and divine mercy.
- "Holy, Holy, Holy" by Reginald Heber – A majestic Trinitarian hymn set to the tune Nicaea.
- "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" by Edward Perronet – A coronation hymn celebrating the lordship of Christ.
- "How Great Thou Art" (Swedish melody) – A modern classic that expresses awe at creation and redemption.
- "Blessed Assurance" by Fanny Crosby – A joyful declaration of saving faith.

The collection also features many gospel songs that became staples in evangelical circles:

- "It Took a Miracle" by John W. Peterson and Merrill Dunlop – A testimony song about the miracle of salvation.
- "Heaven Came Down" by John W. Peterson – A jubilant song celebrating the incarnation and personal salvation.
- "So Send I You" by John W. Peterson and Margaret Clarkson – A hymn of missionary commitment.
- "Springs of Living Water" by John W. Peterson – A song about spiritual refreshment.
- "This Is My Father's World" by Maltbie D. Babcock – A hymn of creation and providence.

Each song in the collection was chosen for its ability to teach, inspire, and unite the congregation in worship. The editors exercised careful discernment to ensure that every selection met the highest standards of theology, poetry, and music.

Comparison with Other Hymnbooks

When compared to other major hymnals of its era, **Praise Our Songs And Hymns** holds its own with distinction. Unlike the more formal and liturgically oriented hymnals of mainline denominations, this collection was designed specifically for the evangelical free-church tradition. It assumes a flexible worship order, allows for a variety of musical styles, and emphasizes congregational participation. Compared to other evangelical collections like **The Broadman Hymnal** (Baptist) or **Hymns for the Living Church**(Hope Publishing), the Singspiration hymnal is notable for its strong emphasis on gospel songs and its inclusion of many contemporary

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