

# Provocative worship

by [Martin E. Marty](#) in the [October 14, 1998](#) issue

Fewer people should be dozing off during worship, if items I'm seeing in church bulletins are any indication. For example, a United Methodist Church proclaims that it has "a longstanding tradition of whorshipful music." Another bulletin announces that "the ministers and choir will be disrobed for the morning service."

- At a White Plains wedding, Ms. X was identified as "Old Testement Palm Reader." Home address: Endor?
- "Holy Trinity, one God, in You we lie and move and have our being." Telling it like it is at confession time.
- "We praise you, God of Wisdom, for publishers and printers and all who enabled the Bible to be always at hand." Is that what the Gideons are putting in hotel drawers?
- "We call on thy name and recant thy wondrous deeds." Try that one on Martin Luther, who cannot, will not.
- "For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the wafers cover sea." Because of observing communion frequently.
- "Special music, verse one: 'I am the vice, you are the branches.'" Organized crime in the sanctuary.
- Hymn: "In wilderness and dessert our tribe shall make its home." Was it "rocky road" ice cream?
- "Offertory Solo: It Is Enough." That's rarely the case.
- "Allen Pote (Youth Choir) is among the most prominent composters, conductors and clinicians. . . ." Must be a postmodernist commingler.
- "Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing steam doth flow." A Hot Springs church?

- "My Gold, I Love Thee." The truth will out.
- "The Offertory: 'Hydrofil' by Paul Manz." Do the Welsh put water in the gas?
- "And we read how immortality breaks your heart and robs us of joy in our lives."
- "OUR QUILT HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY." Baby, it's cold inside.
- "How Lovely Are Thy Swellings Fair." A pregnant pause ensued.
- "The choir will resent a cantata on Palm Sunday." Fans of contemporary worship?