

# Spanish Hymnos

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Revision Process

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### Updating the Spanish Hymnal

### Smuggling the Spanish Hymbook into Mexico

#### **Updating the Spanish Hymnal 2015-2016**

After almost thirty years, the need to review and update the Spanish Hymnal editions of 1979 and 1989 was evident. In addition to the deterioration that most hymnals had suffered due to the use over the years. The servants announced that work was under way to make a new Spanish hymnal to replace the 1989 edition in use. It was last printed in Saskatoon, Canada, by Prairie Graphics Industries, Limited and contained 256 hymns. It was a reprint of a 1979 edition. Another edition was used before that about which little is known.

After the decision was made to compile a new Spanish hymnal, each country designated a person to be in charge of the preliminary work, making up a panel. Juan Gunn, from Spain, supervised the entire process. The others were: Jonathan Wright, Richard Wulf, Percy Lealand Broughton, LeRoy Lerwick, Duane Hopkins, William Berger, Alan Anderson, Samuel Herrera, Álvaro Moreno and Armando Adan.

The process started at the beginning of 2015. Then in May 2015, the panel traveled to Panama City, Florida, US, with the goal of finishing the hymnal by the beginning of 2016. By the end of 2016, the new hymnals were printed and bound in Italy, and being distributed through R. L. Allan & Sons Publishers, Thorgood House, 34 Tolworth Close, Surrey, KT6 7EW, England. Copyright Pocock & Martin 2016.

There were two parts to the process. One was to evaluate the hymns in the current hymnal. They asked those who directed the meetings in each field to write down the hymns requested by each person in the meetings. After a while, a list was made of the most and least requested hymns. Later, each person was asked to choose their preferred hymns. All this information was taken into consideration in making the final selection of which of the current 265 hymns in their hymnal would be retained or omitted. Hymns that were not sung very often were excluded from the new hymnal.

The other part of the process was to evaluate the hymns some servants and saints had composed and to decide which would be worthy additions to a new hymnal. Adding new hymns to the hymnal was preferable to the separate pamphlet of all his hymns printed by Juventino Valdez.

Although many hymns were submitted for evaluation, not many were considered suitable, as some lacked poetic value, character, rhythm, etc., and some were often a repetition of thoughts already better expressed in other hymns. In addition, it was considered necessary to make certain corrections in the translations that would allow a better rhyme in the stanzas.

Therefore, the brothers were given a selection of 253 *unpublished* hymns written by servants and brothers in various Spanish-speaking countries along with others that were translations of English hymns. The brothers were asked to rate each hymn according to the following scoring method:

- 20 points = excellent
- 18–19 points = admirable
- 16–17 points = very good
- 14–15 points = good
- 12–13 points = acceptable
- 10–11 points = adequate

It was decided not to include 12 hymns from the 1979 Hymnal in the new version (Nos. 10, 62, 69, 74, 91, 150, 151, 197, 198, 224, 234, 243). The words of hymn No. 85 would be replaced with the words of hymn No. 133 of the hymnal in Portuguese. The words of hymn No. 111 would be replaced with the words of hymn No. 182 from the 2014 supplement. The music of hymn No. 121 was changed to the tune of English Hymnal No. 277. Also, all the words referring to *Jesus* were capitalized. In the previous hymnal this consideration only referred to *God*.

Altogether, the new hymnal contained 401 hymns. It included 53 hymns by Juventino Valdez, from Mexico; 64 hymns by Sam Jones; 14 by James Jardine; and 9 by Ada R. de Carvalho (Brazilian-Venezuelan), and various other Spanish-speaking hymnwriters. Some hymns were translated from English and Portuguese (Nos. 72, 132, 147, 172, 192).

[See Photo of Hymnbook](#) ~ Scroll to right for Photo #2

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### Smuggling the Spanish Hymnbooks into Mexico By G. R. Berry

A new Spanish hymnbook was printed in 1979 by a publishing company in Canada. So the next step was to start distributing them all over Mexico, and eventually to other Spanish-speaking countries.

In 1980, I was living in southern California, and often had opportunities to visit the friends and workers in Mexico. I had studied Spanish since the 9th grade and could pretty well say anything I wanted to say, but still needed lots of practice understanding Spanish when it was spoken to me. Just because you can speak it doesn't mean you can understand it! Quick speech and slang can make that pretty hard, so I liked going to Spanish meetings and hanging around with the Mexican friends for the language practice.

By July of that year, I had gone over the border at least four times with some other professing guys. It was all quite an adventure, except for the time I got horribly ill from eating some exotic fruit and drinking their water. For two days I had to stay in bed at the house of some poor and kindly old lady, while the local neighbors and kids all wandered in and out of the room whenever they wanted so they could gawk at the sick *gringo*. I was the village's main attraction for those two days, I guess.

One time in April though, we had more of a purpose than just going to Mexico for fun. We were smuggling hymnbooks!

One of the guys had a rather beat-up old van. He had lived all his life just a few miles from the border, and he certainly knew all the tricks about getting over the border with the fewest problems possible. But getting hundreds of freshly printed books down there could certainly cause a problem if the van was inspected. The books had the words *No se vende* printed on the very first page, meaning *Not to be sold*. So technically there was nothing illegal about taking them down for distribution. They were just going to be given away to all the friends, because many of them wouldn't be able to afford one if they had to buy them. People from the US and Canada had generously paid for the whole edition of books for the benefit of the Spanish work.

But we knew the border guards would never believe that a van full of books was not a profit-making venture. They would probably hold us up for hours, demanding official paperwork, and most likely not let us go on until several bribes were paid. That's just how things worked down there. So, we tore up the floor of the van and stashed books by the hundreds everywhere possible, and carefully restored the floor and the seats. As a cover, we randomly tossed into the van several more innocent-looking boxes of stuff that we were going to give away, like old clothes and kitchen supplies, things that were obviously used and not for sale. Things that wouldn't cause any suspicion.

But we had one more thing that needed to be taken to Mexico too. A piano. Yes, we tore up an old piano into as many parts as we could and stashed bits and pieces of it all over the van too, some of it under the floor, some of it under the various other boxes. It too was not for sale, of course, it was just going to the home of some of the professing people who were very excited about getting the only piano in their town. (We especially enjoyed visiting that family; they had nine kids – any one of the six daughters could have won the Miss Mexico pageant if they had entered). Not that they could play the piano, but the workers could, and maybe it would be an inspiration to the kids to learn. It would also be a big help in teaching the new hymns.

The smuggling wasn't just a one-way thing though. We always made sure to bring back home cases full of the **fabulous Mexican soft drink, Señorial Sangría**. We all guzzled it by the gallons (no, it's not alcoholic!). Such a large amount would look suspicious to the border agents, but it was all just for us, since it wasn't available in the US back then. Now, you can find it in every grocery store and Walmart. No more smuggling necessary!

We were nervous at the border. It was night time when we went over into Mexico with our secret load, because we had stopped in Yuma, Arizona, to pick up another young guy who wanted to go with us. But we had no problem at all—no inspection, no interrogation, no bribes needed. We decided the Lord was on our side! Again, we weren't really doing anything illegal—we weren't going to sell anything down there. We were just trying to save ourselves a big hassle from the border guards, and it all worked out just fine.

So that's how the new hymnbooks were transported into Mexico!