

Supplement – Report on Proposed Psalms and Hymns

Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church (2004)

PRINCIPLES:

THE SONG OF THE CHURCH IS TO BE SUITABLE FOR THE CHURCH’S WORSHIP TO THE GLORY OF GOD

1. The songs of the Church are to be scriptural
In content, form, and spirit the Church’s songs must express the truth of the Holy Scriptures. Augustine, referring to the singing of Psalms, said, “No one can sing anything worthy of God which he has not received from Him . . . then we are assured that God puts the words in our mouth.”
2. The songs of the Church are to be a sacrifice of praise¹
Singing is an important element of the congregation’s response to God’s redeeming work in Christ Jesus and the Word proclaimed in the worship service.

John Calvin wrote, “Singing has great strength and power to move and to set on fire the hearts of men that they may call upon God and praise Him with a more vehement and more ardent zeal. This singing should not be light or frivolous, but it ought to have weight and majesty.”

3. The songs of the Church are to be aesthetically pleasing
The songs for worship are to be a beautiful blend of God-honouring poetry and music.²

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING SONGS:

1. The songs of the Church must be thoroughly Biblical. They are to represent the full range of the revelation of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.³
2. The Book of Psalms is foundational for the Church’s songs. Therefore, all of these Psalms, in their entirety, ought to be included in the Church’s songbook.
3. When Psalms or other portions of Scripture are set to music, the words must be faithful to the content and form of the inspired text.⁴

¹ Hebrews 13:15

² Psalm 92:1–4

³ Psalm 147:1

⁴ 2 Timothy 3:16

NOTES: _____

- 1 4. In the case of songs other than the versification of Scripture, the words must faithfully
2 express the teaching of Scripture⁵ as summarized by our Reformed confessions.
3
- 4 5. The songs of the Church must be intelligible⁶ and edifying to the body of Christ.⁷
5
- 6 6. The songs of the Church must reflect and preserve the language of the Church of all ages
7 rather than accommodating current secular trends.⁸
8
- 9 7. In content and form, the songs of the Church must be free from artificiality, sentimentality,
10 and individualism.
11
- 12 8. The music of the song should suit the text.
13
- 14 9. The music of the Church should be expressive of the Reformed tradition. Use is to be made
15 of the music developed in the tradition of this rich heritage.
16
- 17 10. The music of the Church should not be borrowed from music that suggests places and
18 occasions other than the Church and the worship of God.⁹
19
- 20 11. The melodies and harmonies of church music must be suitable for congregational singing,
21 avoiding complicated rhythms, excessive syncopation, and a wide range of pitch.
22

Additional Guidelines (2022)

23
24 In addition to these guiding principles, the Committee (pre-2022) adopted some further
25 guidelines for the addition of non-Genevan Psalm renditions to enhance the Book of Praise. The
26 additional guidelines adopted were:
27

- 28 1. The Trinity Psalter Hymnal is to be the primary source for additional Psalm renditions. Other
29 possible sources:
30 A. *The Psalter* (1912 used by the PRCA)
31 B. *The Scottish Metrical Psalter* (words only)
32 C. *Sing Psalms* (from the Free Church of Scotland)
33
- 34 2. Use of antiquated language should be avoided.
35
- 36 3. Special consideration is to be given to those Psalms infrequently sung due to melody more
37 than words.

⁵ Proverbs 30:6

⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:15

⁷ Colossians 3:16

⁸ Romans 12:2

⁹ Ephesians 5:18–21

NOTES: _____

- 1 4. Commonly sung Psalms can be considered for the sake of providing variety of choice.
- 2
- 3 5. Additions can include alternate melodies for the same rhyming or alternate Psalm renditions
- 4 altogether.
- 5
- 6 6. Melodies with a strong association to a well-known hymn should be avoided if possible.
- 7
- 8 7. Alternate Psalm renditions which communicate the message of the whole Psalm should be
- 9 preferred over those which are partial.

PSALMS

Psalm 4

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 4.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

- 19 1. 39 churches gave feedback: 22 in favour, 17 not.
- 20 2. Positive feedback:
 - 21 a. The words are a faithful rendition of the whole of the biblical text of Psalm 4.
 - 22 b. The melody is easy to sing and learn, and is suitable to the text.
 - 23 c. The song could serve as a good alternative to the Genevan rendition, which should be
 - 24 retained.
- 25 2. Negative feedback:
 - 26 a. The short stanzas take away from the flow of the psalm and do not assist in capturing
 - 27 the emotions of the text.
 - 28 b. The melody is uninspiring and does not improve upon the current Genevan melody.
 - 29 c. This rendition provides a mediocre versification and is thus unacceptable.
- 30 3. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

- 34 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 20 in favour, 13 not.
- 35 2. Positive feedback:
 - 36 a. The text is faithful to Scripture and the rendition seeks to cover the entirety of the
 - 37 psalm.
 - 38 b. The melody is pleasant and accessible.
- 39 3. Negative feedback:
 - 40 a. The text is not as rich or accurate as the current Genevan version. One example of
 - 41 concern is the line in stanza 3, “and my request make known.” It is too obviously a
 - 42 mere filler. Even if the awkward, inversion of “and make known my request” could
 - 43 have been avoided, it would still have detracted from the plain forcefulness of the

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1 clause “when I call to him.” Urgently pleading for justice is more than just making a
2 request known.

- 3 b. The response to the melody is quite mixed. One church requesting the addition of this
4 rendition even included a comment about “disastrous congregational singing.” The
5 melody is too simplistic, lacks prayerful quality suitable to the text, and the stanzas
6 are short giving the psalm a clipped feeling.

7
8 **Considerations:**

- 9 1. This text provides a complete rendition of Psalm 4, and its contents are not repeated in
10 the hymn section.
11 2. The melody is unique to our current collection.
12 3. Concern for the prayerful tenor of the psalm can be addressed by accompanists playing
13 the psalm at a slower pace than they might otherwise.

14
15 **Final Recommendation:**

- 16 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 4 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

17
18 **Psalm 5**

19
20 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

21 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 529:1.

22
23 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 24 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 13 in favour, 24 not.
25 2. Positive feedback:
26 a. The melody is well-known and appropriate to the text.
27 b. Some churches that supported its inclusion suggested it be placed in the hymn
28 section.
29 3. Negative feedback:
30 a. Most comments were critical of the fact that the proposed alternative focuses on verse
31 8 of the psalm. Two churches concluded that this alternative contravened the adopted
32 guidelines.
33 b. A number of churches were concerned that taking one verse out of context does not
34 do justice to the psalm.
35 c. There was also concern with a return to archaic language (thy/thou makest) when we
36 have been diligent to update the language in our version of the Genevan psalms.
37 4. The recommendation was to add this version as an alternative to Psalm 5, but if not
38 advisable, to add as a hymn.

39
40 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

41 **Observations:**

- 42 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 12 in favour, 22 not.
43 2. Positive feedback:

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- 1 a. There is continued appreciation for the melody, with a few recommending it as a
- 2 hymn.
- 3 b. There is appreciation for how this short song would suit certain contexts quite well.
- 4 c. The question was raised as to why TPH 529:2 was not added, with the
- 5 recommendation of its addition. One church wondered why TPH 5 was not added.
- 6 3. Negative feedback:
- 7 a. There is a strong concern about this being included as an alternative, given the lack of
- 8 context for the text. The first half is an incomplete version of Psalm 5:8, “Lead me, O
- 9 LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before
- 10 me.” The words “because of my enemies” have been omitted. The second half is not
- 11 taken from Psalm 5 but from Psalm 4:8b, “For you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in
- 12 safety.”
- 13 b. The inconsistency in updating the text of Genevan melodies and then proposing new
- 14 songs with archaic text was noted a few times.

15
16 Consideration:

- 17 1. The concern noted in Step 3, 3.a is valid. One of the major principles of understanding
- 18 Scripture is to understand it in its context.

19
20 Final Recommendation:

- 21 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 529:1 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

22
23 **Psalm 8**

24
25 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

26 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 8C.

27
28 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 29 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 13 in favour, 24 not.
- 30 2. Positive feedback:
- 31 a. Some churches noted that the words are faithful to the text and others noted that the
- 32 refrain in the song is also a refrain in Psalm 8 (i.e., vv. 1, 9)
- 33 b. A number of churches noted that the melody is joyful, upbeat, uplifting, and suits the
- 34 words.
- 35 c. Some made mention of the high E but noted that the Genevan melody also has this
- 36 note.
- 37 3. Negative feedback:
- 38 a. Other churches noted that this rendition includes some words not found in the text of
- 39 Scripture, that some phrases were unnecessary, and that some words from the
- 40 scriptural text were omitted.
- 41 b. There was concern regarding the melody, suggesting it did not support the majesty of
- 42 the text, that it lacks depth, and is complicated.
- 43 4. Initially the Committee recommended TPH 8C to the churches for consideration. Upon
- 44 feedback, further discussion, and research, the Committee formally adopted the decision

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1 to recommend GPH 8 instead as it had already updated the archaic language and had a
 2 few minor text changes from TPH 8C. Unfortunately, the text of our recommendation to
 3 GS 2022 was that it adopt TPH 8C while sharing GPH 8, which is the one we truly
 4 recommended to GS 2022.

6 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

7 Observations:

- 8 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 10 in favour, 23 not. The churches that were positive
 9 also noted some concerns.
- 10 2. Positive feedback:
 - 11 a. One church likes the idea of alternative renditions of the Psalms and suggested that
 12 the text of this song could be sung to the tune of Hymn 76 of the *Book of Praise* or
 13 “Take My Life” without the refrain.
 - 14 b. Two churches strongly appreciate the melody and chorus of this rendition.
 - 15 c. In surveying their congregation, a number of churches that responded positively also
 16 noted that the congregation was split on this one.
- 17 3. Negative feedback:
 - 18 a. There is some concern that the text is not a complete representation of the psalm. One
 19 congregation noted there is no mention of the “Son of Man,” which is significant as it
 20 is referring to Christ.
 - 21 b. Others mention that the melody is too “bouncy” for the majestic nature of the text and
 22 that the current Genevan rendition is richer both in text and melody.
 - 23 c. Numerous churches mentioned that the refrain is quite repetitive. As one church
 24 suggests, “the fivefold repetition of this wordy component and the repetition of the
 25 last lines of each stanza diminish the strong impact of the exclamation ending and
 26 concluding the Psalm: *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*”

28 Considerations:

- 29 1. While there is some repetition in the scriptural text of Psalm 8 (i.e., vv. 1, 9), the
 30 repetition in this rendition significantly reduces the impact of the theme as an opening
 31 and concluding line. It is overdone. This serves as an example where more is less.
- 32 2. The text of this song is faithful to the general tone and purpose of Psalm 8, but it is
 33 lacking the depth and richness of our current, well-loved, and often-sung Psalm 8.
- 34 3. Very few churches strongly recommend the melody of this alternative. Most churches
 35 (including those that responded favourably to this proposal) responded with some
 36 concern for the melody and provided alternative suggestions.

38 Final Recommendation:

- 39 1. That GS 2025 not adopt GPH 8 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

41 **Psalm 11**

43 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

44 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 11B.

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1 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 2 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 21 in favour, 15 not.
- 3 2. Positive feedback:
- 4 a. The text is faithful to Scripture and follows the text of the psalm.
- 5 b. The melody is familiar and easy to sing. As such, it could “restore the psalm to more
- 6 regular use within our liturgies.”
- 7 3. Negative feedback:
- 8 a. A number of churches noted concern with the text’s faithfulness. One example is “the
- 9 exclusion of ‘fire and brimstone’ in line 1 and 2 of stanza 4 as a weak summary of Ps.
- 10 11:6. One church offered specific feedback on the text, noting words that were
- 11 awkward and obscured the meaning of the scriptural texts, words used that did not fit
- 12 the imagery of the psalm, and word choices that were not as clear.”
- 13 b. The melody and text are in dissonance; the melody is too upbeat for the text.
- 14 c. There was some concern with the melody being mediocre, repetitive, or difficult to
- 15 learn.
- 16 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

17

18 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

19 Observations:

- 20 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 19 in favour, 15 not.
- 21 2. Positive feedback:
- 22 a. A number of churches strongly appreciate this melody and text while others
- 23 expressed concern with either the melody or text but still saw this song as an
- 24 appropriate alternative. A small number of churches endorsing the addition of this
- 25 song did wonder about the use of the word “snipers” in stanza 1.
- 26 b. The positive feedback often notes that the Genevan melody is more difficult and
- 27 prevents its regular use in liturgy.
- 28 3. Negative feedback:
- 29 a. There is dissonance between the text and melody.
- 30 b. The melody is difficult to sing and so not a helpful alternative to Genevan 11.
- 31 c. There is some concern about the text. One example is found in stanza 3:
- 32 The LORD looks on man with his all searching eyes;
- 33 his eyelids observe, and their conduct he tries.
- 34 The LORD tests the righteous who walk in his ways;
- 35 his soul hates the wicked, who terror embrace.
- 36 See vv. 4b–5: “His eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. The LORD tests the
- 37 righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.”
- 38 i. Regarding lines 1–2, in line 1 “man” is singular, but in line 2 “their” is plural.
- 39 ii. Regarding line 2, the noun “eyelids” is found in some translations but in many it
- 40 is “eyes,” which would be the expected choice in this context.
- 41 iii. Since in normal English the verb “tries” is synonymous with “attempts,” it may
- 42 not be as clear as it should be that here it is intended to mean “tests” or
- 43 “examines.”

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- 1 iv. Regarding line 4, “terror” means “extreme fear” and is therefore not a correct
2 rendering of “violence.” (It would seem that “terror” was mistakenly assumed to
3 mean “terrorism.”)
4

5 **Considerations:**

- 6 1. This song seeks to be faithful to the entirety of the scriptural text, but the feedback about
7 some of the textual concerns is not insignificant.
8 2. The melody of Genevan 11 is considered to be quite difficult and seems to be a hindrance
9 to its more regular liturgical use. However, it seems unlikely that having this alternative
10 melody would increase the use of this psalm.
11 3. Some churches like this melody as an alternative while others consider it to be at least as
12 difficult as the Genevan.
13

14 **Final Recommendation:**

- 15 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 11B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.
16

17 **Psalm 13**

18
19 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

20 The Committee proposed to the churches Hymn #410 from the hymnal *Lift Up Your Hearts*.
21

22 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 23 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 19 in favour, 18 not.
24 2. Positive feedback:
25 a. A number of churches noted that the words are faithful to the scriptural text.
26 b. Some churches observed that the tune was easy to learn and fit the text well.
27 3. Negative feedback:
28 a. Some churches prefer the text of the Genevan, and suggest this alternative is taking
29 liberties with the text.
30 b. Regarding the music, a few suggested that the melody was too upbeat/waltzy for the
31 content of the psalm and was not an improvement on the Genevan tune.
32 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.
33

34 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

35 **Observations:**

- 36 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 19 in favour, 15 not.
37 2. Positive feedback:
38 a. The text is a faithful rendition of the entirety of the psalm.
39 b. Of those supporting the inclusion of this song, there is general consent that the
40 melody is an improvement on the Genevan melody.
41 3. Negative feedback:
42 a. Regarding the text, some churches noted that the connection between enemies and
43 their threats was weak or absent altogether.

NOTES: _____

- 1 b. Regarding the melody, some churches were concerned with the style of music and the
2 suitability of the melody as a lament.

3
4 **Considerations:**

- 5 1. The text captures the main truths of Psalm 13.
6 2. The melody retains an appropriate mood if it is played slower. One of the beauties of
7 Genevan tunes is that they are versatile to different moods as articulated in the text. The
8 same can be said for this melody.
9 3. The current Genevan melody presents a challenge for some, and having an alternative
10 could encourage congregations to sing this psalm a little more frequently.

11
12 **Final Recommendation:**

- 13 1. That GS 2025 adopt Hymn #410 from the hymnal *Lift Up Your Hearts* for inclusion in
14 the *Book of Praise*.

15
16 **Psalm 19**

17
18 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

19 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 19A.

20
21 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 22 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 22 in favour, 14 not.
23 2. Positive feedback:
24 a. The melody is joyful, celebratory, majestic, and exciting.
25 b. The text is faithful to the scriptural text.
26 3. Negative feedback:
27 a. No specific criticism of this rendition of Psalm 19, but the Genevan is well-known
28 and to be preferred.
29 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

30
31 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

32 **Observations:**

- 33 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 19 in favour, 13 not.
34 2. Positive feedback:
35 a. It is a faithful rendition of the psalm and sings well.
36 3. Negative feedback:
37 a. There is no need for an alternative to a song that is well-known and easy to sing.

38
39 **Consideration:**

- 40 1. This song is faithful, sings well, and provides an alternative for a psalm that is frequently
41 used in the liturgy.

42
43 **Final Recommendation:**

- 44 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 19A for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

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Psalm 22**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 239.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 37 churches gave feedback: 15 in favour, 22 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. This melody suits the ending of Psalm 22 better than our current one.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. This alternative is not a complete setting of the psalm.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches completed the survey: 12 in favour, 22 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. This song is a suitable addition to our current Genevan 22.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. This proposed alternative covers only part of the psalm.

Considerations:

1. This song is indeed a partial versification of Psalm 22 but it is not intended to replace the current complete rendition of Psalm 22.
2. This song would allow the churches to sing the last part of Psalm 22 in a cheerful tune.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt GPH 239 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 23**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 23A.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 39 churches gave feedback: 33 in favour, 6 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. This version of Psalm 23 is well-known and loved by many.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Some of the critical comments concerned stanza 4, line 1. “Furnished” is sung in three syllables, which is archaic. The suggestion was made to follow the 1912 Psalter and change the line into “A table thou hast furnished me,” which allows “furnished” to be sung as two syllables.

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- 1 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, but did suggest a change to stanza 3, line
 2 2. The suggestion regarding stanza 4, line 1 was not supported by the Committee since it
 3 does not reflect the more familiar way of singing this psalm.

4
 5 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

6 Observations:

- 7 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 28 in favour, 5 not.
 8 2. Positive feedback:
 9 a. This alternative is well-known and much-loved.
 10 3. Negative feedback:
 11 a. This alternative contains archaic language.
 12 4. One church suggests changing stanza 4, line 1 to “A table Thou hast furnished me” and
 13 so eliminating a glaring archaism. This change is also found in the new songbook of the
 14 Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

15
 16 Considerations:

- 17 1. This alternative to Genevan 23 is indeed well-known and much-loved.
 18 2. In its report to GS 2022, the Committee did not support the suggested change to stanza 4
 19 because it would not reflect the more familiar way of singing this song. However, since
 20 the change is not that big, improves the song, and is also found in a songbook of one of
 21 our sister churches, this change has merit.

22
 23 Final Recommendation:

- 24 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 23A, with the change in stanza 4, line 1 (“A table Thou hast
 25 furnished me”), for inclusion in our *Book of Praise*.

26
 27 **Psalm 32**

28
 29 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

30 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 32.

31
 32 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 33 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 16 in favour, 20 not.
 34 2. Positive feedback:
 35 a. This alternative is easy to sing.
 36 3. Negative feedback:
 37 a. The melody is boring.
 38 b. It is a partial/incomplete text of the psalm and uses old language.
 39 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, with emendations to stanzas 2 and 3.

40
 41 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

42 Observations:

- 43 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 14 in favour, 19 not.
 44 2. Positive feedback:

NOTES: _____

1 a. It sings well.

2 3. Negative feedback:

3 a. Genevan 32 is well-known, much-loved, and easy to sing. There is no need for an
4 alternative.

5
6 Consideration:

7 1. Our current Genevan 32 is closer to the text of the psalm and sings well.

8
9 Final Recommendation:

10 1. That GS 2025 not adopt GPH 32 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

11
12 **Psalm 39**

13
14 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

15 The Committee proposed to the churches the lyrics of TPH 39 (LANGRAN).

16
17 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

18 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 15 in favour, 22 not.

19 2. Positive feedback:

20 a. It is easier to sing and has a prayer-like character.

21 3. Negative feedback:

22 a. The melody is difficult.

23 b. The current Genevan 39 is better.

24 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

25
26 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

27 Observations:

28 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 18 not.

29 2. Positive feedback:

30 a. Both text and melody are acceptable.

31 3. Negative feedback:

32 a. Its lyrics are antiquated and awkward and it is difficult to sing.

33 b. The current version is to be preferred.

34 4. One church suggests changes to stanzas 1, 4, and 8 to make it more acceptable. These
35 suggested changes deal with archaisms and odd expressions.

36
37 Considerations:

38 1. The text and melody of this proposed rendition do not make it more singable than the
39 current Genevan.

40 2. The support among the churches is mixed.

41
42 Final Recommendation:

43 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 39 (LANGRAN) for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

44
NOTES: _____

1 **Psalm 41**

2

3 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

4 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 41.

5

6 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 7 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 24 in favour, 13 not.
- 8 2. Positive feedback:
- 9 a. The tune is singable and suited to the lyrics.
- 10 b. The text is faithful to Scripture.
- 11 3. Negative feedback:
- 12 a. The tune is difficult to sing.
- 13 b. The short stanzas fragment the text.
- 14 c. The rhyming seems far-fetched or irregular, making the sentences awkward.
- 15 d. One church suggested improvements to stanza 2.
- 16 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

17

18 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

19 Observations:

- 20 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 19 in favour, 13 not.
- 21 2. Positive feedback:
- 22 a. The text is faithful to Scripture.
- 23 b. The tune is easy to sing. It is a good alternative to the Genevan tune.
- 24 3. Negative feedback:
- 25 a. The lyrics do not represent the psalm, and the tune is not great.
- 26 b. It is not an improvement over our current Genevan 41.
- 27 c. There is no need for an additional version to the Genevan.
- 28 4. One church offered the following suggestions to address some of the language problems
- 29 in stanzas 2 and 5.
- 30 a. The switch from third-person singular at the end of stanza 1 to the second-person
- 31 singular at the beginning of stanza 2 is rather jarring and awkward. An improvement
- 32 is suggested for stanza 2:
- 33 He will not hand him over to his foes
- 34 that they may satisfy their evil will.
- 35 The LORD will on his sickbed give him strength,
- 36 restoring him to health when he is ill.
- 37 b. It is regrettable that stanza 5 does not work with John 13:18, where the Lord Jesus
- 38 quotes Psalm 41. A suggestion is offered:
- 39 They say, "A deadly thing on him is poured;
- 40 he will not rise again and leave his bed."
- 41 My closest friend against me raised his heel –
- 42 he whom I trusted and who shared my bread.

43

44

NOTES: _____

1 Considerations:

- 2 1. The proposed version provides the churches with an alternative for a psalm that is not
3 frequently sung, as the survey taken by the Committee showed.
4 2. The suggested changes to stanzas 2 and 5 are not to be adopted because
5 a. the change from first to second person is also in the text of Psalm 41; and
6 b. “lifting the heel” in Ps. 41:9 refers to the person turning his back.

7
8 Final Recommendation:

- 9 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 41 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

10
11 **Psalm 46**

12
13 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

14 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 46C.

15
16 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 17 1. 38 churches gave feedback: 16 in favour, 22 not.
18 2. Positive feedback:
19 a. The tune is well-known and makes the correlation between Psalm 46 and “A Mighty
20 Fortress” more obvious.
21 3. Negative feedback:
22 a. The tune is not an improvement.
23 b. The text of the proposed song does not cover the whole psalm.
24 c. Stanza 2 has some difficulties.
25 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

26
27 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

28 Observations:

- 29 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 11 in favour, 21 not.
30 2. Positive feedback:
31 a. The melody and text are enjoyable to sing, and this is thus an acceptable alternative.
32 b. The connection with “A Mighty Fortress” is seen as positive, as Luther’s hymn is a
33 paraphrase of this psalm.
34 3. Negative feedback:
35 a. The lyrics do not accurately represent the text of the psalm.
36 b. The hymn “A Mighty Fortress” is already in the hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.
37 Therefore, this proposed hymn does not add to our *Book of Praise*.

38
39 Considerations:

- 40 1. The text of this proposed song is indeed a paraphrase rather than an accurate versification
41 of the psalm.
42 2. Since the *Book of Praise* has already the hymn “A Mighty Fortress,” which is connected
43 to Psalm 46, there is no need for this version of Psalm 46.
44

NOTES:

1 Final Recommendation:

- 2 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 46C for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

3
4 **Psalm 51**

5
6 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

7 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 51C, as revised in LUYH 623 (with lyrics
8 modified from TPH 51C).

9
10 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 11 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 17 in favour, 19 not.
12 2. Positive feedback:
13 a. The melody is familiar.
14 3. Negative feedback:
15 a. The text of the song is not close to Scripture.
16 b. The melody does not suit the psalm.
17 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, but with a change to stanza 2, line 2.

18
19 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

20 Observations:

- 21 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 13 in favour, 20 not.
22 2. Positive feedback:
23 a. The words faithfully reflect the text of Psalm 51.
24 b. It is singable.
25 3. Negative feedback:
26 a. The lyrics do not reflect the depth of the psalm.
27 b. There is no need for an alternative.

28
29 Considerations:

- 30 1. The weakness of this proposed song is that it does not cover the whole psalm.
31 2. This proposed version lacks the depth of the psalm. For example, the confession,
32 “Against you only have I sinned,” is not reflected in the words, “My transgression I
33 confess.”
34 3. The tune of our current Genevan 51 conveys much better the mood of penitence.

35
36 Final Recommendation:

- 37 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 51C for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

38
39 **Psalm 57**

40
41 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

42 The Committee proposed to the churches Crown and Covenant 57B.

43
44
NOTES: _____

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 36 churches gave feedback: 10 in favour, 26 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The words are faithful to Scripture.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The melody is difficult for the congregation to sing.
 - b. It is an incomplete rendition of Psalm 57 and thus not in line with “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 7.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches completed the survey: 5 in favour, 29 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text and melody are acceptable.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. It only covers part of the psalm.
 - b. The tune is difficult to sing.

Considerations:

1. This proposed song covers part of Psalm 57 and thus is not suitable as an alternative to our Genevan 57.
2. In both reviews the churches showed little interest in adding this proposed song.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt Crown and Covenant 57B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 59**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches the text of GPH 59, set to the melody of Hymn 24 of the *Book of Praise*.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 34 churches gave feedback: 19 in favour, 15 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The tune is familiar.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The versification skips significant portion of the text.
 - b. The song is incomplete.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

NOTES:

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 18 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The tune is familiar and a good addition to our current Psalm 59
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. It is not a complete version of Psalm 59.
 - b. The lyrics do not accurately represent the text of the psalm, softening of the imprecatory elements.
 - c. It is not an improvement over the current Psalm 59. The proposed alternative is more of a paraphrase than an accurate versification.
 - d. The lyrics do not match the melody.

Considerations:

1. The lyrics of this proposed song do not adequately reflect the text of the psalm. It is a paraphrase rather than a versification.
2. The tune of this proposed version does not improve the singing of this psalm.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt GPH 59 (GRÄFENBURG) for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 64**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 64.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 36 churches gave feedback: 11 in favour, 25 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The melody fits the text well.
 - b. The words are true to Scripture.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The melody is not an improvement over the Genevan melody.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 32 churches completed the survey: 10 in favour, 22 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is good.
 - b. Several of the churches that replied positively, mentioned that the tune was challenging.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The tune is difficult to sing.

NOTES:

1 Consideration:

- 2 1. Though there were no objections to the lyrics, the tune was considered difficult by many
3 churches, and for this reason the proposal was not well received by the churches.

4
5 Final Recommendation:

- 6 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 64 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

7
8 **Psalm 69**

9
10 **Step 1: Initial Review**

11 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 69A.

12
13 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 14 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 16 in favour, 21 not.
15 2. Positive feedback:
16 a. The words are faithful to Scripture.
17 b. The melody is singable.
18 3. Negative feedback:
19 a. The melody is unfamiliar and difficult to sing.
20 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

21
22 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

23 Observations:

- 24 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 17 not.
25 2. Positive feedback:
26 a. The lyrics are faithful to the text of Psalm 69.
27 3. Negative feedback:
28 a. The tune could be challenging to sing.
29 b. The current version suits the tone of the psalm and is to be preferred.

30
31 Consideration:

- 32 1. The majority of the criticism focuses on the tune. It is a challenging tune and not an
33 improvement over the current Genevan version. It will not likely promote greater use of
34 this psalm in the worship services.

35
36 Final Recommendation:

- 37 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 69A for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

38
39 **Psalm 84**

40
41 **Step 1: Initial Review**

42 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 84C.

43
44
NOTES: _____

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 36 churches gave feedback: 11 in favour, 25 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Although the text was described as a beautiful and scriptural rhyming of the psalm, some positive responses expressed criticism of the antiquated language, and noted instances of awkward grammar and free paraphrasing.
 - b. The melody was called a beautiful tune and a “classic sounding hymn of the church.”
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Several considered the language to be antiquated.
 - b. The melody does not complement the words, goes too high for congregational singing, not intuitive and far too challenging.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation but did suggest textual revisions and the transposing of the melody down to D major.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 18 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is fine.
 - b. The melody is nice, good, and acceptable.
 - c. A number of positive responses also remarked that the Genevan 84 is beautiful, loved and even questioned whether the additional tune would actually enhance the current Psalter section.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. There are some textual concerns regarding flow of words, accuracy to the biblical text, and archaic language.
 - b. There is a genuine love for the melody and text of the Genevan 84.

Considerations:

1. Regarding the concern about archaic language, the revised recommendation to GS 2022 actually included a textual revision that removed all the archaic language.
2. Both the positive and negative feedback from the churches confirmed there is much appreciation for the Genevan 84. Thus, there is no need to provide an alternative to this well-loved psalm.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 84C for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 90**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 90A.

NOTES: _____

1 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 2 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 21 in favour, 14 not.
- 3 2. Positive feedback:
- 4 a. The text was accurate and faithful to the scriptural text.
- 5 b. The melody was easy to sing and familiar due to its association with the hymn “Faith
- 6 of Our Fathers.”
- 7 3. Negative feedback:
- 8 a. Some feedback noted that the lyrics were challenging, due to awkward phrases and
- 9 imperfect rhymes that made it difficult to sing.
- 10 b. The melody runs counter to “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 6.
- 11 c. The Genevan version is well-known and thus an alternative is not necessary.
- 12 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

13

14 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

15 Observations:

- 16 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 23 in favour, 9 not.
- 17 2. Positive feedback:
- 18 a. Repeated comments mentioned that the text is a faithful rhyming of Scripture
- 19 covering the whole psalm.
- 20 b. The melody is familiar and easy to sing, due to its association with the well-known
- 21 hymn, “Faith of Our Fathers.”
- 22 c. A church noted that this would be the third rendition of Psalm 90 in the book, along
- 23 with Hymn 54.
- 24 3. Negative feedback:
- 25 a. The psalm text contains poetic infelicities, such as inconsistent rhyming (last two
- 26 lines of stanzas 4 and 7), added syllables (stanza 2), problematic inversion of text
- 27 (stanza 5), and some flat and prosaic word choice (stanza 6), which result in a
- 28 versification that is less aligned with the ESV or NIV text.
- 29 b. Word alignment with music made it more difficult for some congregations to sing.
- 30 c. Melody and text are not seen as an improvement.
- 31 d. There is already a hymn based on Psalm 90 (Hymn 54).

32

33 Considerations:

- 34 1. The whole psalm text is summarized albeit with some poetic inconsistencies, as raised in
- 35 Step 3, 3.a.
- 36 2. There is repeated mention that the melody is familiar, which in part is due to the
- 37 melody’s association with the familiar hymn, “Faith of Our Fathers.” This melodic
- 38 association does conflict with a consistent application of “Additional Guidelines,”
- 39 Guideline 6, which discourages the selection of melodies connected with a well-known
- 40 hymn.
- 41 3. Both positive and negative survey responses confirm that Hymn 54, “O God Our Help in
- 42 Ages Past,” already covers content from Psalm 90.

43

44

NOTES: _____

1 Final Recommendation:

- 2 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 90A for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

3
4 **Psalm 95**

5
6 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

7 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 95B.

8
9 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 10 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 22 in favour, 13 not.
11 2. Positive feedback:
12 a. The text was faithful to the scriptural text.
13 b. The melody was easy to sing, familiar, joyful, and well-suited to the text.
14 c. It is a welcome alternative to an oft-sung Genevan melody.
15 3. Negative feedback:
16 a. Limited feedback on the text noted that the text was archaic (without giving
17 examples), faithful to Scripture, and that the copyright status was a reason for not
18 adopting it.
19 b. The melody runs counter to “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 6.
20 c. Genevan 95 is well-known and thus an alternative is not necessary.
21 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

22
23 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

24 Observations:

- 25 1. 31 churches completed the survey: 22 in favour, 9 not.
26 2. Positive feedback:
27 a. Comments about the text found it good, faithful, and biblical.
28 b. The melodic leaps, considered by some to be difficult, seemed predictable to those
29 who were familiar with the tune.
30 c. This psalm provides an alternative melody to what appears four times in the Genevan
31 collection (Psalms 24, 62, 95, 111).
32 d. This alternative melody is the same as that proposed for the alternative to Genevan
33 149.
34 3. Negative feedback:
35 a. The text of Genevan 95 is more closely rhymed to the ESV text.
36 b. The melody of Genevan 95 better captures the mood shift in the psalm (i.e., between
37 verses 1–3 and verses 4–5). Additionally, the melodic design of the Genevan was also
38 felt to better capture the “power and might of God.”

39
40 Considerations:

- 41 1. It is indeed noteworthy that this psalm would provide an alternative melody to what
42 appears four times in the Genevan collection. At the same time, the major HANOVER
43 (CROFT) tune does not enable opportunity to reflect a mood shift between verses 1–3
44 and verses 4–5, which the modal Genevan 95 tune does permit.

NOTES: _____

- 1 2. This tune is also the one associated with the proposed TPH 149. In our existing
2 collection, the repetition of melodies has followed the principle of doubling melodies
3 where there are similar textual themes or content. The textual themes of Psalm 149 are
4 sufficiently distinct from those of Psalm 95 to warrant not having both melodies in the
5 collection.
- 6 3. The upbeat melodic characteristics apply more fittingly to the singular praise theme of
7 Psalm 149 than of the dual moods of Psalm 95.

8
9 **Final Recommendation:**

- 10 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 95B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

11
12 **Psalm 98**

13
14 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

15 The Committee proposed to the churches Psalm 98 from the *Seedbed Psalter* (set to the
16 RICHMOND melody).

17
18 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 19 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 12 in favour, 23 not.
- 20 2. Positive feedback:
 - 21 a. The text is considered close to Scripture.
 - 22 b. The melody was considered “grand” and easy to learn, although one church
23 commented on the wide intervallic leaps in the last few bars, which could be
24 potentially difficult.
- 25 3. Negative feedback:
 - 26 a. The text was generally faithful to Scripture, except for the words “joyful song” in the
27 place of “new song” in stanza 1.
 - 28 b. Certain syllables were spread over multiple notes (melismatic) resulting in a general
29 awkwardness between word and melody.
 - 30 c. The melody contains large leaps between notes.
- 31 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

32
33 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

34 **Observations:**

- 35 1. 28 churches completed the survey: 9 in favour, 19 not.
- 36 2. Positive feedback:
 - 37 a. Although the words and melody were appreciated, positive responses nevertheless
38 noted that it was “challenging,” “not an easy-singing psalm,” and “somewhat difficult
39 to sing for a congregation.”
- 40 3. Negative feedback:
 - 41 a. The text does not fit well with the melody.
 - 42 b. The word alignment is rather poor and unfit for congregational singing.
 - 43 c. Many churches commented on the difficulty of the tune due to large leaps in the
44 melody.

NOTES: _____

d. The current version of Genevan 98 is much better and to be preferred.

Considerations:

1. The Committee recognizes that there is not a clear alignment between words and tune, which hinders congregational singing.
2. Any reworking of the text will be difficult because of current copyright restrictions with the *Seedbed Psalter*.
3. We already have a good, functioning version.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt Psalm 98 of the *Seedbed Psalter* (set to the RICHMOND melody) for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 100

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 100A.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 37 churches gave feedback: 22 in favour, 15 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is faithful to Scripture.
 - b. Numerous comments described the melody as “very suitable, familiar, beautiful, easy to sing, joyful, majestic, and suited to congregational singing.”
 - c. Some viewed as positive the melody’s association with the hymn text “Crown Him with Many Crowns.”
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. There was a range of response from “loose translation to faithful and close rendition of Scripture.”
 - b. The melody’s association with the hymn “Crown Him with Many Crowns” contravenes “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 6. Nevertheless, it is likely this reason that made the tune “easy to sing with some vigour!”
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 25 in favour, 8 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Generic comments remarked that the two-stanza setting appears to be a faithful rendition of the biblical text.
 - b. A recurring reason for accepting was that this joyful melody particularly suited the psalm text and that it was well-known, possibly creating a helpful connection between the hymn “Crown Him with Many Crowns” and the text of Psalm 100.

NOTES: _____

3. Negative feedback:
 - a. There is no need for an additional psalm rendition due to familiarity of and appreciation for Genevan 100.
 - b. The melody's association to the well-known hymn "Crown Him with Many Crowns" contravenes "Additional Guidelines," Guideline 6.

Considerations:

1. The brevity of this two-stanza rendition is the only substantive comment given in support of adding this song.
2. The DIADEMATA tune (used for "Crown Him with Many Crowns") is familiar to the churches and seems to be the primary reason for accepting the tune.
3. The melody's strong association to the well-known "Crown Him with Many Crowns" conflicts with a consistent application of "Additional Guidelines," Guideline 6. Although exceptions can be made, it is unwise to make choices that directly conflict with this rule, especially if the well-known hymn is being adopted at the same time.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 100A for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 103

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 103C.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 36 churches gave feedback: 21 in favour, 15 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is faithful to Scripture.
 - b. The melody was described as "nice, singable, simple, flowing, fitting to the text and suitable for worship."
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Some churches noted that the text contains deviations from Scripture as well as grammatical infelicities.
 - b. Although there was a wide range of feedback on this melody, from boring, unfamiliar, inferior, trendy to "one of the worst proposed," a recurring sentiment was that this melody was not an improvement on the Genevan version.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 24 in favour, 9 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is considered faithful to Scripture, although a church commented that the word "grace" is not the best translation of the word "benefits" in Psalm 103:2.

NOTES: _____

- 1 b. Recurring descriptors given by the churches who responded positively were,
2 “unfamiliar, but not difficult,” “learnable,” appropriate, singable, and beautiful. A few
3 churches also noted that there were fewer high notes than in Genevan 103, which
4 makes it easier for the congregation to sing.
- 5 c. A repeated sentiment from the churches that responded positively was that Genevan
6 103 is well-liked. They also did recommend that the proposed version serve as an
7 additional version of Psalm 103.
- 8 3. Negative feedback:
- 9 a. The only text critique was that the versification of Genevan 103 is better aligned with
10 the ESV than the proposed version.
- 11 b. The melody is unfamiliar, not very singable, somewhat repetitive and lacks
12 “majesty.” A repeated sentiment is that Genevan 103 is well-known and loved, and
13 that there is no need for an additional version of Psalm 103.

14
15 **Considerations:**

- 16 1. The text reflects the content of the whole psalm, and as such, the poetic liberty displayed
17 is not to the detriment of faithfully representing the biblical text even if it is different than
18 the versification found in the *Book of Praise*.
- 19 2. The range of this melody is actually the same as Genevan 103 (one octave: D-D).
20 However, it begins on the low D and features fewer high notes.
- 21 3. The melody is repetitive due to its “rounded bar form” construct, which features an exact
22 melodic repetition of lines 2 and 4, as well as some internal repetition in line 3.
- 23 4. Both the positive and negative responses confirmed that there is a love and appreciation
24 for Genevan 103.
- 25 5. Repeated support for this setting by the churches also indicates that there is a desire for an
26 alternative of this well-known psalm.

27
28 **Final Recommendation:**

- 29 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 103C for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

30
31 **Psalm 104**

32
33 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

34 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 104B, with the following changes:

- 35 1. the transposing of the key of the melody to G major
36 2. the removal of the dotted eighth notes at the end of lines 2 and 4

37
38 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 39 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 27 in favour, 10 not.
- 40 2. Positive feedback:
- 41 a. Most churches stated that the text of this psalm was a good rendition and faithful to
42 the biblical text.
- 43 b. The melody is familiar because it is identical to that of Hymn 84. For some churches
44 this was distracting because they had to mentally block out the text of that hymn, but

NOTES: _____

1 they liked the ease of singing this psalm to a well-known melody. Some churches
2 preferred not to have psalm melodies that are similar to hymns.

3 c. Several churches stated that the melody suited the words and was easy for
4 congregational singing.

5 3. Negative feedback:

6 a. A few churches considered the melody of the alternative to contravene
7 “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 6, given its shared melody with Hymn 84.
8 Some churches did not consider this melody to improve upon Genevan 104,
9 which has more of a sense of majesty and awe.

10 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

11 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

12 Observations:

13 1. 31 churches completed the survey: 24 in favour, 7 not.

14 2. Positive feedback:

15 a. The words faithfully reflect the text of Psalm 104. One church, however, noted some
16 infelicities in the text. In particular, stanza 13 speaks of “Leviathans,” while the term
17 appears only in the singular in Scripture. And stanza 14 has “spirit” as lowercase,
18 while most translations have “Spirit.”

19 b. Most appreciated the familiarity of the melody.

20 c. The song covers the whole of the psalm.

21 3. Negative feedback:

22 a. The melody is popular but is already in our hymn section (Hymn 84), which can
23 make learning the words of each song more difficult.

24 b. A couple churches stated that the song does not offer an improvement upon Genevan
25 104.

26 Considerations:

27 1. The noted infelicities in the text would warrant adjustments.

28 2. The relatively short stanzas at times hinder the clear expression of the thought
29 development in the psalm. For example, the “these” of stanza 13, line 2, can seem to refer
30 to the “Leviathan(s)” of the previous line, when according to the biblical text, it refers to
31 not only the Leviathan but also the “living things both small and great” (Ps. 104:25–26),
32 which TPH 104B mentions in the *previous* stanza (12). The short stanzas stunt the flow
33 of thought in the song. By contrast, Genevan 104 contains longer stanzas, and thus works
34 out thoughts in a more traceable manner.

35 3. There were mixed reactions to the song’s familiarity by virtue of the melody’s strong
36 association with that of Hymn 84. Although exceptions can be made, adopting this
37 alternative would conflict with a consistent application of “Additional Guidelines,”
38 Guideline 6.

39 Final Recommendation:

40 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 104B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

41 NOTES: _____

1 **Psalm 106**

2

3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 106B.

5

6 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 7 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 11 in favour, 25 not.
- 8 2. Positive feedback:
- 9 a. The melody is singable and pleasant. One church had noted that it offered a good
- 10 melodic alternative for this long psalm. Another church appreciated that the melody
- 11 was not set as high as the Genevan melody.
- 12 b. Several churches noted that it was, however, not a complete rendition of Psalm 106.
- 13 3. Negative feedback:
- 14 a. Most comments were made about the incomplete, partial, and condensed rendition of
- 15 the text of the psalm. Several churches noted that much of the historical storyline of
- 16 Israel is missing in this rendition.
- 17 b. Many churches referred to the melody as poor, repetitive, too short, uninspiring,
- 18 feeling unfinished, boring, or disappointing. One church suggested considering the St.
- 19 Flavian melody instead (used for Hymn 43 in the *Book of Praise*).
- 20 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

21

22 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

23 Observations:

- 24 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 9 in favour, 25 not.
- 25 2. Positive feedback:
- 26 a. The melody is recognizable and easy to sing, complementing the words nicely.
- 27 3. Negative feedback:
- 28 a. Sections of Psalm 106 are missing in this version (verses 14–22, 25, 28–39, 43–47),
- 29 so the psalm is incompletely covered, and even the parts that are versified are often
- 30 significantly condensed (verses 26–27, 41–42).
- 31 b. Some churches referred to the melody as dry, very monotone, awkward, lacking
- 32 substance, feeling unfinished, and repetitive. A couple churches suggested
- 33 considering the St. Flavian melody instead (used for Hymn 43 in the *Book of Praise*).

34

35 Considerations:

- 36 1. The entirety of Step 3, 3.a contravenes “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 7.
- 37 2. The melody has some unwelcome features:
- 38 a. It has a lack of resolution at the end of the song.
- 39 b. It begins and ends mid-range, that is, on the third of the scale.
- 40 c. The repetitiveness of the melodic structure does not do justice to the contents of the
- 41 psalm.
- 42 3. The majority of responses both pre- and post-GS 2022 points to an overall lack of support
- 43 for this alternative.
- 44

NOTES: _____

1 Final Recommendation:

- 2 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 106B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

3
4 **Psalm 110**

5
6 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

7 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 110B.

8
9 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 10 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 13 in favour, 21 not.
- 11 2. Positive feedback:
- 12 a. Churches observed that the text is well written, a good versification, suited to the
- 13 melody, and faithful to Scripture.
- 14 b. Churches noted that the melody was better than that of Genevan 110. It is easy to
- 15 sing, has a good range and a nice shape, and fits well with the text.
- 16 c. Some churches had concerns about the melody (see below).
- 17 3. Negative feedback:
- 18 a. Regarding the text, the words “of th’order of” in the last line of stanza 2 are awkward
- 19 to sing, and the words “in vict’ry lift the head” in stanza 3 could be changed to “in
- 20 vict’ry lift his head.”
- 21 b. The melody has issues, including the high E-flat in the first line, the descending
- 22 pattern of the third line with its frequently repeated notes, and the complicated
- 23 rhythm.
- 24 c. Other feedback on the melody included a wide range of comments, ranging from
- 25 “unsingable” and “uninspiring” to “better than that of the *Book of Praise*.”
- 26 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

27
28 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

29 Observations:

- 30 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 12 in favour, 22 not.
- 31 2. Positive feedback:
- 32 a. Churches noted that the melody is acceptable, not hard to sing, but they were not
- 33 especially enthusiastic about it.
- 34 i. One church drew attention to the mouthful “th’order” on the last line of stanza 2,
- 35 as also noted above.
- 36 b. Churches found the text true to Scripture, and the song complete in its versification of
- 37 the psalm.
- 38 c. Some churches, though registering support, noted that their congregations gave mixed
- 39 reactions to the song.
- 40 3. Negative feedback:
- 41 a. Textual concerns with particularly stanzas 2 and 3 were expressed. For example,
- 42 stanza 2, line 3 says that the Lord will never be released from his oath, which implies
- 43 that another party could do the releasing, something the Scripture text does not

NOTES: _____

1 convey. Line 4 says, “Of th’order of Melchizedek, you’ll always be a priest,” which
2 does not sufficiently capture Psalm 110:4, “You are a priest forever.”

- 3 b. Regarding the melody, churches found it difficult, not very singable.
4 c. Churches much preferred Genevan 110.

5
6 **Considerations:**

- 7 1. The Committee echoes the textual concerns in stanzas 2 and 3 as noted in Step 3, 3.a. The
8 recent copyright date (2009), however, does militate against pursuing textual changes.
9 2. This song has not grown on churches since 2022; in fact, the opposite has happened.

10
11 **Final Recommendation:**

- 12 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 110B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

13
14 **Psalm 111**

15
16 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

17 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 111B.

18
19 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 20 1. 33 churches gave feedback: 18 in favour, 15 not.
21 2. Positive feedback:
22 a. Churches regarded the text as faithful to Scripture, a complete representation of the
23 biblical text, and closer to Scripture than Genevan 111.
24 b. Regarding the melody, churches called it easy to sing, beautiful, fitting, wonderful,
25 nice, and easy to learn. Some said that since the Genevan melody is used for three
26 other psalms as well (24, 62, 95), an alternative melody would be desirable.
27 c. One church cautioned that the melodic contours in measures 11–16 could result in the
28 congregation taking breaths in the middle of words, interrupting the flow of the song.
29 3. Negative feedback:
30 a. The text inverts phrases in an unnatural way, and is insufficiently literal, shifting
31 the focus from God to our response.
32 b. The melody is fair but somewhat awkward to sing and play. It is not an
33 improvement upon Genevan 111.
34 c. There is no need for an alternative since the Genevan is well-known and better.
35 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

36
37 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

38 **Observations:**

- 39 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 17 not.
40 2. Positive feedback:
41 a. The text faithfully and completely reflected the text of the psalm. Some churches
42 expressed dissatisfaction with stanza 3, line 4, “God the LORD is kind,” as a rather
43 weak rendering of verse 4, “The LORD is gracious and merciful.”

NOTES: _____

1 b. The melody is familiar and sings well. Some feedback indicated that it is a little
 2 difficult, citing a similar sentiment as noted in Step 2, point 2.b above, that the second
 3 half makes it difficult to sing in one breath.

4 3. Negative feedback:

5 a. There were concerns that the versification at times switches the emphasis of the
 6 biblical text from God’s great works to the saints’ response. For example, stanza 2
 7 says, “His saints delight to search and trace his mighty works and wondrous ways,”
 8 while the biblical text says, “Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who
 9 delight in them” (verse 2) Further, stanza 3 says, “His people ever keep in mind,”
 10 while the biblical text says, “He caused his wondrous works to be remembered”
 11 (verse 4).

12 b. Regarding the melody, there were mixed reviews, from “more joyful” than the
 13 Genevan and “quite singable” to “difficult” and not working well with the words (i.e.,
 14 difficult to sing certain parts in one breath). Churches felt that the Genevan is well-
 15 known and better.

16
 17 Considerations:

- 18 1. The song’s emphasis at times on the saints’ response rather than on the Lord’s deeds is a
 19 concern among the churches. This feature negatively distinguishes this version from
 20 Genevan 111.
 21 2. The melody displays the features of an acceptable congregational melody, with step-wise
 22 motion and range of an octave.
 23 3. The churches’ responses are quite mixed in terms of support for this alternative.

24
 25 Final Recommendation:

- 26 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 111B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

27
 28 **Psalm 112**

29
 30 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

31 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 112.

32
 33 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 34 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 19 in favour, 15 not.
 35 2. Positive feedback:
 36 a. The text is faithful to Scripture and the psalm is well-versified.
 37 b. The melody is easy to sing, cheery and lively, bright and joyful, an improvement
 38 upon the Genevan, and suits the text very well.
 39 3. Negative feedback:
 40 a. There are small flaws of versification and unnatural word choice.
 41 b. There are strange runs in the melody, the last line is too difficult for congregational
 42 singing, the song is “more suitable to a brass band,” and not an improvement upon the
 43 Genevan.
 44 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

NOTES: _____

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 17 in favour, 16 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is scriptural and work well with the melody.
 - b. The melody, though not well-known, is singable, joyful, pleasant, and improves upon Genevan 112.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Regarding the text, there was some awkwardness noted in regard to the word order; for example, “arises light,” “that ever will him move,” “will everlasting prove,” “he his desire will see.”
 - b. Regarding the melody, similar reasons as before were cited, namely, that it is a little trickier to sing than the Genevan, there are strange runs, the last line is confusing and hard to sing, and the melody as a whole is not an improvement upon the Genevan.

Considerations:

1. As to the text, the critique that there is some awkwardness in the word order cites examples that are unpersuasive. Similar inversions of word order have been made in our existing collection.
2. The melody is robust, joyful, and well-suited to the text, and is thus well worth the effort to learn.
3. The response from the churches is mixed.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 112 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 113**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 113B.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 35 churches gave feedback: 16 in favour, 19 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is faithful to Scripture and covers the whole psalm.
 - b. The melody is easy to sing and fits the words well.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The text contains some questionable locutions. Stanza 5 uses the word “sons” while the corresponding Scripture passage speaks of “children” in the context of motherhood for the barren. Further, the word “condescend” in stanza 3, while meaning not to “patronize” but to “lower oneself” or “come down,” might create misunderstanding among some.

NOTES: _____

- 1 b. The melody is repetitive, not exciting, lacking depth, and is not better than that of
- 2 Genevan 113. There is an absence of rests between the lines, thus making it hard for
- 3 congregations to sing.
- 4 c. A number of churches said that the current Genevan version is fine and that no
- 5 alternative is needed.
- 6 4. The Committee, sympathetic to the critiques of the text, maintained its recommendation
- 7 but suggested textual revisions and updates.

9 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

10 Observations:

- 11 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 14 in favour, 19 not.
- 12 2. Positive feedback:
 - 13 a. The text is acceptable and faithful to Scripture.
 - 14 b. The melody is easy and singable. One church did comment, however, that the melody
 - 15 does not allow the congregation a chance to breathe, and the members had trouble
 - 16 with the repetition of alternating thirds within the melody.
 - 17 c. Some churches, though registering support, noted that their congregations gave mixed
 - 18 reactions to the song.
- 19 3. Negative feedback:
 - 20 a. While churches found the words scriptural, some saw the repetition of the last line as
 - 21 a detraction from the majesty of the psalm.
 - 22 b. Churches struggled with the melody, finding it not very singable, complex, and
 - 23 monotonous. Some churches said that the melody is playful and thus more suited to a
 - 24 children's choir.
 - 25 c. Several churches felt that this neither adds to nor improves upon Genevan 113.

27 Considerations:

- 28 1. While the text revisions approved by GS 2022 seemingly addressed previous concerns,
- 29 the unchanged repetition of the final line of each stanza again drew critique. On the one
- 30 hand, this repetition does not detract from the text's faithfulness to Scripture. On the
- 31 other, for some it contributes to a monotonous feel of the melody.
- 32 2. The Committee echoes the expressed concerns regarding the melody, especially that the
- 33 repetition of alternating thirds does not promote a melody that reflects the majesty of the
- 34 text.
- 35 3. The response from the churches is mixed.

37 Final Recommendation:

- 38 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 113B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

40 **Psalm 117**

42 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

43 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 117.

44
 NOTES: _____

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 35 churches gave feedback: 18 in favour, 17 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The melody is joyful and fitting.
 - b. Some caveats were expressed, namely, that the Genevan melody is good, and that this version of the psalm did not need to be so long.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. There is too much additional text compared to the Bible. The covenantal focus of Psalm 117:2 (“steadfast love toward us”) is absent from the text.
 - b. There is too much repetition in the melody. There are too many eighth notes.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 18 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is faithful to Scripture.
 - b. In place of the problematic second line that currently reads, “For God’s grace and lovingkindness,” one church offered an alternative rendition: “For God’s steadfast love toward us.”
 - c. The melody is good and singable.
 - d. The text and melody fit together.
 - e. The positive comments were somewhat muted: “sounds nice,” “no issues,” “acceptable,” “singable,” “could be in addition or left out.”
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The text is not close enough to Scripture. Genevan 117 is closer to Scripture and singable.
 - b. The melody is difficult.

Considerations:

1. Textually, many churches (including some that accepted it) considered this version too loose, almost a paraphrase. It is true that the text is rather free. The suggested alteration to line 2 would reduce this concern.
2. Melodically, this tune is weak in that there is much repetition: three of the four lines are identical, leaving only the third line to offer variation. While it is common for four-line hymns to have similar or repeated lines, having three of the four lines identical is less than ideal.
3. A concern about the eighth notes was brought up by one church, but these do not make the tune unsingable.
4. The churches that submitted an opinion did not express strong support for this song.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt GPH 117 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

NOTES:

1 **Psalm 120**

2
3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 120.

5
6 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 7 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 17 in favour, 17 not.
8 2. Positive feedback:
9 a. The text is faithful to Scripture.
10 b. The plaintive melody is suitable to the text and not difficult to learn, although some
11 did find it too difficult.
12 3. Negative feedback:
13 a. One church, finding unacceptable word choices, offered an alternative version of the
14 text.
15 b. The melody is too difficult. If this melody is modal, it provides no advantage to the
16 Genevan.
17 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

18
19 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

20 Observations:

- 21 1. 35 churches completed the survey: 16 in favour, 19 not.
22 2. Positive feedback:
23 a. The beautiful words are accurate to Scripture.
24 b. The melody fits the text, but many churches noted that it is rather difficult.
25 3. Negative feedback:
26 a. The text is biblical but not as close to the Bible as the current Genevan 120.
27 b. There were some comments regarding stanza 2, line 4, which reads, “with coals still
28 glowing, burning from the vine.” Psalm 120:4 (ESV) has “broom tree” instead of
29 “vine.” The vine is said to be associated usually with prosperity, while the broom tree
30 is associated with hardship in Israel.
31 c. Many churches had concerns with the melody. They consider it awkward,
32 challenging, not very singable, and not an improvement upon the Genevan.

33
34 Considerations:

- 35 1. The association of the vine with prosperity and the broom tree with hardship (Step 3, 3.b)
36 is not certain, but it is true that in the Bible the text refers to the glowing coals of a broom
37 tree rather than those of a vine, with good reason. The broom tree, when burned, produces
38 intense heat and its coals retain that heat.
39 2. The melody is similar to Genevan 120 in that both are written in a modal style, are suited
40 to the text of the psalm, and are similarly difficult. This melody does not add to the
41 melody of Genevan 120.
42 3. The response from the churches is mixed.

43
44
NOTES: _____

1 Final Recommendation:

- 2 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 120 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

3
4 **Psalm 130**

5
6 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

7 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 130B.

8
9 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 10 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 18 in favour, 17 not.
11 2. Positive feedback:
12 a. The words were considered to be faithful to the biblical text, with a couple of
13 exceptions.
14 b. The melody is suited to the words (haunting, expressive), reflecting despair and hope.
15 3. Negative feedback:
16 a. A number of concerns regarding the text were raised.
17 b. A church suggested that the major key was unsuitable.
18 c. A number of churches gave a general reason that there is no need for an alternative
19 rendition.
20 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, with a change of stanza 1, line 1 from
21 “out from the depths” to “out of the depths.”

22
23 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

24 Observations:

- 25 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 13 in favour, 21 not.
26 2. Positive feedback:
27 a. The text is faithful to Scripture, although one church commented that some creative
28 liberties were taken.
29 b. The tune is beautiful and well-loved, having a nice harmony.
30 c. A few churches that liked this selection also commented that Genevan 130 is well-
31 loved.
32 3. Negative feedback:
33 a. The words have many shortcomings, are imprecise, awkward, and in a couple of
34 cases go beyond what the psalm actually says (e.g., stanza 1, line 2, “forgiving all”—
35 does God actually forgive all?; stanza 3, line 3 “mighty though they seem”).
36 b. The melody is too joyful for the words. The mood of this melody does not fit the song
37 (it is not sad enough).
38 c. Many churches stated that Genevan 130 is much more suitable to the text and mood
39 of the psalm.

40
41 Considerations:

- 42 1. Since the scriptural text must be accurately reflected, the Committee is sympathetic to the
43 concern that some of the lyrics can be misunderstood. It is, therefore, questionable
44 whether this versification substantively adds to Genevan 130.

NOTES:

2. The melody is very singable. Whether it is suitable for the text of Psalm 130 appears to be a matter of subjective opinion.
3. It is remarkable that many churches, both among those who accepted this tune and those who rejected it, commented on the beauty and suitability of Genevan 130, and expressed their love for that version.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 130B for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 149

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 149A.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 35 churches gave feedback: 22 in favour, 13 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The words were faithful to Scripture.
 - b. The melody is familiar and easy to learn. One church said that Genevan 149 is difficult in lines 5, 6.
 - c. One church that accepted this alternative noted that this melody “pales in comparison to the original.”
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. A few comments on the text were received.
 - b. This tune is also in another proposed psalm, and thus a contravening of “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 6.
 - c. This tune is quite similar to the tune of “Ye Servants of God” (Hymn 84).
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 32 churches completed the survey: 24 in favour, 8 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The melody was familiar to and well-liked by many churches.
 - b. A couple of churches accepted this song, but also questioned the need for it with the comment that the Genevan tune was fine.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The song is nice, good, and biblical, but not a necessary addition to the Psalter.

Considerations:

1. The text of this proposed alternative is faithful to Scripture.
2. The tune is very well liked and easy to sing, and may thus lead to an increased singing of Psalm 149.

NOTES:

- 1 3. A strong majority of the churches that submitted an opinion accepted this alternative
2 song.

3
4 **Final Recommendation:**

- 5 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 149 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

6
7 **Psalm 150**

8
9 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

10 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 150C.

11
12 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 13 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 20 in favour, 15 not.
14 2. Positive feedback:
15 a. The melody is familiar and fits with the text.
16 3. Negative feedback:
17 a. The use of a refrain (“Hallelujah!”) is not advisable since in the Bible the psalm does
18 not have one.
19 b. Using this melody, which is also used for the proposed hymn, “All Creatures of Our
20 God and King,” conflicts with “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 6.
21 c. Genevan 150 is well-loved and very singable.
22 4. Committee maintained its recommendation, with a correction of the words “all that
23 breathes” to “all that breathe” in stanza 3.
24

25 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

26 Observations:

- 27 1. 35 churches completed the survey: 23 in favour, 12 not.
28 2. Positive feedback:
29 a. The words are faithful to Scripture, except for the multiple Hallelujahs.
30 b. The melody is familiar, singable, joyful, and appropriate to the words of the psalm.
31 c. Some churches that accepted this melody also asked why it should be included since
32 Genevan 150 “is beautiful and can stand alone,” and that this melody “pales in
33 comparison to the original,” i.e., the Genevan.
34 3. Negative feedback:
35 a. There are too many Hallelujahs.
36 b. The refrain or chorus is already in the hymn “All Creatures of our God and King.”
37 c. This song is unnecessary because Genevan 150 is well-loved and superior to this one.
38 It is nice but cannot compare to what we have.
39 4. One church suggested altering the text of stanza 2, lines 4–5.
40

41 Considerations:

- 42 1. The text of this version faithfully conveys the scriptural text.

NOTES: _____

- 1 2. This melody of the psalm is very familiar and is usually associated with the hymn “All
- 2 Creatures of Our God and King.” “Additional Guidelines,” Guideline 6, discourages the
- 3 choice of melodies with a strong association with a well-known hymn.
- 4 3. Clearly, most churches that accept or reject this rendition appreciate and love Genevan
- 5 150.

6
7 **Final Recommendation:**

- 8 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 150C for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.
- 9

NOTES: _____

HYMNS

A Shoot Will Spring

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 302, “A Shoot Will Spring from Jesse’s Stump.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 34 churches gave feedback: 11 in favour, 23 not.
2. The report of the Committee to GS 2022 does not list the positive feedback.
3. The negative feedback was mixed on both the tune and the text, with the tune drawing considerably more negative responses than the text.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 19 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. It is scriptural.
 - b. It is appropriate for congregational singing.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The tune is difficult.
 - b. The expression “sevenfold energy” is not derived from the Scripture.
 - c. It is an unnecessary addition to our hymn section since Hymn 16 and Hymn 20 contain similar elements.

Considerations:

1. The feedback on the tune is both positive and negative.
2. The expression “sevenfold energy” is an obscure expression and not clearly found in the text of Isaiah 11 and thus not in line with “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 5. It is unlikely that a congregation singing these words will know what this means.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 302, “A Shoot Will Spring from Jesse’s Stump,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Abide with Me

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 159, “Abide with Me.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 37 churches gave feedback: 31 in favour, 6 not.
2. Positive feedback:

NOTES: _____

- 1 a. It is a beautiful, comforting, and well-known song.
- 2 3. Negative feedback:
 - 3 a. It contains archaic language.
 - 4 b. It is more suitable for personal than corporate occasions.
- 5 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

7 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

8 Observations:

- 9 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 33 in favour, 1 not.
- 10 2. Positive feedback:
 - 11 a. It is a well-known and much-loved song.
 - 12 b. It is scriptural.
- 13 3. Negative feedback:
 - 14 a. It is focused on the individual and thus may not work for corporate worship.
- 15 4. One church in its correspondence to GS 2022 suggests that not all stanzas need to be
 - 16 adopted. It points to stanza 5, which focuses on one dying individual's meditation, and
 - 17 could be left out. This would result in a more triumphant and more directly Scripture-
 - 18 based ending (1 Cor. 15:54b–55).

19 Considerations:

- 20 1. The many positive responses from the churches (see Step 3, points 1 and 2) indicate that
 - 21 they would like to see this well-known hymn added to the hymn section.
 - 22 2. The suggestion to not include stanza 5 has merit. It is indeed not very suitable for
 - 23 corporate worship.

24 Final Recommendation:

- 25 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 159, "Abide with Me," stanzas 1–4, for inclusion in the *Book of*- 26 *Praise*.

27 **All Creatures of Our God and King**

28 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

29 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 431, "All Creatures of Our God and King."

30 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 31 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 30 in favour, 6 not.
- 32 2. Positive feedback:
 - 33 a. The hymn is well-known and the text biblical. It echoes Psalm 148.
 - 34 b. The tune is appropriately joyful, grand, and majestic.
- 35 3. Negative feedback:
 - 36 a. There is too much repetition.
 - 37 b. This hymn overlaps too much with Psalm 148.
- 38 4. The Committee amended its recommendation, proposing stanzas 1–3 of the GPH and
 - 39 stanza 5 of the TPH 248, but slightly modified.

40 NOTES: _____

41 _____

42 _____

43 _____

44 _____

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches completed the survey: 23 in favour, 11 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The hymn was well received by the churches.
 - b. It is easy to sing.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. There are enough songs about creation and praising God for his work in creation in the *Book of Praise*. This addition is not needed.
4. One church in its correspondence to GS 2022 suggests revisions with regard to stanzas 4 and 5.

Stanza 4

All living creatures, praise the Lord!
 Let him be everywhere adored,
 alleluia, alleluia!
 You kings and rulers of the earth,
 in worship let your praise ring forth:
 O praise him, O praise him,
 alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Stanza 5

Praise God, all people, old and young!
 Exalt his name in joyful song.
 alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
 and praise the Spirit, Three in One,
 O praise him, O praise him,
 alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Considerations:

1. This hymn is well-known and much-loved, as also the responses of the churches indicate.
2. As the change by the Committee in its final recommendation to GS 2022 indicates, there are some problems with stanza 4. The revisions suggested above are an improvement. Since the hymn is in the public domain, we could adopt these revisions.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt “All Creatures of our God and King,” stanzas 1–3 of the GPH and stanzas 4 and 5 as amended above, for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Amazing Grace**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 433, “Amazing Grace.”

NOTES: _____

1 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 2 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 26 in favour, 10 not.
 3 2. Positive feedback:
 4 a. This hymn is classic, beautiful, focused on God’s grace, scriptural, Reformed, and
 5 well-loved.
 6 3. Negative feedback:
 7 a. The hymn is more suited for individuals than for corporate worship.
 8 b. The hymn does not reflect the experience of many in our churches.
 9 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

10
 11 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

12 Observations:

- 13 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 27 in favour, 7 not.
 14 2. Positive feedback:
 15 a. It is well-loved, as a classic hymn.
 16 3. Negative feedback:
 17 a. It is not covenantal. In our worship we sing as God’s covenant people.
 18 b. There is too much focus on the individual.
 19 4. One church in its correspondence to GS 2022 does not regard this song suitable for
 20 Reformed corporate worship. Stanza 1 can only be sung with conviction by believers who
 21 were converted the way John Newton was. Stanzas 5 and 6 are not clear. This church also
 22 notes that there is no universally accepted version of this hymn. For example, in the GPH
 23 the order in which the stanzas appear has been changed. It therefore suggests a revised
 24 version of the hymn.

25
 26 Considerations:

- 27 1. The hymn expresses the miracle of God’s grace, which is a subject that could be further
 28 highlighted in our collection of hymns.
 29 2. It is true that not everyone who sings in the worship service has the shared experience of
 30 the author, but the experience of God’s undeserved grace for sinners is for all believers.
 31 3. Rather than changing a well-known hymn to make it more acceptable, it would be
 32 preferable to delete stanzas if they are deemed not appropriate for corporate worship or
 33 unclear in meaning. The GPH 462 omits stanza 5 and reverses the order of stanzas 3 and
 34 4. This eliminates the reference to the veil, and stanzas 3 and 6 connect well.

35
 36 Final Recommendation:

- 37 1. That GS 2025 adopt GPH 462, “Amazing Grace,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, as
 38 follows:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 39 | | |
| 40 | 1. Amazing grace – how sweet the sound – | 2. ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, |
| 41 | that saved a wretch like me! | and grace my fears relieved; |
| 42 | I once was lost but now am found, | how precious did that grace appear |
| 43 | was blind but now I see. | the hour I first believed! |
| 44 | | |

NOTES: _____

- 1 3. The Lord has promised good to me, 8 'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
 2 his word my hope secures; 9 and grace will lead me home.
 3 he will my shield and portion be 10
 4 as long as life endures. 11 5. When we've been there ten thousand years,
 5 12 bright shining as the sun,
 6 4. Through many dangers, toils, and snares 13 we've no less days to sing God's praise
 7 I have already come; 14 than when we'd first begun.

15
 16 **Angels, from the Realms of Glory**

17
 18 **Step 1: Initial Review**

19 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 313, "Angels, from the Realms of Glory."
 20

21 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 22 1. 33 churches gave feedback: 23 in favour, 10 not.
 23 2. Positive feedback:
 24 a. It is well-known, biblical, and meaningful. It is a welcome addition to hymns
 25 celebrating the birth of our Saviour.
 26 3. Negative feedback:
 27 a. The current section in the *Book of Praise* (Hymns 15–21) is sufficient. There is no
 28 need for more hymns.
 29 b. The hymn is in the present tense, as if Christ were born today.
 30 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, with one update, changing the "ye" into
 31 "you."
 32

33 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

34 Observations:

- 35 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 21 in favour, 13 not.
 36 2. Positive feedback:
 37 a. It is a well-known hymn and suitable for celebrating the birth of our Saviour.
 38 3. Negative feedback:
 39 a. Stanza 4 ("saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope") is not very clear.
 40 Some call it biblically weak and shallow.
 41 b. Our *Book of Praise* contains appropriate psalms and hymns about the birth of Christ.
 42 c. We should not add Christmas carols to the *Book of Praise*.
 43

44 Considerations:

- 45 1. Stanza 4 is indeed problematic. It is unlikely that a congregation would make sense of the
 46 references to the altar and the temple. Lines 1–4 are grammatically convoluted.
 47 2. If we need more hymns about the birth of our Saviour, there are better choices.
 48

49 Final Recommendation:

- 50 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 313, "Angels, from the Realms of Glory," for inclusion in
 51 the *Book of Praise*.

NOTES: _____

1 **Before the Throne of God Above**

2
3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 277, “Before the Throne of God Above.”

5
6 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 7 1. 39 churches gave feedback: 23 in favour, 16 not.
8 2. Positive feedback:
9 a. It is a beautiful, scriptural hymn.
10 3. Negative feedback:
11 a. It is too much focused on the individual and not covenant-focused.
12 b. The tune is out of step with the *Book of Praise* and difficult to sing.
13 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

14
15 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

16 Observations:

- 17 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 19 not.
18 2. Positive feedback:
19 a. The text is scriptural and the melody is acceptable.
20 3. Negative feedback:
21 a. The range from low A to high E-flat is too large for congregational singing.
22 b. There is too much attention on the individual.

23
24 Considerations:

- 25 1. This hymn does not add an important aspect to the hymn section.
26 2. This hymn is indeed focused on the individual and therefore less suitable for corporate
27 worship.
28 3. The topic of this hymn (Christ’s heavenly intercession) is covered sufficiently in the *Book*
29 *of Praise* (e.g., Hymns 38, 40, 42).

30
31 Final Recommendation:

- 32 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 277, “Before the Throne of God Above,” for inclusion in
33 the *Book of Praise*.

34
35 **Christians, Awake**

36
37 **Step 1: Initial Review**

38 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 350, “Christians, Awake.”

39
40 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 41 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 17 in favour, 17 not.
42 2. Positive feedback:
43 a. An appropriate hymn for Christmas with a solid and biblically faithful text.
44 b. The tune is joyful and, while not popular, accessible for congregational singing.

NOTES:

- 1 3. Negative feedback:
 - 2 a. The text is confusing and sentimental, the content is redundant of Hymn 21 and not
 - 3 necessary to add.
 - 4 b. Some consider the tune to be difficult, criticizing its musical range and high pitch.
- 5 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

7 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

8 Observations:

- 9 1. 31 churches completed the survey: 12 in favour, 19 not.
- 10 2. Positive feedback:
 - 11 a. One church suggests that some stanzas found in TPH 312 are missing and should be
 - 12 added.
 - 13 b. This is a very nice Christmas song with a well-known melody.
 - 14 c. The range in the melody is significant but the steps towards the high E make it still
 - 15 accessible for congregational singing.
- 16 3. Negative feedback:
 - 17 a. Most negative feedback addresses the lack of love for the melody, in particular, the
 - 18 large range from the low C to the high E. Some suggest it is a difficult song to learn
 - 19 and not well-loved by the members in the congregation.
 - 20 b. Since we have a number of Christmas hymns already that are sung but once or twice
 - 21 per year, there is no need to add an additional Christmas hymn.

23 Considerations:

- 24 1. In deciding to recommend GPH 350 and not TPH 312, the Committee noted that the GPH
- 25 version is based more closely to the text of Luke 2:10–20. This hymn is suitable for
- 26 corporate worship, given its focus on the incarnation of Christ and its confessional
- 27 language.
- 28 2. The melody does have a large range, but given the steps to the high E, this song would be
- 29 accessible for congregational singing.

31 Final Recommendation:

- 32 1. That GS 2025 adopt GPH 350, “Christians, Awake!” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

34 ***Come, O Almighty King***

36 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

37 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 212, “Come, Thou Almighty King.”

39 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 40 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 26 in favour, 9 not.
- 41 2. Positive feedback:
 - 42 a. Great appreciation for the text as classic, rich, Trinitarian, and it is a well-known
 - 43 hymn for those who may join our churches from other denominations.

NOTES: _____

- 1 b. The melody was described as beautiful, familiar, fitting to the text, triumphant, and
2 easy to learn and sing.
- 3 3. Negative feedback:
- 4 a. There were some concerns about the use of archaic pronouns originally which were
5 addressed in our recommendation to GS 2022.
- 6 b. Others were concerned that this hymn does not add to what we already have in the
7 *Book of Praise*.
- 8 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, requesting text revisions to address
9 concerns with archaic pronouns.

10 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

11 Observations:

- 12 1. 31 churches completed the survey: 21 in favour, 10 not.
- 13 2. Positive feedback:
- 14 a. It is a well-known and loved hymn that addresses the Trinity and is taken from Psalm
15 24:10.
- 16 b. The text and melody are suitable for congregational singing and are much
17 appreciated.
- 18 c. It is asked that the original version of the hymn be included rather than the
19 alternatives suggested to GS 2022. It cites the use of “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” and
20 “How Great Thou Art” as hymns we would leave because they are so well-known and
21 loved within broader Christendom.
- 22 3. Negative feedback:
- 23 a. There was some concern with the text.
- 24 i. The King does not help us “your name to sing.” That is the work of the Holy
25 Spirit.
- 26 ii. For example, “To the great One in Three” sounds very odd (normally we speak of
27 “Three in One”).
- 28 iii. The older English is not always easy for younger generations to understand.
- 29 b. The hymn is too basic and does not add rich content to our *Book of Praise*.

30 Considerations:

- 31 1. The King, Jesus, does in fact help us to praise his name by his Spirit. There is no tension
32 there.
- 33 2. It is not inappropriate to refer to God as “One in Three” (see the Athanasian Creed,
34 Article 27, “Thus in all things, as has been stated above, both trinity in unity and unity in
35 trinity must be worshipped”).
- 36 3. This is a classic Trinitarian hymn that is well-known in broader Christian circles, is
37 accessible for congregational singing, and ought not to be changed unless the changes
38 dramatically improve the content of the hymn.
- 39 4. The comment regarding the change to the archaic language should be considered. The
40 removal of archaic pronouns would be an unnecessary CanRC idiosyncrasy.

41 NOTES: _____

42 _____

43 _____

44 _____

1 Final Recommendation:

- 2 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 212, “Come, Thou Almighty King,” for inclusion in the *Book*
3 *of Praise*, retaining the use of archaic pronouns.

4
5 **Come, O Fount of Every Blessing**

6
7 **Step 1: Initial Review**

8 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 429, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”

9
10 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 11 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 25 in favour, 12 not.
12 2. Positive feedback:
13 a. Many churches appreciated the melody although love for the text was not as strong.
14 3. Negative feedback:
15 a. Those who rejected the song did so because of archaic language and some unclear
16 meaning (“melodious sonnet,” “flaming tongues,” “fixed upon the mount”). There
17 was also a concern that the hymn was too emotional and I-focused.
18 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, requesting a number of text revisions to
19 address archaisms.

20
21 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

22 Observations:

- 23 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 24 in favour, 9 not.
24 2. Positive feedback:
25 a. The lyrics are accessible and the melody is well-loved.
26 3. Negative feedback:
27 a. The language is very archaic, somewhat unclear, and the hymn is individualistic and
28 not suitable for the *Book of Praise*.
29 b. The updated language, especially stanza 3, “O to grace how great a debtor I am every
30 day anew,” is considered stranger than the original.
31 c. This hymn is not based on any text and is sentimental.

32
33 Considerations:

- 34 1. Although the language is older, the lyrics remain accessible to most members in the pew.
35 2. The lack of clear scriptural reference makes this a less desirable hymn.
36 3. The concern for individualism is not entirely unfounded. While some psalms and hymns
37 make use of the personal pronoun “I,” they are usually echoing Scripture or confession.
38 This hymn is less clear on specifically what truths of Scripture it is meant to echo.
39 4. Stanza 3 is not improved by the editorial change to “I am every day anew.”
40 5. Removing archaic language could be an unnecessary CanRC idiosyncrasy. If new
41 hymnals like the TPH maintain the older language, it is unlikely that the text will be
42 modernized widely in broader Christian circles.

43
44
NOTES: _____

1 Final Recommendation:

- 2 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 429, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” for inclusion
3 in the *Book of Praise*.

4
5 **Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus**

6
7 **Step 1: Initial Review**

8 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 300, “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus,” stanzas
9 1 and 4.

10
11 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 12 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 27 in favour, 8 not.
13 2. Positive feedback:
14 a. The hymn is well-known, the text’s theme is strong, and the melody is pleasant and
15 accessible.
16 b. The hymn would be a welcome addition to the advent section of the *Book of Praise*.
17 3. Negative feedback:
18 a. The author Charles Wesley was an Arminian, some words are archaic, the calling of
19 Jesus the “dear Desire” was deemed unbiblical, and the content of this hymn is well
20 covered already in the hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.
21 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, requesting a slightly revised text.

22
23 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

24 Observations:

- 25 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 27 in favour, 5 not.
26 2. Positive feedback:
27 a. One church summarizes well: the words express concisely the longing for Jesus to
28 reign in the hearts of God’s people. In addition, the hymn deals with the incarnation,
29 but it emphasizes Christ’s kingship instead of sentimentalizing his birth.
30 b. This would be a great addition to the Advent section of the Book of Praise as its text
31 is biblically sound and its melody is accessible.
32 3. Negative feedback:
33 a. One of the churches that endorsed this hymn questioned the wisdom of including a
34 hymn of a man whom we would not allow to preach in our churches.
35 b. Some of those who endorsed this hymn expressed concern with the recommendation
36 to change/modernize its lyrics. These churches express that we ought not to change
37 the lyrics as this is a well-known hymn of Christendom for any guests who may be in
38 our churches.
39 c. Another church that endorsed this hymn with its original lyrics writes:
40 i. “Thou” in the original title and the first line is a pronoun for Jesus, which draws
41 further attention to him. While changing it to “O” sounds better than “you” (the
42 modern equivalent for “thou”), “O” is just an archaic spelling of “Oh,” which is
43 not necessary and does not draw as much attention to Jesus.

NOTES: _____

- 1 ii. Changing “dear Desire of ev’ry nation” to “bring your hope to every nation” does
2 two things:
- 3 1. The change completely eliminates the message that Jesus is “the dear Desire
4 of every nation,” just as Jesus is “Israel’s strength and consolation,” as stated
5 in the previous line.
 - 6 2. The change unfortunately breaks up the continuity of stating what Jesus, our
7 “long expected Saviour” is to us. As stated in the last line of stanza 1, Jesus is
8 also the “joy to every longing heart.” The change that the Committee
9 proposed in the last line of stanza 2, “bring you hope to every nation” implies
10 that “hope” is something that Jesus is being asked to bring, rather than a
11 statement of who he is. As a result, the next word that follows, which is “joy,”
12 could also be mistakenly understood by the singer to be something that Jesus
13 brings, when actually “joy to every longing heart” is what he is to us.

14
15 **Considerations:**

- 16 1. When the CanRCs adopt well-known and widely loved hymns and change their lyrics,
17 such changes can quickly become unnecessary CanRC idiosyncrasies. A hymn’s
18 appropriateness for inclusion in the *Book of Praise* should be based on its textual
19 faithfulness and melodic accessibility.
- 20 2. On the concern expressed by a church regarding the legitimacy of referring to Jesus as the
21 “dear Desire” of the nations, the Committee in the report to GS 2022 had commented, “It
22 appears that Wesley based his expression ‘Desire of every nation’ on Haggai 2:7....
23 Given that the NT does not allude to this part of the verse and that commentators now
24 doubt the connection between ‘desire’ in Haggai 2:7 and ‘Christ,’ it is better to adopt a
25 different wording.”
26 While “dear Desire” may not be textually accurate in Haggai, it is true that Abraham was
27 promised that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:18). In
28 that sense, Christ is the desire of all nations (see also Isa. 49:6).

29
30 **Final Recommendation:**

- 31 1. That GS 2025 adopt the *original* TPH 300, “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus,” stanzas
32 1 and 4, for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

33
34 **Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain**

35
36 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

37 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 389, “Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain.”

38
39 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 40 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 8 in favour, 27 not.
- 41 2. Positive feedback:
 - 42 a. This is a joyful Easter hymn.
 - 43 b. The text and melody are “okay” or “mediocre.”
- 44 3. Negative feedback:

NOTES: _____

- 1 a. The melody is a difficult one and not well-known.
- 2 b. There is an “unpredictability to the melody” and some “strange drops in line 3.”
- 3 c. The use of archaic language is not simply in reference to pronouns for God (i.e., Thee
- 4 and Thou) but also in other ways, where the meaning of the text is not clear to a
- 5 modern reader. Some examples:
- 6 i. “All the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying” can suggest that sin is no
- 7 longer a concern for believers, and “flying” is an archaism that has a different
- 8 meaning today.
- 9 ii. “This the spring of life today” is confusing, and there are concerns about the
- 10 hymn being written in the historical present.
- 11 iii. The phrases “and from three days’ sleep in death” and “burst the bars of the
- 12 tomb’s dark portal” were considered to be “old” and laborious.
- 13 d. The text of the hymn does not seem to be directly referencing specific passages of
- 14 Scripture; the hymn in general would add little to our relatively rich Easter hymn
- 15 section.
- 16 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

17 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

18 Observations:

- 19 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 9 in favour, 24 not.
- 20 2. Positive feedback:
- 21 a. Good Easter hymn. Some noted that there were five stanzas in TPH 356 and
- 22 wondering why that version was not included instead.
- 23 b. The melody is accessible for congregational singing and the text is appropriate for
- 24 Easter.
- 25 3. Negative feedback:
- 26 a. Similar concerns as before: the melody is inaccessible and not well-known.
- 27 b. The text is archaic in so many ways and will likely sit unsung in the *Book of Praise*.
- 28 c. The objective to have more classic hymns is worthwhile. This hymn does not fit that
- 29 criterion.
- 30

31 Considerations:

- 32 1. The Committee chose GPH 389 to avoid even more archaic and challenging language
- 33 found in TPH 356.
- 34 2. This melody is a challenge for some, but with practice it could be a well-known and
- 35 loved tune.
- 36 3. Based on the churches’ feedback, it becomes clear that this is not a hymn that would be
- 37 appreciated by our churches.
- 38

39 Final Recommendation:

- 40 1. That GS 2025 not adopt GPH 389, “Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain,” for inclusion
- 41 in the *Book of Praise*.
- 42
- 43
- 44

NOTES: _____

1 **Crown Him with Many Crowns**

2

3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches the revised stanzas of TPH 380, “Crown Him with
5 Many Crowns.”

6

7 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 8 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 28 in favour, 8 not.
- 9 2. Positive feedback:
- 10 a. This hymn is a classic, well-known, and much-loved hymn. Appreciation is expressed
11 that this version of the hymn is chosen rather than alternative versions.
- 12 b. The text was found to be scriptural, expressing beautiful formulations of scriptural
13 truths and also echoing elements of Rev. 19.
- 14 c. The melody is singable, powerful, strong, familiar, weighty, and majestic, and has a
15 good melodic range. The words and music blend well together.
- 16 3. Negative feedback:
- 17 a. Those who criticized the text wondered who did the crowning (believers, angels,
18 etc.), some even suggesting that its theology is Roman Catholic. More significant was
19 the following observation: “Nowhere in Scripture are believers exhorted to crown
20 him who is their King and Lord. One who is already crowned does not need to be
21 crowned again, especially not by his subjects. The opening words of each stanza are
22 therefore totally unacceptable.”
- 23 i. However, as the Committee noted in its report to GS 2022, the words, “Crown
24 him with many crowns,” echo Revelation 19:12 (NIV), “His eyes are like blazing
25 fire, and on his head are many crowns.” This line in the hymn should be
26 understood not as a command to believers to place many crowns on Jesus’ head,
27 but rather as a poetic way of ascribing honour to him, attributing high honour to
28 him, and rejoicing in his victory.
- 29 b. The sequence of events described in this hymn were also questioned. Other
30 respondents criticized specific lines in various stanzas as ornate (stanza 1, “drowning
31 music” is a “too ornate embellishment”), ambiguous (stanza 3, lines 1 and 2), obscure
32 (stanza 5, line 1), or awkwardly expressed (stanza 5, line 2).
- 33 i. However, as the Committee noted in its report to GS 2022, the process of
34 versification allows for a measured use of poetic license. In this case, the ordering
35 of events does not oppose the scriptural account, but simply sets forth a summary
36 of such events.
- 37 c. An additional concern regarding the text of this hymn is that singular and plural first-
38 person forms are used inconsistently: “awake, MY soul,” “now WE sing,” “died for
39 ME,” “for US he died.”
- 40 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, requesting the contraction and
41 realignment of the phrase “th-in-car-nate Word” (stanza 4).



NOTES: _____

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches completed the survey: 34 in favour, 1 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Many churches express that this is a well-known, majestic hymn, very suitable for the Lord's Day that deals with Christ's atoning work, or for the Lord's Supper celebrations.
 - b. It is a very accurate summary of the life of Christ. The melody is strong and good for congregational singing.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The one church objecting is less concerned about the content of this hymn specifically, but more concerned with the number of hymns generally as it writes, "Only acceptable if we have one in our hymns that can come out. Fit the sermon and occasion very well; 65% of congregation disagree with adding this [hymn]."

Considerations:

1. None of the objections mentioned in Step 2, 3.3.a–c was raised after GS 2022, which suggests that the considerations in the report to GS 2022 were helpful in addressing those concerns.
2. This hymn is widely appreciated by the churches.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 380, "Crown Him with Many Crowns," including the contraction and realignment of the phrase "th-in-car-nate Word" (stanza 4), for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

**For Your Gift****Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 399, "For Your Gift of God the Spirit."

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 36 churches gave feedback: 15 in favour, 21 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. This is a hymn praising God for the gift of his Spirit.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. This hymn contravenes "Principles and Guidelines," Guidelines 4, 5, and 6.
 - b. The text is hard to understand and theologically questionable.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

NOTES: _____

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 32 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 17 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Text is good, even though at times clumsy and outdated.
 - b. It fills a gap in the hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, in regard to the Ascension and God the Holy Spirit.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. It is hard to understand.
 - b. The tune is hard to sing.
 - c. It does not add significantly to our current hymns.

Considerations:

1. The hymn is unclear in several instances. It requires explanation to sing it understandably, which contravenes “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 5. To give a couple examples, stanza 1, “your ascended throne” is incorrect because Christ’s throne did not ascend; stanza 2, “He...still across our nature’s darkness moves to wake our souls from sleep” is unclear.
2. The feedback of the churches indicates that the majority do not think this hymn adds to our current selection.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 399, “For Your Gift of God the Spirit,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

God Himself Is with Us**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 164, “God Himself Is with Us.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 34 churches gave feedback: 14 in favour, 20 not.
2. Negative feedback:
 - a. The phrase “God we own” in stanza 1 is not scriptural. We do not own God.
 - b. The melody is repetitive and simplistic.
3. The Committee proposed to recommend TPH 164, but the stanzas 2 and 3 from the GPH to avoid the archaisms.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 14 in favour, 19 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The lyrics are scriptural.
 - b. The tune is easy to sing.

NOTES: _____

- 1 3. Negative feedback:
- 2 a. The expression “God we own” is not scriptural.
- 3 b. The content is similar to Hymn 5.

4
5 Considerations:

- 6 1. In its report to GS 2022, the Committee explained the expression “God we own.” The
7 frequent responses by the churches indicate that, in spite of this explanation by the
8 Committee, the churches remain unconvinced.
- 9 2. The feedback from the churches is mixed.

10
11 Final Recommendation:

- 12 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 164, “God Himself Is with Us,” for inclusion in the *Book of*
13 *Praise*.

14
15 **God Moves in a Mysterious Way**

16
17 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

18 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 256, “God Moves in a Mysterious Way,” with an
19 update to the text of stanza 3 (“ye” to “you”) as in GPH 434.

20
21 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 22 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 10 in favour, 24 not.
- 23 2. Negative feedback:
- 24 a. Many churches objected to the text. They considered the language is vague,
25 ambiguous, and awkward.
- 26 b. Especially the line “behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face,” is
27 questioned.
- 28 c. The tune is already used for Hymn 72.
- 29 3. The Committee maintained its recommendation but did recommend deleting stanza 4.

30
31 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

32 Observations:

- 33 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 9 in favour, 23 not.
- 34 2. Positive feedback:
- 35 a. The contents are comforting in times of trouble and distress.
- 36 3. Negative feedback:
- 37 a. The text is awkward at times. Stanza 2 is hard to understand. The message is not
38 clear.

39 Considerations:

- 40 1. This hymn needs too much explanation to make it suitable for congregational singing,
41 contravening “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 5.
- 42 2. The first line of stanza 2 is not very suitable for congregational singing. Not only is the
43 imagery hard to follow, but the word “unfathomable” takes too many syllables in the line.

NOTES: _____

- 1 3. The repeated feedback from the churches indicates that this hymn is not one they would
- 2 like to see added to the *Book of Praise*.
- 3 4. The *Book of Praise* has already several hymns that deal with God's providence.

4
5 **Final Recommendation:**

- 6 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 256, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way," for inclusion in
- 7 the *Book of Praise*.

8
9 **Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer**

10
11 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

12 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 543, "Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer."

13
14 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 15 1. 36 churches gave feedback: 24 in favour, 12 not.
- 16 2. Negative feedback:
 - 17 a. There were some concerns about expressions in the hymn, such as "the crystal
 - 18 fountain," "Hell's destruction," and "tread the verge of Jordan."
 - 19 b. There is no clear reference to Christ.
- 20 3. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

21
22 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

23 **Observations:**

- 24 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 22 in favour, 10 not.
- 25 2. Positive feedback:
 - 26 a. It has good lyrics and is suitable for worship.
- 27 3. Negative feedback:
 - 28 a. It contains several ambiguous phrases and expressions. Even some churches that were
 - 29 in favour mentioned this.

30
31 **Considerations:**

- 32 1. This hymn contains imagery that may not be clear. Nevertheless, the Committee
- 33 explained this imagery in its report to GS 2022. This hymn is a prayer that uses biblical
- 34 imagery to refer to the pilgrim's journey.
- 35 2. As the reactions from the churches indicate, the hymn is well-liked because of its
- 36 beautiful tune.

37
38 **Final Recommendation:**

- 39 1. That GS 2025 adopt GPH 543, "Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer," for inclusion in the
- 40 *Book of Praise*.

41
42
43
44
NOTES: _____

1 **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

2
3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 311, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.”

5
6 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 7 1. 33 churches gave feedback: 23 in favour, 10 not.
8 2. Negative feedback:
9 a. The use of this hymn would be limited to Christmas Day.
10 b. The words of the angels in Luke 2:14 have been changed.
11 c. The expression “mild, he lay his glory by” (stanza 3) is a weak reference to Phil 2:7.
12 3. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

13
14 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

15 Observations:

- 16 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 24 in favour, 10 not.
17 2. Positive feedback:
18 a. It is a good addition to the Christmas hymns.
19 3. Negative feedback:
20 a. There is no need for Christmas carols in the *Book of Praise*
21 b. The expression “mercy mild” is ambiguous.
22 c. This hymn is more suitable for Christmas programs than for worship services.

23
24 Considerations:

- 25 1. The text of this hymn is faithful to Scripture.
26 2. This hymn is well-known and much-loved.

27
28 Final Recommendation:

- 29 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 311, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” for inclusion in the *Book*
30 *of Praise*.

31
32 **How Bright Appears the Morning Star**

33
34 **Step 1: Initial Review**

35 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 357, “How Bright Appears the Morning Star.”

36
37 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 38 1. 32 churches gave feedback: 15 in favour, 17 not.
39 2. Negative feedback:
40 a. It is odd to sing to a star.
41 b. The melody is difficult and complicated.
42 3. The Committee maintained its recommendation, proposing a revision for stanza 2 and a
43 revision of the musical notation.
44

NOTES: _____

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 32 churches completed the survey: 12 in favour, 20 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. It is powerful and majestic.
 - b. The words are good and suitable for public worship.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The tune is too jumpy and not easy to sing.
 - b. This hymn is better suited for a choir than for congregational worship.

Considerations:

1. This hymn is faithful to Scripture. It contains many OT references to the coming of Christ (Jer. 23:5; Isa. 11:1; Mic. 1:15).
2. The feedback from the churches indicates that this is not a hymn the churches would like to see added to the *Book of Praise*, especially because of its tune.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt GPH 357, “How Bright Appears the Morning Star,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

How Deep the Father’s Love for Us**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 351, “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 38 churches gave feedback: 29 in favour, 9 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text speaks personally about God’s love.
 - b. The hymn is familiar.
 - c. The melody contains a built-in repetition (lines 1, 2, and 4) that leads to predictability and singability.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The text includes singular pronouns, generating repeated questions regarding the corporate singability of the text.
 - b. Textual references to Christ’s love are not explicitly scriptural or confessional.
 - c. The hymn is not from a Reformed tradition, contravening “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 9.
 - d. The melody was challenging for some congregations.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches completed the survey: 28 in favour, 6 not.

NOTES: _____

2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Multiple churches noted that the text accurately relays scriptural truths (e.g., John 3:16; Eph. 3:14–19; Gal. 6:14).
 - b. Repeated themes mentioned by the churches were: beauty of forgiveness, depth of God’s love, as well as an emphasis on Christ’s work.
 - c. One church mentioned that the text filled a gap in the category of Easter.
 - d. Although the words are self-reflective, the focus is still on God.
 - e. A number of churches considered the hymn to be “familiar,” “well-loved,” and well-suited to congregation singing.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The text lacks the same level of covenantal language that is so rich in the Psalms.
 - b. The use of personal pronouns was considered to be man-centred. One church, although appreciating the personal element, found that it was not helpful for corporate worship.
 - c. Musical criticisms noted that the hymn has a “praise and worship” vibe, is not suited to unison congregational singing “due to its slow pace,” and that the song is “heavily sentimental and emotional.”

Considerations:

1. Although this hymn may not specifically use covenantal language, it does faithfully summarize a number of Scripture passages; for instance, 1 John 3:1 and Heb. 2:10 (stanza 1); 1 Cor. 1:31 and 2 Cor. 10:17 (stanza 3).
2. The hymn text highlights the believer’s personal complicity in the sufferings of Christ, and also the personal application of Christ’s atonement.
3. Even though stanza 1 begins with the plural “us” and is clearly corporate, stanzas 2 and 3 speak in the first-person singular. Such movement is also known from the Psalms, though there such movement seems more commonly to move from the singular to plural (e.g., Pss. 123, 130).
4. The static harmony, with usually one chord change per measure, indirectly makes the melody line a “solo voice” and could explain the concern raised in Step 3, 3.c. Although the static supporting notes exemplify an accompaniment practice that is atypical for *Book of Praise* songs, repeated feedback from the churches suggests that they have been able to sing this hymn well.
5. Although this is a contemporary hymn that has not had an opportunity to withstand the test of time, a high number of churches supported this hymn.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 351, “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

How Great Thou Art

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 227, “How Great Thou Art.”

NOTES: _____

1 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 2 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 29 in favour, 8 not.
- 3 2. Positive feedback:
- 4 a. The text is broadly based on Psalm 8.
- 5 b. Churches responded that the hymn was well-known and loved.
- 6 3. Negative feedback:
- 7 a. The text uses singular pronouns highlighting that the hymn was not originally
- 8 intended for corporate worship.
- 9 b. The text includes archaisms and old language (“thee, thou, and art”).
- 10 c. The melody in the first half is rather static, with a limited range (interval of a fourth)
- 11 and frequent repetition of pitches.
- 12 d. The second line of the refrain features the melody moving down by step and then an
- 13 awkward, downward leap of the sixth, which “breaks the rules for good melody
- 14 writing” and is also a “challenge for the singers.”
- 15 e. Musical notation in the refrain often features adaptations of the rhythm with the
- 16 words “Saviour God, to.”
- 17 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

18

19 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

20 Observations:

- 21 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 31 in favour, 3 not.
- 22 2. Positive feedback:
- 23 a. A well-known, classic hymn that was appreciated by a majority of churches.
- 24 b. In order to avoid undue repetition of the refrain, suggestions were made regarding
- 25 singing the refrain only after the last stanza (e.g., as can be done with Hymn 66,
- 26 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”).
- 27 c. Repeated comments in favour of the tune underlined the need to make a rhythmic
- 28 change to the refrain, as congregations struggled to sing together in unison.
- 29 3. Negative feedback:
- 30 a. The text includes archaic language.
- 31 b. The text seems to speak more about personal experience (I, me, and my), rather than
- 32 about references to the praise of God.
- 33 c. More than one church commented on the strong emotional connection in this song,
- 34 particularly the third stanza.
- 35 d. There was a concern with stanza 3, line 3: “on the cross, my burden gladly bearing.”
- 36 Did Christ gladly bear my burden or is this taking away from his unfathomable
- 37 suffering?
- 38 e. Copyright restrictions prevent modifications to the melody of the refrain.

39

40 Considerations:

- 41 1. The text speaks generally about God and his creation and reflects a theme that is
- 42 repeatedly mentioned in the Psalms (e.g., Psalms 8, 19, 104, and 148).
- 43 2. The use of personal pronouns in song faithfully echoes the language of Scripture (e.g.,
- 44 Pss. 22, 25, and 116). Furthermore, such pronouns are actually appropriate for the singing

NOTES: _____

1 congregation as a whole, particularly when the poet expresses sentiments or experiences
2 that are more common to believers' walk of faith. What Christ has done for the believer
3 personally is applicable to the congregation as a whole.

- 4 3. In spite of the overwhelmingly positive support from the churches, there were repeated
5 comments to 1) remove archaisms from the text, and 2) make rhythmic changes to the
6 refrain. In both instances, the copyright belonging to The Stuart Hine Trust prevents the
7 Committee from producing a version that incorporates these repeated suggestions from
8 the churches.
- 9 4. Finally, a comment regarding the refrain is that refrains, by their very nature, are to be
10 repeated. Since the refrain begins with the conditional "then" and depends on the
11 preceding stanza, it is necessary for the refrain to be sung after each stanza. Musically,
12 the refrain also concludes with a tonic note of the melody rather than ending on the
13 median (or third), which is less musically conclusive. In other words, the refrain ought to
14 be repeated.

15
16 **Final Recommendation:**

- 17 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 227, "How Great Thou Art," for inclusion in the *Book of*
18 *Praise*.

19
20 **In Christ Alone**

21
22 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

23 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 265, "In Christ Alone."

24
25 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 26 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 27 in favour, 10 not.
- 27 2. Positive feedback:
- 28 a. The text celebrates the confidence we may have in Christ.
- 29 b. The melody is well-known.
- 30 c. The hymn is one of praise, faith, and hope.
- 31 3. Negative feedback:
- 32 a. The text is sentimental and individualistic, contravening "Principles and Guidelines,"
33 Guideline 7.
- 34 b. The melody is wide ranging and includes some rhythms and leaps, which make it
35 more challenging for congregational singing and for the accompanists.
- 36 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

37
38 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

39 Observations:

- 40 1. 35 churches completed the survey: 33 in favour, 2 not.
- 41 2. Positive feedback:
- 42 a. The text is a personal confession of faith.
- 43 b. Although the text is not based on any particular Scripture passage, a number of
44 scriptural references are made:

NOTES: _____

- 1 i. Christ is my light – Psalm 27:1
- 2 ii. My strength, my song – Exodus 15:2; Psalm 118:14; Isaiah 12:2
- 3 iii. Cornerstone – Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6
- 4 iv. Solid ground – Psalm 40:2
- 5 v. Comforter – John 14:16,26
- 6 vi. All in all – 1 Corinthians 15:28
- 7 c. The text is seen as comforting, particularly in funeral contexts.
- 8 d. The melody is considered “beautiful” by many churches.
- 9 3. Negative feedback:
- 10 a. The melody has a wide range intended for a soloist (an eleventh, also known as an
- 11 octave plus a fourth). Typically, congregational melodies have range of an octave or
- 12 possibly a ninth.

14 Considerations:

- 15 1. The text reflects the comforting truths of Scripture as noted in Step 3, 2.b. In addition, the
- 16 text conveys that Christ is the active agent in my salvation. Christ is the object of my
- 17 faith and I am his possession.
- 18 2. The hymn does speak throughout in the first-person singular, but that does not make it
- 19 individualistic. Apart from the wide use of the first-person singular in many psalms, the
- 20 apostle Paul also felt free to speak in the first-person singular about his faith and his
- 21 spiritual life and experience; see, e.g., Rom. 7:7–25, Gal. 6:14, Phil. 3:2–16.
- 22 3. While the melody does feature a wide range, and some challenges with respect to
- 23 rhythms, it is not in itself unsuited to congregational singing. The current popularity and
- 24 frequent use of the hymn among the churches suggests that whatever challenges are
- 25 posed by the melody, this hymn can be used to the edification of the congregation, and
- 26 most importantly, to the praise of God.

28 Final Recommendation:

- 29 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 265, “In Christ Alone,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

31 **Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come**

33 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

34 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 299, “Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come.”

36 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 37 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 27 in favour, 7 not.
- 38 2. Positive feedback:
- 39 a. The text is based on Psalm 98 and calls the whole world to rejoice in the coming and
- 40 kingship of our Saviour.
- 41 b. The melody is a joyful and well-known Christmas carol.
- 42 3. Negative feedback:
- 43 a. Critical feedback on the text included a suggestion that stanza 1, lines 1–2 can be
- 44 improved by replacing the antiquated auxiliary verb “is” with “has” and changing

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1 “Let earth receive” to “The earth received”; in stanza 3, there was a suggestion to
2 change “comes” to “came.”

3 b. The melody begins on a high D.

4 c. This is not a hymn, but a Christmas carol, and we have enough Christmas songs.

5 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

6
7 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

8 **Observations:**

9 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 26 in favour, 8 not.

10 2. Positive feedback:

11 a. The text is a familiar, well-known traditional Christmas hymn, although it was not
12 originally written as a Christmas song.

13 b. The text is based on Psalm 98 and could even be seen as an alternative to this psalm
14 rather than a separate hymn.

15 c. There is merit to adding appropriate hymns to the *Book of Praise* that deal with the
16 coming and incarnation (Advent and Christmas) of the Lord Jesus Christ.

17 d. Some churches who responded positively wondered whether it was appropriate to add
18 Christmas carols, particularly if they were sung only once a year.

19 3. Negative feedback:

20 a. There was a repeated mention that there is no need for Christmas carols in the *Book of*
21 *Praise*, and that it is already being sung outside the worship service on Christmas
22 Day.

23
24 **Considerations:**

25 1. Both text and tune are very well-known.

26 2. The text references Psalm 98, highlighting the appropriate response of creation and
27 mankind to the coming of our Lord and Saviour.

28 3. The hymn concludes each stanza with a threefold repetition of text, thereby limiting the
29 message that the song wishes to convey.

30 4. In spite of this song’s nearly unquestionable association with Christmas carols, as a
31 Christmas song, it actually has limited references to the birth of Christ. Rather, this hymn
32 accents the *kingship* of Christ, a topic on which we already have several hymns (e.g.,
33 Hymns 41, 44–46).

34
35 **Final Recommendation:**

36 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 299, “Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come,” as an
37 additional hymn.

38
39 ***Let All Things Now Living***

40
41 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

42 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 254, “Let All Things Now Living.”

43
44
NOTES: _____

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 35 churches gave feedback: 28 in favour, 7 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is faithful to Scripture.
 - b. The melody is beautiful.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. No negative feedback on text or tune.
 - b. Negative feedback on the hymn centred on the fact that it was not based on a particular Bible passage and that it featured themes repeatedly covered by the psalms.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 27 in favour, 6 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is well-known and speaks to God’s creative work and sustaining care for creation, reflecting scriptural truths found in Genesis 1, Job 26:7–14, and Job 38. The text also corresponds well with Lord’s Day 10.
 - b. Some churches who responded positively noted that the themes of this hymn are already covered in the psalms.
 - c. The melody is very familiar and easy for the congregation to sing.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The text does not add anything to that which is already covered in a number of psalms.
 - b. Without any additional content, and in light of the current hymn cap, requests were made to fill in other categories.
 - c. There was no criticism on the melody.

Considerations:

1. The hymn text covers themes found in the Psalms (e.g., Pss. 19, 104, 148, and 150). The lyrics are in full accord with Scripture.
2. The melodic merits of this well-known hymn of praise are recognized by the churches.
3. The hymn is well-known and loved by the churches.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 254, “Let All Things Now Living,” as an additional hymn.

Man of Sorrows! What a Name**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 352, “Man of Sorrows! What a Name.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 35 churches gave feedback: 20 in favour, 15 not.

NOTES: _____

- 1 2. Positive feedback:
- 2 a. The text reflects a clear gospel message that speaks about the suffering and atoning
- 3 death of Christ.
- 4 3. Negative feedback:
- 5 a. The repetition of the phrase “Hallelujah, what a Saviour” at the end of each stanza
- 6 detracted from the sense and suffering of Christ.
- 7 b. A question regarding the use of the word “vile,” and a suggestion to use GPH 482,
- 8 “Guilty, helpless, lost were we.”
- 9 c. The absence of a tonic ending to the melody caused some to feel that the tune was
- 10 “strange and unfinished.”
- 11 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, requesting that the opening words of
- 12 stanza 3 be replaced with the opening words of GPH 482, stanza 3.
- 13 Guilty, helpless, lost were we;
- 14 spotless Lamb of God was he.
- 15 Full atonement! Can it be?
- 16 Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

17 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

18 **Observations:**

- 19 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 15 in favour, 19 not.
- 20 2. Positive feedback:
- 21 a. The text was considered nice, familiar, acceptable, and suitable for Good Friday.
- 22 b. The melody is familiar and nice, although it is rather short, is quite high at the end,
- 23 and concludes with a strange, unresolved note.
- 24 3. Negative feedback:
- 25 a. The text was found to be awkward in phrasing, rhyme scheme and word flow.
- 26 b. Some churches found the chorus “Hallelujah, what a Saviour!” to not only be
- 27 awkward, but even lacking reverence and respect.
- 28 c. The melody was considered short and repetitive, with the ending being viewed as
- 29 awkward and incomplete.

30 **Considerations:**

- 31 1. Even though the content of this hymn would fit within the section “Christ Jesus Full
- 32 Atonement Made,” other songs in the *Book of Praise* (e.g., Psalm 22; Hymns 23, 25, and
- 33 26) already highlight the scriptural truths summarized with this hymn.
- 34 2. The concluding phrase, “Hallelujah, what a Saviour!” at the end of each stanza ought to
- 35 encourage a worshipful response to the suffering of Christ, yet the corresponding melodic
- 36 ending (on the dominant) possibly contributes to a feeling of incompleteness.
- 37 3. The melody is short and repetitive, further emphasized by the recurring end phrase.

38 **Final Recommendation:**

- 39 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 352, “Man of Sorrows! What a Name!” as an additional
- 40 hymn.

41 **NOTES:**

1 **May the Mind of Christ, My Saviour**

2
3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 488, “May the Mind of Christ My Saviour.”

5
6 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 7 1. 30 churches gave feedback: 15 in favour, 15 not.
- 8 2. Positive feedback:
- 9 a. Churches noted the prayerful tone and scriptural content of this hymn. It was
- 10 suggested that contractions (“pow’r,” “ev’rything”) be expanded to “power” and
- 11 “everything,” in keeping with the usage in the *Book of Praise*.
- 12 b. The tune was considered to be quite well-suited to the text.
- 13 3. Negative feedback:
- 14 a. Several concerns were expressed regarding the text:
- 15 i. It is individualistic, contravening “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 7.
- 16 ii. We do not have the mind, but rather, the Spirit of Christ.
- 17 iii. The word “self-abasing” could be problematic for persons suffering with
- 18 depression or low self-esteem.
- 19 iv. There is a lack of clarity in the final stanza regarding what “the channel” is. It was
- 20 suggested that this stanza be deleted, to bring the hymn to a stronger conclusion.
- 21 b. Feedback on the melody of this hymn included mixed assessments of its quality and
- 22 difficulty, with some suggesting that it contravenes “Principles and Guidelines,”
- 23 Guideline 11.
- 24 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, requesting that the contracted words
- 25 (“pow’r,” “ev’rything”) be expanded to “power” and “everything.”

26
27 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

28 Observations:

- 29 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 12 in favour, 20 not.
- 30 2. Positive feedback:
- 31 a. Both the text and melody were appreciated. The song was deemed appropriate for
- 32 congregational singing.
- 33 b. It was also suggested that the hymn would come to a stronger conclusion if the final
- 34 stanza (6) were deleted.
- 35
- 36 3. Negative feedback:
- 37 a. Regarding the text, similar concerns as those noted above were raised: it has language
- 38 that is unusual (“the mind of Christ...live in me,” “channel,” “self-abasing,” “his
- 39 beauty rest upon me”), and is individualistic, sentimental, and very personal,
- 40 contravening “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 7. Furthermore, one church
- 41 suggested that the language was archaic, contravening Guideline 2.
- 42 b. Regarding the tune, there were mixed reviews. Some churches found it difficult to
- 43 learn, while others considered it learnable.
- 44

NOTES: _____

1 Considerations:

- 2 1. The hymn does speak throughout in the first-person singular. However, that does not
3 necessarily make it individualistic. In addition to the wide use of the first-person singular
4 in many psalms, the apostle Paul also felt free to speak in the first-person singular about
5 his faith and his spiritual life and experience (e.g., Rom. 7:7–25; Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:2–16).
6 Furthermore, this song cannot be sincerely sung by a person living in a fallen condition,
7 but only by a genuine believer, whose focus is Jesus Christ. In the original consideration
8 of this hymn, it was noted that it is one of only two proposed hymns that speak explicitly
9 about the Christian’s daily walk of life.
- 10 2. While the suggestion was made that the text is archaic, no example was given.
- 11 3. The use of unusual expressions is in itself a non-issue, provided the terms can be
12 understood from the context, which is the case here. Furthermore, some of the cited
13 “unusual terms” are hardly so. Regarding “the mind of Christ...live in me,” in Phil. 2:5,
14 Paul commands us to have the mind of love and humility, which is ours in Christ. In 1
15 Cor. 2:16, Paul writes that because we have the Spirit of Christ, we have the mind of
16 Christ. Regarding “his beauty rest upon me,” the notion is beautifully familiar from a
17 passage like 2 Cor. 3:17–18. And re the word “channel” in the sixth stanza, it refers to the
18 witnessing believer. It may not be immediately clear, but the thought is appropriate, also
19 from a confessional perspective (Lord’s Day 32.86). Finding a synonymous expression is
20 difficult.
- 21 4. While the melody may seem difficult to learn, it is conducive for congregational singing.
22 For example, it features mainly step-wise motion and does not have large leaps.

23
24 Final Recommendation:

- 25 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 488, “May the Mind of Christ My Saviour,” for inclusion in the
26 *Book of Praise*, maintaining the change of the contracted words (“pow’r,” “ev’rything”)
27 to “power” and “everything.”

28
29 **My Lord, I Did Not Choose You**

30
31 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

32 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 496, “My Lord, I Did Not Choose You.”

33
34 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 35 1. 29 churches gave feedback: 17 in favour, 12 not.
- 36 2. Positive feedback:
- 37 a. Quite a few churches noted with appreciation that this hymn speaks about election.
- 38 b. Some churches considered the melody good. Many noted that the melody will be easy
39 to learn and to sing.
- 40 3. Negative feedback:
- 41 a. Concerning the text, the topic of election is sufficiently addressed in the *Book of*
42 *Praise*, the hymn misses a contrast with the “old self,” and it may not be biblical to
43 say that grace “taught my opening mind.”
- 44 b. Some churches suggested that the melody is boring, especially the first half.

NOTES: _____

- 1 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.
2

3 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

4 Observations:

- 5 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 17 in favour, 16 not.
6 2. Positive feedback:
7 a. The text, with its focus on God’s sovereign choosing and our utter dependence on
8 him, is much appreciated.
9 b. The melody is very singable.
10 3. Negative feedback:
11 a. Concerning the text, some churches noted appreciably its focus on God’s sovereign
12 election, while others felt it was a heavy emphasis, lacking a comprehensive, deep
13 presentation of the gospel and a contrast with the remaining “old man.”
14 b. The melody is uninspiring, lacking excitement, difficult, and “needs to be changed.”
15 One church observed that it may not be conducive to congregational singing due to its
16 high notes (E-flat) and slurred notes.
17

18 Considerations:

- 19 1. The doctrine of election is an important tenet of the Reformed faith. This proposed song
20 will aid our churches in singing also about this scriptural teaching.
21 2. A reference to the remaining struggle with the “old self” is not needed for this hymn to be
22 considered worthy of inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.
23 3. Regarding Step 2, point 3.a., the notion of being taught (trained) by God’s grace is
24 biblical. Titus 2:12 speaks about how God’s grace “trains” believers, and in the Canons
25 of Dort III/IV.11, we confess that God “powerfully enlightens [believers’] minds by the
26 Holy Spirit” and “opens the closed...heart.”
27 4. The melody is suitable for congregational singing. Its simplicity enables one to focus on
28 the substance of the words.
29 5. As the current setting is somewhat high, a transposition down to D major would make the
30 hymn more comfortable for congregational singing.
31

32 Final Recommendation:

- 33 1. That GS 2025 adopt GPH 469, “My Lord, I Did Not Choose You,” for inclusion in the
34 *Book of Praise*, with the melody being transposed down to the key of D major.
35

36 ***O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart’s Desire***

37
38 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

39 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 267, “O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart’s Desire.”
40

41 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 42 1. 33 churches gave feedback: 20 in favour, 13 not.
43 2. Positive feedback:

NOTES: _____

- 1 a. The text is faithful to Scripture and has an ancient origin (8th century). Several
 2 churches noted the beauty of this hymn, particularly how it expresses the glory of
 3 what we have in Christ.
- 4 3. Negative feedback:
- 5 a. The text is archaic and superficial. Its content is already sufficiently covered in the
 6 *Book of Praise*.
- 7 b. The second line of the melody has large leaps that are difficult for congregational
 8 singing.
- 9 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, proposing a revised versification that
 10 helps to eliminate archaisms.

11 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

12 Observations:

- 13 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 20 in favour, 13 not.
- 14 2. Positive feedback:
- 15 a. The text is much appreciated, with churches noting that it is beautifully composed,
 16 keeping Christ and his creating and atoning work as central, and covering some
 17 theological territory not fully covered by other hymns. One church suggested without
 18 rationale that this hymn could replace our current Hymn 33.
- 19 b. The melody is beautiful, familiar, and sings very well.
- 20 3. Negative feedback:
- 21 a. The text contains archaisms, and its message is already covered elsewhere in the *Book*
 22 *of Praise*.
- 23 b. Some expressed confusion and concern over some of the terminology, namely, “You
 24 are on your Father’s throne” (stanza 3), and “our ever great reward...our only glory”
 25 (stanza 4).
- 26 c. The melody, though having beauty, is difficult, too jumpy, and contains “excessive
 27 syncopation,” which contravenes “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 11.
- 28 d. This hymn was previously decided against by GS 2010 after it was proposed in the
 29 Augment.

30 Considerations:

- 31 1. The archaic language was updated after approval by GS 2022. Some churches
 32 unfortunately continued to use the version in use before that time.
- 33 2. Contrary to sentiments that the song’s message is already covered elsewhere in the *Book*
 34 *of Praise*, the Committee believes this hymn actually helps to fill a certain gap in the
 35 book. It would not work as a replacement of Hymn 33 since that is a song about Christ’s
 36 resurrection. This song, however, speaks of the atonement of Christ, giving special
 37 attention to the elements of Christ’s mediatorial satisfaction and payment that are
 38 confessed in Lord’s Day 5.
- 39 3. The ancient origin of the lyrics of this hymn adds to the catholic character of our hymn
 40 collection (“Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 6).
- 41 4. The confusion and concern over certain expressions can be addressed. Regarding “you
 42 are on your Father’s throne,” see, for example, Heb. 4:14–16, Rev. 7:17 (and Hymn
 43
 44

NOTES: _____

84:2), and Rev. 21:5. Regarding “our ever great reward...our only glory,” Christ is the eschatological hope, glory, prize, and reward for his people; see how the New Testament speaks in places like Phil. 3:10–14, Col. 1:27, and the letter to the Hebrews (e.g., 10:35–39). Christ is the true portion and inheritance of his people, *the* fulfilment of Ps. 16:5–6.

5. The many remarks about the beauty and familiarity of the melody show that, far from finding the tune difficult to sing, the churches in fact enjoy singing it.
6. The interval in the second line is large, but singable; see further the opening line of the Crimond (proposed Psalm 23) where the same interval is sung with ease.
7. This hymn was initially proposed by the Committee to GS 2007 for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*. The Committee proposed to GS 2010 that it not be included, noting that “feedback from the churches suggests that this hymn is not a strong hymn.” The report provides no further explanation of the recommendation, to identify the purported weaknesses of the hymn. (See “Report of Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*,” in *Reports to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010*, vol. 2, p. 42.)

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 267, “O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart’s Desire,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, maintaining the revised versification that eliminated archaisms.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 319, “O Come, All Ye Faithful.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 32 churches gave feedback: 25 in favour, 7 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Many churches appreciated the familiarity of this classic Christmas hymn and expressed thankfulness for the opportunity to sing this in worship at the celebration of Christ’s birth. This song is used in the Christmas celebrations of many congregations.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. There was a concern about singing about past events as occurring today, and about archaic language.
 - b. Several of the churches rejecting this hymn either did not test the song or objected to the addition of any psalms or hymns to the *Book of Praise*, and thus gave no feedback on the lyrics or melody of this hymn.
 - c. We do not need another Christmas song in the *Book of Praise*.
4. The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 340 (not TPH 319, as noted in our report to GS 2022), with a textual adjustment to the opening line of the second stanza.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches completed the survey: 28 in favour, 6 not.
2. Positive feedback:

NOTES:

- 1 a. Once again, many churches expressed thankfulness for the opportunity to sing this
2 classic hymn in worship. Widespread love for the hymn is obvious from the feedback.
- 3 3. Negative feedback:
- 4 a. We do not need to “come...to Bethlehem” today since that is not where Christ is. And
5 we do not need to exhort the angels to sing, as though they did not already do so at
6 Christ’s birth.
- 7 b. The use of archaic language can mislead as to the intended meaning of the text (e.g.,
8 stanza 2, “abhors not the virgin’s womb,” where “abhor” no longer carries the same
9 meaning that it did when originally this hymn was written).
- 10 c. The song would probably only be used once a year. Further, we do not need more
11 Christmas songs in the *Book of Praise*.

12
13 Considerations:

- 14 1. There is archaic language in the hymn, but the universal familiarity of this song in its
15 current form makes it virtually impossible to update the archaic language (by analogy,
16 think of “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”). Further, the meaning of the words can be
17 understood by virtue of the context. (On the use of “abhor,” please note that our existing
18 collection contains this very notion, where in our singing to Christ in Hymn 3:3, we
19 praise him for not *despising* the Virgin’s womb.)
- 20 2. To sing about past events as if they are occurring today is to sing in the historic present,
21 which has been deemed legitimate usage. The vivid recollection of past events is also
22 found in Scripture; for example, the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, versified in our
23 Hymn 12. Moreover, the church’s song is an expression of the communion of saints,
24 where we are to sing in union with the church throughout the ages. It is very much in
25 place to sing also this song with the ancients; we recall in song (as in preaching and
26 prayer) the great deeds of the Lord, also as if they just occurred.
- 27 3. While the word “true” was added (twice) to the opening line of stanza 2 in an effort to
28 reflect the wording of the Nicene Creed, it makes for an awkward moment for the singing
29 congregation, and it separates this version from the more familiar versions, which simply
30 begin with “God of God, Light of Light.”
- 31 4. The hymn is a classic Christmas hymn, appropriate for the celebration of Christ’s birth,
32 and sung widely in the catholic church. Furthermore, our current collection contains only
33 three hymns particularly concerned with Christmas (Hymns 20–22), of which Hymn 21 is
34 a canticle. Including one classic Christmas hymn in our collection is reasonable and could
35 even be considered complementary to the including of one classic hymn in our advent
36 songs, namely, Hymn 16 (“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”).

37 Final Recommendation:

- 38 1. That GS 2025 adopt GPH 340, “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” for inclusion in the *Book of*
39 *Praise*, eliminating the double appearance of the word “true” from the opening line of
40 stanza 2.

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1 **O Sacred Head, Now Wounded**

2

3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches GPH 383, “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.”

5

6 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 7 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 29 in favour, 5 not.
- 8 2. Positive feedback:
- 9 a. This hymn is a good addition to our collection of hymns in the section, “Christ Jesus
- 10 Full Atonement Made.” Some appropriate uses would be on Good Friday and at the
- 11 celebration of the Lord’s Supper.
- 12 b. Feedback on the melody of this hymn was minimal, with no negative remarks.
- 13 c. This is a hymn beloved by churches throughout the world.
- 14 3. Negative feedback:
- 15 a. The text received the following criticisms:
- 16 i. It addresses Christ’s “sacred head.”
- 17 ii. It portrays Christ as if he is suffering now.
- 18 iii. It speaks about the believer claiming Christ (which seemed to sound Arminian),
- 19 whereas it is Christ who claims the believer.
- 20 iv. It addresses Christ as “dearest Friend,” which seems inappropriate. While he
- 21 called the disciples his friends, they never spoke of him in that way.
- 22 v. It has a sentimental tone rather than a scriptural one.
- 23 b. Feedback on the text also included some concerns about the use of the word “gory”
- 24 and the clarity of the expression “dying sorrow.”
- 25 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

26

27 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

28 Observations:

- 29 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 22 in favour, 12 not.
- 30 2. Positive feedback:
- 31 a. The text is well-known and loved. As before, churches noted with appreciation its
- 32 usefulness for Good Friday and Lord’s Supper services. Multiple churches saw as a
- 33 strength that it expresses how Christ’s suffering and death yield benefits at the
- 34 personal, individual level, and confesses personal gratitude for and commitment to
- 35 the crucified Lord.
- 36 b. One church suggested there was an error in the music: the 3rd line, 2nd note, bass
- 37 line, should be a D instead of an E.
- 38 3. Negative feedback:
- 39 a. Reactions to the text were similar to those noted under Step 2, point 3.
- 40 b. The song was generally not rejected because of the melody, as that was regarded as
- 41 well-known and beautiful.
- 42
- 43
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1 Considerations:

- 2 1. In itself, it is not inappropriate or incorrect to address the head of Christ, as a part of his
3 human body, which was “weighed down with grief and shame” and “surrounded with
4 thorns.” It may be viewed to be a legitimate consideration of his true humanity and
5 genuine suffering (see <https://www.placefortruth.org/blog/o-sacred-head-now-wounded>,
6 an article on this hymn by URC minister Rev. William Boekestein). We note also that
7 there is a poetic device called metonymy, which means, using a part to represent the
8 whole (e.g., “hired hand”). Speaking to or about the head of Christ may be taken as
9 speaking to or about Christ himself.
- 10 2. To sing about past events as if they are occurring today is to sing in the historic present,
11 which has been deemed legitimate usage. The vivid recollection of past events is also
12 found in Scripture; for example, the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, versified in our
13 Hymn 12. Moreover, the church’s song is an expression of the communion of saints,
14 where we are to sing in union with the church throughout the ages. It is very much in
15 place to sing also this song with the ancients; we recall in song (as in preaching and
16 prayer) the great deeds of the Lord, also as if they just occurred.
- 17 3. Christ does claim the believer, but by faith the believer also claims him. For example,
18 Thomas’ words, “My Lord and my God!” are taken by Jesus as a confession of faith
19 (John 21:28–29). When the psalmists speak of God as “my God,” as they frequently do,
20 they are claiming God, declaring that he is their God, the one in whom they put their
21 hope.
- 22 4. It is not improper to address Christ as “dearest Friend.” The *Book of Praise* has a hymn
23 that speaks of Christ as “friend,” namely, Hymn 38:4. When some churches objected that
24 it was not proper to do so, GS 2010 responded as follows: “The Lord Jesus speaks of his
25 disciples as his friends (John 15:15). See also James 2:23. It seems logical that we may
26 also speak of him as our ‘Friend’” (*Acts* GS 2010, Art. 128, 2.3, 3.3). For further
27 treatment of the topic, see the chapter by Dr. Jannes Smith, “Can We Call God Our
28 Friend?” in his *Walking and Talking with God* (Armada: Pro Ecclesia, 2016).
- 29 5. The word “gory” means unpleasant, frightening, because of blood or signs of violence.
30 As such, it is an apt description of Christ’s appearance as he hung on the cross, pouring
31 out his blood for our salvation. Scripture repeatedly focuses on the blood of Christ poured
32 out on the cross (see, e.g., Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; see also Jesus’ disfigurement
33 prophesied in Isa. 52:14; 53:3–5).
- 34 6. The expression, “dying sorrow” refers to the sorrow Christ experienced while he suffered
35 and died, and is clear from the context in which it is used in this hymn.
- 36 7. The emotive character of the content and the melody of this hymn are appropriate, well-
37 suited to the commemoration of Christ’s death on Good Friday, and not sentimental in the
38 sense that the content and melody are meant to artificially manipulate the emotions of the
39 congregation.

40
41 Final Recommendation:

- 42 1. That GS 2025 adopt GPH 383, “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded,” for inclusion in the
43 *Book of Praise*.
- 44

NOTES: _____

1 **Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above**

2

3 **Step 1: Initial Review**

4 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 214, “Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above.”

5

6 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 7 1. 31 churches gave feedback: 12 in favour, 19 not.
- 8 2. Positive feedback:
- 9 a. The text is biblical, touching on many great themes of the faith, including God’s
- 10 power, sovereignty, love, creative work, providence, justice, and mercy, and our
- 11 comfort and salvation.
- 12 b. The contracted words “ev’ry” and “pow’r” should be expanded.
- 13 3. Negative feedback:
- 14 a. Several critical remarks about the text were submitted. Also, several comments
- 15 suggested that most of the thoughts expressed in this hymn are found in the Psalms.
- 16 b. The melody is not easy to sing, partly because of large jumps and partly because it
- 17 was quite similar to the tune of Genevan 138.
- 18 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation, requesting that the contracted words
- 19 (“ev’ry,” “pow’r,”) be expanded to “every” and “power.”
- 20

21 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

22 Observations:

- 23 1. 32 churches completed the survey: 12 in favour, 20 not.
- 24 2. Positive feedback:
- 25 a. The text flows well and is faithful to Scripture.
- 26 b. The melody is good and acceptable.
- 27 3. Negative feedback:
- 28 a. Many of the psalms cover the content of this hymn.
- 29 b. Several critical remarks about the text were submitted.
- 30 i. Stanza 2:
- 31 1. The sentence, “What God’s almighty power has made in mercy he is
- 32 keeping,” is clumsy and unclear.
- 33 2. The words, “By morning glow or evening shade his eye is never sleeping,”
- 34 are pretentious and indirect.
- 35 3. Where God rules, all is “just and right.” But not all is right or just in this
- 36 world.
- 37 ii. Stanza 3:
- 38 1. Since line 1 is in the past tense, the shift to the present tense in the second line
- 39 is an error.
- 40 2. When we are “helpless,” we may need something other than “peace” and
- 41 more than “cheer.”
- 42 iii. Stanza 4:
- 43 1. “Name” is used both as a verb and as a noun.
- 44 2. The hymn does not indicate what “wondrous story” it is referring to.

NOTES: _____

- 1 c. The melody's similarity to that of Genevan 138 makes it difficult and confusing to
2 sing. Also, the many large jumps make it difficult to sing.

3
4 **Considerations:**

- 5 1. Some expressions in this hymn may initially seem unclear but become quite
6 understandable upon reflection.
7 2. The expression, "His eye is never sleeping," echoes the thought of Psalm 121:4.
8 3. The shift from the past to present tense within the first two lines of stanza 3 is not
9 problematic but is an exercising of poetic license. The tenses need not be the same.
10 Incidentally, GPH 465 in its version also has the same shift in verb tenses.
11 4. "Name" is used both as a verb and as a noun in rapid succession in Scripture as well; for
12 example, in Eph. 1:21 and 2 Tim. 2:19. There is no reason this should be considered a
13 detriment to this hymn.
14 5. This hymn sings of themes like God's perfections and his providence, with a doxological
15 flavour, which emerge in the Psalms. It does add a Christological component, where we
16 exalt and thank the Saviour for his looking upon us in our weakness and giving us "peace
17 to cheer us" (language found also in our current Hymn 85:2).
18 6. The melody of this hymn is not difficult to sing precisely because of its similarity to
19 Genevan 138, and it will become increasingly familiar the more it is sung.
20

21 **Final Recommendation:**

- 22 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 214, "Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above," for inclusion in
23 the *Book of Praise*.
24

25 **Speak, O Lord**

26
27 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

28 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 172, "Speak, O Lord."
29

30 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 31 1. 37 churches gave feedback: 25 in favour, 12 not.
32 2. Positive feedback:
33 a. The text was generally considered scripturally accurate, and suitable as a song for
34 before the service or sermon.
35 b. The melody was mostly appreciated as beautiful and reverent in tone.
36 3. Negative feedback:
37 a. The hymn is sentimental.
38 b. The hymn is problematic, specifically the line, "Help us grasp the heights of your
39 plans for us."
40 c. The melody is not deep enough, does not fit the lyrics, and is not expressive of the
41 Reformed tradition.
42 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.
43
44

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Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches completed the survey: 27 in favour, 6 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The churches liked the words, raising no concerns.
 - b. The song was seen as a good preparation for the preaching of the Word.
 - c. The melody is easy to learn and is very singable.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The lyrics are “simple and empty.”
 - b. It is not a church song, conducive to congregational singing.
 - c. A few churches did not see the need to add this hymn to the hymn collection, especially in view of the hymn cap of 100 hymns.

Considerations:

1. The text is a prayer and can be used, for example, as a song of preparation for the sermon.
2. The lyrics could perhaps be characterized as simple, but not as empty. It is evident that we are asking God to help us to more fully understand the opening of his Word. The opening words (“Speak, O Lord”) can be compared with Elijah’s prayer in 1 Kings 18:37, “Answer me, O LORD, answer me,” or with the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.
3. The tune is written in a contemporary style but is singable by a congregation in corporate worship. The melody is appropriate to the text and the harmonies are playable on an organ or piano.
4. A strong majority of the churches that completed the survey appreciated both the text and the music.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 172, “Speak, O Lord,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Take My Life, and Let It Be**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 538, “Take My Life, and Let It Be.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 36 churches gave feedback: 26 in favour, 10 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. It is scriptural, with links to Isa. 6, Phil. 1, Rom. 12, and Luke 21.
 - b. It can be used as a prayer for practical Christian living and sacrificial service to God’s will.
 - c. The melody is well-known, also among the children, and easy to sing.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. The hymn is individualistic and can pull emotional strings.
 - b. The text contains archaic language.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

NOTES: _____

1 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

2 Observations:

- 3 1. 34 churches completed the survey: 26 in favour, 8 not.
- 4 2. Positive feedback:
- 5 a. It is a nice hymn, with a nice tune. It is well-loved, enjoyable to sing.
- 6 b. Some language is archaic.
- 7 c. One church that accepted this hymn questioned the message of stanza 5: how can my
- 8 will and my heart be God's royal throne?
- 9 d. The melody is familiar.
- 10 3. Negative feedback:
- 11 a. This hymn is too individualistic. One church wrote, "In a songbook primarily
- 12 intended for corporate worship, it would be problematic if the individual's religious
- 13 experience were to receive a disproportionate emphasis."
- 14 b. The words of stanza 5 raise concerns (see Step 3, 2.c).
- 15 c. It is more suited as a children's song than a hymn used in corporate worship.

16

17 Considerations:

- 18 1. In this hymn, each Christian is praying for God to act powerfully in his whole being for a
- 19 life of faithfulness. The personal sentiment expressed in this hymn ought to reflect every
- 20 believer's experience, thus making it a suitable hymn for corporate worship.
- 21 2. Stanza 5, speaking about the will and the heart, poetically reflects the teachings of 1 Peter
- 22 3:15 and Col. 3:15, which point up the lordship of Christ in the believer's heart.
- 23 3. The song in its simplicity is not a deterrent to congregational singing.
- 24 4. Archaisms, while not desirable, cannot always be avoided if a song is an old classic that
- 25 cannot be easily altered. Hymnary.org confirms that very few hymnals have altered the
- 26 text of this hymn. It would be difficult to alter the text without disturbing its familiarity to
- 27 many.

28

29 Final Recommendation:

- 30 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 538, "Take My Life, and Let It Be," for inclusion in the *Book*
- 31 *of Praise*.

32

33 **Threefold Amen**

34

35 **Step 1: Initial Review**

36 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 575, "Threefold Amen."

37

38 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 39 1. 33 churches gave feedback: 24 in favour, 9 not.
- 40 2. Most of the churches noted that many churches already sing this Amen or some other
- 41 version of it. As a congregational response, it does not require synodical approval and
- 42 should not hinder the addition of other hymns if our hymn cap is maintained.
- 43 3. The Committee maintained its recommendation, with the proviso that this song not count
- 44 against any hymn cap.

NOTES:

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 31 churches completed the survey: 21 in favour, 10 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Churches that accepted the *Threefold Amen* all agreed that it is not truly a hymn and should not be counted with the 100.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. This is not a hymn and should not be included in the count up to the hymn cap of 100.
 - b. It is meant to be sung in harmony, which is not how our *Book of Praise* is set up. Nevertheless, churches should be encouraged to use it.

Considerations:

1. The “Threefold Amen” is not really a hymn, but a liturgical response to the blessing from the Lord at the end of a service.
2. More churches now sing an Amen at the end of their services. Often the *Threefold Amen* is sung, but sometimes another setting of the Amen is sung.
3. Singing “Amen” does not require synodical approval but is a matter for local consistories.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 575, “Threefold Amen,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**Step 1: Initial Review**

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 338, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 34 churches gave feedback: 25 in favour, 9 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is scripturally accurate.
 - b. It is suitable for Easter.
 - c. The tune and text fit well together.
 - d. The hymn is well-known and easily sung.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. This hymn is too much about the self, which makes it unsuitable for corporate worship; it is too focused on the redeemed instead of the Redeemer.
 - b. The opening lines of stanza 3 are questionable: we cannot be invited to see sorrow and love flow from Christ’s head, hands, and feet.
4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches completed the survey: 20 in favour, 15 not.

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2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text contains many biblical references and is suitable for Good Friday and the Lord's Supper.
 - b. This song fills a gap in the category of Good Friday/Easter hymns.
 - c. The melody is beautiful and appropriate. It is not difficult.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Stanza 3 contains problematic lines: lines 1–2, “See, from his head, his hands, his feet”; line 4, “Or thorns compose so rich a crown.”
 - b. This song dwells on imagery of our crucified Saviour, and calls on such imagery to create emotion (contained in language of sorrow and love flowing mingled down), which contravenes “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 7, which speaks against sentimentality.
 - c. The text is difficult to understand.

Considerations:

1. Gal. 6:14 teaches believers not to boast in anything “except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” A similar text is 2 Cor. 11 (Paul's boasting in Christ). This hymn follows this teaching in a way that is characteristic of many 18th-century hymns.
2. The opening lines of stanza 3 are a poetic expression encouraging us to consider Christ's shed blood as indicative of both his suffering and his love. It calls on such imagery to encourage an emotional response.
3. While the hymn does encourage an emotional response, that in itself does not contravene “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 7.

Final Recommendation:

1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 338, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

When Peace Like a River

Step 1: Initial Review

The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 476, “When Peace Like a River.”

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

1. 37 churches gave feedback: 31 in favour, 6 not.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The text is expressive of sorrow and suitable for funerals and times of anxiety.
 - b. The text is powerful, full of blessed assurance, comforting, hopeful, and scriptural.
 - c. The hymn is well-known and easily sung.
 - d. The melody is well matched to the lyrics.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. There are archaisms in stanza 1.
 - b. The text is sentimental, especially compared to Psalms that treat similar themes.
 - c. The refrain is problematic for a church that sings in unison.

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- 1 d. The melody is over-sung and is uninspiring.
 2 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

3
 4 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

5 Observations:

- 6 1. 33 churches completed the survey: 29 in favour, 4 not.
 7 2. Positive feedback:
 8 a. It expresses grief and sorrow and hope after personal loss, which everyone
 9 experiences at times. It is a wonderful confession of trust in God whatever the
 10 circumstances of life.
 11 b. This hymn has well-loved lyrics and tune.
 12 c. It is a classic or traditional hymn that is well-known in the wider Christian
 13 community.
 14 d. The melody was considered to be beautiful and appropriate; not difficult.
 15 3. Negative feedback:
 16 a. This hymn focuses on my soul rather than body and soul as beautifully depicted in
 17 Lord's Day 1.
 18 b. It is too individualistic for corporate worship even though it is a classic hymn.
 19 c. Archaic language is used.
 20 d. Although it is biblical, the refrain is repetitive, the song is often sung too slowly, and
 21 there is a fear that it may be over-sung.
 22 e. It does not follow a text but rather a sentiment; the hymn has an interesting history. It
 23 is more a personal statement of faith and being at peace than any biblical principle.
 24

25 Considerations:

- 26 1. The text is comparable to portions of Hymns 54, 55, 64, 66, 68, 71, and 83 (themes of
 27 trust and comfort amid sorrow). The theme, therefore, does not fill a gap in the *Book of*
 28 *Praise*.
 29 2. Even though there was apparent strong support for this hymn among the churches,
 30 several of the churches that accepted this hymn also raised concerns and caveats
 31 regarding the individualism of the hymn, the archaic language, the refrain and
 32 repetitiveness, and the concern that this hymn is a personal statement of faith that
 33 expresses a sentiment rather than following a text (see Step 3, 3.b–e). These concerns,
 34 coming from churches that liked the hymn, indicate that while the hymn is indeed
 35 popular, it is also problematic in several ways.
 36 3. The refrain of this hymn is dependent on four-part harmony: the clause “It is well”
 37 (“well” being held for six beats) is meant to be undergirded by the alto, tenor, and bass
 38 voices repeating the line in harmony. This pattern is repeated in the next phrase “with my
 39 soul.” Since the Committee, based on feedback from the churches, is recommending that
 40 the *Book of Praise* continue to be published with only the melody notated, this hymn will
 41 not be sung as it was meant to be.
 42 4. This hymn, being weak both textually and musically, and the theme being covered in
 43 several other hymns, is unnecessary (given that the Committee has a sufficient number of

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1 hymns to meet the synodically approved quota of new hymns). Not all “nice,” “familiar,”
2 or even popular songs are necessarily suitable for corporate worship.

3
4 **Final Recommendation:**

- 5 1. That GS 2025 not adopt TPH 476, “When Peace Like a River,” as an additional hymn for
6 inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

7
8 **Yet Not I But through Christ in Me**

9
10 **Step 1: Initial Review**

11 The Committee proposed to the churches “Yet Not I But through Christ in Me.”

12
13 **Step 2: Post-Feedback Review**

- 14 1. 35 churches gave feedback: 20 in favour, 15 not.
15 2. Positive feedback:
16 a. The text is scriptural.
17 b. The hymn is beautiful, singable, powerful and “reverent in melodic tone and pace.”
18 3. Negative feedback:
19 a. There was textual criticism on the lines, “There is no more in heaven now to give,”
20 and, “The night has been won, and I shall overcome, yet not I but through Christ in
21 me.”
22 b. The melody is “messy,” with a difficult pick-up and undesirable repetition, making it
23 unsuitable for the *Book of Praise*.
24 c. The Committee itself considered that the song is designed more for a small ensemble
25 than for a congregation. The arrangement seems to require a percussion element to
26 keep the melodic line moving forward.
27 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

28
29 **Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review**

30 **Observations:**

- 31 1. 36 churches completed the survey: 19 in favour, 17 not.
32 2. Positive feedback:
33 a. The text is good and scriptural. It is a comforting hymn that emphasizes our reliance
34 on our Saviour and what he has done.
35 b. The tune is appropriate and singable by the congregation.
36 c. It is a beautiful, biblical, and well-loved song.
37 3. Negative feedback:
38 a. For some the words seem to be Arminian. For example, “Oh the night has been won,
39 and I shall overcome! Yet not I but through Christ in me.”
40 b. The line, “There is no more for heaven now to give” (stanza 1), is confusing because
41 it undermines the mediating work of Christ, and the interceding of the Holy Spirit.
42 The line, “To this I hold my sin has been defeated” (stanza 3), makes it sound as if
43 there is no more sin left in the life of the believer, or temptations to struggle with.
44 “With every breath I long to follow Jesus” (stanza 4) is a very bold claim.

NOTES: _____

- 1 c. This style of music is significantly different from what we have in our current hymn
2 section. Our collection will start to become very eclectic, for better or worse.
- 3 d. Is this song suitable for congregational singing? It would be nice for a choir
4 performance.
- 5 e. The repeats are confusing, as is the ending of the fourth verse. The notation is unusual
6 and difficult.
- 7 f. This tune does not hold up well to congregational singing, which contravenes
8 “Principles and Guidelines,” Guideline 11. It is also needlessly repetitive, which goes
9 against Guideline 5. The tune also accommodates modern trends and does not reflect
10 the singing of the church of all ages, which goes against Guideline 6.
- 11 g. The arrangement does not work well for organ, or congregational singing; the pick-up
12 note on the offbeat at the beginning makes for sloppy singing in a congregational
13 context.

14
15 **Considerations:**

- 16 1. Although many of the churches found the words to be biblical, even among churches that
17 accepted this hymn there were concerns raised about the words (see Step 3, 3.a) and the
18 music (see Step 3, 3.c–d).
- 19 2. This song does not contravene “Principles and Guidelines,” Guidelines 5 and 6.
20 Guideline 7, however, warns that the songs of the church must be free of individualism.
21 In this song much of the language is individual rather than corporate. The “I” is the
22 subject of the song, and the last line, as true as it is, does not sufficiently remediate this
23 (“Yet not I but through Christ in me”).
- 24 3. This song, though popular, is not suitable for congregational worship, but because of its
25 style and arrangement, it is much more suited for a small-group ensemble or choir. This is
26 evident with the pick-up notes on the half beat, by the low range, and by the repetitive
27 melody.

28
29 **Final Recommendation:**

- 30 1. That GS 2025 not adopt “Yet Not I But through Christ in Me” for inclusion in the *Book*
31 *of Praise*.

32
33 **Your Law, O God, Is Our Delight**

34
35 ***Step 1: Initial Review***

36 The Committee proposed to the churches TPH 175, “Your Law, O God, Is Our Delight.”

37
38 ***Step 2: Post-Feedback Review***

- 39 1. 34 churches gave feedback: 23 in favour, 11 not.
- 40 2. Positive feedback:
- 41 a. The text received many commendations. It is an appropriate and beautiful summary
42 of Psalm 119 and “adds praise for the Saviour” showing fulfilment of the law.
- 43 b. The melody is suitable for worship.
- 44 3. Negative feedback:

NOTES: _____

- 1 a. The connection to Psalm 119 makes this hymn redundant.
- 2 b. This melody (Germany) is also being proposed for Psalm 111B, which was a
- 3 distraction for a few churches.
- 4 4. The Committee maintained its recommendation.

6 ***Step 3: Post-GS 2022 Review***

7 Observations:

- 8 1. 31 churches completed the survey: 20 in favour, 11 not.
- 9 2. Positive feedback:
 - 10 a. This is a good, biblical hymn that can be used as a response to the reading of the Law.
 - 11 b. We need more songs of confession [of sin] to choose from. It is good to bolster the
 - 12 hymn section with songs that speak of the delight of the law to the Christian life.
 - 13 c. The tune flows naturally and is not overly difficult to learn.
- 14 3. Negative feedback:
 - 15 a. We already have the entire Psalm 119, so we do not need another song saying the
 - 16 same thing.
 - 17 b. Psalm 19 as well as Psalm 119 already cover the same themes.
 - 18 c. The tune is uninspiring and unknown; the congregation struggled with it.

20 Considerations:

- 21 1. This hymn is based on Psalm 119 in a general sense and is not an actual rhyming of that
- 22 psalm.
- 23 2. This hymn shows the New Testament fulfillment of Psalm 119; see stanza 3, “Lord, we
- 24 have failed your law’s demands with impure hearts and unclean hands. But One has kept
- 25 them perfectly—our Savior, Jesus Christ, is he.”
- 26 3. It is clear that Genevan 119 as well as Genevan 19 are well-loved and well-used. This
- 27 hymn will provide a good alternative.

29 Final Recommendation:

- 30 1. That GS 2025 adopt TPH 175, “Your Law, O God, Is Our Delight,” for inclusion in the
- 31 *Book of Praise*.

NOTES: _____
