

Press release from the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*

General Synod Burlington, 2010, instructed the Committee to publish an Authorized Provisional Version of the *Book of Praise*.

Synod decided that this version will be the *authorized* version for use in the worship services once it is released, (cf. Church Order Article 55). At the same time, this version will be *provisional* in that the next Synod, 2013, will, hopefully, adopt the definitive version which will serve our churches for many years. Synod requested the churches to use the upcoming 2010 version in their worship services and to alert the committee to any errors in it so that a pristine edition can be presented to Synod 2013. The committee expects that the differences between the 2010 and the 2013 versions will be minimal.

Synod forwarded to the committee all the letters Synod received relating to the committee's report to Synod, the revised psalms, the revised hymns and the augment hymns. The committee has carefully gone through all the comments from the churches, incorporating what was appropriate, and expects that the 2010 version should be available to the churches by early December. The committee will endeavour to keep the churches posted.

What will this version look like?

The psalms will have been revised. The committee reminds the reader that about fifty psalms needed no or little improvement while about fifty needed significant improvement and the remaining fifty were completely redone. We acknowledge the fine work of Dr. William Helder in this endeavour.

Many of the hymns will have been improved as well. Furthermore, Synod added nineteen from the Augment for a new total of eighty-five hymns. The following were added from the Augment: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28. Since the "new" hymns had to be inserted here and there according to theme, it necessitated a change in many of the hymn numbers.

Synod also instructed the committee to bring all pronouns referring to God, in song and prose sections, to lower case in keeping with the most common translations used in the churches.

The *Book of Praise* in its current small format would be rather bulky with the addition of more hymns and the overleaf notation. Therefore this next edition's format will be a bit larger (5 ½ x 8 ½ rather than the current 4 ½ x 6 ½). This will make for a more appealing look to the book.

Synod directed the committee to communicate to the churches that they determine for themselves how to purchase and distribute the copies of this provisional *Book of Praise*. Although not set in stone, it is expected that the retail price will be \$22-\$24 per book. Churches and schools do well to note that the publisher has informed the committee that if churches and schools submit bulk orders, they will receive a 25% discount, resulting in an expected net price of about \$16-\$18 per copy.

The Authorized Provisional Version will, in time, be available on the committee's website, www.bookofpraise.ca. This site is graciously hosted by Bernie Harsevoort of Adverdea Advertising/Web Design.

Synod considered that the church is never finished with the work of writing hymns, and so it instructed the committee "to seek, receive, evaluate and recommend additional hymns to be compiled and proposed at a future date for testing by the churches, and for

possible recommendation to a future Synod.” The committee will be writing the churches about this at a future date.

Some churches had asked whether the *Book of Praise* could be set to four-part harmony. Synod instructed the committee to take up the matter of harmonization of the psalms and hymns, and to make a specific proposal to synod 2013 as to how this can best be addressed. The committee was also encouraged to develop and promote materials for the musical accompaniment in the worship services.

Synod directed the committee to maintain good contact with Deputies for the *Book of Praise* in the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. As well, the committee is mandated to continue promoting the *Book of Praise* worldwide.

From time to time the committee receives communications from near or far suggesting that the Canadian Reformed Churches have a great treasure in the *Book of Praise*. We agree. It is a unique songbook in that all 150 psalms can be sung on the authentic Genevan tunes. The *Book of Praise* is a catholic songbook since the Genevan Psalter can be found in many languages throughout the world. We acknowledge with deep gratitude the work that our fathers, under the blessing of God, undertook only a few years after the founding of the first Canadian Reformed Churches.

May the Lord bless the worship of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and may he bless the song book we love and cherish.

Committee