

APPENDIX III C

BOOK OF PRAISE – REPORT 3

To General Synod 1989 of the Canadian Reformed Churches,
to be held in Winnipeg

From the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*
January 16, 1989

Esteemed brothers,

In addition to the matters that we have already dealt with in Report 1 (Creeds), Report 2 (Church Order), and a Supplementary Report on the Church Order, we now present the following for your consideration:

I. PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION

- A. 1. Synod 1986 was informed that as of December 31, 1985, there were about 700 copies left of the revised edition of the *Book of Praise*. In the meantime these were also sold and arrangements were made for a second printing of 3000 copies so that, in accordance with our mandate, our churches as well as the Australian sister-churches could be kept supplied.
2. Premier Printing Ltd. asked to be allowed to reprint the *Book of Praise* together with the RSV Bible in a one-volume edition. Permission was granted provided that the availability of the regular edition of the *Book of Praise* would not be adversely affected.
3. In both reprints all the changes adopted by Synod 1986 were included along with a few minor corrections.
- B. Early in 1988 our committee received inquiries from the Committee on Liturgy of the Free Reformed Church of North America regarding the possibility of including in their Psalter all the Anglo-Genevan Psalms as found in our *Book of Praise*. We responded by offering them our full cooperation in such a venture. Subsequently Synod 1988 of the Free Reformed Church gave its committee the mandate to present a detailed report with recommendations to the next synod.
- C. We were kept informed by the Deputies for the Church Book appointed by Synod 1987 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia regarding the use of the *Book of Praise* in their worship services. Synod 1987 acceded to a request to permit and encourage the probationary use of the entire hymn section. Synod also dealt with the wording of the Apostles' Creed in Hymn 1A (see below).
- D. 1. The committee regularly received and answered requests for permission to reprint items from the *Book of Praise* in books and other publications.
2. The Michigan Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Lansing, Michigan, was given permission to transcribe the *Book of Praise* into braille.
3. In the Church of Chatham a committee led by brother J. Tillema took the laudable initiative of sending complimentary copies of the *Book of Praise* to a large number of universities and seminaries throughout Canada and received many favourable reactions.
4. Although only very few publications paid any attention to review copies that we sent them in 1985, we have received indications of interest in the *Book of Praise* from persons outside of our churches not only in Canada but also in California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia as well as in England and New Zealand.

5. Outside of our circles orders for the *Book of Praise* have been placed by congregations in Missouri and in Texas.
6. From time to time we receive inquiries concerning the availability of harmonizations of the complete Genevan Psalter. To our knowledge, these are at present published only in The Netherlands under Dutch titles and with a Dutch-language preface, etc.

II. CORPORATE STATUS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

- A. In accordance with previous synod decisions, the committee has maintained its status as a corporation (516455 Ontario Ltd.).
- B.
 1. The committee has not been involved in any financial transactions. For details regarding the manner in which financial and other aspects of publishing the *Book of Praise* have been delegated to Premier Printing Ltd., see the *Acts of Synod Cloverdale 1983*, pp. 297-99.
 2. To prevent misunderstanding we should like to point out that any expenses incurred in the course of our work as synod-appointed committee are submitted in the usual fashion for reimbursement by the church in charge of the General Fund of the churches. In this respect we are no different from other committees.

III. HYMN 1A

- A. Synod 1986 decided "to instruct the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to insert the word 'Christian' in the hymn version of the Apostles' Creed, if this is possible" (Art. 101, D.2.a).

In this connection, we submit the following for your consideration:

1. The word "Christian" cannot be inserted without an alteration of the melody as composed by J. Schouten.
2. Changing the existing melody would only confuse many congregations during their worship services.
3. Synod 1983 made a number of other changes in the Apostles' Creed which also do not fit the melody; these occur in four of the twelve articles, i.e., in 1, 2, 5, and 6. Adding only "Christian" would create a *third* text of the Apostles' Creed.
4. Whatever other text of the Apostles' Creed is or will be in use among us, no one has presented any reason why the churches should be deprived of the opportunity to sing this creed in the traditional formulation so widely known in the English-speaking world.
5. No other English-speaking Reformed churches have adopted the insertion of the word "Christian."

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia have decided "to adopt the text of the Ecumenical Creeds with the exception of the word 'Christian' in Art IX of the Apostles' Creed . . ." (*Acts of Synod 1987*, Art. 100, D.2). Their Deputies for the Church Book have informed us that they favour the text of Hymn 1A as it is found in the present edition of the *Book of Praise*.

On the basis of these considerations, we propose that Hymn 1A be left as it is, so that it remains within the freedom of the churches to use this text and melody.

- B. Synod 1986 also decided "to pass on [the alternate melody composed for Hymn 1A by D. Zwart, Jr.] to the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*, so that they may consider if it can be adapted to the 'new text' or whether a new melody can be found for this 'new text'" (Art. 189, D.1) and "to instruct the

committee to report back to the next general synod" (Art. 189, D.2).

1. The members of our music sub-committee examined the proposed melody and found it unsuitable.
2. They further reported that they have been unable to find a melody for the "new text."

IV. FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the recommendations in section III, above, and those in Report 1 (Creeds), Report 2 (Church Order), and the Supplementary Report on the Church Order, we propose to Synod

1. that a Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* be appointed again;
2. that this committee be given the mandate
 - a. to see to it that the *Book of Praise* remains available to the churches at a reasonable price,
 - b. to make the necessary arrangements with printers and others for the production and distribution of the *Book of Praise*.
 - c. to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*.
 - d. to implement all synod decisions regarding the contents of the *Book of Praise*.
 - e. to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others,
 - f. to stimulate the publication of a book of harmonizations of the melodies in the *Book of Praise* for use in the English-speaking world.
 - g. to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed;
3. that the size of the committee be reduced to three or four members, while keeping in mind that continuity would be desirable;
4. that a separate committee be appointed to deal with such matters as the revision of the translation of the ecumenical creeds and the selection of prooftexts for the Belgic Confession.

Yours in Christ's service,

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*

W. Helder (convener/reporter)
J. De Jong
J. Faber
M. Kampen
C. Van Dam
C. Van Halen-Faber
J. Van Huisstede

POSTSCRIPT

From the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, Chatham, Ontario, the committee received several requests and comments with respect to the Apostles' Creed, the Canons of Dort, and the Church Order. The committee was not able to deal with these late submissions and advised the Church of Chatham to send them directly to General Synod Winnipeg 1989.