

SUPPLEMENT II — (Acts, Art. 28)

REPORT to General Synod, New Westminster 1971
of the Canadian Reformed Churches, submitted by
DEPUTIES FOR AN ENGLISH CALVINISTIC PSALTER,
appointed by General Synod, Orangeville, 1968

I APPOINTMENTS

Deputies wish, at the beginning of this report, to express their deep gratitude for the contributions to the work of preparing a Book of Praise by the late professor F. Kouwenhoven, M.Th. He has served the Churches in this committee for several years and his interest for this work and his advices are highly appreciated.

When the LORD in His wisdom took him away the need was felt to invite others to assist Deputies in their work. In the course of time they invited the Reverend Mr. Wm. W. J. VanOene and Mr. W. Helder to do so. Deputies request Synod to approve of this action.

II MANDATE

Synod Orangeville 1968 gave Deputies the following mandate:

1) "To consider the reports mentioned and the criticisms brought forward in overtures and requests" (Acts Art. 87, sub 7a)

Deputies have dealt with the recommendations laid down in the Synodical Committee IV, and have considered everything which has come to their attention in the preparation and finalizing of the Book of Praise.

2) "To delete from a new edition of the Book of Praise those rhymed versions which lack the close conformity to the Scripture text and those which lack the simplicity and clarity of expression required for the songs of the covenant, if revision is not possible." Acts, 87, 7 sub b, 1)

Deputies wish to repeat here what was written in the report of Deputies to Synod Orangeville 1968 (Acts, Supplement 7, sub II, p. 103): "Since Deputies feel that not all versifications of the Psalms contained in the original Book of Praise may meet all the requirements of complete conformity to Scripture and linguistic correctness, it is their intention to submit these versifications to a close scrutiny before presenting the Churches with a complete Psalter". To accomplish this the entire Book of Praise and Supplement were scrutinized and considerable changes have been made.

3) "To delete from a new edition those hymns which are not thoroughly scriptural in contents; and those tunes which are not considered conducive to the purpose of the singing of covenant people, namely the "praise of the Lord". (Acts Art. 87, 7 sub b, 2 and 3)

Several hymns have been deleted, as the new hymn-section, presented to Synod will show.

4) "To continue the work in such a way that the completion of the Psalm-section of the Book of Praise have first attention of Deputies". "To remember the decision of Synod Edmonton 1965 concerning the inclusion of Hymns that are scriptural, preferably rhymings of parts of Scripture" (Acts, Art. 87, 7 sub c, 1 and 2)

In spite of the fact that the Psalm-section had the first and foremost attention of Deputies they have to report that the Hymn-section was finalized before the Psalm-section for the following reasons:

a) the revision of a considerable number of Psalms and the addition of new rhymings to the existing Psalter has been a time-consuming work.

b) for new Psalms Deputies were dependent on people who prepared rhymings, and correspondence with technical advisers has slowed the process. On the other hand, some of the Hymns could be taken directly from existing Psalters.

- 5) "To give preference to the Genevan tunes as melodies for the rhymed Psalms with the understanding: 1. that identical tunes be avoided as much as possible, and 2. that those tunes which are hard to sing be replaced by other melodies of "priceless value". (Acts, Art. 87, sub d, 1 and 2).

Deputies refer to the report to Synod Orangeville 1968 in which the unanimous conclusion was laid down: 'to suggest that the Churches forsake this concept—of replacing "difficult" Genevan tunes by well-known tunes of "priceless value"—and proceed to the completion of a Genevan Psalter.

The Synodical Committee IV "would regret a removal from the Book of Praise of the beautiful non-Genevan tunes which are used in the Psalm-section". Deputies wish to inform Synod that some of the non-Genevan tunes in the present Book of Praise have found a place in the enlarged Hymn-section.

The matter of identical tunes had the full attention of Deputies. All Genevan tunes will be found in the completed Psalter.

- 6) "To continue the contact with 'Deputies for a Church Book in the English language' of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia".

This contact was again scarce. Deputies of the Churches in Australia expressed their concern about the enlargement of the Hymn-section, and provided Deputies with some suggestions and technical remarks.

- 7) "To set as a target date for the presentation of a complete Book of Praise the year in which the next General Synod will be convened". To make sure that the Creeds, the Liturgical Forms, and the Church Order are included (Acts, Art. 87, sub 7, k and l)

a) Deputies regret that, mainly due to the convening of General Synod at an earlier date, they have not been able to present a complete Psalter. The work is in progress toward finalizing the Psalm section. It can be expected that the work will be completed at the end of 1971 or in the beginning of 1972.

The last part of this mandate should be repeated in the mandate to the Deputies to be appointed.

b) Deputies recommend that Synod appoint Deputies to prepare the Creeds, Forms and Church Order for inclusion in the Book of Praise since they have come to the conclusion that, among others, there is no uniformity in spelling, punctuation, etcetera. With a view to revision of the Church Order and the provisional character of the present translation of the Church Order. Synod express itself as to the necessity of having the Church Order included in the first printing of the complete Book of Praise.

c) Synod take measures for the time when the Book of Praise will have been completed and the present Committee will have fulfilled its mandate.

It gives us much pleasure to present to Synod a complete Hymn-section.

III FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Attached to this report please find a Report and Financial Statement over the period, November 1960 — March 1966, and a Statement over the years, 1970/1971.

Respectfully submitted,

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