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R E P O R T

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D E P U T I E S F O R A N E N G L I S H C A L V I N I S T I C P S A L T E R .

Deputies for an English Calvinistic Psalter, appointed by the Synod of Edmonton of 1965, respectfully submit hereby the following report:

I. THE SUPPLEMENT.

Though the Synod Edmonton in its decision (see Acts, Art. 192) envisaged the completion of the "Book of Praise" and instructed its Deputies accordingly, it moreover authorized deputies, in case it appeared to be impossible to submit to the Churches a complete Psalter in the near future, to publish a "Supplement" in order to fill the gap between the present "Book of Praise" and a complete Psalter (Acts, Art. 192 3h).

When Deputies discovered that a speedy publication of a complete Psalter in the near future would not be forthcoming, they focused all their attention on the second possibility, notably the publication of a "Supplement", which was forwarded to the Churches in the course of 1967.

The publication of the "Supplement" did not create any insuperable problems, especially not since the majority of the Hymns could be adopted from existing Hymnaries, whereas the publication of the Psalm section was greatly facilitated by the contribution from one of our church members.

Though the Supplement per se constitutes the Deputies' report -- a matter too often forgotten -- and consequently does not need any particular introduction, Deputies, however, do not mind mentioning in this report (as they already did in the Preface to the Supplement) that this "Supplement" embodies 34 Psalms and 18 Hymns. The majority of the Psalms is on the traditional "Genevan tunes". The Deputies also published three Psalms on a tune different from the traditional. It is very much to be regretted that, due to a printing error, Psalm 41 was not published on the traditional Genevan tune; Psalms 94 and 112, however, clearly indicate the intention of Deputies, namely to present a Psalm on two divergent tunes.

In this report, Deputies like to give account of this rather unusual procedure, although they now personally have come to the conviction not to proceed in that direction. It has been a matter of consideration why some Psalms are hardly ever sung and are virtually unknown, whereas other Psalms

apparently constitute part of a "collection" of "beloved" melodies. To a certain extent this discrepancy may be explained by the subjective choice of the minister with his individual preference for a certain number of Psalms. However, it cannot be denied that in most cases the same Psalms are hardly ever sung in any Church. This indicates that the subjective choice of the local minister is apparently not determinative for the existence of "favorite" tunes". On the strength of this consideration, Deputies have come to the conclusion that the unfamiliarity of a Psalm is the result of the unfamiliarity of the melody and not of the contents of the Psalm. Hence Deputies attempted to replace an "unfamiliar" by a "familiar" tune. However, in order not to entirely forfeit the traditional melody, Deputies decided to publish the first stanza on the traditional tune, and to distinguish the Psalm on the "alternate tune" with an "a" added to its number as is the case in Psalms 41, 94 and 112. Deputies took this decision on the conviction that many Psalms, now hardly ever used in the worship services, probably would become more popular among the church members. However, Deputies would now rather suggest a different course of action, as this report indicates.

Deputies express their deep disappointment with the little interest shown in their work on the part of the Churches; those, however, who submitted their critical remarks will notice how much Deputies appreciated their suggestions.

II. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The ultimate aim of Deputies is to present to the Churches a complete Psalter comprising all 150 Psalms on the Genevan tunes. Deputies would like to emphasize the phrase "on the Genevan tunes". Deputies do not anticipate any objections to the first part of this suggestion; all of us are convinced that the Churches are in need of a complete Psalter. The second part of the suggestion, however, implies that Deputies will no longer avail themselves of the opportunity offered by the Edmonton Synod, namely that Deputies not necessarily should limit themselves to the Genevan tunes, but were at liberty to use different tunes in conformity with the purpose of the congregational singing: the praise of the Lord. Deputies are now of the

opinion not to make use of this possibility. They have come to the unanimous conclusion, after many lengthy discussions, not to recommend to the Churches to add another Psalter to the many existing Psalters, composed of a number of tunes well-known in the Anglo-Saxon world, together with beloved Genevan tunes. If this would be the result of their work, Deputies would consider the work previously done a waste of time and money since there are many of this type of Psalters available in our country. Deputies, however, would like to suggest that the Churches once and for all forsake this concept of an eclectic Psalter and proceed to the completion of a Genevan Psalter. If our Churches would achieve this -- and Deputies are convinced that this is certainly possible within a reasonable period of time -- then our Churches would not only possess a well-balanced Psalter, but also have contributed in a unique manner to the culture of our nation, for the most part unfamiliar with the magnificent Genevan tunes. Deputies even flatter themselves with the hope to contribute thus to the Psalmody of our nation. That they certainly do not aim too high may be inferred from the enthusiasm with which musicologists from many quarters have received our still incomplete Psalter. This change of policy entails of course that the non-Genevan tunes of some Psalms in the existing Book of Praise will be replaced by Genevan tunes.

Deputies, however, are convinced that many non-Genevan tunes are of a priceless value, to mention only Psalms 5, 11, 12, 127, and they would like to suggest to insert these tunes in the Hymn section of the Book of Praise. The advantage of such a procedure is that we retain a good non-Genevan tune, though not in the Psalm section.

The so-called "identical tunes" ("Doublures") constitute a different chapter. As may be known the Genevan Psalter comprises 150 Psalms, though not 150 different tunes. A number of Psalms are sung on an identical tune; four times one tune is used for three different Psalms, and there is even one tune used four times, notably in Psalms 24, 62, 95 and 111. These "identical tunes" ("doublures") create a specific problem since Deputies could not find any consistency in the three- or fourfold use of a melody: why is the tune of Psalm 24 used four times, and why the tune of Psalm 42 and Psalm 89 only once? Deputies would like to reserve to themselves a certain

liberty in the choice of a melody for a Psalm belonging to this category. It may be superfluous to assure the Churches that Deputies, in the choice of a different melody for the Psalms sung on an identical tune, will limit themselves to the Genevan tunes.

Since Deputies feel that not all versification of the Psalms contained in the original Book of Praise may meet all 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. Thereby Deputies hope to ensure that all rhymed versions are faithful to the original text and are rendered in idiomatic English.

The contact of Deputies with foreign churches was extremely scarce, the more so since Deputies did not meet with such particular problems in the publication of the "Supplement" which necessitated consultation. The Deputies appointed by the Australian Churches will certainly not fail to notice that Deputies have gratefully adopted the suggestions made by them with respect to the tunes, and Deputies are convinced that, though they could not adopt all their suggestions, they certainly assimilated the main tenets of the report of the Australian Deputies.

With deep gratitude Deputies acknowledge the assistance received from some members of our Churches, who contributed to the "Supplement". Their contribution opens vistas of the publication of a Psalter, originating from more than just one source. Deputies express the expectation that they will be able, within the foreseeable future, to conclude a contract with these contributors to our Psalter.

Deputies express their disappointment with the fact that one of the Deputies, Mr. J. Knegt, Rockwood, Ontario, for reasons of increased business responsibilities, could no longer serve on the Committee. Mr. Knegt, who so faithfully served as Deputy and who contributed so much with his musical talent, resigned as treasurer of Deputies as well. His place was taken by Mr. S.R. Smilde, Thornhill, Ontario. Deputies are very grateful for the

worthwhile contribution of br. Knegt and for his active participation in the work of Deputies.

III. Attached please find a Report on the finances of our Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

G. VanDooren,
D. VanderBoom,
M.M. DeGroot,
S.R. Smilde,
F. Kouwenhoven.