

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD CARMAN, 2013

Introduction:

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (hereinafter referred to as the Committee or SCBP) hereby submits a report on its activities regarding the mandate given by General Synod Burlington, 2010. Throughout the report, references to the Committee's mandate are provided based on the *Acts General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches – Burlington, ON, 2010*.

The mandate provided by *General Synod 2010* includes many and varied aspects related to the *Book of Praise*. During the past three years, the Committee has worked diligently to fulfill this mandate to the best of its ability and for the edification of the churches. In keeping with the General Synod's core directive "[t]o present a final version of the *Book of Praise* to synod 2013 for approval and prepared for publication" (*Acts* Art. 142, 4.2.5), the Committee spent most of its energies on finalizing the text of the Psalms and the text and melodies of the Hymns. In addition to carefully reviewing the material received by General Synod 2010, the Committee also engaged the churches by inviting them to send feedback on the Psalms and Hymns published in the *Authorized Provisional Version* at the direction of General Synod 2010. The Committee is very grateful for the tremendous response it received from the churches: The interest in and love for the *Book of Praise* is alive and well!

With this report the Committee presents the definitive 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise* to General Synod for approval.

The Committee expresses deep gratitude to the LORD for his care and guidance as we worked to fulfill all aspects of the mandate given by the churches. The Committee did its work with much joy and in a spirit of good harmony. It is our hope that this work may serve the churches in giving final approval to the new edition of the *Book of Praise*. It is our prayer that the *Book of Praise* will continue to be a blessing to the church of Christ for many years to come.

Overview of the report:

Unless noted otherwise, all quotations in this report are taken from the *Authorized Provisional Version of the Book of Praise* (hereinafter referred to as APV). For ease of reading, the report is divided into main paragraphs followed by subheadings dealing with the various elements of the Committee's mandate. Specific references to articles refer to the *Acts of General Synod Burlington 2010*:

1.0 Implementation of General Synod Burlington 2010 decisions re. changes in *Book of Praise*:

- 1.1 Pronouns Referring to God (*Acts*, Article 109)
- 1.2 Improving the Revised Psalms (*Acts*, Article 120)
- 1.3 Proceeding with the Revised Psalms (*Acts*, Article 121)

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

- 1.3.1 Implementing the Mandate re. Revised Psalms
- 1.3.2 How did we approach the input received?
- 1.3.3 Observations regarding the feedback received re. the Psalms
- 1.3.4 Some examples
- 1.3.5 Proposed final text of the 150 Psalms for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*
- 1.3.6 Recommendations regarding the text of the Psalms
- 1.4 Revision of Current Hymns (*Acts*, Article 122)
 - 1.4.1 Receiving Input
 - 1.4.2 How did we approach the input received on the hymns
 - 1.4.3 Proposed final text of the 85 Hymns for inclusion in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*
 - 1.4.4 Recommendations regarding the text of the Hymns
- 1.5 Music Notation and Melodies for the Hymns (*Acts*, Article 123)
 - 1.5.1 Background and Context
 - 1.5.2 Soliciting Feedback from the Churches
 - 1.5.3 Evaluation of Feedback Received
 - 1.5.4 General Comments
 - 1.5.5 Reinstating Previous Music Notation (Summary)
 - 1.5.6 What about the breath marks?
 - 1.5.7 The one exception . .
 - 1.5.8 Other issues re music notation & melodies
 - 1.5.9 What about the matter of “old text set to new melodies”?
 - 1.5.10 Recommendations regarding the musical notation and melodies of the Hymns
- 1.6 Future Direction re. Hymns (*Acts*, Article 142)
 - 1.6.1 Recommendation
- 1.7 Publication of the *Book of Praise* (*Acts*, Article 143)
 - 1.7.1 The 2010 APV
 - 1.7.2 E-availability
- 1.8 Harmonization (*Acts*, Article 145)
 - 1.8.1 Recommendation and request for confirmation
- 1.9 The Matter of “Difficult” tunes (*Acts*, Article 161)
- 1.10 Hymn Index with Scripture References (*Acts*, Article 164)
 - 1.10.1 Recommendation
- 2.0 Printing and Distribution** (*Acts*, Article 113)
 - 2.1 Contract
 - 2.2 Printing and Sales
 - 2.3 Distribution
 - 2.4 Current Retail Price
 - 2.5 Print Preparation for the 2013 Definitive Edition of the *Book of Praise*
- 3.0 Fostering Awareness** (*Acts*, Article 114)
 - 3.1 Recommendation

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

- 4.0 Contact with the Australian Sister Churches (FRCA) (*Acts*, Article 115)**
 - 4.1 Recommendation
- 5.0 Corporate Status (*Acts*, Article 116)**
 - 5.1 Recommendation
- 6.0 Committee Address (*Acts*, Article 117)**
 - 6.1 Correspondence
 - 6.2 Permanent Mailing Address
 - 6.3 eMail Address
 - 6.4 Archives
 - 6.5 Meetings and Place of Meeting
 - 6.6 Recommendation
- 7.0 Committee Membership (*Acts*, Article 119)**
 - 7.1 Current Members
 - 7.2 Pending Changes in Membership
 - 7.3 Recommendation re. Committee Membership
 - 7.4 Advisors
 - 7.5 Recommendation re. Advisors
- 8.0 Common Songbook (*Acts*, Article 146)**
 - 8.1 Contacts
 - 8.2 URCNA Synod Nyack, 2012
 - 8.3 Recommendation
- 9.0 Other Matters**
 - 9.1 Forms of Subscription
 - 9.2 Forms for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper
 - 9.3 Form for the Solemnization of Marriage
 - 9.4 Heidelberg Catechism
 - 9.4.2 Question and Answer 115
 - 9.5 Belgic Confession
 - 9.6 Canons of Dort
 - 9.7 Church Order
 - 9.1.1 - 9.7.1 Recommendation(s)
- 10 Copyright Implications**
- 11 Suggested Mandate for the New Term (Summary)**
- 12 Acknowledgements, Summary, and Conclusion**

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

1.0 Implementation of General Synod Burlington 2010 decisions re. changes in *Book of Praise*

In addition to working with all regular aspects of the mandate, the Committee has implemented the decisions made by General Synod 2010 as follows:

1.1 Pronouns Referring to God (Art.109)

The Committee reviewed the entire text of the APV and ensured that all pronouns for God are in conformity with the NIV and are used consistently throughout the *Book of Praise*.

1.2 Improving the Revised Psalms

Synod provided the SCBP with the detailed material submitted by the churches, for its consideration and review (Art.120).

The Committee took careful note of this material, and after a thorough review, incorporated the elements it considered to be improvements into the APV for use by the churches.

1.3 Proceeding with the Revised Psalms

Synod requested the SCBP to encourage the churches to identify errors in the approved provisional edition of the Psalms, and to do so within a timeframe that allowed the Committee to review the materials received and to incorporate those deemed appropriate in a final version of the Psalms for final approval by Synod 2013. (Art 121, 4.1). Concerns and input received by Synod 2010 are to be included also (Art 121, 4.2).

1.3.1 Implementing the Mandate re. Revised Psalms

The Committee implemented this aspect of the mandate as follows: Letters were sent to all the churches in May 2011 and again in April 2012 alerting the churches that their input regarding the Book of Praise was to be received by 1 May 2012 to allow the Committee time to review the materials for consideration in the report to Synod. Many churches availed themselves of this opportunity: Several submissions included detailed recommendations, others were supported by material prepared by individuals within a congregation, and yet others even went beyond what Synod requested by providing suggestions for improvement of the text. Although many submissions were received well after the requested date, the Committee was able to review all the material submitted. The amount of material received from the churches with many helpful comments indicates that the churches put much effort into this work. We are thankful for this involvement.

The Committee also reviewed input provided via the report prepared by the Australian deputies for the GS 2012 of the Australian churches. Although the report as such was not

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

addressed to the SCBP directly, it was used in the same way all the letters from our churches were used, in keeping with the decision to consider input from the Australian sister churches. We worked particularly with the specific comments on the Psalms (Ps. 1-78).

1.3.2 How did we approach the input received?

Given the sheer amount of feedback and input received from the churches, the SCBP first determined a common approach to deal with the material received. As a next step, the Committee divided the work over two internal sub-committees, one dealing with the Psalms, the other with the Hymns.

These sub-committees were given the task to deal with all the input received, to seek advice where required, and to prepare a report for discussion at the full committee level. In order to avoid having the same eyes look at the same material over and over, the SCBP asked several brothers and sisters with academic background and expertise in the areas of English language (Dr. Benne Faber and Dr. Deanna Smid), and Hebrew language and Old Testament exegesis (Dr. Jannes Smith, and on one occasion, Dr. Cornelis van Dam) to provide expert advice with regard to particular questions and suggestions. We are very thankful to these advisors for their willingness and for the excellent way in which they helped us. We are also grateful that Dr. William Helder availed himself to be part of this process.

1.3.3 Observations regarding the feedback received re. the Psalms

The sub-committee for the Psalms engaged in an initial review of all the material submitted by the churches. Although it is not possible nor is it our mandate to list all the comments and suggestions received from the churches, we can report in general that the majority of the comments received with respect to the revision of the Psalms were very positive.

Many expressed appreciation for the work of Dr. W. Helder. For example, one church reflected a sentiment that was present in several submissions when it wrote that one can question the need for these revisions, “but a careful comparison to Scripture quickly reveals that our brother has done an excellent job of bringing the text of many of the psalms closer to the actual wording in Scripture.”

We received critical comments as well, ranging from questioning whether some changes are indeed improvements, to suggestions that the revision did not go far enough. Several churches included comments received from members of the congregation in which some express disappointment at the loss of well-known phrases and expressions in well-known Psalms.

One church submitted a detailed review of several Psalms. This

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

church requested that the SCBP provide much more interaction with the churches on the revisions as these have been proposed. “The SCBP, for each revised Psalm (and hymn), should demonstrate that the changes made conform with all aspects of the Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church, including demonstrating how those changes are necessary, a significant improvement, poetic, and conforming to the meaning of the scriptural texts.” The Committee judged that this request went beyond our current mandate. General Synod Smithers 2007 gave the Committee the mandate to initiate a thorough review of the Psalms, to involve the churches by soliciting input, and to publish a revised and updated Psalm version. General Synod Burlington approved the way the Committee fulfilled its mandate. Objections to the mandate adopted by GS 2007, or to the procedures proposed and followed by the Committee, should have been brought before GS 2010.

In order to do justice to each submission, while also identifying overlapping observations and comments, we reviewed each letter (and additional documentation when included) carefully. Some comments were straight-forward and often pointed out typographical and punctuation errors. These have been collected in one file and will be provided to the printer for incorporation in the 2013 edition of the Book of Praise. Many comments and questions submitted by the churches could be addressed by the Committee. On several matters that were raised by the churches, we sought the input of the expert advisors. As a result, in some cases the wording of the APV was maintained, while in other instances we agreed with the concerns raised and with the help of the advisors were able to formulate suggested changes. Although we cannot possibly begin to include all the details of this review and revision process, we would like to provide a bit of insight into the process. To this end, we include some examples as illustration.

1.3.4 Some examples

A few examples of instances where we considered the input by the churches but after careful consideration propose *not to change* the APV text. For example,

- a) Several churches wanted to return to the 1984 version of Psalm 23. It was felt that the addition of “ ’s ” after LORD (as a contraction of the verb “is”) makes it more difficult to sing.

We decided not to change it, because there are many well-known versions of Ps. 23 that include the “s”. But more importantly, the APV version is in line with the Hebrew text of the Psalm. The Psalm opens with the strong statement

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

sentence: The LORD is my Shepherd. In the 1984 version of Ps. 23 this is lost because the main verb of the opening sentence is “defends”. In the APV, the opening line now has two sentences and begins with confessing that the LORD is our Shepherd. As a result, the Committee decided to maintain the APV version.

- b) At times the rhyming of the Psalms has to make a choice with regard to an *exegetical* point. For example, in Ps. 36 we sing of a voice in the human heart that lures the wicked to his choice. The question is whether David knows this voice (as the APV has it) or whether the wicked hears this voice (1984 edition). Or, to give another example, in Ps. 127 the question is whether the LORD gives sleep to his beloved, or whether he gives his blessings while they are sleeping. The expert advice we received in both cases was that the version of the APV is defensible in light of the Hebrew. For this reason we decided to maintain the APV version.

1.3.5 Proposed final text of the 150 Psalms for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*:

No changes to the APV text

After careful examination and evaluation of the recommendations made by the churches, using the process that included the advice and input of various experts, the Committee proposes *not* to make any changes but to retain the text as it is presently in the APV.

What follows is a list of Psalms that were reviewed but left unchanged:

Ps. 1:1	Ps. 31:10,11	Ps.86:6	Ps.120:1
Ps. 3 (general)	Ps. 35:1	Ps.87:2	Ps.124 (general)
Ps. 5 (general)	Ps. 36:1	Ps.89:13	Ps. 127:2
Ps. 7:2.1	Ps. 47:2	Ps. 90 (general)	Ps. 133 (general)
Ps. 8:2.3	Ps. 49:1	Ps. 92:1	Ps. 137:4
Ps. 9:7.2	Ps. 56:4	Ps. 94:1	Ps. 139 (general)
Ps. 16:3	Ps.66:3, 5	Ps.102:9	Ps. 141:6
Ps. 22 (general)	Ps.68	Ps. 103:1	Ps. 144:6
Ps. 22:7	Ps.69:3	Ps. 104: 2, 8	Ps. 147:1
Ps. 23:1	Ps. 76:4	Ps. 119 (Hebrew characters)	

Changes to the APV text

In several instances the input from the churches helped us to have another look at a stanza or line, and this then resulted in a proposed change. We feel that these changes will enhance the Book of Praise. These changes were discussed with Dr. W. Helder, and we

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

are thankful for his insights and cooperation.

Ps. 8, stanza 4, lines 1 & 2

Not only did we receive questions about the change to “divine”, but we also received the comment that the proposed wording did not fit well with the tune (i.e., the word ‘lower’ was sung on a clearly ascending note sequence). After receiving expert advice it was decided to leave the word “divine” but to change the wording to fit the tune better.

We propose to change line 1 and 2 as follows:

Almost divine! So *you, O LORD, have* made him,
crowned *him with glory and as king* arrayed him.

Ps. 17, stanza 5

What began with a seemingly simple request to change the difficult-to-sing, ‘slushy-sounding’ words “share such treasure,” turned into a much deeper discussion involving the meaning and exegesis of the Hebrew text. With the help of several experts, a thorough investigation of the original text, and its rendition in English (and Dutch) bible translations and rhymed texts led us to the conclusion that indeed the original text is very difficult, and that the translation and interpretation of the text may lead to very different and irreconcilable outcomes.

After much consideration, and recognizing that ministers will continue to bring out the different options when they preach on this passage, we propose the following text:

They like a *lion crave their* prey.
Rise *up, O LORD, rise up to* show them
the *sword you* draw to *overthrow* them.
Now *with your* hand snatch *me* away
from those who *trust in earthly* treasure,
who *have in this life* their reward.
O *gorge them and their* offspring, LORD,
with bitter *fruits in fullest* measure.

Ps. 18, stanza 8, line 5

The word ‘cunning’ is used twice in this line.

We propose to change it to:

The *shrewd and crafty you outdo* in cunning

Ps. 19, stanza 1, line 1

Some churches felt that rendering the two syllables of ‘heav-en’ with a single note creates a mismatch with the preceding word ‘spacious’ and needlessly disrupts the rhythm. They suggested a

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

return to the 1984 version. However, the word “laud” in the 1984 version is not correct, since the Hebrew text speaks of “declaring”. The following change is proposed:

The *heavens* above declare

Ps. 20, stanza 2, line 3

Many commented on the word “unstinted” as a word that may be unfamiliar to the singer.

We propose changing the line to:

May songs in celebration chanted

Ps. 25, stanza 6

The first half of this stanza is somewhat obscure and not very close to Scripture. For one thing, in line 1 the word “sincerely” (once inserted as convenient substitute for the three syllables of “Jehovah”) may cause an unintended shift in emphasis, especially since “sincerely” is the last word in the line. In the second half, the person in line 5 may well call to mind a loud and successful businessman (“He will thrive, enjoy success”) rather than a humble believer.

We propose to revise this stanza as follows:

Who, *then*, serves the LORD and fears him?
God will *guide him* all his days,
teaching *him what path to follow*,
leading *him in righteous ways*.
Then will *he know happiness*,
and *his children God will favour*:
all the *land they will possess*
as their *heritage forever*.

Ps. 30, stanza 1, lines 3 & 4

This Psalm was reduced from 7 to 5 stanzas. As a result, a reference to David being healed (vs. 2), is now missing in the proposed version.

To correct this omission, we propose to change the first part of stanza 1 to:

LORD, yours all *praise and glory* be.
Out *of the depth* you *lifted* me;
you healed me *and you kept* my foes
from *gloating over* all *my woes*.

Ps. 44, stanza 1, lines 4 - 6

We received questions about the punctuation and propose to change the punctuation in lines 4 - 6 as follows:

You *drove out nations proud and bold*;
you *crushed them* with your *mighty hand*.

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

Your own you *planted*, made them flourish.

Ps. 57, stanza 3, lines 3 & 4.

Some felt that the word “wended” is not a common word.

We propose to change lines 3 & 4 to:

*Alarmed was I when foes against me banded
to set a snare, but to their great surprise*

Ps. 71, stanza two, line 6

It was pointed out that in Hebrew the words form a statement, rather than a wish.

We propose changing lines 5 and 6 to:

*Protect me from their power:
you are my strength and tower.*

Ps. 81, stanza 6

We looked at two elements in regards to this stanza. The first one is an exegetical question: The Hebrew text speaks of thunder.

However, in this stanza, is it indeed correct to connect it specifically to the event of the giving of the Law? The second element concerned the last line and whether the grammar can be improved. We sought and received input from our advisors.

We propose the following revision of this stanza:

*“In a thundercloud
I, the LORD, addressed you;
my support I vowed,
and you also saw
how at Meribah
I was there to test you.*

Ps. 81, stanza 11, line 6

In line 2 “Israel” is sung as two syllables. However, in line 6 it appears as three syllables. It was felt that this made for rather awkward and confusing singing.

We propose to change line 6 to:

truly their defender!

Ps. 89, stanza 10, line 2

It was felt that in the line “earth’s most exalted king, in fame surpassed by none” the words “earth’s most” do not sing easily because they contain too many consonants.

We propose to change the line to:

highest of earthly kings, in fame surpassed by none.

Ps. 89, stanza 10, line 6

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

We were asked whether the rhyming of lines 5 and 6 could be changed. We propose the following change:

will ever stand *secure* and *last as long as* heaven.

Ps. 89, stanza 12, line 5

Similar to the last lines of stanza 10, we propose to change line 5 in this stanza to:

And *like the moon, the faithful witness high in* heaven,

Ps. 93, stanza 3, line 2

The comment was made that “far mightier than” doesn’t sing very well.

We propose to change it as follows

more mighty *than the breakers* of the sea

Ps. 101, stanza 3, line 2

“The faithless and their deeds I hate sincerely...” The Psalm itself does not say that we hate the faithless, only that we hate their deeds.

We propose to change the line to:

All deeds of faithless men I hate sincerely.

Ps. 119, stanza 34, line 1

An example of an observation that the sequence of words within a line is not as natural as it should be . . . Can it be ‘smoothed-out’ a little?

We propose changing it to:

Forever fixed in heaven is your word;

Ps. 119, stanza 38, line 2

Along similar lines as described above: The words “all owing to” do not sing well.

We propose to change it to:

for all your precepts I have been observing.

Ps. 120, stanza 1, line 2

Scripture says: ‘I call on the Lord in my distress, and he answered me.’ The APV: “I seek the Lord in my affliction / and cry to him for my protection:”

We propose changing it to:

and *cry to him for his* protection:

Ps. 123, stanza 1, line 7

The text and music correlation in line 7 is open for improvement.

We propose:

so do our eyes look to our Master’s face

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

Ps. 136; stanza 10, line 1

Line 1 makes for awkward singing.

We propose to change it to:

Sihon of the Amorites,

Ps. 148, stanza 4, lines 4-6

Upon review, it was felt that line 5 in the APV contained so many individual words, that visually the line no longer reflects the succinct nature of the parallel melodic phrases.

We propose the following change:

*He raised his people's horn on high, (revised punctuation)
made Israel, his faithful nation,
the theme of praise and celebration.*

1.3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS regarding the text of the Psalms:

- a. That General Synod 2013 approve the proposed changes in the text of the APV described above.
- b. That General Synod 2013 declare the revision of the 150 Psalms to have been completed.
- c. That General Synod 2013 adopt the text of the Psalms as presented in the APV, along with the incorporated changes under a) as the definitive text of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*.

1.4 Revision of Current Hymns (Acts, Article 122)

1.4.1 Receiving Input

With respect to the hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, General Synod Burlington 2010 followed an approach similar to that of the Psalm section: It passed on to the SCBP for its consideration, the letters received from the churches. In many cases, these letters contained technical suggestions, recommendations, and concerns regarding the proposed revision to the hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.

In addition, the various decisions made by General Synod (Art. 122, 4.4.1 - 4.4.4) were implemented as reflected in APV Hymns 35, 61 and 78.

Subsequent to GS 2010, the Committee solicited feedback on both the Psalm and Hymn sections. In return it received letters from many churches, as well as some individuals, with suggestions regarding the text and the music notation of the hymns. These letters were all duly considered — with greater weight given to material received from churches — and recommendations were formulated.

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

To ensure that the Committee could propose sound recommendations to the churches in preparation for General Synod 2013, help was requested from some brothers and sisters who have expert knowledge of the English language. Not only was the Committee's synodically appointed language advisor, Dr. Karen Dieleman, asked for advice, but the Committee also sought the assistance of Dr. Benne Faber, Dr. William Helder, and Dr. Deanna Smid. The Committee has great appreciation for the helpful advice received.

1.4.2 How did we approach the input received on the hymns?

As we stated earlier in this report, the Committee divided itself into two sub-committees: One dealing with the Psalms and the other with the feedback received regarding the hymns. All findings and recommendations were discussed in the full Committee, and the proposals in this report are Committee proposals.

The hymn sub-committee quickly realized that the comments from the churches could be divided into "text-related" and "music-related" comments.

1.4.3 Proposed final text of the 85 Hymns for inclusion in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*:

Examples of no changes to the APV Hymn text

After careful examination and evaluation of the recommendations made by the churches, using the process that included the advice and input of various experts, there are occasions when the Committee proposes *not* to make any changes but rather proposes to retain the text as it is presently in the APV.

The Committee ensures the churches that every suggestion and comment was duly considered even if there may be no explicit evidence of it in what follows. If the Committee does not recommend a change be made to the APV text of a hymn, the church that made (sometimes even very lengthy) comments on a specific hymn should know that no comment or suggestion was quickly dismissed but honestly considered by the Committee and the advisors.

Some examples include:

Hymn 3

This hymn, *Te Deum*, was completely revised in 2010. Several churches made suggestions, none of which were convincing or considered to be improvements. One item warrants special mention: In st. 3, line 3, "Virgin" is capitalized (as it was in the 1984 BoP and other English translations of this Latin hymn). A concern was expressed for the danger of Mariolatry. However, it is proper to capitalize "Virgin" since it is a noun in place of a proper

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

noun. “The Virgin” functions as a proper noun identifying a particular person. “The virgin” would not be correct. A few examples may help to make this clear. Psalm 94:2 says, “Rise up, O Judge of the earth...” Please note that “Judge” is capitalized since it is a noun in place of the proper noun, God or LORD. Other examples are seen in Psalm 95 where God is called Rock and Maker. These are not examples of capitalization out of respect for God but capitalization for grammatical reasons (noun used as a proper noun). Then notice that in Psalm 94:22, God is said to have become the Psalmist’s fortress where the word is lower case since the LORD is said to be *like* a fortress rather than “Fortress.” A human example of this is “John the Baptist.” He is not described as a baptist (one who baptizes) but called “the Baptist” (the noun describing what he does is attributed to him as one of his names). Or consider that one of our prime minister’s names is “Mr. Prime Minister” and that our queen is properly designated as “the Queen.” In all these cases a noun is used in place of a proper noun and, hence, properly capitalized.

The Committee proposes to maintain the text as it is presently printed in the APV.

Hymn 17

Some churches suggested that “My soul does magnify” is better than “My soul will magnify” since the verb tense would, then, better reflect what Mary actually sang, for she was not saying that she would magnify the Lord in the future but that she was doing so in the present. The Committee, after having heard the English experts, was not convinced by this. In normal English, the auxiliary verb “will” does not necessarily refer to the future. In the context of this hymn, “My soul will magnify” can readily be taken to mean “My soul will now magnify.” That there was no objection to “will voice” and “will rejoice” in lines 4 and 5 indicates that no one has a problem interpreting these verbs as “will now voice” and “will now rejoice.”

The Committee proposes to maintain the text as it is presently printed in the APV.

Hymn 45

A few churches objected that this hymn refers to our Lord and Saviour simply with “Jesus.” However, we have long had hymns that refer to our Lord only by his personal name, Jesus (cf. Hy. 23, 28, 41, 43, 47, 55, 61, 68, 71, 82, and 84). Other objections to this song were addressed by GS 2010, Article 163.

The Committee proposes to maintain the text as it is presently printed in the APV.

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

Changes to the APV Hymn Text

Text-related observations and proposals regarding the APV

Hymns:

Hymn 8

Several churches opined that the “Amen” should be either included or omitted but not left optional. No church objected to the inclusion of the “Amen.”

The Committee proposes to make the singing of the “Amen” standard (i.e., remove brackets, asterisk, and the phrase “may be sung with Amen-cadence”).

Hymn 18

The suggestion was made that a way be found to bring the word “covenant” into the last line of st. 1. The Committee agreed.

The Committee proposes to alter “has kept the oath he swore to Abraham” to “has kept the covenant made with Abraham.”

Hymn 56

A church pointed out that whereas the hymn “Loving Shepherd” has “straight and narrow” it should be “strait and narrow”. Since the idea comes from Matthew 7:13, 14, where the KJV had “strait,” this will be corrected. This might be perceived as the introduction of an archaism, but it fits with the tenor of the hymn (cf. “suffer not” of the preceding line).

The Committee proposes to change “straight” to “strait.”

Hymn 58

Although the SCBP Report to General Synod 2010 recommended that this song not be included in the APV based on the initial feedback from the churches, General Synod 2010 did approve this hymn text for inclusion. Subsequently, several churches again objected to a possible Arminian/Baptist bias contained in the idea of parents presenting their children to the Lord. Although this aspect was addressed by GS 2010 (Art 135), the Committee believes it is good to alter the text to prevent future misunderstandings and to strengthen the overall content of this Hymn.

The Committee proposes a revised text as follows:

1. Our children, LORD, as covenant heirs,
are baptized in your name,
for they your steadfast promise share,
which you to us proclaim.

2. Such children Jesus did embrace
while dwelling here below;
to us and ours, O God of grace,

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

the same compassion show

3. As they grow up, keep them secure
from worldly snares, we pray;
O let them to the end endure
in every righteous way.

Hymn 77

Some churches wondered why this hymn was not updated and expressed the thought that the Committee had been inconsistent. The Committee agrees with this sentiment, and upon further research also noticed that other contemporary hymnals have updated the language of this song.

The Committee proposes that the text be revised to read:

1. We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you, we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.
2. We worship you, God of our fathers, we bless you;
through life's storm and tempest our Guide you have been.
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,
and with your help, O Lord, our battles we win.
3. With voices united our praises we offer;
our songs of thanksgiving to you we now raise.
Your strong arm will guide us, our God is beside us;
to you, our great Redeemer, fore'er be praise.

Hymn 78

It was pointed out that the lines of stanza 2 "Have you not seen all that is needful has been sent by his gracious ordaining?" are considered awkward. The Committee agreed and noted that with a small change in punctuation, the awkwardness can be easily alleviated.

The Committee proposes to change stanza 2, lines 3-4 to read:

Have you not seen? All that is needful has been
sent by his gracious ordaining.

- 1.4.4 **RECOMMENDATIONS regarding the text of the Hymns:**
 - a. That General Synod 2013 approve the proposed changes in the Hymn text of the APV described above.
 - b. That General Synod 2013 adopt the text of the Hymns as presented in the APV, along with the incorporated changes

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

under a) as the final text in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*.

1.5 Music Notation and Melodies for the Hymns

1.5.1 Background and Context

In order to understand the mandate which the SCBP received from General Synod 2010 regarding the melodies of the hymns, some historical background will be helpful: After the SCBP had submitted its main report to Synod by the end of 2009, the Committee followed this up with an additional letter to Synod (dated February 2010) with information regarding music notation. As a committee we have always understood that, as a rule, General Synods do not concern themselves with the technical matters and details related to musical notation as such (Synod Winnipeg 1989, Article 146); yet we wanted General Synod to be informed. In this letter the SCBP conveyed to Synod that it intended to make changes to the music notation of some hymns. It was explained to Synod that these changes included the removal of breath marks, the deletion of most fermatas, some changes in notation that would reflect a more original notation, and some changes in notes or note values. The *Song of Zechariah* (Hymn 14 in the 1984 edition) was mentioned as an example of a hymn that would be affected.

In addition, the SCBP informed Synod that it would like to introduce two new melodies to the hymn section of the Book of Praise: An additional (alternate) melody for the hymn *Christ has risen! Hallelujah* (Hymn 26 in the 1984 edition of the Book of Praise) and a new melody for the hymn *Come praise the Holy Spirit* (Hymn 37 in the 1984 edition). The new melody – called ‘Thornbury’ – was intended to replace the old melody. The rationale for including these melodies was explained in the letter. Since the Committee recognized that introducing new melodies to existing hymns in the hymn section is not a minor issue, the Committee specifically requested and received Synod’s permission to include these two new melodies.

In keeping with the decisions and instructions received from General Synod 2010 (*Acts*, Art. 123) the changes in the music notation and in particular hymn melodies were implemented. The two new melodies were included in the 2010 APV of the *Book of Praise* as Hymn 31A and Hymn 48 respectively.

1.5.2 Soliciting Feedback from the Churches

In May 2011 the Committee sent a letter to the churches with the reminder that feedback regarding the hymn melodies was to be submitted by May 1st, 2012. Most churches honoured this request

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

and submitted their input before that date. From a few churches feedback was received during May, June, and even July 2012. The SCBP has taken note of all submissions, including those that came late.

1.5.3 Evaluation of Feedback Received

The changes to the hymn melodies generated an enormous amount of feedback from the churches: More than half of the churches sent in a submission! Much of the feedback received was of a critical nature, especially the removal of the rests in some of the hymns (Hymn 2, 12, etc.). It became clear to the SCBP that some of the changes which were intended to be ‘improvements’ were not received as such by the churches in general.

In order to help the SCBP to evaluate the responses received and to seek direction for moving forward, the Committee decided to broaden its pool of advisors to include trained musicians from across Canada, in addition to the official advisor, br. Frank Ezinga (Langley). The Committee approached the following additional church musicians: br. James Teitsma (Winnipeg), and br. Martin Jongsma (Fergus). The SCBP is thankful for the helpful advice received from these three brothers. In what follows, the SCBP now presents its considerations and recommendations to Synod.

1.5.4 General Comments

By way of introduction the Committee would like to point out that in some cases the changes to hymn melodies were simply corrections of errors (example: Hymn 65, last line). In a number of other cases, however, the changes were inspired by an appreciation for the original musical notation. An example is the melody of Hymn 30 (*Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands*) which represents a notation that is more original than the melody which the churches had been singing from the 2007 Augment.

The SCBP included a number of these more original notations because they were considered beautiful and because it was expected that these melodies would enrich the ministry of praise in the churches. The Committee was convinced that, with some effort, the churches would be able to sing these original versions and learn to appreciate them over time. Judging by feedback received, this has indeed happened in a few congregations. However, in most churches the changes were not appreciated and in a number of churches no serious effort appears to have been made to introduce the changes.

Looking back over developments, the Committee now recognizes

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

that it had underestimated the challenges of trying to implement changes to well-known melodies. It is also recognized that what the Committee believed to be improvements, were not received as such by various church accompanists. As a result, some accompanists may have resisted and/or ignored the changes.

The Committee recognizes that melodies and musical notation should not be a cause of unrest or unhappiness in the churches. In the present situation the Committee feels that the best solution will be to revert to the previous versions of a number of hymns that were changed. Clearly, the majority of churches find the 'old' versions to be more singable. Unfortunately, this means that those congregations where the changes have been introduced will be asked to change back to the old version of the respective hymns.

1.5.5 Reinstating Previous Music Notation (Summary)

Having received feedback from the churches, and having received recommendations from our musical advisors, the SCBP proposes the following changes:

- Hymn 2 and 12: Reinstate 1984 notation (without breath marks)
- Hymn 18: Reinstate rests with one small exception (see below)
- Hymn 30: Revert to Augment version
- Hymn 37: Reinstate 1984 notation (without breath marks)
- Hymn 40: Reinstate fermatas at the end of lines 3 and 6.
- Hymn 47: Reinstate 1984 notation (without breath marks)
- Hymn 53: Reinstate fermatas at the end of lines 2, 4, and 9.

1.5.6 What about the breath marks?

A few churches and individuals have asked for the reinstatement of breath marks (commas at the end of the lines). The Committee recognizes the good intention behind this request: The congregation should have enough time to take a breath between the lines. However, having received advice from our musical advisors, the Committee is opposed to reinstating breath marks. The main problem with breath marks is that they can be interpreted in different ways: One accompanist may interpret a breath mark as a rest while another one may not do so. This can lead to confusion. The Committee has also taken into account that modern North American hymnals do not have breath marks.

The Committee feels that the concerns regarding breathing opportunities are addressed with the changes that have been proposed.

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

1.5.7 The one exception . . .

With respect to Hymn 18, the Committee was happy to see that the minor changes which have been applied to the melody (in lines 7, 9, and 10) have generally been accepted in the churches.

The same cannot be said about the removal of the rests. The Committee has recognized this and wanted to reinstate the rests. At the same time there were question marks about the peculiar pattern of rests in the 1984 notation (rests after lines 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9). The three musical advisors were requested to serve the Committee with recommendations. Having heard the advice, the Committee feels that some of the lines can be combined and sung without rests in between (lines 1-2, 3-4, 5-6). However, in the second half of the hymn the lines are longer and more breathing opportunity should be given.

The structure of the text (which consists of four parts: lines 1-2, 3-4, 5-7, 8-10) also needs to be taken into account.

After ample discussion the Committee came to the conclusion that the best solution will be to insert rests after lines 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. In effect, this represents only a minor change to the 1984 notation (the rest after line 5 is moved to the end of line 6).

1.5.8 Other issues re. music notation & melodies

In a number of cases suggestions were received to undo some of the smaller changes that were made in the 2010 APV edition. In addition, the Committee received requests or proposals to implement ‘new’ changes to the 2010 edition. Here is a brief summary of these requests, followed by the SCBP’s proposals.

Hymn 1:

A few churches suggested minor changes to rest values in this hymn. The Committee is not convinced that such changes are needed.

We propose no changes to this Hymn.

Hymn 42:

Several churches asked that the notation be reverted to the 1984 notation (using quarter notes instead of half notes, etc.).

In this case the Committee feels that the 2010 notation is better than the 1984 notation: The half notes suggest a somewhat slower tempo which is fitting for the content of this hymn.

We propose that the APV notation be retained.

Hymn 63

A few churches asked to go back to the 1972 notation (using quarter notes instead of half notes, etc.).

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

Considering that Hymn 63 is a rendering of the Lord's Prayer, which should not be rushed through, the Committee feels that the notation with half notes (which suggests a somewhat slower tempo) is the better choice. The current notation, which was introduced in 1984, has served the churches well.

We propose that the APV notation be retained.

Hymn 65

A few churches requested that the last line be changed back to the 1984 version of the hymn.

The Committee is opposed to doing this because the 1984 version was an error. We now have the correct version which is also found in other hymnals (e.g. the *CRC Grey Psalter Hymnal*, # 446).

We propose that the APV notation be retained.

Hymn 73

A few churches asked that rests or fermatas be added at the end of lines 2, 4, 6, and 8.

The Committee considers this a change in comparison to the 1984 version (which has breath marks at those places).

The 2010 version is line with other North American hymnals (e.g. the *CRC Grey Psalter Hymnal*, # 21). With the moderate tempo, the congregation will be able to sing the current version.

We propose that the APV notation be retained.

Hymn 74

Similar requests made as with Hymn 73 with similar considerations on the part of the Committee.

We propose that the APV notation be retained.

Hymn 77

One church commented that this hymn has too many dotted quarter notes. Our musical advisors were unanimous in recommending that the hymn should not be changed.

We propose that the APV notation be retained.

Hymn 78

A number of churches commented that this hymn has too many dotted quarter notes, and asked that the melody be "stabilized" by changing the dotted quarter notes in bar 3 of lines 1 and 2, and in bars 3 and 4 of line 3.

Although the Committee has no firm opinion either way, it was noted that such a change would bring us in line with other North American hymnals (e.g., *CRC Grey Psalter Hymnal*, # 253).

Another argument in favour of making the change would be the fact that this was also the version that was used in the 1967 Supplement.

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

We propose that the changes suggested above be implemented.

Hymn 83

Several churches asked that this notation be changed back to the notation of the 1984 edition (using quarter notes).

Considering that this is a hymn of thanksgiving which should not be rushed, the Committee recommends staying with the 'half note notation.'

We propose that the APV notation be retained.

1.5.9 What about the matter of “old text set to new melodies”?

Hymn 31A and/or 31B

The SCBP was instructed by Synod to solicit and evaluate feedback from the churches regarding the inclusion of the alternate melody for the hymn Christ has risen! Hallelujah! (Hymn 31A in the APV 2010 edition). With respect to this melody the feedback has been mixed. In some churches the new melody was received with appreciation. It was commented that the triumphant character of the melody fits the Easter message very well. Other churches were not in favour of the new melody. Several churches commented that they had no problem with the old melody (current 31B) and that they did not see a reason to change to a new melody. A few churches commented that they do not favour having two tunes for the same hymn. Several churches commented that the last line is difficult to sing because of the high F.

The Committee makes the following observations:

To begin with the last point, the Committee recognizes that the high F is problematic. This can be resolved, however, by lowering the entire melody by one semitone (from C to B notation). If that is done, the highest note will be an E which is still high but not impossibly high.

The SCBP believes that the melody of Hymn 31A is a beautiful melody which supports the Easter joy of the hymn in a very fitting manner. In those congregations where the melody has been introduced well, there was much positive response. The Committee is convinced that over time, also with the help of children who learn the melody at school, this will become a much-loved melody.

The question is whether both melodies should be retained in the Book of Praise, or whether a choice should be made between Hymn 31A and 31B.

Initially the Committee felt that the best way forward would be to keep both versions and allow the local churches to sing the one they prefer. While this might be the more diplomatic decision, the

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

Committee nevertheless feels that for the sake of consistency it is better to have one melody – the one which fits the message of the hymn best.

When comparing the two melodies, the Committee believes that the melody of Hymn 31A is the superior one for reasons already indicated.

It should also be pointed out that the melody of Hymn 31B is used twice in the Book of Praise: Not just for Hymn 31B but also for Hymn 47.

In other words, if Hymn 31B is deleted, we would still have the melody with Hymn 47.

We propose that the melody of Hymn 31A be retained as the melody for the hymn *Christ has risen! Hallelujah*.

We propose that Hymn 31A will become Hymn 31, and that Hymn 31B be deleted.

Hymn 48

The SCBP was instructed by Synod to solicit and evaluate feedback from the churches regarding the inclusion of the new ‘Thornbury’ melody which is used in the hymn *Come praise the Holy Spirit!*

Critical feedback was received from quite a number of churches. The most common comments were that the melody was difficult to learn, and that there are too many leaps and jumps in this melody. Other churches reported that the reception of this melody has been mixed: Some liked it, others did not. Some churches recommended going back to the old melody (Hymn 37 in the 1984 edition). Others recommended that an alternative melody be mentioned in a footnote (e.g., that this hymn can also be sung on the melody of Hymn 50).

The Committee is still convinced that there were good reasons to drop the old Dutch melody (*Ick wil mij gaen vertroosten*) which was previously used for this hymn. Though beautiful in itself, it was typically a Lent melody, fitting for the time leading up to Good Friday when the church remembers the suffering and death of our Lord.

Musicians will be able to explain that the character of what may be experienced intuitively as a sad melody, can actually be demonstrated by noting (a) that the dominant harmony is D minor, (b) that the melodic material has a downward motion for every line except the fifth, (c) that the melody does not go higher than the 7th (C) and never reaches the tonic D. All in all, this makes the former melody not such a fitting choice for this festive text.

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

In comparison, the Thornbury melody has a joyful character which fits the content of this Pentecost hymn well: The tune is written in D major, a key which is often used for songs of joy. Further, the melodic material is interesting also: In the first four lines the highest note is a B, in the next two lines it goes up to a C sharp, and in the last two lines the climax is reached by using the tonic D. The last line, with the longer note values, provides a majestic and triumphant ending to the hymn.

The objections raised against this hymn are not strong. Indeed, there are a number of leaps in the melody. But the same can be said about some of the Genevan Psalms (e.g., Psalm 107). The question is not whether there are “leaps” in the melody but whether such leaps make the hymn difficult to sing. The Committee believes that with a little effort this melody can be learned easily. The tune is also found in various North American hymnals (even twice in the *CRC Grey Psalter Hymnal*).

The music advisors to the Committee agreed that the ‘Thornbury’ melody should be retained as the melody for Hymn 48.

We propose that the ‘Thornbury’ melody be retained as the melody for Hymn 48: *Come praise the Holy Spirit*.

1.5.10 RECOMMENDATIONS regarding the musical notation and melodies of the Hymns:

That General Synod 2013 concur with the proposed changes in the musical notation and/or melodies of the Hymns presently in the APV as described above to be included in the 2013 definitive edition of the *Book of Praise*.

1.6 Future Direction re. Hymns

General Synod 2010 instructed the SCBP 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 (Art 142).

In this context it also instructed the SCBP upon request to make available to churches the songs which have previously been reviewed. (Art 142)

The Committee, faced with the heavy workload of the publication of the APV and dealing with the material for the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*, was unable to engage meaningfully with this part of its mandate. We also felt that given the active solicitation for thoughtful feedback on the APV Psalms and Hymns, it would not be wise to ‘burden’ the churches with yet another request even before the current task has been completed. However, the Committee wishes to stress that, once the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise* is completed, it looks forward to be able to devote more

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

time and energy on this part of its mandate in the future.

The Committee is thankful that two churches have spontaneously submitted recommendations for additional hymns. These letters are kept in the Committee's active files!

At this time, we remind the churches that we cannot accept submissions from individuals, but that members ought to channel their proposals through their Council/Consistory.

Further, we remind the churches that the recommended hymn title and text should also be accompanied by reasons why this hymn might be a worthwhile addition to our current hymn collection: What does it add? Where might it fit? Why is it a good choice for use in congregational worship?

In this context, we would appreciate it if the churches could provide some guidance as to: "what kind of hymn section is the ultimate goal". (More classic hymns? More contemporary hymns?)

Lastly, we stress that the proposed hymns must adhere to the *Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church*, adopted by General Synod Chatham 2004.

1.6.1 **RECOMMENDATION:** We propose that General Synod 2013 retain the matter of soliciting and evaluating hymns for future consideration as part of the Committee's mandate.

1.7 Publication of the *Book of Praise*

1.7.1 The 2010 APV

In keeping with its mandate received from General Synod 2012, an Authorized Provisional Version of the *Book of Praise* was published to reflect all changes in the psalm, hymn, and prose sections adopted by Synod Burlington 2010. This APV was made available for purchase at a discounted bulk rate, and has been in use in most, if not all, the churches as well as in many schools.

1.7.2 E-availability

Also in keeping with the mandate received from General Synod 2010, the revised and updated psalms were published on the Committee's website at www.bookofpraise.ca, hosted by Adverdea Web at no cost to the churches. A link to this website was placed on the website of the Canadian Reformed Churches (www.canrc.org). The latter also has the entire prose section on line.

Due to copyright issues there are four hymns that may not be posted publicly on the internet. They are: APV Hymn 38, 50, 66 and 79.

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

1.8 Harmonizations

General Synod 2010 received a letter from one of the churches in which disappointment was voiced regarding the removal of the four-part harmonization of the newly added hymns. You will recall that in the *Augment* these hymns had been printed with four-part harmonization to aid the accompanists who may not have had the music available; in the APV only the melodies have been retained.

As its response, Synod instructed the SCBP to take up the matter of the harmonisation of the hymns and also the Psalter and make a specific proposal to Synod 2013 as to how this can be addressed (Art 145).

The Committee has considered that many other denominations indeed provide four-part harmonisations for the Psalms and hymns (example: the *Psalter-Hymnal* that is used in the United Reformed Churches). The obvious advantage is that the music for accompanying is always available, whether for singing in church or singing at home.

There are, however, a number of complicating factors if we want to do the same for the *Book of Praise*.

With respect to the Psalm section:

First, since our Psalms usually have many more stanzas than the Psalm versions in other Psalters, we would have to drop the overleaf-notation approach and revert to printing the music only with the first stanza. Second, the size of the *Book of Praise* would increase significantly, which would also increase the price of the book. Third, and most important, it would be a massive undertaking: The Committee would have to collect harmonisations. This could mean: Getting copyright for existing harmonisations or asking composers to write new harmonisations. In this process, the Committee would have to make difficult choices regarding which harmonisations to use (Goudimel style or something more contemporary?) Harmonisations intended as accompaniment are not necessarily suited for singing. In the end, the choices made would invariably evoke criticism from organists and others who would have liked to see different harmonisations included. Finally, the Committee is not convinced that there is a strong desire among the churches in general to have four-part harmonisations for the Psalms. Most accompanists do have their collection of preludes and harmonisations.

With respect to the Hymn section:

The situation may be somewhat different as far as the hymns are concerned. The 2008 *Augment* included four-part harmonisations for the new hymns that were proposed. The Synod of 2010 adopted 19 of these hymns for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*. In order to maintain consistency throughout, the four-part harmonisations were removed and only the melodies of the new hymns were included in the hymn section.

It is therefore understandable that going back to a ‘melody only’ approach

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

was seen as a loss, especially by accompanists who had to retain their old copies of the Augment in order to be able to accompany the singing.

The Committee still believes that consistency throughout the collection is important. It would not be good to include four-part harmonisations for a limited number of hymns only.

This leads to the question: Would it be possible and advisable to include four-part harmonisations for all the hymns in the *Book of Praise*? The Committee has considered this option. The advantage would be: consistency throughout the hymn section. The disadvantage would be: inconsistency in the *Book of Praise* as a whole as we would be using one approach for the Psalms (melody only) and another one for the hymns (four part harmonies). In addition, just changing the hymn section would still have significant implications for the *Book of Praise* in terms of size and price. It would be a major undertaking to put a collection of four-part harmonisations together. The reality is that most accompanists have their preferred collections of preludes and harmonisations.

The Committee expects that once the Synod of 2013 has taken a final decision about the hymn section and its melodies, we will see new collections of hymn preludes and harmonisations for the 85 hymns being published.

The Committee has considered yet another option: To retain the current format of the *Book of Praise* and to produce a separate edition for accompanists. The *Book of Praise* would then be available in two editions: a pew edition and an accompaniment edition. While this would eliminate some of the draw-backs mentioned before (the pew edition could stay the way it is), the reality is that the market for the accompaniment edition is very small: If every church were to buy two or three copies of the accompaniment edition we could sell perhaps 150 copies. With such a small number the book will be very expensive. Many churches might decide against buying the book and simply continue using the existing collections of preludes.

In conclusion, although the Committee appreciates the suggestion to consider four-part harmonisations for the Psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise*, we believe that the implications are too daunting to be practical.

1.8.1 RECOMMENDATION AND REQUEST FOR

CONFIRMATION: The Committee proposes to continue with the approach that has been followed: The Psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise* are published in a *melody-only* format.

The Committee therefore requests Synod to confirm that this is the manner in which the Book of Praise is to be published.

1.9 The Matter of “Difficult” Tunes

Although General Synod 2010 did not directly instruct the SCBP to also

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

consider revising some of the “difficult tunes” in the Psalter, one of Synod’s considerations suggests that the request for revised melodies will be passed on to the SCBP for its consideration (Art 161).

In addition, a few churches expressed regret that the APV does not address the so-called difficult tunes such as e.g., Ps.11, 88 or 120. It is felt by some that maintaining all (and only) the Genevan melodies as we have them now may result in that some of these Psalms will be sung infrequently.

As Committee we did not deal with this concern in depth since, without specific instruction from Synod, it fell outside our mandate.

Yet we want to bring it to your attention. We note that the same matter was brought to General Synod Smithers 2007. This was in the context of our contact with the URCNA. (see Acts, Art 103 consideration 3.5, and Art 148, consideration 3.4). At that time, Synod considered that our churches have a strong preference for the Anglo-Genevan Psalter, but did not oppose alternate tunes.

To adequately address these concerns a more in depth and thorough discussion is required. At this point in time the Committee cannot do much more unless there is a clear mandate from Synod. If the matter needs to be discussed further it would be necessary to consider that the collection of 150 Genevan tunes forms a unit that has been carefully preserved not only in our *Book of Praise* but also in other “psalm books”, for example by our sister churches in the Netherlands as well as elsewhere. This collection is of great historical value and it would constitute a significant departure if we were to break this up.

Some of the other questions that would need to be answered include: What constitutes a difficult tune? Would alternate melodies also mean alternate rhymings? Do these alternate melodies have to follow the Genevan tradition?

1.10 Hymn Index with Scripture References

Synod instructed the SCBP to prepare a Scripture index for the hymns, to be included in the proposed Book of Praise for presentation to Synod 2013. (Art 164).

The index requested has been prepared as follows:

INDEX OF SCRIPTURAL ALLUSIONS

Old Testament

Exodus 20:1-17	Hy.11	Isaiah 9:2-7	Hy.19
Deuteronomy 5:1-21	Hy.11	Isaiah 40:1-5	Hy.15
Deuteronomy 32:1-43	Hy.12	Isaiah 40:28-31	Hy.13
Psalms 72:8-19	Hy.46	Isaiah 53	Hy.25
Psalms 72:18,19	Hy.10	Habakkuk 3	Hy.14
Psalms 90:1-6	Hy.54		

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

New Testament

Luke 1:46-55	Hy.17	Hebrews 1:3-4	Hy.38
Luke 1:68-79	Hy.18	Hebrews 4:14-16	Hy.38, 42
Luke 2:8-14	Hy.21	Hebrews 12:1-3	Hy.43
Luke 2:29-32	Hy.22	Hebrews 12:2	Hy.38
John 14:1-3,6	Hy.39	1 Timothy 3:16	Hy.24
Romans 3-5	Hy.28	2 Timothy 2:11-13	Hy.51
Romans 8:16-17,23-25	Hy.48	1 Peter 1:3-5	Hy.36
Romans 8:31-39	Hy.35	1 Peter 1:10-12	Hy.48
Revelation 21:1-8	Hy.73	1 John 3:1-3	Hy.72
Hebrews 1:3-4	Hy.38	Revelation 5:9-10	Hy.69
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1ff	Hy.74	Revelation 5:9-13	Hy.27
Galatians 5:18,22	Hy.48	Revelation 7:13-15	Hy.69
Ephesians 1:13	Hy.48		
Philippians 2:6-11	Hy.23		

1.10.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Committee proposes that General Synod 2013 approve this index for publication in the definitive 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*.

2.0 Printing and Distribution

2.1 Contract

Synod granted approval for contract renewal with Premier Printing Ltd. and directed the SCBP to report concerning this in their Report to Synod 2013 (Art 113).

The Committee continues to operate under contractual relationship with Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg MB. This contract was renewed in 2012, in accordance with Synod's instructions, for an additional five (5) years with an expiry date of February 28, 2017.

The standard contract was modified by the addition of making Premier responsible for the royalty payments due to Hope Publishing Co. These payments are due for each printing and currently are \$12.50 per 1000 copies printed.

Synod Carman 2013 does not need to provide instructions to renew the contract since the current contract will still be in force at the next General Synod.

2.2 Printing and Sales

**Printing and Sales details of the Book of Praise
during the period 10 July, 2006 to July, 2012**

Summary	BoP 2008	APV 2010
Available		
Inventory July 2009	3,319	

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

Printed Jan 2011	12,444
Printed Mar 2011	6,172
Printed April 2011	(coiled set) 50
Printed May 2011	6,199
Total Available	3,319 24,865
Shipped	
Shipped	2,757 21,648
Total Shipped	2,757 21,648
Defects	2 5
Inventory July 31 2012	560 3,212

2.3 Distribution

Distribution Details				
	Canada	Int'l	USA	Total
BoP 2008	1,713	1,017	27	2,757
Bookstore	857	1,017	1	1,875
Church	303		21	324
Misc	41		5	46
School	512			512
APV	21,012	363	273	21,648
Bookstore	8,042	350	8	8,400
Church	10,477		240	10,717
Misc	347	13	13	373
School	2,146		12	2,158
Total	22,725	1,380	300	24,405

2.4 Current Retail Price

The current retail price for the APV edition of the *Book of Praise* is \$24.00

2.5 Print Preparation for the 2013 Definitive Edition of the *Book of Praise*

In anticipation of the preparations for the definitive edition of the *Book of Praise*, the Committee is exploring various options that will give the book of the churches a fresh and contemporary appearance while maintaining appropriate dignity.

3.0 Fostering Awareness

When setting the mandate for the SCBP, General Synod 2010 encouraged the Committee to continue to promote awareness of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world as much as possible.

With gratitude the Committee notes expressions of interest in our *Book of Praise*. During the past three years, the Committee once again responded to various requests for information regarding the *Book of Praise*, and also dealt

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

with a number of requests to copy, in whole or in part the Psalms and Hymns as well as other parts of the *Book of Praise*. These requests originated from within as well as from outside of our federation of churches. The Committee is delighted that there remains considerable interest at home and abroad in the Anglo-Genevan Psalter. The Committee anticipates it will advertise the revised Psalm and Hymn sections more widely once these are finalized and have been adopted by the churches.

Given that the year 2012 was a double anniversary year, the Committee felt that this ought not to go unnoticed. With the encouragement of the Committee one of the members was actively and fully engaged in the preparation of Volume 61, No. 13 [June 22, 2012] issue of *Clarion* which was dedicated to the 450th anniversary of the Genevan Psalter as well as the 40th anniversary of our *Book of Praise*.

A second aspect of fostering awareness concerns the promotion of the authorized provisional *Book of Praise* among the churches as it was tested for a final edition.

On a number of occasions, the Committee wrote letters to all the churches to keep the churches informed about the progress of the work of the Committee. Letters were also prepared in response to *Letters to the Editor* in *Clarion*.

In addition, the Committee invited churches to interact with the revised psalms and hymns by providing feedback to the Committee. We thank the churches for their efforts and we are grateful for the tremendous response we received.

A third element in fostering awareness pertained specifically to the music of the Psalms and Hymns sections. General Synod encouraged the SCBP to develop and promote materials for the musical accompaniment in the worship services (Art 114).

In order to help the churches (and especially the accompanists) to make the transition to the changes in the music notation, br. Frank Ezinga (the SCBP's Synod-appointed music advisor) wrote an article for *Clarion* (May 6, 2011) in which he explained the rationale for the changes. The article also offered suggestions for introducing the changes in the local churches.

Here, too, the Committee made good use of the new APV and the changes it contains: In order to facilitate the understanding of the new melodies as well as the changes recommended for existing ones, br. Frank Ezinga, of the Church at Langley, was invited by the Committee to conduct six workshops across the country. These workshops were well-attended and appreciated by organists, teachers and others. The information presented was also made available on the Committee's website.

In addition, br. Ezinga provided preludes and harmonizations for those hymns that had been changed. These harmonizations were posted on the

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

SCBP website in PDF format.

More recently (June 2012) br. Ezinga has published a complete collection of preludes and harmonizations for the 85 hymns in the *Book of Praise*.

- 3.1 **RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee proposes to General Synod 2013 that the mandate to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the Book of Praise, among others in the English-speaking world, be continued.

4.0 Contact with the Australian Sister Churches (FRCA)

Given the close connection we as English-speaking Reformed churches have with our sister churches in Australia (FRCA), General Synod 2010 instructed the SCBP to continue to maintain good contact with the Australian Deputies for the *Book of Praise*. Among other things, this included to make available to the FRCA Deputies the provisional edition of the *Book of Praise*, and to give the Australian churches opportunity to comment on this version to the SCBP via Synod Armadale 2012.

In addition, Synod empowered the SCBP to incorporate helpful input of the Australian churches in the proposal for the finalized edition of the Book of Praise to be presented to Synod 2013, and instructed the Committee to report on these matters to Synod 2013 (Art 115).

On several occasions, the Committee was in contact with the Australian Deputies to convey the mandates given by General Synod Burlington: To make the APV available, and to explain the APV testing process as a way for churches to identify errors to be corrected prior to the publication of a definitive edition after General Synod Carman 2013. In line with Article 121 of GS 2010, we concluded that the same rules must apply to Australia and Canada. Therefore we wrote:

We greatly appreciate your continued interest in the use of the Book of Praise. We also appreciate your input as we prepare our submission to GS 2013. In light of the mandate we received from GS 2010, we have asked our churches to evaluate the APV for errors. As committee we do not envision a whole scale evaluation of all the Psalms and Hymns. To be consistent, our committee will treat any input of the Australian churches via your committee in a similar way. (Emphasis added)

We did not receive an official response to this, but the above paragraph was quoted in the report by the deputies to Synod Armadale followed by the following comment:

In the light of the statement of GS2010, deputies found this comment rather disappointing, and inconsistent with the intentions of GS2010. It does not appear likely, at this point, that the SCBP will be disposed to interact in any

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

substantial way with input from the Australian Churches.

We were saddened by this development. We tried to give the Australian churches the same opportunity as the Canadian Churches. In hindsight it is regrettable that GS 2010 was not more consistent in formulating the Articles 115 and 121.

In an effort to maintain our mandate with respect to the Australian churches, the Committee took the liberty of using the information gleaned from the Report the Australian Deputies prepared for their General Synod. Since the Report was available on-line, we reviewed and applied the comments regarding the Psalms and hymns in the same way we treated comments received from the Canadian and American Reformed churches. The Report prepared by the Australian Deputies contained critical remarks as well as expressions of appreciation.

Similarly, we used the Acts of General Synod Armadale 2012 published on-line also to glean what the Australian churches decided with respect to the *Book of Praise*.

We were grateful to learn that the 150 Psalms (2010 APV version) were adopted for use in the churches, and that the 65 Hymns (*Book of Praise* 2004 edition) with the changes made in the APV *Book of Praise* (2010) were adopted provisionally for use in the churches.

The 19 additional ‘augment hymns’ were not approved for use in the churches.

In addition, Synod Armadale instructed its Deputies to begin to investigate the options for publishing an Australian version of the Book of Praise which would include a modified prose section to reflect the Australian contents of some forms, the church order, etc.

Given that the Australian sister churches and our churches in North America share a strong bond not only through faith, but also through the English language, it is important to us that we continue to share the rich heritage we have in the Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the *Book of Praise*.

The Committee expresses the desire not only to continue, but also to improve the communication and collaboration between the Canadian Reformed Churches and its Australian sister churches.

4.1 **RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee proposes to General Synod 2013 that the mandate to maintain contact with our Australian

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

sister churches be continued.

5.0 Corporate Status

General Synod 2010 provided the SCBP with the mandate to maintain its corporate status (Art 116) on behalf of the churches.

The Committee is able to report that it indeed continues to maintain its status as a corporation. This implies that all necessary documents for this purpose have been kept up to-date, including filing the *Annual Income Tax* forms with Revenue Canada. This is a legal requirement even though the Committee does not operate under an annual budget, and does not generate an income or profit.

5.1 **RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee recommends to General Synod 2013 that the mandate to maintain the corporate status be continued for the purpose of protecting the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*.

6.0 Committee Address

6.1 Correspondence

Synod instructed the SCBP to maintain an address where correspondence from the churches may be sent. The Committee is to receive, scrutinize and evaluate the contents of such correspondence, and then to file this in the archives (Art 117).

6.2 Permanent Mailing Address

The Committee fulfills this aspect of its mandate by maintain as its permanent mailing address:

Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* (SCBP)
c/o Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary
110 West 27th Street
Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 5A1

6.3 eMail Address

In addition to the regular mailing address, correspondence may be sent electronically to: bookofpraise@canrc.org.

6.4 Archives

The Committee's central archives are maintained at our permanent address noted above, and are housed in the library of the Theological Seminary. Rev. C. Bosch continues to serve as archivist, and we thank him for his willingness to do this work.

6.5 Meetings and Place of Meeting

The Committee regularly met at the facilities of the Theological Seminary, our official address.

Since publishing the report to Synod Burlington 2010, the Committee

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

has met 13 times. In addition some of the evaluation work was divided among members of the Committee, meeting as sub-committees. All meetings were conducted in excellent harmony.

6.6 **RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee proposes to General Synod 2013 that matters pertaining to maintaining a permanent address (both in terms of physical location and electronically), interacting with and filing all items of correspondence, and scheduling meetings at regular intervals be retained in the Committee's mandate.

7.0 Committee Membership

7.1 Current Members (Art. 119)

Synod Burlington appointed committee members as follows:

D.G.J. Agema (2013)

A.J. de Visser (2019)

C.J. Nobels (2016)

C. van Halen-Faber (2013)

G. Ph. Van Popta (convener) (2016)

7.2 Pending Changes in Membership

Two of the Committee members, C. van Halen-Faber and D.G.J. Agema are due to complete their term in 2013.

A.J. de Visser has requested to be relieved from serving as a Committee member after completion of the term ending in 2013.

7.3 RECOMMENDATION re. Committee Membership: The

Committee proposes that its membership continue to be set at 5 members. The Committee will provide General Synod with recommendations for replacements in a separate letter.

7.4 Advisors (*Acts*, Art.119)

Synod Burlington appointed two (2) advisors:

F. Ezinga (music) and K. Dieleman (language)

On several occasions, and at the request of the Committee, the advisors provided helpful feedback and advice.

7.5 **RECOMMENDATION re. Advisors:** In view of the completion of the major revision of the Psalms and Hymns sections of the *Book of Praise* the Committee proposes to General Synod that the two advisors be released from their respective tasks and be thanked for their contributions in the revision process. It is understood that the Committee will seek expert advice whenever there is a need for it.

8.0 Common Song Book

General Synod 2010 instructed the SCBP to attempt to involve the Common Songbook Committee in its review of the provisional *Book of*

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

Praise (Art 146). The Committee reports that little has transpired in this regard.

8.1 Contacts

After Synod Burlington (CanRC) there was one combined meeting of the SCBP and the URC Psalter Hymnal committee. (In August 2012, we also had one unofficial round table discussion with the Rev. Rand Lankheet, chair of the URC committee.) Synod London, 2010 (URCNA), changed their committee's mandate and directed it to focus on a distinctively URC songbook rather than on a common songbook to be used by a future merged federation. Although we were invited to help review their work, our mandate did not direct us to engage in the work of helping to develop an exclusively URC songbook. At the same time, because the URC committee was now mandated to work on a URC songbook, they were unable to review the work we had done. The result is that there is now little common ground for us to work together in a fruitful manner. We have however exchanged information about each other's work: We were provided with a copy of the Hymn Proposal that went to their synod and we provided them with electronic access to our APV.

The Committee is saddened by this development since, over the years, we had accomplished much. As combined committees we had come to an understanding that we would work toward a Psalter that included all 150 Genevan Psalms plus another version of each Psalm. With regard to the hymn section we had together developed a list of over 200 acceptable hymns from which we would have selected those that were most suitable for the Common Songbook.

8.2 URCNA Synod Nyack, 2012

In a recent development, we read the following in a press release from the Nyack Synod: "In another display of ecumenical actions, Synod overwhelmingly accepted the invitation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to work together in their respective tasks of producing updated songbooks for their respective federation/denomination."

On the one hand, the URCNA has altered course and is now working together with the OPC in the production of a common OPC-URCNA songbook. And yet, on the other hand the Psalter Hymnal committee's report to Synod Nyack says: "Synod London mandated our Committee to 'be in dialogue with the Canadian Reformed Churches in a manner consistent with Phase 2 relations.' (Article 135.2) We have provided copies of the Hymn Proposal to the CanRC Book of Praise Committee and they have kindly provided us with pdf access to their Psalm selections as we engage

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

in our Psalm evaluation and selection process.”

- 8.3 **RECOMMENDATION:** As Committee we recommend maintaining contact between the committees but we do not know what that contact should look like. We await General Synod’s direction.

9.0 Other Matters

9.1 Forms of Subscription

The forms presently in the APV need to be corrected to reflect the approval given by General Synod 2010: Inadvertently, when editing the files, some errors resulted which were not discovered until after publication of the APV.

Below are the relevant paragraphs with the unauthorized additions underlined:

Form for use in the local congregation: “We, the undersigned If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the major assemblies for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.....”

CORRECTION: The words “and the classis,” are added in error and need be removed.

Form for use at Classis: “We, the undersigned If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately. Rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the major assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.....”

CORRECTION: The words “consistory and the,” are added in error and need be removed.

9.2 Forms for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

Form for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

Under “Assurance” (p. 594): There is some lingering RSV language in Lord’s Supper form: “He declared saying:”

The Committee proposes to delete the word “saying” to avoid doubling the verb.

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

One of the Churches contacted the SCBP with the request to consider deleting the sub-title "For the second service." The Committee reviewed this matter and concluded that this request deserves merit for the following reasons:

The two forms were included at the time that celebrating the Lord's Supper in both worship services was common practice in the churches. In today's practice, and to our knowledge, there are no churches that celebrate the Lord's Supper in both services (am and pm).

The addition "for the second service" never was a SCBP proposal nor did it come as a proposal from one of the churches. Rather, it was added via a motion from the floor of General Synod Smithville (1980), and can be found in Art.136 on page 104 of the Acts (see also consideration 4), as "for the afternoon service."

Later, Synod Cloverdale 1983 changed it into "for the second service" (art.145, page 97 of the Acts. See observations 6.e.1 and 6.e.2, as well as considerations E.1 and E.2).

The SCBP proposes to General Synod 2013 that the addition "For the second service" to the heading of the Abbreviated form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper be deleted.

Further, that the heading Profession of Faith be added after the "Prayer" and before the "Exhortation" on p. 598 to read as follows:

Profession of Faith

Let us now profess our catholic, undoubted Christian faith. (The Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)

9.2.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Committee recommends that General Synod instruct the Committee to make the amendments as described in a) and b) above.

9.3 Form for the Solemnization of Marriage

In the prayer of the marriage form (p. 617), 2nd par., we read: "We pray you, grant them your Holy Spirit....." Note that the expression "We pray you," is awkward: It is a leftover from "We pray thee." The Committee recommends that this be corrected to: "We pray that you will grant them your Holy Spirit..."

9.3.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Committee requests that General Synod concur with this correction.

9.4 Heidelberg Catechism

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

The introduction to the *Heidelberg Catechism* (p. 510) reads that the National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted the Heidelberg Catechism “as one of the *Three Forms of Unity*,...”.

Strictly speaking, this is not correct because the *Three Forms of Unity* did not exist at that time (the *Canons of Dort* were added in the 17th century).

9.4.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Committee proposes to change this part of the introduction to read as follows: “The National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted it as one the doctrinal standards of the Reformed churches...”

9.4.2 Question and Answer 115

The Committee proposes to change the second part of Answer 115 as follows:

“Second, so that we may constantly apply ourselves and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit to be renewed more and more after God’s image, until after this life we reach the goal of perfection.”

Explanation

Over the years we have received requests to change this part of Answer 115. Already some ten years ago we asked the advice of Dr. N.H. Gootjes and upon studying the matter he suggested that a change was warranted. At that time we did not propose a change but kept it on file for a time when a general overhaul of the Catechism would become more urgent. Now that we hope to publish a definitive new edition of the Book of Praise with the revised Psalms and additional Hymns, we feel the time is right to have a look at Answer 115 again. We asked Dr. J. VanVliet for his advice. He concurred with the suggestion to change. His thorough research has greatly helped us to formulate our proposal. Since the change is more than a linguistic change we will explain our proposal in greater detail.

A comparison of older editions of the Book of Praise shows that this part of Answer 115 has been changed several times. This is for a great part due to the fact that the original German is somewhat ambiguous.

- The 1972 edition reads: “Second, that we may constantly endeavour, and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, to be renewed more and more after the image of God...”
- The 1984 edition reads: “Second, that we may be zealous for good deeds and constantly pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that he may more and more renew us after God’s image...”

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

- Our current edition (1989) reads: “Second, so that, while praying to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may never stop striving to be renewed more and more after God’s image...”

The 1972 edition is very close to the original German. However, it is not clear what the “constantly endeavour” refers to. What are we to endeavour? The 1984 edition added the words “for good deeds.” It is clear now what we are to be zealous for. This addition also links this answer back to the previous Lord’s Days, the explanation of the Ten Commandments. However, the words “for good deeds” are not in the original German. As a result, General Synod 1989 deleted the words “for good deeds.” However, it did more than deleting these words, it also changed the sentence as a whole to the formulation we currently have. The current formulation is problematic for several reasons. It reverses the order of the main verbs from striving - praying to praying - striving, contrary to the original German. In addition, the current formulation makes the praying subordinate to the striving, whereas in the original they stand side by side. A third concern is that the current formulation may give the impression that to be renewed after God’s image is our work, because we have to strive to do it. As Lord’s Day 32 already stated, the Holy Spirit renews us and we pray to God that he may continue his work in us.

As the changes show, we are dealing with an answer that is not easy to translate. The original German places the verbs striving and praying next to each other but does not indicate what we have to strive for. The striving can indeed refer to doing good works (thus linking this answer back to the previous Lord’s Days), but it can also refer to being constant in praying (thus linking to the coming Lord’s Days about Prayer). Rather than interpreting what we have to strive for, the Committee felt that it is best to leave some of the original ambiguity. In making it reflexive (“apply ourselves”) the expression can stand on its own a bit more easily. This allows the preacher to bring out the nuances as he sees fit. From the proposed translation it is also clear that the Holy Spirit renews us. We are applying ourselves, not renewing ourselves.

9.4.3 RECOMMENDATION re. Q/A 115: The Committee proposes to change the second part of Answer 115 as follows: “Second, so that we may constantly apply ourselves and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit to be renewed more and

***Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1***

more after God's image, until after this life we reach the goal of perfection."

9.5 Belgic Confession

a) In the last line of the Preface (p.501): The word "symbolical" is derived from "symbol" as in "confession". However, this meaning of the word has become obsolete and obscure. Given the potential for confusion or misinterpretation, the Committee recommends to remove the word "symbolical". The final sentence in the Preface will then read:

"Its excellence as one of the best statements of Reformed doctrine has been generally recognized."

b) In the introduction (p. 501) the phrase "In the following year" needs to be deleted as it is historically wrong since it was the same year.

We propose to start the sentence with

"A copy was sent to King Philip II..."

c) In Article 3 (p.502): "... did not come by the impulse of man...": "impulse" needs to be changed to "will"; this is lingering RSV language. (See 2 Peter 1:21 in which "will" is used)

We propose that the text be changed to read:

We confess that this Word of God did not come by the will of man, but that

9.5.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Committee requests that General Synod concur with these three corrections.

9.6 Canons of Dort

Under the heading: Rejection of Errors (chapter I) on p. 563.

It reads "Having explained the true doctrine of the perseverance of the saints,"....

this is incorrect, since that is what comes after chapter V.

Instead, here it should read: "Having explained the true doctrine of divine election and reprobation...."

9.6.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Committee requests that General Synod concur with this correction.

9.7 Church Order

Article 59 (p.638) "engrafted" should be "incorporated" as this is in line with the decision made at GS Smithers, Art.172 (pp. 208 and 209).

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

9.7.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Committee requests that General Synod concur with this correction.

10.0 Copyright Implications

The Committee again wants to be clear that in adherence to copyright law, royalties will need to be paid for the use of four of the hymns proposed, i.e., APV numbers 38 50, 66 and 79.

These royalties amount to approximately \$0.125 per printed copy. This will apply also to future reprints of the *Book of Praise*. At each printing, the Publisher, Premier Printing Committee is directed to ensure that these costs are paid.

11.0 Suggested Mandate for the New Term (Summary)

The Committee requests Synod to give the Committee with a mandate that includes the following items:

1. To function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (Acts Cloverdale 1983, pp.297-299), under the original terms of the contract with Premier Printing Ltd., which was recently renewed for a period of five (5) years with an expiry date of February 28, 2017.
2. 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.
3. To foster an increased awareness of the existence of the Book of Praise among others in the English-speaking world.
4. To promote the development of materials for the musical accompaniment in the worship services.
5. To serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the Book of Praise can be directed and to maintain the archives. To evaluate and to scrutinize the contents of this correspondence.
6. To implement all Synod decisions regarding the contents of the Book of Praise.
7. To solicit from the churches suggestions for hymns and evaluate these for future consideration.
8. To maintain contact with our Australian sister churches.
9. To maintain contact with the Psalter Hymnal Committee of the URCNA.
10. To serve the following General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of this Synod.

12.0 Acknowledgements, Summary, and Conclusion

12.1 Acknowledgements

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

The Committee's mandate received from General Synod Burlington was wide in scope and therefore it was not unexpected that the Committee required expert advice in specific areas. The Committee is grateful that such advice was always provided when requested. The Committee therefore wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the contributions of the following individuals in their respective areas of expertise:

- Rev. Chris Bosch (Burlington ON), for serving as the archivist for the Committee.
- Dr. Karen Dieleman (Lansing, IL) Synod-appointed advisor for language-related issues
- Mr. Frank Ezinga (Langley, BC) Synod-appointed advisor for music-related issues.
- Mr. Bernie Harsevoort (Ancaster, ON) for creating and hosting the Committee's web page.

12.2 Summary

In presenting our Report to the churches for discussion at General Synod Burlington 2010, followed by this Report for discussion at General Synod Carman 2013, we have presented the churches with a completely new *Book of Praise*. The churches have taken an active role in the process by means of interacting with the Committee at each step of the way. The importance of both these Reports as a means of interacting with the churches via General Synods cannot be overstated: The *Book of Praise* belongs to the churches!

The revision of the *Book of Praise* is now completed. The churches have thoroughly tested the new Psalm rhyming and the feedback received has been mostly positive. Even with the final changes now before you, one can say that on the whole, the revised Psalms in essence have not changed from what was approved at Synod Burlington 2010: The few exceptions are placed before this General Synod for approval.

Also the hymn section has now been tested by the churches, and thorough review of the substantial feedback received resulted in a number of proposed adjustments now before you.

The Committee's task is to present to the churches the best possible version of an Anglo-Genevan Psalter and a hymn section that together make up the songs in the *Book of Praise*. As a Committee, we feel that we have done so.

The Committee is confident that the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise* now before you, consisting of the 150 Psalms (The *Anglo-Genevan Psalter*, 2013) and the 85 Hymns in the hymn section, is ready to be finalized for use in the worship service.

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1

The Committee wishes to emphasize that as churches we are blessed to have our *Book of Praise* in which the Anglo-Genevan Psalter is complemented by a well-balanced hymn section. It is our prayer that above all, now and in the future, our God be “enthroned on the praises of Israel” (Ps. 22:3) also through the use of the *Book of Praise*.

12.3 Conclusion

Having completed its mandate (*Acts GS 2010*, Art. 43) the Committee hereby submits to the churches here at the General Synod 2013 the revised *Book of Praise*.

As Committee we acknowledge our deep gratitude and praise to the LORD: He provided all that was needed for the Committee to complete the challenging but nevertheless beautiful task.

The Committee is unanimous when it recommends that General Synod Carman 2013 adopt for use in the worship service:

1. The proposed text of the 150 Psalms of the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter*. (The APV with changes outlined in this report)
2. The proposed collection of 85 Hymns (The APV with changes outlined in this report)
3. The remainder of the *Book of Praise* (Prose Section) as already adopted with the exception of any changes included in this report report)
4. The Committee recommends that General Synod:
 - a. authorize the Committee to publish the new edition of the *Book of Praise* containing the revised *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* and the hymns adopted by General Synod as outlined above together with previously approved prose sections.
 - b. direct the churches that the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise* is the Authorized version for use by the churches in the worship services.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Douwe G.J. Agema
Arjan de Visser
Christiaan J. Nobels, secretary/treasurer
Christine van Halen-Faber
George Ph.van Popta, chairman