

APPENDIX III

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK OF PRAISE

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD LINCOLN 1992

Esteemed brothers,

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* is pleased to submit a report on the activities in which it has been engaged in fulfilling the mandate received from the General Synod of Winnipeg 1989.

Before reporting on the way the committee has functioned, we wish to take this opportunity to honour the memory of one of our fellow members, brother John G. Van Huisstede, whom the Lord unexpectedly took to Himself on April 23, 1990. Having been appointed by the General Synods held in 1980, 1983, 1986, and 1989, brother Van Huisstede served on the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* for almost a decade. Always deeply interested in any effort to improve congregational singing in our midst, he for many years used his musical talents for the benefit of the churches. We thank the Lord for the contribution which brother Van Huisstede was enabled to make.

1. PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

Since the number of copies printed in 1987 has almost been depleted, Premier Printing Ltd. has been asked to begin preparations for a third printing. In spite of the possible short-term inconvenience, the committee decided that in the present circumstances it would be best to postpone this printing until immediately after Synod 1992. Any changes adopted by Synod can then be included without delay in what is likely to be the long-awaited complete and definitive edition.

2. RENEWAL OF CONTRACT

In keeping with the regulations adopted by Synod Cloverdale 1983, the committee's contract with Premier Printing Ltd. was renewed in 1990 for another five-year period, i.e., until February 1995.

3. CORPORATE STATUS

As instructed by Synod, the committee has maintained its status as a corporation (516455 Ontario Ltd.) in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters pertaining to the *Book of Praise*.

4. PUBLICITY

The committee continues to respond to the frequent inquiries it receives concerning the *Book of Praise* and to deal with requests for the use of copyright material.

5. HARMONIZATIONS

In connection with the committee's mandate to stimulate interest in the possible publication of a book of harmonizations intended to facilitate the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world, it can be reported that some initial indications of such interest have been received from a party potentially able to undertake such a venture.

6. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO THE BELGIC CONFESSION

Synod 1989 charged the committee with the task of completing the addition of Scripture references to the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, and the Liturgical Forms (see Art. 60; cf. p. 190). Such references already appear in the margin of the Canons of Dort (as adopted by the same Synod) and of the Liturgical Forms (as adopted previously). The committee has now fulfilled its man-

date by adding Scripture references in footnote form at the end of each article of the Belgic Confession. The use of footnotes is necessary since the references are too numerous to be placed in the margin. The *Gereformeerd Kerkboek* of our sister churches in the Netherlands served as our general model. (See Appendix A.)

We further propose that in the preface to the final edition of the *Book of Praise* as a whole it be pointed out that the added Scripture references do not form an integral part of the Confessions.

7. NICENE CREED

A linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed has now been completed. In this connection the committee wishes to acknowledge the advice and assistance of Dr. N.H. Gootjes. The proposed version is hereby presented to Synod for its consideration. (See Appendix B.)

8. PREFACE TO CREEDS

In accordance with what Synod 1989 specified in Art. 60 (cf. p. 190), the prefaces to the Creeds and Confessions have been reviewed and, where necessary, updated and improved. (See Appendix C.)

9. MATERIAL ADOPTED BY SYNOD 1989

The committee was instructed to insert into the *Book of Praise* the final versions of the Creeds, Confessions, and the Church Order, as adopted by Synod 1989. Since the next printing of the *Book of Praise* is scheduled to appear right after Synod 1992 (see point 1, above), this material has not been inserted as yet. It can therefore be included in the new printing along with any final changes to be adopted by Synod 1992.

10. ALTERNATE MELODY FOR HYMN 1A

Synod 1989 instructed the committee "to make the new melody with the 'new text' [of the Apostles' Creed] by br. D. Zwart available to the churches and evaluate any response from the churches" (Art. 145.D.2.j). This new melody, along with a harmonization also prepared by Mr. Zwart, was mailed out in December 1989. (As a matter of courtesy, a copy was also sent to the Deputies for the Church Book of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia for their information.) August 31, 1991, was set as the deadline for reactions from the churches.

We hereby report to Synod that all the churches which have submitted a response are unanimous in their view that the Zwart melody should not be inserted in the *Book of Praise*. It may further be concluded from the comments received that the churches also see no need for any other alternate tune. (The above-mentioned Australian deputies as well as the Australian churches which reported to them expressed the same opinions.)

Those persons who submitted other or revised melodies for Hymn 1A were informed that the mandate given to the committee by Synod 1989 in this respect was limited to making the Zwart melody available and evaluating the response of the churches.

11. FUTURE REVISION

If a linguistically revised Nicene Creed is adopted and the other proposals affecting the contents of the *Book of Praise* are also accepted, it can be expected that the edition to be printed after Synod 1992 will be the definitive version for some time to come. Whereas it is recognized that perfection has not been reached and that proposals for change and requests for improvement will therefore continue to be submitted, the committee recommends that a policy be established in this regard, namely, that synods distinguish between (a) changes, additions, or corrections which must be inserted as soon as possible or can be inserted without caus-

ing any inconvenience for those using the *Book of Praise* and (b) changes or additions which are to be collected until such time when a synod will decide to replace the present *Book of Praise* with a completely new or thoroughly revised edition.

Since, in keeping with synod decisions, the music printed in the *Book of Praise* is not subject to alteration until that time, it should be mentioned that in the present situation a three-person committee can adequately deal with the mandate proposed below and that the additional appointment of a musical expert is therefore not required at this stage.

12. FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to any recommendations made above, we propose to Synod

- a. that the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise be continued and that the size of the committee be kept at three members;
- b. that this committee be given the mandate
 - i. to function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (see 1983 Acts, pp. 297-99);
 - ii. 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*;
 - iii. to implement all synod decisions regarding the contents of the *Book of Praise*;
 - iv. to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others and to promote the availability of a book of harmonizations facilitating the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world;
 - v. to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed

Respectively submitted,

J. DeJong
W. Helder (convener/reporter)
M. Kampen

April, 1992

APPENDIX B

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all ages,
God of God, Light of Light,
true God of true God,
begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father,
Through Him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation,
He came down from heaven;
by the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate of the virgin Mary and was made man.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried.
On the third days He rose again,
according to the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
He with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.

And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

APPENDIX C

REVISED PREFACES TO THE ECUMENICAL CREEDS

THE APOSTLES' CREED

This creed is called the Apostles' Creed, not because it was written by the apostles themselves, but because it contains a brief summary of their teachings. It sets forth their doctrine, as has been said, "in sublime simplicity, in unsurpassable brevity, in beautiful order, and with liturgical solemnity." The Apostles' Creed is based on the creed used in Rome around 400 A.D., which in turn goes back another two hundred years. It is typical of the creeds used in the western part of the Roman empire.

THE NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed, also called the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian Church, in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism. These heresies concerned the doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ and were refuted at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.). Yet it was not this council but the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) which adopted the Nicene Creed. This Council incorporated into its creed various formulations from the decisions of Nicea and expanded the confessions concerning the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed is typical of the creeds used in the eastern part of the Roman empire. Both the Eastern and Western church held it in honour, although with one important difference. The Western church included the phrase "and the Son" (known as the *Filioque*) in the article on the procession of the Holy Spirit, a phrase which to this day is repudiated by the Eastern church.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

This creed is named after Athanasius (293-373 A.D.), the champion of orthodoxy over against Arian attacks on the doctrine of the Trinity. Although Athanasius did not write this creed and it is improperly called after him, the name persists because until the seventeenth century it was commonly ascribed to him. It is also called the *Quicumque*, this being its opening word in the Latin original. Apart from the opening and closing sentences, it consists of two sections, the first setting forth the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity (3-28), and the second dealing with the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning the two natures (29-43). The teachings of Augustine (354-430 A.D.) in particular form the background to the Christological section. The creed itself appears for the first time in the first half of the sixth century, but the author is unknown. It is of Western origin, and is not recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Churches.