

APPENDIX IV

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise Report to General Synod Abbotsford, 1995

Esteemed brothers,

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* hereby submits its report on its activities in regard to the mandate given to it by General Synod Lincoln 1992.

1. Printing and Distribution

A new printing of the revised edition appeared in the spring of 1993. This edition incorporated the changes of Synod 1989 and Synod 1992. Unfortunately, a few typographical errors slipped in which must be corrected in a future printing. Generally, however, this revised printing is a marked improvement over the previous printing.

The errors to be corrected concern the Athanasian Creed:

- a. Line 9 of the preface: change 43 to 41.
- b. correct the next sentence as follows:

The teachings of Augustine (354-430 AD) in particular form the background to the section on the Trinity, and the decision of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) forms the background to the Christological section.

- c. In Art. 22, change "nor begotten" to "but begotten"

2. Renewal of Contract

Following the mandate of Synod Cloverdale 1983, our Committee has taken the necessary steps to renew the contract with Premier Printing in February 1995. Up to this point the printer has done an excellent job to provide us with a good product at a reasonable price, especially considering the average cost of this material in today's market.

3. Corporate Status

The Committee has maintained its status as a corporation, and all necessary documents for this purpose have been kept up to date.

4. Publicity

The Committee continues to deal with various requests for information regarding the *Book of Praise* on a regular basis. We have also extended permission to various individuals and groups to copy our material, as long as they are not using this material for commercial purposes.

5. Mandate

With respect to the mandate we received from Synod 1992 we may report the following:

- a. General preface

The general preface has been updated and now appears in the latest printing to the revised edition of the *Book of Praise*.

- b. Introduction: Church Order

The Committee has prepared an introduction to the church order, which is to be found in Appendix 1 of our report. The arrangement of this introduction follows the pattern of the introduction to the creeds and confessions.

- c. Preface: Canons of Dort

The Committee has prepared a linguistically updated version of the preface to the Canons of Dort, (see Appendix 2). However, the Committee is hesitant

about the inclusion of this material in the *Book of Praise*. The historical preface does not belong with the text of the creed itself, and had no authoritative status. Moreover, the contents are not readily understandable to one who is not familiar with the historical context in which the Canons of Dort were written. The Committee approached the professor of Dogmatology at the Theological College for his advice on this matter. His remarks are included with the Preface (see Appendix 2 a). On the basis of his advice, we recommend that Synod refrain from including this and other prefaces in the *Book of Praise*. The prefaces could eventually be published through other channels in a more scholarly edition of the creeds.

d. Preface: Heidelberg Catechism

The Committee has also included an updated version of the preface to the Heidelberg Catechism, (see Appendix 3). This version was originally submitted to Synod 1974. For the reasons cited above, we would argue against including this preface in the *Book of Praise*.

e. Revision of the Nicene Creed

In accordance with the mandate of Synod 1992, the Committee has reviewed and reworked the revision to the Nicene Creed. The final form of the proposed revision is included at the end of this report (see Appendix 4). We have solicited the help of the

Professor of Dogmatology at the Theological College, and he has passed on to us his remarks concerning the linguistic changes made in the creed, (see Appendix 4a) In some instances, we have preferred alternative approaches, and we have also attached our reasons for this, (Appendix 4b).

f. Evaluation of Melodies of the Creed

The Committee solicited the help of three musical experts in forming an opinion concerning the melodies to the Apostles' Creed. The melodies were sent to Prof. Jan Overduin, professor of Music at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario; Dr. Emily Brink, professor of music and worship at Calvin College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Drs. Jan Smelik, a doctoral candidate associated with the Center for Liturgical Sciences at the University of Groningen, in the Netherlands. All of these people are outside of our immediate community, and thus were able to give an impartial judgment of all the melodies sent to them.

The Committee offers the following summary of their response:

a. Schoof Melody

The Schoof melody is inadequate on technical grounds and therefore ought not to be included in the church book. All of our musical advisers pointed out that there were serious problems with this melody. Much work would need to be done in order to make it a workable melody for congregational singing.

b. Teitsma 'adaptation'

Musically, this melody received some good reviews, although these were not unanimous. But the copyright problems associated with this rendition make it impossible to proceed with this melody. The Committee contacted Mr. M.M. DeGroot, a former member of the Publication Committee, who now owns the copyright to the Schouten melody. In his response to our queries, he made it clear that fundamental changes to the text of the Schouten melody of the kind proposed by Br. Teitsma would be a breach of copyright.

c. Schouten melody

The remarks on this melody indicate that there are good reasons for retaining it in the church book. One of the musical advisers suggested not to include this melody in the *Book of Praise* on the grounds that it had too much of an artificial flavour. However, the other advisers were rather favourable towards it.

d. Zwart melody

The responses on this melody indicate that it is suitable for use in congregational singing. However, since there was some difference of opinion among the advisers on the over-all suitability of this melody, the Committee cannot give a wholesale endorsement to its inclusion in the church book. One of the advisers suggested giving the melody a "test-period" by placing it in a book outside the scope of an ecclesiastically adopted hymnal.

e. Other possibilities

The Committee considers it worthwhile to pass on other possibilities suggested in the advice of the musical experts. One advisor was emphatic in stating that the Zwart melody should not be the only version of the Creed in the church book. Another gave a strong recommendation to the version in the church book of Martin Bucer in Strasbourg 1539. This rendition of the creed corresponds in form with the Genevan tunes, since it belongs to the same time period. We have included this melody in our report (See Appendix 5) and would recommend that Synod give serious consideration to adopt this version as an alternate melody to the present Hymn 1A. Some work would need to be done to fit the setting to the English text of the creed.

g. Questions of Mr. L. VanZandwyk

The Committee also solicited the help of Dr. N.H. Gootjes with regard to the questions raised by Mr. L. VanZandwyk. He noted the following:

- i. Br. VanZandwyk wants to use the term "power" in Canons II/3 and Canons II/4. In both places the Latin text reads: *valoris et pretii*. Here *valor* means "value" in the sense of "to be powerful, to be strong, to avail, (cf. *valeo*, to be strong). Hence the nuance of "power" is implicit in this word.
- ii. There is no indication that the Christian Reformed translation is responsible for the rendition in our church book. It is more likely that the revisers simply worked with the Latin text as a further elucidation of what was meant by the Dutch text.
- iii. There are many other so-called pleonasms in the Canons of Dort. An abundant use of pleonasms forms part of the 17th Century prose style. See, for example, Canons II/5 (*promiscue et indiscriminatim; annuntiarum et proponi*), II/6 (*defectu vel insufficientia*) and II/7 (*liberantur ac servantur*).
- iv. The Latin term in Answer 17 of the Heidelberg Catechism and in Article 19 B.C. is *potentia* (Fr.: puissance; Gr.: Kraft). This carries a different connotation than the Latin *valor*.

On the basis of these considerations, we recommend that the emendations proposed by br. VanZandwyk not be adopted in the *Book of Praise*. The suggestions of br. VanZandwyk indicate that he has made no examination of the confessions in their original languages, and therefore they lack sufficient credibility to be incorporated in the *Book of Praise*. In this regard, the Committee assumes that the consistent viewpoint of our Synods occupied with revisions has been to restrict linguistic changes to those strictly necessary, and to honour the original texts as much as possible.

6. Future Revision

If the Synod can adopt the changes as we have proposed them, then there will be a need for a new printing incorporating the changes of Synod 1995. Once this printing has been issued, it should serve the churches for some time to come.

At the same time, the Committee feels that improvements are always necessary, and these should be promoted. We propose that the Committee keep a running file of possible improvements to all sections of the *Book of Praise*. Particularly if the churches adopt a new Bible translation to be recommended for use by the churches, the *Book of Praise* will need to be substantially modified to reflect this change.

At present we do not see the need for a new edition. However, the matter of more substantial changes and improvements should be left open, so that the churches can continue to suggest ways and means to improve our congregational singing. Improvements of some of the poetry of the present psalm and hymn rhymings should be considered for a new edition. Also, the Committee has received several requests for the possible inclusion of more hymns. The Committee proposes that the consideration of possible improvements become part of its mandate.

7. Further Recommendations

Pursuant to this approach we propose above we would make the following recommendations:

- a. that the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* be continued and that the size of the Committee be kept to four members. We propose the appointment of one member with talents in the musical area, in order to work with suggested changes and improvements re the Psalm and Hymn section. (Note: Dr. W. Helder has indicated that, considering he has served on the Committee for about twenty-five years, he finds it appropriate to step down from the Committee).
- b. that the Committee be given the mandate:
 - i. to function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (Cf. *Acts*, pp. 297-299).
 - 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 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;
 - iv. to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed.

Respectfully submitted
Dr. J. De Jong (reporter)
Dr. W. Helder (convener)
Mr. M. Kampen
Rev. G. Nederveen
October, 1994

Though General Synod decided not include the appendices to the Reports, the following appendices have been added because they form an integral part of the Report.

A. Proposed Text for the Nicene Creed (Linguistic revision)

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 and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man.² He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and He arose on the third day,³ in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; 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; with the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified;⁴ He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in⁵ one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge⁶ one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.⁷

Amen.

B. Report for a linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed, for the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise, submitted by N.H. Gootjes

1. General Remarks Concerning the Text of this Creed

The creed which we now call 'Nicene Creed' is the creed decided upon by the Council of Constantinople, 381.¹ The original text is in Greek, it can be found in J.N.D. Kelly's book *Early Christian Creeds*, pp. 297ff. with a careful translation in English. The translation in Kelly differs in a number of details from the text in our *Book of Praise*. This English text goes back to a Latin text used in the liturgy of the Mass.²

Your committee has to make a general decision as to what kind of version it wants to present to Synod. Generally speaking, three avenues are open to you:

- a. To update the version in the *Book of Praise* in today's English, without considering the original Greek text;
- b. To translate the original text as literally as possible, without taking into consideration the history of this creed (including the English translation in the *Book of Praise*);
- c. To translate the original text, but not in a rigid way, making allowances for English usage and theological development.

The disadvantage of the first alternative is that the text will grow away from its roots if the original text is not considered. The second alternative will end up in a scholarly correct rendering (see e.g. the translation in Kelly) which may not be fitting for a congregation today confessing God and his work for us. The third alternative seems to be the best and is, in fact, in agreement with the way the Forms of Unity have been updated in the 1980s. If you opt for this route it means that it should be argued case by case what version is most satisfactory.

Following this approach I present the following translation for your consideration. The numbers inserted in the text correspond with explanations following the text.

2. Translation

We believe (1) in one God, the Father almighty, Maker (2) of heaven and earth, of (3) all things visible and invisible.

We believe (4) in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from (5) the Father before all ages (6) [(7)], Light from Light, true (8) God from true (8) God; begotten, not made; [(9)] of one substance with the Father; through Him (10) all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation He (11) came down from heaven;
by (12) the Holy Spirit He became (13) incarnate of (12) the virgin Mary and was made man;

He (11) was crucified (14) for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried;

on (15) the third day He arose (16) according to the Scriptures;

He (15) ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father;

He (15) will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead;

His (15) kingdom will have no end.

We believe (4) in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life;

He proceeds from the Father and the Son (17);

He is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son (18); He spoke through (19) the prophets.

We believe (4) in (20) one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We confess (21) one baptism for the forgiveness (22) of sins.

We look forward (23) to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming world (24).

Amen.

3. Explanation

1. We believe. The Greek text has the plural. The majority of the Eastern Creeds use the plural, rather than the singular in the Western Creeds. The singular "I believe" in our version of the Nicene Creed is an adaptation of the Nicene Creed to the Apostles' Creed. There can, of course, be no objection against retaining the expression from the *Book of Praise*: "I believe." I am, however, in favour of following the original form: "We believe." This underlines that the personal and the communal aspect of faith complement one another. With the Apostles' Creed we express that I personally am committed to this faith. With the Nicene Creed we express that we share this faith with the catholic church.
2. Maker. The *Book of Praise* has in the Apostles' Creed "Creator" but in the Nicene Creed it has "Maker." This is a correct rendering of the Greek text and can be retained.
3. The Greek does not have "and" here. *Te* should not be translated as "and," it forms part of the parallel, *oratoon te kai aoratoon* 'of visible as well as invisible things'.
4. The Greek text has "We believe" only in the first line, and it is nowhere repeated. In fact, most of it, up to baptism, is one long sentence. Such long sentences are possible in Greek, also because the meaning is indicated in the repetition of the accusative case. In English, however, they are awkward, and more difficult to understand. In the version of the *Book of Praise* the verb is added to the articles on the Spirit and the church. It is, therefore, inconsistent that 'we believe' is not added to the confession of the Son. If "We believe" is added here, "and" could be deleted.

5. "From" replaces "of" four times in the *Book of Praise*. This is closer to the Greek text (*ek*). Kelly uses in all instances "from," the New International Consultation Text has "of" once and "from" three times. Is "from" not better English?
6. Ages. The Greek word *aeon* can be translated in a temporal sense (age) as well as in a local sense (world). The meaning of the plural "worlds" is difficult to understand in this context, and the obvious meaning of the plural is "ages."
7. God from God. These words are missing in the Greek original, they have been added later to the Latin version. Since these words are repeated in "true God from true God" this later addition does not contribute anything substantial and the original text can be restored.
8. True. The Greek word *alethinous* does not mean "very" but "true." The translation "very" may be a case of scholarly Latinized English, derived from the Latin *verum*. But in today's English *verum* does not mean "very" but "true."
9. Being (of one substance). The Greek does not have a participle. I would prefer to omit "being" if that is possible in English.
10. Through Him. Two remarks: a) "through" is closer to the Greek *dia* than "by" (*hupo*). b) I would not translate this as an independent sentence: "Through Him..." since it is connected with the preceding phrases as part of the proofs for the Son's full divinity.
11. He. The Greek does not have a full stop after "made"; the sentence continues. If one wants to stay close to the Greek text the translation could read: ... through Whom all things were made; who for us man... I follow the suggestion of the New International Consultation Text to begin a new sentence here.
12. By... of. Actually, the Greek has only one preposition: *ek*: "He became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary," see Kelly. This could give the impression that the Holy Spirit is the Father of Jesus Christ. The proposed translation avoids this impression.
13. Became incarnate. This is a better rendering of the aorist than the usual: "He was incarnate."
14. Crucified. The *Book of Praise* has "was crucified *also*." The word *te*, however, should be read in connection with *kai pathonta*: He was crucified... as well as He suffered (the construction is the same as in nr. 3). If the redundant "also" is dropped the line reads better, too.
15. On. The Greek connects the sentences with repeated *kai*, "and," see the translation in Kelly. This sounds awkward in English.
16. Arose. The word "again" seems to imply that Jesus Christ had risen before this. The Greek verb does not convey the notion of "again." The word can be omitted here, just as it has already been omitted in the Apostles' Creed.
17. Proceeds from the Father and the Son. The text as decided by the Council of Constantinople has only: "proceeds from the Father."
The words "and the Son" were added to the Nicene Creed by the Synod of Toledo, 589 as the result of the theological development in Augustine. I, for one, would not easily give up this addition.
18. He is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. The *Book of Praise* has a different order: "Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified," – which sounds somewhat ponderous. The proposed translation tries to follow the usual word order in English.

19. Through. The *Book of Praise* has: "by the prophets." The Greek, using *dia* and indicating that the prophets are God's means of revelation, could be translated as *through*; see also *dia* in (10).
20. In. The Greek text shows that the verb "to believe" is used in all cases (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, church) with the preposition "in." The Apostles' Creed, however, makes a distinction, by adding "in" only to the triune God, not to the last part of the creed. The result was that via Augustine the difference between "to believe in" and "to believe" became part of western theology. The Nicene Creed, on the other hand, does not use the preposition to express the difference between believing God and believing something. The committee has to make a hard choice between two equally valid approaches:
 - a. Follow the Greek text and maintain "believe in" in connection with the church. This would show that we know ourselves to be heirs of the Council of Nicea, Constantinople and of Athanasius. The difference between believing God and believing the church is so obvious that it does not need a terminological distinction.
 - b. Bring the Greek text into agreement with the formulation of the Apostles' Creed. The reason for this change could be that we should not create difficulties in a church where the Augustinian explanation has become popular knowledge.
21. We confess. The *Book of Praise* reads: "I acknowledge." Lampe's *Dictionary of Patristic Greek* gives both translations for the verb: to confess, to acknowledge, so either translation is possible. "To confess" fits better in the context.
22. Forgiveness. The Greek word, when used in the New Testament, is usually translated as "forgiveness" (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4, Luke 1:77 etc).
23. Look forward. The expression "I look for" has a different connotation in today's English. The Greek verb is now usually translated as "to look forward to," see also Kelly.
24. Coming world. Is this not smoother English than "world to come"?

Yours in Christ's service

N.H. Gootjes, December 9, 1993

C. Committee Notes on Proposed Translation:

1. The Committee prefers "of" for stylistic reasons.
2. This word order follows the Greek text. The Committee felt that we must hold to this text as much as possible.
3. Here we have followed the Greek text.
4. Here we have followed the word order of the Greek text.
5. The Committee opted for the first of the two choices put forward to us on this matter by Dr. Gootjes (see Appendix 4a). Our rationale for this is two-fold: first, it honours the original text; second, it allows for the fact that, if properly qualified, one may speak of "believing in the church." That is, one may state that he believes in the church as an indestructible reality, and a life-giving divine work present on earth. The church is then looked upon not as a human work, but as a divine work. As such, one may believe in it. This, it seems to us, is also the unique element which the Nicene Creed serves to isolate.
6. The Committee prefers "acknowledge" for stylistic reasons.
7. According to Lampe, the Greek *prosdokao* means: expect, (cf Latin: *expecto*, *are*). The Committee opted for the term "await."

¹See on this especially J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (third ed.; New York: Longman Inc. 1983) 313-331.

²See the Latin text printed in H. Denzinger, A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 33. ed. (Barcinone: Herder, 1965) 67. The differences between the Greek and the Latin text are duly noted here.