

Report of the Synodical Psalm & Hymn Selection Committee

Dear brothers in Christ,

We present to you our fourth and final report, at least as the present study committee. For that we give hearty thanks to God for his goodness to us over the past twelve years as we have worked on this project. He has sustained us and enabled us to work together cheerfully all the way through. We have had our disagreements, of course, but only ever on this hymn or tune or that and I must give thanks to my fellow committee members for making that possible. It has been a most enjoyable project to be involved with.

You have now had *Sing to the Lord* in your hands for a few months. We are well aware it is not exactly as every one of you would have liked it. Yes, one of my favourites is not in it and two of the best tunes in the English language did not make it. Sigh. But every other committee member has their own similar story! But acknowledging that inevitability, without exception, we on the committee are very pleased with the outcome and we trust that overall you all are too and that the book may indeed help us worship God a little more richly than we have in the past.

A little review

Synod 2011 decided (Art.41)

5. To accept the selection of hymns submitted to the churches over the years 2009 –2011 in the letters listed as Appendices 1-5 of this report ... and authorize their publication for the use of the Churches in public worship, after the following process ... ;

- a. That the churches have until 31st May, 2012 to give any further feedback;*
- b. That the committee will consider this feedback before making its final selection;*
- c. That Synod appoint two additional people to the committee for the purpose of assisting in the review of this feedback.*

In addition, Synod decided (Art.47)

- 1. (The evaluation process being completed (cf. Art.41),) to charge the committee to prepare the book, to be called **Sing to the Lord**, for publication, including appropriate preface, Statement of Principle, Psalms, hymns, and indices (see Appendix 8), for production.*
- 2. To authorise the printing of approximately 4,000copies (unless economies of scale would warrant more) and the payment of copyright fees for an extra 2,000.*
- 3. To charge the committee to prepare projection slides.*
- 4. To authorise the committee to co-opt other personnel for specific tasks.*
- 5. To adopt the songbook **Sing to the Lord** for provisional use with a view to final adoption to be considered at Synod 2020.*

Further, Synod decided (Art.48)

- 1. To include the forms and confessions in the new hymnal.*

In the event, Synod gave us three new members to complete our review. So in addition to the continuing members, J Rogers, Mrs L Brooks, Mrs L Hoyt & the Rev. J Goris, Mr J Koolaard and the Revs Andrew de Vries and Hans Vaatstra were added to the committee.

We thank the churches for their feedback all of which was considered and final decisions made resulting in the book you now have.

There is one directive of Synod 2011 that we have not fulfilled and which all of us are unhappy about, albeit perhaps in varying degrees, namely: *To include the forms and confessions in the new hymnal*. The over-riding consideration in this was the anticipated – now confirmed! – size of the

book. It is about as big as any such book should be. For the record, even though most delegates will be aware, we did not just ignore Synod's decision. We discussed the question with the Forms & Confessions Committee and requested the Synodical Interim Committee's concurrence. That resulted in quite a discussion between the three committees. The decision was relayed to the sessions by a joint letter from the Hymnal Committee and the Forms & Confessions Committee in May 2013, which in turn resulted in further discussion with some sessions who were not happy with the decision. In the end, the decision stood. We appreciate the concerns and generally agree with them, but we also wanted the first production of this book to be of a lasting quality, hence thicker paper, yet still useable.

Quo Vadis?

Unfortunately, when one publishes a book, as distinct from merely adopting one, it seems the work can never quite be left. There are ongoing matters.

Our proof readers have been pretty sharp. Even so, we have already found just a few small errors. We need to have a mechanism to preserve the PDFs from which the book was printed, keep track of any errors notified and thus to correct the PDFs for future printings. In the light of this and other possible matters, we therefore put the following recommendations:

Recommendation

1. *That Synod establish a standing hymnal committee with the following mandate:*
 - i) to receive notification of any errors with a view to:
 - a. determine whether they are errors (and that is not always obvious!);
 - b. make any necessary amendments to the PDFs for any further reprinting or edition.
 - ii) to receive and keep track of feedback for future editions (as distinct from future reprints).
 - iii) to prepare a reprint of the present book with the following differences:
 - a. including the forms and confessions;
 - b. of a smaller size (say 19 x 13cm instead of the present 23.5 x 15.5cm) and using thinner paper (possibly even an India-type paper) to make iii.a possible;
 - c. Synod underwrite the cost.
 - d.

Background & Rationale

The present book is nearly sold out. It is a large book and fairly heavy. We have already paid copyright for another 2,000 copies. We suggest Synod underwrite the cost because a second printing will likely not be taken up as quickly as the present printing. It will give us the opportunity to assess the comparable durability and usefulness of the two different print runs, possibly even including a different type of cloth (but the same colour) covering the board covers; things like thumb indicators for the various sections of the book – forms, confessions, indices – could be investigated.

Recommendation

2. *That this committee be dismissed!*

Conclusion

In conclusion, we wish to thank you all for your cooperation and patience with us over this dozen years – and your trust. One of our hopes with this project was, in the light of the fragmentation that seems to be somewhat the current *force de jour*, including in the church (at large), that if we could

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provide a hymnbook that would help us worship **together** then with the Lord's blessing it may help us as churches to remain united overall. It is very gratifying to us to see that very nearly all the churches immediately bought the book. In fact, of the 4,000 printed we have only about 160 unsold. We could hardly have wished for more and we are very thankful to the Lord. May he use it to this end – of unity – also.

Respectfully submitted

Mrs L Brooks, Mrs L Hoyt

Mr J Koolaard

Revs J Goris, Andrew de Vries, Hans Vaatstra, John Rogers (reporter)

Appendix:

We believe it appropriate that a full list of those who have played a significant role in this project be recorded. (There have actually been others who have made contributions here and there, and for that we are grateful also, but we have to draw a line somewhere!)

Mrs Andrea Benfell (committee)

Mr Hans Berends (guitar chords)

Mrs Lieda Brooks (committee, et al)

Mrs Rebekah de Ruiten (transcribing & data projection slides)

Rev. Andrew de Vries (committee)

Rev. John Goris (committee, et al)

Rev. John Haverland (committee)

Mr Berwyn Hoyt (committee & administrator)

Rev. Bruce Hoyt (formatting PDFs)

Mrs Elrike Hoyt (administrator)

Mrs Lois Hoyt (committee, et al)

Mrs Sari Klinkhamer (data projection slides)

Mr John Koolaard (committee)

Mrs Lydia Nugteren (transcribing)

Mrs Sarah-Kaye Oosterbaan (copyrights)

Mr Titus Smith (guitar chords)

Mrs Margaret Thompson (data projection slides)

Rev. Hans Vaatstra (committee & indices)

Mr Philip van der Wel (guitar chords)

Mr Pieter van der Wel (proofreading)

Mr John van Dyk (formatting indices)

Mr Jeremy Watson (transcribing)

Rev. Bill Wiersma (committee)

It should also be noted that four spouses missed their better halves a lot over the past twelve years: Mr Arnold Brooks, Rev. Bruce Hoyt, Rev. Andrew Nugteren & Mrs Sheryl Rogers, and for that we thank them heartily.

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