

**Report of the
Psalter Hymnal Committee
of the
United Reformed Churches in North America**

Synod 2010 (London, ON)

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Introduction

What a wonderful blessing it is to sing the Lord's praises! Paul expresses it this way: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:16).

Over the past 13 years, since the initial appointment in 1997 of the "Psalter Hymnal Committee," we've been challenged with the various mandates of past synods and the turnover of membership on our committee. Yet, through it all we've enjoyed unity, laughter, good fellowship, steady progress - all with thankfulness in our hearts to God. When Synod 1997 appointed our committee, the delegates understood that the process for producing a new songbook would be lengthy. And so it is. We hope, however, that as you read this report you will see that there is "light at the end of the tunnel." Indeed, we plan on distributing copies of our "hymn proposal" of the new songbook to the delegates meeting in London, Ontario, for Synod 2010. Though the "hymn proposal" will not be discussed at this synod, it will give delegates a first-hand look at a significant part of the proposed songbook. And as the delegates return back to their churches, we are encouraging careful examination of the proposed songs by each consistory.

It is no small task to evaluate, plan and produce a book that will contain songs for the worship of God's people. You have entrusted our committee with this important responsibility and we are truly thankful for being given this opportunity. With this report we seek to provide you with an update of our work and seek your direction in various matters.

I. History and Mandates

A. SYNOD 1997 (St. Catharines, ON) appointed a Psalter Hymnal committee "to explore what is required to produce, reproduce, or obtain a Psalter Hymnal." The grounds for this mandate were:

1. A common psalter hymnal would promote unity among the churches of our federation;
2. The *Psalter Hymnal* used in the majority of our churches is presently out of print;
3. Because the process of producing a psalter hymnal is lengthy it would be wise to begin the process as soon as possible.

(Minutes of Synod, October 1997, Article LXII.C. [pp.33-34])

B. SYNOD 1999 (Hudsonville, MI) Our committee explored the options of producing, reproducing, or obtaining a psalter hymnal and reported its finding to Synod 1999. This synod approved the republication of the 1976 edition of the CRC Psalter Hymnal, added members to the committee, and gave us the following mandate:

1. "...To begin the work of producing for publication a new URCNA Psalter Hymnal." (Minutes, Article XLI.b)
2. To provide "a recommendation of songs to be included in the new Psalter Hymnal" (Article XLI.c.(a))
3. To provide "a recommendation of other materials (Liturgical forms, the 3 forms of Unity, Creeds, Prayers, etc.) to be included in the new Psalter Hymnal." (Article XLI.c.(b))
4. "That the committee consult with those churches with whom we have entered into corresponding relations." (Article XLI.c.(c).i.(d))
5. "That the Psalter Hymnal Committee report to the next meeting of synod with a proposal for funding the new songbook." (Article XLIX.C)

C. SYNOD 2001 (Escondido, CA) Having begun this work, our committee reported our progress to Synod 2001. Synod Escondido approved entering into "Phase Two" of ecumenicity with the Canadian Reformed Churches and made the following decisions regarding our committee:

1. Approved the establishment of a fund to finance the cost of the new psalter hymnal and requested the churches to collect free-will offerings for this cause. (Minutes, Article XXXV,D,2,3)
2. Reaffirmed our mandate of Synod 1999 and requested that we present the guiding principles for study by the churches and for adoption by the next synod. (Minutes, Article XXXV,D,4)
3. Added the following to our mandate: "That the present 'Psalter Hymnal Committee' work together with the Canadian Reformed 'Book of Praise Committee' to consider for inclusion in this song book the 150 Psalms in metrical settings (one note for each syllable) from an English translation of the Genevan Psalter, as well as other non-Genevan settings for the Psalms, and also hymns that meet the standard of faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Reformed Confessions. The two song books primarily in use need not be included in their totality." (Minutes, Article XLV,B,2,c)

D. SYNOD 2004 (Calgary, AB) released our committee from the responsibility to prepare and provide recommendations for the non-musical portion of the songbook (liturgical forms, prayers, confessions, etc.) and appointed another committee to take on that responsibility. (Minutes, Article 96.3-5) Further, Synod Calgary appointed more members to our committee (Article 96.6-7), recommended that the churches of the URCNA "familiarize themselves with the *Book of Praise*" (Article 96.2), and adopted the following:

PRINCIPLES & GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING MUSIC IN THE CHURCH (Article 96.1):

PRINCIPLES:

The song of the church is to be suitable for the church's worship to the glory of God!

1. The songs of the Church are to be Scriptural

In content, form, and spirit the Church's songs must express the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

Augustine, referring to the singing of Psalms, said, "No one can sing anything worthy of God which he has not received from Him. . . then we are assured that God puts the words in our mouth."

2. The songs of the Church are to be a sacrifice of praise¹

Singing is an important element of the congregation's response to God's redeeming work in Christ Jesus and the Word proclaimed in the worship service.

John Calvin wrote, "Singing has great strength and power to move and to set on fire the hearts of men that they may call upon God and praise Him with a more vehement and more ardent zeal. This singing should not be light or frivolous, but it ought to have weight and majesty."

3. The songs of the Church are to be aesthetically pleasing

The songs for worship are to be a beautiful blend of God-honoring poetry and music.²

About such beauty, Abraham Kuyper remarks: "The world of sounds, the world of forms, the world of tints, and the world of poetic ideas, can have no other source than

¹ Hebrews 13:15

² Psalm 92:1-4

God; and it is our privilege as bearers of His image, to have a perception of their beautiful world, artistically to reproduce, and humanly to enjoy it."

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING SONGS:

1. The songs of the Church must be thoroughly biblical. They are to represent the full range of the revelation of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.³
2. The Book of Psalms is foundational for the Church's songs. Therefore, all of these Psalms, in their entirety, ought to be included in the Church's songbook.
3. When Psalms or other portions of Scripture are set to music, the words must be faithful to the content and form of the inspired text.⁴
4. In the case of songs other than the versification of Scripture, the words must faithfully express the teaching of Scripture⁵ as summarized by our Reformed confessions.
5. The songs of the Church must be intelligible⁶ and edifying to the body of Christ.⁷
6. The songs of the Church must reflect and preserve the language of the Church of all ages rather than accommodating current secular trends.⁸
7. In content and form, the songs of the Church must be free from artificiality, sentimentality, and individualism.
8. The music of the song should suit the text.
9. The music of the Church should be expressive of the Reformed tradition. Use is to be made of the music developed in the tradition of this rich heritage.
10. The music of the Church should not be borrowed from music that suggests places and occasions other than the Church and the worship of God.⁹
11. The melodies and harmonies of church music must be suitable for congregational singing, avoiding complicated rhythms, excessive syncopation, and a wide range of pitch.

E. SYNOD 2007 (Schererville, IN) clarified our committee's mandate - particularly Synod Escondido's decision regarding our working relationship with the CanRC's Book of Praise committee which stated: "That the present 'Psalter Hymnal Committee' work together with the Canadian Reformed 'Book of Praise Committee' to consider for inclusion in this song book the 150 Psalms in metrical settings (one note for each syllable) from an English translation of the Genevan Psalter, as well as other non-Genevan settings for the Psalms, and also hymns that meet the standard of faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Reformed Confessions. The two song books primarily in use need not be included in their totality."

The decisions of Synod Schererville included:

1. Acceding to Overture 17 in order to clarify these three phrases of the Synod Escondido decision as follows:
 - a) "*work together with*" includes both consultation with and careful consideration of views advanced by the Canadian Reformed "Book of Praise Committee" but only insofar as such work does not hinder, delay, or divert the Psalter Hymnal Committee from fulfilling its purpose as originally adopted;

³ Psalm 147:1

⁴ 2 Timothy 3:16

⁵ Proverbs 30:6

⁶ I Corinthians 14:15

⁷ Colossians 3:16

⁸ Romans 12:2a

⁹ Ephesians 5:18-21

b) “*to consider for inclusion*” neither implies nor necessitates inclusion of any or all metrical psalmody;

c) “*this song book*” refers to a new URCNA Psalter Hymnal that will serve the churches of our federation alone, whether or not we are in ecclesiastical fellowship with any number of denominations / federations.

(Minutes, Article 63.6)

2. “That Synod 2007 continue the Songbook Committee’s mandate given by previous synods.” (Article 78.1)
3. “That Synod 2007 maintain the goal for production and use of a Common Song Book, but establish that the production and use of a Common Song Book is not a condition for federative unity with the Canadian Reformed Churches.” (Article 78.10)
4. “That Synod 2007 provide direction to the committee, regarding whether the inclusion of all 150 Anglo-Genevan Psalms would be detrimental for the churches to accept the Common Song Book, by mandating the URCNA Songbook Committee to contact the churches of the URCNA for their input on this question.” (Article 78.11)

II. Summary of Activities

Following Synod 2007, our committee has continued the practice of meeting face-to-face twice a year, alternating between Grand Rapids, Michigan and Hamilton, Ontario. Between these meetings we have met at least monthly by way of a “chat room” online.

Shortly after Synod Schererville, we met with the CanRC Book of Praise Committee to discuss with them our synod’s decision to focus our work on a URC songbook. Though understandably disappointed, they received that decision with grace. More recently we met with them briefly and updated them about our hymn proposal for synod. We also learned about their initial recommendation of adding 28 more hymns to their current 65 hymns, a recommendation which has been refined as an addition of 14 hymns. But beyond these two brief meetings over three years, our Committee has worked on finishing a hymn proposal for a new URC songbook.

We have also posted this report and a separate page containing the **Principles and Guidelines** in our federation’s website: www.urncna.org.

A. Hymns

The majority of our time was taken up with applying the approved principles and guidelines to hymns that had been recommended to us and found in various songbooks currently in use among Reformed and Presbyterian churches. To give you some idea of the scope of this project, our committee considered: the 182 hymns of the *Psalter Hymnal* (1959 edition); the 404 hymns of the *Psalter Hymnal* (1987 edition), the approximately 600 hymns of the *Trinity Hymnal* (1990 edition); the 65 hymns of the *Book of Praise* (1984, Canadian Reformed songbook), the 28 hymns of the *Book of Praise, Augment to Hymnary* (2007, Canadian Reformed); approximately 100 hymns from *Cantus Christi* (Canon Press, 2002); the 14 hymns of the *Hymns for a Modern Reformation* (James Montgomery Boice and Paul Jones, 2000); and 74 suggested hymns from various sources sent to our committee by members and councils of United Reformed churches. We also evaluated more recently produced hymns written by Stuart Townend, Keith and Kristyn Getty, and others.

In addition to those main sources various members of our committee scanned through parts of the first edition of the *Trinity Hymnal*, (Great Commission, 1961); *Sing! A New Creation*, (CRC Publications, 2001); *Lutheran Book of Worship*, (Augsburg Publishing House, 1978); and *The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration* (Word Music, 1986) and a collection of hymns published by GIA Publications (Chicago, Illinois).

This means that we evaluated, either together in committee, or personally by assignment, more than 2000 hymns. Over the years that we've been engaged in this task, we amassed a gross list of nearly 800 hymns that we initially deemed suitable for inclusion. In the last two years we have been engaged in the painful task of paring down that list to a reasonable number that gives adequate representation of the various topics and subjects of our Christian faith and life (e.g. the Trinity, the birth of Christ, the atonement, the sacraments, worship, missions, etc.). We have also digitally formatted each of these songs so that they are uniform in appearance. We have nearly completed this task and intend to make our proposed hymn section available to the churches prior to Synod 2010.

More than half of our hymn proposal includes songs that are not found in the current, blue-covered Psalter Hymnal (BPH). This large number of new songs will require extra attention and will likely produce lengthy debate when it comes time for a synod to approve them.

The vast majority of these songs met with unanimous approval by the members of our committee, past and present. There were some songs, however, which led to much longer debates and some emotional discussions in our meetings. We all have our own personal tastes, musically and poetically. We have different thresholds when it comes to poetic license: some like colorful, flowery language, while others prefer more literal, straight-forward language. We have different thresholds when it comes to precision of doctrine in the words of a song, as well. Thus, it should not be surprising that some songs evoked these mixed emotions among us, and required longer discussion.

If this was true for our committee of 5-7 members, how much more in a synodical body of nearly 200 delegates! Therefore, for time considerations as well as for removing some of the emotion, we are recommending that synod approve a more structured, deliberative process for approving the proposed hymn section. Please see **recommendations 5 & 6**.

B. Psalms

After completing the hymn section, we will embark on the Psalms. We anticipate that this process will take less time than the hymn selection process. We intend to number the Psalm selections according to their Biblical number, and designate any multiple renditions of a particular Psalm by letter (e.g. Psalm 103a; Psalm 103b; Psalm 103c). We also intend that at least one rendition of a particular Psalm will be that Psalm in its entirety.

We have already been engaged in preliminary research and discussions about various important topics for the Psalm collection. For example, we've approached several Old Testament scholars on the question of whether using the word "Jehovah" for Yahweh is appropriate. We also met with Dr. W. Helder of the Canadian Reformed Churches who illustrated for us, using Psalm 72, the issues and difficulties of bringing the text of Scripture to song. We've had several discussions regarding what makes the song a psalm; for example, how close must the words be to the biblical psalm? If the words are quite different, but the concepts are present, is that a psalm or a hymn? And, in light of guideline 7, we've discussed the matter of "individualism" and the Psalmists' use of the 1st person singular pronoun.

We have also been in contact with the Hymnal Committee of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand who provided us with bound copies of their provisional *Sing To The Lord* hymnal which presently consists of the entire psalter.

As to the question of including all the 150 Anglo-Genevan psalms, Synod Schererville gave the following mandate to our committee: "That Synod 2007 provide direction to the committee, regarding whether the inclusion of all 150 Anglo-Genevan Psalms would be detrimental for the churches to accept the Common Song Book, by mandating the URCNA Songbook Committee to contact the churches of the URCNA for their input on this question." In fulfillment of this mandate, we sent a letter to all URCNA churches in July, 2008 requesting their feedback on this important question. Sixteen churches responded to our request and we appreciate the thoughtful comments that

were offered. Of the 16, ten responses were unfavorable toward including all 150 Anglo-Genevan Psalms. Four churches expressed support of including all, but indicated that there should be other non-Genevan Psalm renditions included as well. The remaining two provided our committee with good advice, but no answer to the question.

C. 1 Rationale for an Official Songbook for the URCNA

At Synod Schererville (2007), several delegates raised the question whether our churches actually want an official songbook, that is, a synodically-approved songbook which each church will be expected to purchase and use in their worship services. As a committee we have discussed this matter and prepared this rationale for the adoption of an official songbook.

Please note that when we speak of adopting an “official songbook,” we are not raising the matter of using additional songbooks, or a supplemental collections of songs. As things currently stand, Article 39 of our Church Order allows for consistories to approve hymns not found in the official Psalter Hymnal. In this section of our report we are simply discussing whether all our churches must have at least one songbook as their official songbook, *the songbook that all URCNA churches will use in common*.

As a starting point for our rationale, consider the mandate given to our committee when it was appointed by Synod 1997. Synod 1997, which met in St. Catharines, ON, appointed a “Psalter Hymnal committee” and mandated the committee “to explore what is required to produce, reproduce, or obtain a Psalter Hymnal.” The first ground given for this mandate was, “A common psalter hymnal would promote unity among the churches of our federation” (Minutes of Synod, October 1997, Article LXII.C. [pp.33-34]).

In one respect, this should be sufficient rationale for the URCNA to adopt an official songbook. This was the decision of the churches in 1997, and that decision has never been appealed, set aside, or rendered obsolete by any subsequent synodical decision. Therefore, it remains the official position of our churches.

However, simply citing that decision and that ground may not be sufficient to persuade the churches to actually adopt an official songbook. This is partly due to the fact that so many other songbooks and supplementary collections currently are being used in our churches. In some cases, these supplemental songs and songbooks have been used for more than a decade. And these songs are being used not just in pre-worship “hymn-sings” but in some cases within the worship service itself. Many of our office-bearers and members are getting used to the idea that each church can sing almost whatever they want, provided it meets the approval of their consistory. It seems that the role of the broader assemblies to regulate our church music is being minimized.

We looked into our history as Reformed churches to see whether there is a report or a document that sets out the case for an official songbook and did not find such a rationale. As part of this investigation, we spoke with Dr. Bert Polman of the “Calvin Institute for Christian Worship.” He concludes that the absence of any formal rationale for an official songbook probably reflects the unspoken assumption among Reformed churches that having an official songbook needed no argumentation. In other words, in the past it was simply assumed that Reformed churches, as well as many other federations, would develop and use an official songbook. Each federation would choose songs representing its own history, theology, and liturgical principles, and would collect those songs in their official songbook. So we find official songbooks of the Methodist Church and the Lutheran Church and the Presbyterian Church. So also, the Christian Reformed Church always had her own official songbook throughout her entire history. This is simply the way it was, and no rationale for an official songbook was needed or provided.

Some may conclude from the “silence of history” on this issue that there is no sufficient argument for the necessity of synodical approval of an official songbook. We would urge you to consider the

opposite conclusion: that the very fact that Reformed churches in the past needed no formal rationale to persuade them to adopt an official songbook suggests that it belongs to the unity, the identity, and the wellbeing of the federation to have such a songbook.

The old Latin expression, “*lex orandi, lex credendi*,” illustrates the connection between liturgy and doctrine, between what is sung in the churches and what is believed by the people. The relationship is reciprocal: what we sing is a confession of what we believe, but also, what we sing, we come to believe. That raises the importance of what we sing to a high level, and means that what we sing has a bearing on the confessional unity of the federation.

In this regard, consider the fact that our churches adopted a set of “Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church” at Synod Calgary in 2004. By that decision, the synodical delegates were not only saying, “We agree that these are good principles and guidelines for choosing music to be used in the churches.” They were also agreeing that it was for the unity, identity, and well-being of the churches to have those standards *in common*.

Consider also the action of Synod 1996. At that synod the churches adopted “the liturgical forms printed in the Psalter Hymnal, Centennial Edition (1976) for use among the churches” (Acts of Synod 1996, Article 24, point L). The liturgical forms are not, strictly speaking, confessional documents. They are definitely doctrinal, but they are not, in the narrow sense of the word, confessional. Yet our churches without hesitation committed themselves to using the adopted forms in all of the churches across the federation. We consider the adopting of an “official songbook” consistent with the adopting of “official liturgical forms.” If we believe that all the churches should use the same synodically-approved liturgical forms, then it follows that a synodically-approved songbook be used by all the churches.

In addition to these fundamental arguments for the adoption of an official songbook, we would ask you to consider an important practical matter. As soon as we have a synodically-approved collection of psalms and hymns, the work of publishing the songbook will begin. At that point, the financial costs will escalate dramatically. Copyright permission has to be obtained, sometimes at a cost. An editor or editors will have to be hired to ensure consistency in capitalization, punctuation, notation, typeface, etc. Decisions will have to be made about paper, book cover, ink, etc. One of the biggest factors in estimating printing costs is to be able to estimate how many copies of the songbook will be produced. Selling only 1000 books might mean a per copy cost of \$75-85, whereas selling 10,000 books could bring the cost down to \$25-35 per copy, depending on other factors. And the cost per book drops exponentially, for every 500 or 1000 more copies printed.

Thus, before more work goes into the selection of songs, our Psalter Hymnal Committee will need to know an estimated number of copies for the first printing of the songbook. If the purchase and use of this songbook will be optional for our churches, then the printing costs could become prohibitive. In that case, our Psalter Hymnal Committee should be directed by synod simply to publish a list of song titles which meet the criteria of the “guidelines and principles.” Then each congregation would be responsible to produce its own songbook or its own supplemental collection of songs.

However, we think we have provided a good rationale for an official songbook and are recommending that this be Synod’s decision. **See recommendation 2.** We will come to a subsequent synod with cost estimates for an official songbook as our work gets closer to that stage.

III. Committee Membership

We regret to report that since our last Synod it became necessary for three of our members to resign from the Psalter Hymnal Committee:

Mrs. Daphne Jasperse submitted her resignation after her husband was diagnosed with a cancerous mass on the right front lobe of his brain in November of 2008. Mrs. Jasperse served on our committee since being appointed by Synod Calgary (2004) and was greatly appreciated for her musical abilities and knowledge as well as her organizational skills. We have communicated to her our regret, our thanks and most importantly our continued prayers for her husband Steve and family.

Rev. Ed Knott has been a member of our committee from its inception, in 1997, where the chairman of Synod St. Catharines appointed him to serve as chairman of our committee. Rev. Knott did so with the wisdom, patience, steady hand, and obvious love for the church for which he is so deservedly loved. He served on our committee until the Spring of 2009 at which point he submitted his resignation. We have also written Rev. Knott, expressing our regret at his resignation and our appreciation for his many years of faithful service.

Rev. Dick Wynia was also appointed to our committee at its inception. He served faithfully and tirelessly, particularly these past several years as secretary. After accepting the call to The Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church of Lincoln, ON, our committee requested that he continue serving until we completed the hymn section and he, with the kind approval of his consistory, consented. However, in January of this year, his work load in the local church and as a delegate to their synod required Rev. Wynia to submit his resignation. We greatly appreciate the work he did and thanked him for his nearly 13 years of service on the committee, and for his willingness to serve “above and beyond” the call of duty after having joined the CanRC.

With the approval of the convening consistory of Synod 2010 (Cornerstone URC, London, ON) we replaced these members with Angeline Vanderboom, a very gifted musician and member of Zion United Reformed Church of Sheffield, ON, and Rev. Christopher Folkerts, pastor of New Covenant United Reformed Church, Twin Falls, ID.

Regarding these membership matters, please **see recommendations 3 & 4.**

Following Rev. Knott’s resignation, the committee appointed Rev. Rand Lankheet to serve as our current chairman.

IV. Recommendations

- 1. That synod receive the work of the committee to date.**
- 2. That Synod 2010 affirm the production of an official songbook which will be purchased and used by all URCNA churches. (See pp. 7-8 of this report)**

Grounds:

- a. This is in keeping with Synod 1997’s decision to appoint the Psalter Hymnal Committee;
- b. An official songbook for all the churches would promote the unity, identity and well-being of the federation;
- c. This would keep the cost of producing the songbook to a minimum;
- d. This would give confidence to the Psalter Hymnal Committee that their work is not in vain.

- 3. That synod accept the resignations of Mrs. Daphne Jasperse, Rev. Ed Knott, and Rev. Richard Wynia, and express the churches’ appreciation for their service on the committee.**

- 4. That the current Psalter Hymnal Committee be augmented by one member from each**

classis not yet represented on the committee (i.e. Classes Central U.S., Eastern U.S., Michigan, and Western Canada), and that these classes be mandated to appoint a qualified member for the committee. Such qualification includes:

- **Biblical and theological knowledge;**
- **Musical ability: a working knowledge of music and (preferably) artistic talent;**
- **Language ability: an ability to work with poetry and an understanding and appreciation of poetry as an art form;**
- **A passion for working with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.**

(Note: members need not be office-bearers)

Grounds:

- a. This practice has precedence in the makeup of other synodically-appointed committees;
- b. Due to resignations, the present committee is too small to continue our mandate effectively and efficiently;
- c. Having a member from each classis on the committee will give each classis representation on the committee;
- d. Having a member from each classis on the committee will enable the committee to better answer the needs/concerns of the churches;
- e. Having a member from each classis on the committee will aid the churches to take ownership of this project and be more willing to support it financially and prayerfully.

5. That Synod approve the following process for evaluation and approval of the hymn section:
(see pp. 5-6 of this report)

- a. **That each consistory evaluate the proposed hymn section in light of the synodically-approved “Principles and Guidelines” (included in this report), and send their recommended changes in the form of an overture to its classis. The overtures should follow this format: “The consistory of ____ Church overtures Classis ____ to approve the following changes to the proposed hymn section and communicate its decision to the Psalter Hymnal Committee...” The overture should include grounds.**

(Note: The consistory may appoint musically gifted and theologically astute members of their congregation to help evaluate the hymns.)

- b. **That the classis deliberate the merits of the overture in light of the synodically-approved “Principles and Guidelines.” If classis agrees with the overture or a portion thereof, classis shall send an official communication regarding the recommended changes to the Psalter Hymnal committee for its consideration and written response. Such communication must be received by the Psalter Hymnal committee no later than March 31, 2012.**
- c. **That the Psalter Hymnal Committee categorize and print these communications, along with the written response, in a “master report.” This report will also include the final proposed hymn section and be distributed to all the consistories at least six months before the next meeting of synod.**
- d. **That the synod which will decide upon the hymn section for the new songbook shall**

not consider other hymns or changes to the hymns beyond those contained in the previously submitted communications from classes to the Psalter Hymnal Committee or in the "master report" from the Psalter Hymnal Committee.

Grounds:

- a. This process will allow for individuals, churches and classes to have a voice;
- b. This process ensures that the discussions will be directed by the objective criteria of the synodically-approved principles and guidelines;
- c. This process allows for the songbook committee to give due consideration to the communications, understanding that such communications have the approval of both a consistory and a classis;
- d. This process will ensure that all things are done decently and in good order (I Corinthians 14:40), avoiding the chaos which would result if delegates make motions from the floor to include or exclude a particular hymn. With this recommended process, we are confident that most of the discussion and deliberation about the hymn proposal will be objective and professional.

6. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to members of the Psalter Hymnal Committee when this report is being discussed.

Conclusion

It is our privileged to serve the churches, and the Lord, in the work entrusted to us as the Psalter Hymnal Committee. Please pray for His continued blessing on our work, and that our work will prove to be useful and fruitful in the worship of God's people, for His glory, and their edification.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Christopher Folkerts
Rev. Rand Lankheet, chairman
Mrs. Angeline Vanderboom
Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen