



Revivals And Church History :: Book of Common Prayer

Book of Common Prayer - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/10/20 10:37

I obtained an old copy of this small size book this last week and have been spending abit of time reading through it. It is heavily used in anglican services (or at least it was). The doctrine in the book seems to be quite heavily calvinistic but I really have been benefiting from reading some of the prayers:

Come, Holy Ghost, eternal God,
 Proceeding from above,
 Visit our minds, into our hearts,
 Thy heav'nly grace inspire;
 Thou art the very Comforter
 In grief and all distress;
 The fountain and living spring
 Of joy celestial'
 Thou in thy gifts art manifold,
 By them Christ's Church doth stand;
 According to thy promise, Lord,
 Thou givest speech with grace;
 O Holy Ghost, into our minds
 Send down thy heav'nly light
 ...

great stuff!

Re: Book of Common Prayer - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/20 10:54

Would you like to know a little more about it?

Think before you answer! ;-)

There is an online version of (<http://www.vulcanhammer.org/anglican/bcp-1662.pdf>) The Book of Common Prayer - 1662 which others might be interested in.

In fact, you can trace the whole (<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/england.htm>) "whole history of the Anglican prayer book" here.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/10/20 11:02

I was going to be forthright and ask that Ron ;-)) for you to give more details into this publication but I wasn't trying to get you into a corner. But now that you have consented, yes please do give us some insight. I thought it would be interesting because you have resided in the UK for so long.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/10/20 11:09

Perhaps I can ask this also, What do you think generally are some of the biggest problems that arise from the Book of Common prayer, doctrinally and in practice?

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/20 11:21

Quote:

-----I thought it would be interesting because you have resided in the UK for so long.

Not quite as long as the Book of Common Prayer. :-D
 which version are you reading, the one first published in 1662?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/10/20 11:34

I believe it is the **1662**, because there are references to the Apocrypha, which in their articles of religion it states:

"And other Books (as *Hierome* saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these..."

I think this is a healthy view that the books of the Apocrypha should be looked upon as church history books but not to make "biblical" doctrine out of them. Which many do with other church history to this day.

and the 1689 version one of the stipulations of its printing is:

-All lessons from the Apocrypha were eliminated

Re: you asked for it! - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/20 15:11

A background to the Book of Common Prayer.

"there is no such thing as uninterpreted history" I have forgotten who first said this but it is important to remember this when reading/studying history. There is another cynical comment which should be considered; "one of the chief spoils of victory is that you get to write the history". The impact of the latter is that every historian is biased, including amateur ones like me. My prejudices will be reflected in the way I re-tell history. English history is a very strong example of this. The Shakespeare plays were strong "Tudor Propaganda" but they have influenced people's views of English history ever since.

There are some good mini-histories on the 'official' British Monarchy pages to be found (<http://www.royal.gov.uk>) here .

the introduction to the Tudor Dynasty says

The five sovereigns of the Tudor dynasty are among the most well-known figures in Royal history. Of Welsh origin, Henry VII succeeded in ending the Wars of the Roses between the houses of Lancaster and York to found the highly successful Tudor house. Henry VII, his son Henry VIII and his three children Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I ruled for 118 eventful years.

During this period, England developed into one of the leading European colonial powers, with men such as Sir Walter Raleigh taking part in the conquest of the New World. Nearer to home, campaigns in Ireland brought the country under strict English control. ??Culturally and socially, the Tudor period saw many changes. The Tudor court played a prominent part in the cultural Renaissance taking place in Europe, nurturing all-round individuals such as William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser and Cardinal Wolsey. ??The Tudor period also saw the turbulence of two changes of official religion, resulting in the martyrdom of many innocent believers of both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. The fear of Roman Catholicism induced by the Reformation was to last for several centuries and to play an influential role in the history of the Succession. It is during the reigns of

Henry VIII - 1509 to 1547

and his three children

Edward VI - 1547 to 1553

Mary I - 1553 to 1558

and Elizabeth I - 1558 to 1603 that the saga of the English Reformation was played out. There's pdf (<http://www.royal.gov.uk/files/pdf/stuarts.pdf>) Genealogy for any interested;

The reason the English Reformation swung backwards and forwards is due to the convictions of these rulers.

Henry VIII was a Catholic to the last, but created the Church of England in order to be its 'head'. He believed that the Lord ordained the King and that all, including the church, was to be subject to that rule. He created an English Catholicism which removed the Pope as its head and substituted Henry himself. He was a pragmatist and used different religious leaders with different religious views to effect his own agenda. During Henry's reign the 'prayer book' would have been similar to the (<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Sarum/index.htm>) the Sarum Missal Here is an example of their position on 'confession' Let the priest say: I confess to God, to blessed Mary, to all the saints and to you: because I have sinned too much by thought, word, and deed by my fault: I pray, holy Mary, all the saints of God, and you to pray for me. Communicating and venerating the memory in the first place, of the glorious Virgin Mary, the mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ; But also of thy blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus; Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Laurentius, Crispin, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian; and all thy saints: by whose merits and prayers grant that in all things we

e may be defended by the help of thy protection. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. and on 'baptism' This is straightforward Catholicism with veneration of the Virgin and the doctrine of (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supererogation) supererogation.

His son, Edward, was educated by the Protestants and when Henry died Edward VI was only 10 when he became king and died at 15. Edward VI's reign was really that of a mere (http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/edward6.html) figurehead but during his reign his Protestant advisors began a much more thorough reformation than had taken place under Henry VIII. The (http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1549/BCP_1549.htm) First Book of Common Prayer - 1549 was published during his 'reign'. It was mostly the work of Thomas Cranmer, the vacillating Archbishop. Cranmer's real problem was that he elevated the doctrine of obedience to the king above everything else, so he changed with the wind of which ever monarch he was serving. The First Book of Common Prayer was a sturdy Protestant document. It "was an honest attempt to get rid of medieval corruptions and to go back to what was primitive and Catholic. It contained the ancient services of the Church condensed, simplified, purified, and published in English. It was not intended to provide a brand-new scheme of worship, or to break rudely with the past." Cranmer said it was essentially the same as had been used for centuries with some things 'taken out'. The things 'taken out' were Mariolatry and prayers to other saints and other conspicuously Catholic elements etc. It was later revised but the theology was broadly the same.

The scene was rudely interrupted by the death of Edward and the subsequent reign of (http://home.earthlink.net/~elisale/queenmary.html) Bloody Mary. She was the daughter of Henry's first wife, Katharine of Aragon but was only second in line to the throne because of Edward. When Edward died she became the legitimate heir. "Mary had from the start intended to restore the papal supremacy over the Church of England. She began secret negotiations with the Pope soon after becoming Queen. The Pope appointed the Englishman, Cardinal Reginald Pole, to be his legate in England. Pole was a descendant of Edward IV's brother the Duke of Clarence and a distant cousin of Mary. His mother, the Countess of Salisbury, had been Mary's godmother and governess and had been executed by King Henry VIII in 1541. Reginald had fled from England and began his career in Rome. Pole advised Mary to move quickly in returning England to Rome but Mary argued that this would take time. There were political problems and she suggested that it would be easier to persuade the Parliament and the people to accept papal supremacy if the Pope would agree to leave the confiscated monastic lands in the hands of the present owners. At first Pole did not agree but after a year the Pope agreed. In 1555 Mary was able to return to the Franciscan and Dominican monks the monasteries still in the possession of the crown that had not been given to private individuals. Pole arrived in England in November of 1554. By Christmas Parliament had passed 'An Act for the Renewing of The Three Statutes made for the Punishment of Heresies', which reinstated the Act for the Burning of Heretics of 1401. The burnings began in February, 1555."

The persecution of Mary is the background to Foxe's Book of Martyrs and (http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Latimer_Ridley_Cranmer.htm) Hugh Latimer, Nicolas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer were all burned at the stake during her reign.

At Mary's death her sister Elizabeth came to the throne. "Her 45-year reign is generally considered one of the most glorious in English history. During it a secure Church of England was established. Its doctrines were laid down in the 39 Articles of 1563, a compromise between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Elizabeth herself refused to 'make windows into men's souls ... there is only one Jesus Christ and all the rest is a dispute over trifles'; she asked for outward uniformity. Most of her subjects accepted the compromise as the basis of their faith, and her church settlement probably saved England from religious wars like those which France suffered in the second half of the 16th century." In many ways it is Elizabeth who was the creator of the Church of England producing what historians know as the "Elizabethan Compromise". We are close in spirit now to Greg's Book of Common Prayer because it was designed to further the grand goal of a Catholic Liturgy with a Protestant Theology. Most Catholics would have been pretty comfortable with the Book of Common Prayer. During her reign (http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1559/BCP_1559.htm) the Elizabethan Prayerbook was printed. "The Prayer Book of 1559 was the third revision for the Anglican Church, and was brought about by the accession to the throne of Elizabeth I and the restoration of the Anglican Church after the six-year rule of the Catholic Queen Mary. It was in use much longer than either of its predecessors - nearly 100 years, until the Long Parliament of 1645 outlawed it as part of the Puritan Revolution. It served not only the England of Elizabeth I, but her Stuart successors as well. This was the first Prayer Book used in America, taken there by the Jamestown settlers and others in the early 1600's."

When Elizabeth died (http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page136.asp) James Stewart became king. He was the son of a Catholic mother raised by fervent Presbyterians and was forever stuck between the two. He believed passionately in the 'divine right' of kings and was determined that the king would rule over the church. The Presbyterians believed that the king should be subject to the church. James wanted a United Kingdom under bishops (Episcopalian) and not a system under church eldership government (Presbyterian). The King James Bible is a result of his determination to water down the Presbyterian and radical Puritanism of his day. Just as Elizabeth tried to create a 'compromise church' so James tried

d to create a 'compromise bible'. (that will get me into trouble! :-))

James was followed by (<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page137.asp>) Charles I who ultimately declared war on his own parliament and sparked off England's Civil War of 1642-48. (We're getting closer to your 1662 Book of Common Prayer now, Greg, if anyone is still listening) Charles I lost and was executed and England became a Republic under Oliver Cromwell. Shortly after Cromwell's death and the failure of Richard Cromwell's protectorate (<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page138.asp>) Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660. He reigned from 1660 to 1685, so it was during his reign that Greg's Book of Common Prayer 1662 was published. In many ways the Civil War was a struggle between Anglicanism and Presbyterianism; the Presbyterians won... briefly.

It was published with that same aim of providing in the Church of England a 'broad church' where everyone would feel at home. It contains the (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1571-39articles.html>) 39 articles which represent the Doctrinal Constitution of the Church of England. The same struggle between 'Catholic' concepts and 'Reformed' concepts are seen in it. The classic example is water baptism. Article 17 states Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. Evangelical Anglicans have found some comfort here by noting that 'baptism' is only a 'sign' of regeneration and not the means of regeneration. However the actual service of water baptism of infants has the statement

O Merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this Child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him. Amen.

Â Â Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him. Amen.

Â Â Grant that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph, against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Amen.

Â Â Grant that whosoever is here dedicated to thee by our office and ministry may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live, and govern all things, world without end. Amen.

Almighty, everliving God, whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of his most precious side both water and blood; and gave commandment to his disciples, that they should go teach all nations, and baptize them In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Regard, we beseech thee, the supplications of thy congregation; sanctify this Water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that this Child, now to be baptized therein, may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. which words are followed by the declaration Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this Child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits; and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this Child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning. This is thoroughly Catholic view of sacraments where the correct use of the method guarantees the result.

The Book of Common Prayer then should be expected to be a mixture of truth and error but always beautifully presented in noble English. There are some amazingly clear statements of truth and, to my view, some almost unbelievable muddle. But as I said at the very beginning... there is no such thing as uninterpreted history and what you have just waded through was my 'interpretation' of history. :-D

There is another consequence of the union of state and religion in the UK. It is known as the Act of Uniformity or (<http://www.bartleby.com/65/cl/ClarendoCd.html>) the Clarendon Code Part of this legislation forced the 1662 Book of Common Prayer on all ministers in England and Wales. There were four aspects to this legislation. 1. it required all officers of incorporated municipalities to take communion according to the rites of the Church of England and to abjure the Presbyterian covenant. That meant that a non-conformist (this is where the word comes from) could not hold public office. 2. The Act of Uniformity (1662) required all ministers in England and Wales to use and subscribe to the Book of Common Prayer; nearly 2,000 ministers resigned rather than submit to this act. 3. The Conventicle Act (1664) forbade the assembling of five or more persons for religious worship other than Anglican. 4. The Five-Mile Act (1665) forbade any nonconforming preacher or teacher to come within 5 mi (8.1 km) of a city or corporate town where he had served as minister. It was as a result of this legislation that many godly ministers were banned from caring for their flocks and resulted in people like Thomas Watson and Matthew Henry's father being expelled from their pastorates. Some puritan pastors believed that the great fire of London in 1666 was a divine retribution for this legislation.

Re: - posted by Eli_Barnabas (), on: 2005/10/21 9:23

I've got a BCP as well and I sometimes look through it. I agreed with you that it's got good and bad in it. A lot of it is really cool and there's much to glean from. But I find when it is in use in church it is as dead as a fish... this might not be the case everywhere but at least from what I've experienced.

In Christ,
-Eli

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2005/10/25 12:30

Thanks **philologos** for this historical review.

I come from a non-liturgical tradition, however, I have found some prayer books and catechisms to be rather edifying. One of them is the *Book of Common Prayer*.

I find many of the prayers in *BCP* to be richly biblical and edifying to the spirit. It's refreshing to read and pray them (for me, mostly in private), as compared to the long-winded and repetitive prayers that some people do -- so full of spiritual jargon and cliches and void of meaning.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/10/25 12:44

I echo the comments of Eli there is a lot of good to "glean from". Thanks Ron for that superb simple history of the book. Sometimes you are able to bring a lot of information into a simple bit size amount that the simpleton can understand and assimilate! thanks again.

Re: - posted by jimbob, on: 2005/11/27 22:37

Ron B and all,

If you would be interested in a historical and biblical view on infant baptism, from an (conservative)episcopal bishops perspective go to <http://www.malcolmsmith.org/home.asp> and order the tape series "The Power of the Holy Spirit in Liturgy"

It may not be the abhorrent practice you all seem to make it out to be!

Martin Luther and co. were not ignorant men, they did have reasons for keeping the practice.

As far as the BCP and the liturgy, I have discovered a whole world of blessings involved in the sacraments that is sorely missing my baptist/pentecostal/charismatic experience.

Word to the wise though, you may have to search to find episcopal leadership that are not hostile to the authority of the scriptures.