

# Similarities and Differences

## *The Book of Common Prayer in America:*

### *How do the 1928 & 1979 editions compare?*

In America since the seventeenth century, four editions of *The Book of Common Prayer* have been in official use in churches in communion with the see of Canterbury.

In the colonial period the edition of the BCP used everywhere was the English of 1662, a book that has been translated into 150 languages for use of people all over the world. This edition is still the official Prayer Book of the Church of England and of Anglican Churches in the British Commonwealth of nations. In America, after Independence, a new edition of the BCP, specifically related to the situation of an autonomous Church in a new country, was produced and authorized in 1789. In the preface the unity with the BCP of 1662 and with the Worship, Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England are clearly affirmed. "This Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline or worship; or further than local circumstance require."

So the first American edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* in 1789 was substantially in agreement with the Prayer Book of the Church of England, and the Prayer Book used for over a century in the colonies.

Minor editing was done of the 1789 BCP to produce first the edition of 1892 and then that of 1928. There is a very distinct and clear relation in content and style between these four editions of 1662, 1789, 1892 and 1928 and it is obvious they are editions of **one** book, whose first edition was 1549 in England.

It was the intention of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. in the 1960s to produce another edition of the same book. However, as the project progressed and as a variety of factors and forces from outside and inside the Church made their impact, the original project of gentle, minimal editing, expanded. It became a major overhaul, and, in turn, this overhaul became a project of creating virtually a new book altogether.

In other Churches of the Anglican family, similar work was going on, energized by such things as the reforms of Vatican II, the insights of the Liturgical Movement, the social and cultural revolution of the 1960s, the cry for peace and justice, and the call for full human rights. Yet other Churches decided to treat their new creations of services and prayers as alternatives to those of the historic and classic *Book of Common Prayer* and to call their

new books by such names as *A Book of Alternative Services*, or *A Prayer Book for South Africa*, or *A Prayer Book for Australia*.

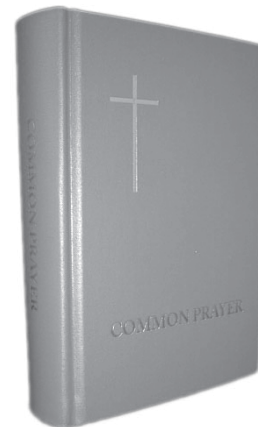
The Episcopal Church stood alone in the 1970s in the decision to call its new prayer book, "The Book of Common Prayer," when it was – by its purpose and content – very similar to the alternative prayer books in other parts of the world.

Thus the Church of England had *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) and the *ASB 1980 (Alternative Service Book)* while the Episcopal Church had only the one book, a book of varied services, and it chose in the General Conventions of 1976 and 1979 to call this new type of prayer book of 1976/9 by the ancient name of "The Book of Common Prayer"! Further, in adopting this new book, it declared that the previous Prayer Book, the authentically Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* of 1928, should not any longer be in use and should cease to be the Formulary (Doctrinal Standard and Norm) of the Episcopal Church.

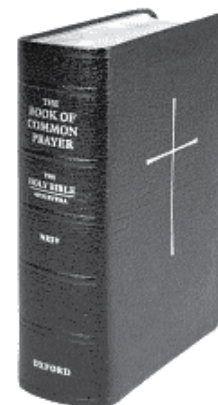
So the adopting a new Prayer Book became also in the U.S.A. the adopting of a new statement of what the Church believed, taught and confessed. Thereby, as the events of the last three decades reveal, a new form of Anglicanism, set on the path of innovations, in part determined by advanced western culture and society, was born in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. Further, a new definition of "Common Prayer," challenging that in use for several centuries, was proposed to the Anglican Way. No longer was it the use of common texts by all clergy in all churches from one or another edition of *The Book of Common Prayer*; but, it was the novel development of the use of varied and different texts, all possessing the same basic structure or shape and having some basic key elements in common..

So what are the chief differences between the authentic edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1928 and the innovatory "Book of Common Prayer" of 1979, with its Rite I and Rite II parts?

**I**n the 1928 is consistent in language and style, using the traditional second person singular for both God and the human person – "thou art." In contrast, Rite I uses the traditional second person singular, as 1928, and Rite II uses the modern form of the second singular; however, there is not sufficient material in the Rite I form for this to become a consistent style and content for worship on all occasions. Significantly, the service of Baptism and the services of ordination are only available in



OR



modern language.)

**2** The 1928 is consistent in its doctrine of God, Christ, sin and salvation, presenting patristic orthodoxy and a reformed Catholicism in all its services. In contrast, there is deliberate variety of doctrine in the 1979 book, ranging from reformed Catholicism to modern liberal Catholicism. Thus it presents no coherent system of worship and doctrine. In some regards 1979 differs radically in doctrine from 1928 as, for example, in the nature and content of the Vow/Covenant in the Baptismal Service and in the changed character and meaning of the rite of Confirmation.

**3** The 1928 has one form of each regular service (e.g., Daily Morning and Evening Prayer & Holy Communion) and thus truly presents common prayer, with congregations in a province all using the same basic text/liturgy in their local circumstances and with local ceremonial. Of course, the readings from the OT & NT and the Psalms change each morning and evening and for each Sunday the Gospel and Epistle change, but there is in principle one basic form of each daily and weekly liturgy. In contrast, the 1979 presents Daily Prayer and the Holy Eucharist in both the Rite I and Rite II forms. In terms of the Eucharist there is a choice of the main ingredient, the Eucharistic prayer, with a variety of options from which to choose. Thus what the 1979 presents is varied prayer, not common prayer.

**4** The 1928 recognizes sin for what it is before God and thus places great emphasis on the need for recognizing human sinfulness, confessing one's sins to God in a humble and penitent manner, turning from sin and looking to God for absolution and remission of sins. Further, the confession of sins before God is seen as a necessary part of the praise of Almighty God, for it is the recognition of his holiness, righteousness and mercy. In contrast, the 1979 clearly places much less emphasis upon the sinfulness of sin and tends to see confession of sin as something to get done quickly so that the real part of worship – celebration – can begin.

**5** The shape or structure of the service of Holy Communion in 1928 is what may be called the Anglican shape, or the reformed catholic structure, that which is found in the editions of *The Book of Common Prayer* from the sixteenth century through to the twentieth. In the 1979 the shape for Rite I and II is deliberately different for it claims to be based on the shape found in the liturgies of the Early Church of the third century, with the “passing of the peace” at the center. (In the 1928 the peace of the Lord is communicated by the Sacrament and then verbally with the Blessing at the end— “The Peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds...” In the Canadian 1962 the Peace is given, as in the traditional Roman Mass, by the Celebrant at the end of the Prayer of Consecration, while the congrega-

tion kneels.)

**6** The version of the Bible used in the Eucharistic Lectionary of 1928 is the KJV except for the Psalter where it is an updated version of the Coverdale translation of the sixteenth century. The translation of various canticles and of the Psalter in 1979 is dominated by the modern principle of dynamic equivalency and also of anti-sexism (so that “Blessed is the man...” becomes “Happy are they...”). The use of these modern theories virtually prevents the Psalter being read and prayed Christologically, that is, with Christ and in Christ in his Body.

**7** The content of the Eucharistic Lectionary of the Epistle and Gospel with Collect in 1928 is ancient, going back through the editions of *The Book of Common Prayer* and the Latin Missal of the Middle Ages to the late patristic era. Its arrangement conveys particular biblical doctrines whose purpose is both to form and inform the minds of those who hear them each year. The modern ECUSA Eucharistic Lectionary is based on modern ecumenical projects from the 1970s and 1980s and has no clear doctrinal aim.

**8** The Calendar in 1928 represents that of reformed Catholicism, whereas that in 1979 represents post-1960s ecumenical agreements. For example, in 1979 the whole period of 50 days from Easter Day until Pentecost Day (Whitsunday) is called Easter and the Sundays are numbered with Easter Day as Easter 1. In 1928 only Easter Day (and week) is Easter, with Sundays afterwards being named “Sundays after Easter” until the Feast of the Ascension, after which it is “the Sunday after the Ascension.” Then the long period after Pentecost/Whitsuntide is the season of Trinity in 1928 but the season of Pentecost in 1979.

**9** The construction of Collects in the 1928 is uniform, following the pattern of the Latin Collects from the fifth century. In the 1979 book various changes are made not only in the content but also in the grammar. The most obvious and important is the change from the relative clause to the declarative clause – that is, from e.g., “O God, who knowest what we need before we ask...” to “God, you know what we need before we ask...” This grammatical change suggests a change in attitude and piety before God, for in the latter one seems to be telling God, the omniscient One, that which he already knows perfectly and fully.

**10** In the 1928 the services of ordination constitute a separate book, with a separate title, “The Form and Manner...” but bound for convenience with the Prayer Book. In the 1979 the ordination services are made part of the Prayer Book as such and they are provided only in a modern language form. Further, the 1979 specifically by its use of words makes possible the ordination of women to all three orders of the sacred Ministry. In fact, as the new Formulary of the Church it establishes the

ordination of women as a received doctrine.

**11** In the 1928 there is full recognition of the spiritual disease of sin which profoundly affects each and every human being, and against this great need, spiritual regeneration, birth from above by the Spirit, is central. In 1979 these truths are not excluded but minimized and further, in the “baptismal covenant” the commitments made to striving for justice and peace and respecting the dignity of human persons have had the effect of confirming the radical social and cultural agenda pursued by the Episcopal Church since the 1960s.

**12** In the 1928 the sacrament/rite of Confirmation is taken most seriously as intimately connected to Baptism but separate in itself and with its own aim. Practically, it gives those baptized as infants the opportunity to make a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and receive the gifts of God through the ministry of the Bishop and his laying on of hands. In the 1979 Confirmation is not required even though in a minimized form it may be used, for that “initiation is complete in Baptism” is the official doctrine of 1979.

**13** In the 1928 there is no specific provision for special services at the end of Holy Week and at Easter Eve. In the 1979 there is such provision. However, the doctrinal content of these services has been reduced so that they do not have the fullness of doctrine of sin and salvation as formerly used by high-church Anglicans in their local adaptation of Roman Catholic services.

**14** In the 1928 there is no specific provision for auricular confession (and thus anglo-catholics had previously used a form of the Roman Catholic usage) but there is provision in the 1979 of “The Reconciliation of a Penitent.” However, once again, the doctrinal content of the form is reduced. In fact the rite in 1979 is the first instance of a rite of penance in the history of the Church to omit any act of penance, substantive or symbolic.

**15** In the 1928 the content of basic Christianity is provided in the Catechism and in the Offices of Instruction. Here the Christian mind is built upon Bible via the Creed, the Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer (what to believe, to

do and to pray). In 1979, the Outline of the Faith, is based upon the contents of the Rite II services and represents a new law of prayer creating a new law of belief!

In summary, the title of the 1928 BCP is a correct description of what is inside the covers, while the title of the 1979 is not so. The use of the ancient title may be called an act of piracy which took the title of one thing and made it the title of a different thing. It was an act of robbery which took away from devout Episcopalians a consistent form of prayer, which has the purpose of guiding people into living a godly life as the congregation of Christ’s flock and as the Body of Christ and Household of God. Of the new Prayer Book, it may be claimed that its use for worship and teaching has been a major factor in the continuing move of the Episcopal Church away from historic Anglican worship, doctrine, discipline, polity and morality toward ever more innovation.

### **Essay and Books to read for further details of differences:**

Urban T. Holmes, “Education for Liturgy,” in *Worship Points the Way* (Seabury Press, 1981, edited by M. C. Burson). This shows as clearly as possible that the 1979 is a different book with a deliberately changed doctrine.

Massey H. Shepherd, “The Patristic Heritage of the BCP of 1979” in *The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, Volume 53, pp.221. ff. This shows how committed were the creators of 1979 to the model for liturgy that they claimed to find in the early Church.

Louis R. Tarsitano & Peter Toon, *Neither Orthodox Nor a Formulary. The Shape and Content of the 1979 Prayer Book* (Prayer Book Society of the U.S.A., 2004).

Peter Toon & Louis R. Tarsitano, *Neither Archaic Nor Obsolete. The Language of Common Prayer and Public Worship* (Edgeways Books, England & Prayer Book Society U.S.A., 2003).

Peter Toon, *Worship without Dumbing Down. Knowing God through Liturgy* (Preservation Press of the Prayer Book Society U.S.A., 2005)

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## **Handel’s *Messiah***

*Continued from page 12*

different recordings of *Messiah*, each undertaking the work with a different musical approach, a different enterprising conductor, a different world-class ensemble and different palate of big-name soloists.

One might wonder if it is very remarkable that a man like Jennens, an outsider in mainstream English society because of his deeply held convictions, should so decisively rise above his contemporaries for his part in producing a cultural icon like *Messiah*. Perhaps it really isn’t so remarkable, consider-

ing his participation in a Church tradition that was strong, orthodox and which promoted his spiritual formation in the way that the Anglican tradition did. For faithful Anglicans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, once again marginalized in popular culture, we have access to a great spiritual inheritance and the same spiritual tools from which Charles Jennens benefited so greatly. May we be heartily encouraged by Jennens’ example of devotion to our *Messiah* and to His Church, and also be diligent in keeping our wonderful tradition alive.

# What to Pray on Christmas Day

**I**n the *Ecclesia Anglicana* before she began to use English (as the Church of England) 1549, there were Three Latin Collects for Christmas Day. The Missal of Sarum (Salisbury) in use up to 1549 made provision for three Masses for this high festival – one at cockcrow, one at the break of dawn, and one in full daylight.

At the Mass at cockcrow the Collect prayed (in translation):

*O God, who madest this most sacred night to shine with the brightness of the true Light; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, as we have known the revelations of the Light upon earth, so we may also have the fruition of his joys in heaven; who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God world without end. Amen.*

This recalls Jesus as the Light of the world especially as he is so presented in the Prologue and Text of the Gospel according to St. John.

At the Mass at dawn the Collect prayed:

*Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, to us upon whom the new light of the Word made flesh is shed forth, that the light which shines by faith in our hearts may also shine brightly in our works. Through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.*

This also specifically recalls the Prologue of the Gospel according to St. John.

At the Mass in the full light of day the Collect prayed:

*Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the new birth of thy only-begotten Son through the flesh may set free those, who are held fast by the old bondage under the yoke of sin. Through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.*

Here the Incarnation of the Son of God, born from Mary his virgin mother, is seen as the basis for the salvation offered to us through the same Jesus Christ.

In the provision for the new *Book of the Common Prayer* (1549), the reformed Church of England pro-

vided only one Collect along with the Epistle and Gospel set for the third Mass in the Latin Church. However this Collect was a new creation from the hand of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

*Almighty God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit through the same Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.*

In this Collect we have a most beautiful combination of sound doctrine and of inspired petition.

The Son of God was the Second Person of the Holy Trinity before he took to himself human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary. At the Annunciation and Conception, Mary conceived Jesus miraculously by the presence of the Holy Ghost; at the same time the Son of God who had eternally his divine nature acquired the beginnings of a human nature, so he became One Person made known in two natures, divine and human.

As the Son of God was born according to his human nature from Mary, Blessed Virgin, so each of us is to be born of the Holy Ghost into the kingdom of God and thereby made into the adopted children of God, through the love of the Father and the grace of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as the Son of God in his human nature lived as Jesus of Nazareth, fulfilling the vocation of the Messiah and Suffering Servant of God, so we are to fulfill the vocation of the children of God called unto holiness and service in the kingdom and church of God our Father.

Christmas is a time for rejoicing with the heavenly host that the Son of God has become man for us and our salvation. It is also a time to see and accept what is the vocation of the regenerate children of God and by the help of the Holy Ghost fulfill the same during the whole Christian Year.

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