

MANDATE

The Bi-Monthly Magazine of the Prayer Book Society

Volume 26, Number 4

July/August 2003

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The Primates of 38 Provinces Meet in Brazil



Where can I find a church that uses the 1928 Prayer Book?



Huntington Station

Good Shepherd (Anglican Church of America)
210 West Pulaski Road (V.F.W. Hall)
Huntington Station, NY
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 145
Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724
516 423 6029
Sunday 10:00 am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd, 5th) · *Morning Prayer* (2nd, 4th)
The Rev. Joel Alligood, Priest-in-Charge

East Islip

St. Stephen's (Anglican Catholic Church)
127 Country Village Lane · East Islip, NY
Mailing Address: 129 Country Village Lane · East Islip, NY 11730
631 277 4271
Sunday 10:00 am Holy Communion
The Rev. Canon Stanley F. Lazarczyk, Rector

West Islip

SS. Peter & Paul (Anglican Province of the Good Shepherd)
44 Wavcrest Ave. · West Islip, NY 11795
631 422 0428
Sunday 11:00 am Holy Communion
The Rev. Peter Robert Raimondi, OSA, Rector

We list parishes using the 1928 BCP by state or area, their ecclesiastical jurisdiction (Episcopal Church or "Continuing Church"), and all of their services, if from the 1928, or the ones that use the 1928 BCP. The Reformed Episcopal Church uses a Prayer Book which includes both the 1662 (Church of England) and much from the 1928.

An excellent reference is the *Directory of Traditional Anglican and Episcopal Parishes*, published by the Fellowship of

New York City/Long Island

New York City

St. Mary Magdalene (Anglican Province of Christ the King)
339 East 84th Street (Zion St. Mark's Church Building) · New York, NY
Mailing Address: 4 Connecticut Avenue
Greenwich, CT 06830
203 861 2432
Sunday 3:00 pm Holy Communion
The Rev. Robert Bader, SSC, Rector

First Reformed Episcopal Church

(Reformed Episcopal Church)
317 E. 50th Street · New York, NY 10022
212 755 0995
Sunday 11:00 am Holy Communion (1st & 3rd) · *Morning Prayer* (2nd & 4th)
The Rev. Gregory C. McComas, Rector
The Rev. Walter G. Truesdell, Sr., Assistant

Peoples Cathedral of Brooklyn

(Independent)
910 Union Street · Brooklyn, NY 11215
718 783 8204
Sunday 10:00 am Holy Communion
The Rt. Rev. Heron A. Sam, Pastor
The Rev. Charles Wilcox, Assistant
The Rev. Henry Geohaghan, Assistant

Concerned Churchmen. This directory does not tell what prayer book is used. You may order from the editor, Mrs. Jane Nones, 4800 Dupont Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55409, telephone: (612)824 3933.

Please let us know of other parishes that use the 1928 BCP. We are glad to know of them, and also that folks are reading *Mandate*. Since we can only list each parish once, it might be a good idea to keep the issues of *Mandate* that have this column to use for future reference.

Church of the Resurrection

(The Episcopal Church)
119 East 74th Street
New York, NY 10021
212 879 4320
Sunday 8:30 am Holy Communion (not in July or August)
11:00 am Holy Communion
The Rev. Canon Barry E.B. Swain, SSC, Rector

St. Joseph's (Anglican Catholic Church)

123-131 Arlington Avenue - Cypress Hills
Brooklyn, NY 11203
718 756 2709
Sunday 9:00 am Morning Prayer
10:30 am Holy Communion
The Rev. Canon Neville Brathwaite, Rector

St. Mary's (Reformed Episcopal Church)

415 East 143rd Street
Bronx, NY 10454
718 665 9446
Sunday 8:00 am Holy Communion
11:00 am Holy Communion (1st-3rd)
11:00 am Morning Prayer (4th)
The Rev. Belgrave Pelle, Rector

Please write the Rev. Fr. David C. Kennedy, SSC, at 1325 Cardinal Lane, Lantana, FL 33462-4205 if you know of parishes that use the 1928 BCP. Needless to say it will take a long time to list them all! Praise God for that!!!

THE MANDATE

July / August 2003
Volume 26, Number 4

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The Members of the Board of Directors of the Prayer Book Society: The Rev'd Wayland Coe (Texas); The Rev'd Joseph S. Falzone (Pennsylvania); Mr. Michael W. Freeland (Pennsylvania); Dr. Herb Guerry (Georgia); The Rev'd David C Kennedy SSC (Florida); The Rev'd Bill Martin (California);

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The Rev'd Dr. Peter Toon (England); Mr. Luther Dan Wallis (California); & Mr. W. Denman Zirkle (Florida).

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Reflections from the Editor's Desk

The Prayer Book & Homily Society

The Rev'd Dr. Peter Toon M.A., M.Th., D.Phil
(Oxon)

It may appear strange that a Society once existed in England to distribute not only *The Book of Common Prayer* (of which the SPCK was the major distributor) but also *The Book of Homilies* (which the SPCK did not distribute). *The Book of Homilies* from the age of Elizabeth I is referred to in Article XXXV of *The Articles of Religion*, printed at the back of the Prayer Book. It contains sermons to be read in parish churches by clergy who are not skilled in divinity and biblical study and who need to communicate sound doctrine and practice to the parishioners.

With respect to *The Book of Homilies* the American Prayer Book Society has made available four CD's in two sets (*Six Edwardian Homilies* and *Six Elizabethan Homilies*—see page 16 below) which contain recordings of some of the most significant sermons from this Collection and which were read in churches in England. Take a listen to them! You will be surprised just how sophisticated they are for ordinary people in the sixteenth century.

But back to The Prayer Book and Homily Society. The reason for the existence of one society to do this task in distributing two books lies in the particular nature and work of The British and Foreign Bible Society (founded 1804), founded by evangelical Christians from the State Churches of England and Scotland together with Congregationalists and Baptists and Methodists.

On 20th May 1812 a group of Church of England evangelical clergy and laity met in The Freemasons' Tavern in Great Queen Street, London, to form "The Prayer Book and Homily Society". These founders together with the majority of the early supporters were also members of the Church Missionary Society (founded 1799) and the British and Foreign Bible Society. The latter society could not by its charter distribute specifically Anglican things and so the new society arose to complement the work of evangelical churchmen in the Bible Society. For to be genuinely Anglican Christians, with Anglican doctrine and ethos, the Anglican Churches overseas, as well as the Churches in Britain, needed not only the Bible but also both *The*

Book of Common Prayer and (to be evangelically Protestant & reformed Catholic) the exposition of Protestant Christianity found in *The Articles & The Book of Homilies*.

The purpose of The Prayer Book and Homily Society was to print and distribute *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) in English and in other languages, as needed by missionaries; and also to publish *The Book of Homilies* as an authoritative source (even formulary) of the foundational doctrine of the Church of England by law established.

We know from the annual reports (available for most years from 1813 to 1874) found in the British Library, London, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford, that the Society published editions of the Prayer Book in 12 languages, the Homilies only in English, and was at its peak of activity around 1830.

Apparently no archives of the Society have been preserved and the Society has not yet attracted a historian to write its history, a history which can only be understood in relation to the nineteenth century evangelical concern to have people read the Bible in the context of worshipping God with "that most perfect

liturgy" (as they called it) of the BCP and with a mind informed by the reformed catholic (= protestant) teaching of the official Homilies. There is surely a major historical article, or perhaps a thesis, to be written on this Society, of which we appear to know far too little.

The American Prayer Book Society was formed in 1971 and so, if it lasts as long as the Prayer Book and Homily Society it still has a few years to run, until 2032! Certainly the need to keep the classic Prayer Book in print, to encourage congregations to use it, to help them understand its worship, doctrine and discipline, and to use all means (e.g., CD's, books and videos) to this end are tasks facing the American Society. So please keep on praying for its President and all the Directors (their names are on page 2) and please also keep on sending in your donations and writing the name of the Society into your will. The Board is so grateful to those who do write the Prayer Book Society into their wills. Thank you! And thanks be to God for their generosity.



William H. Ralston

Priest & Scholar, for whom the traditional Book of Common Prayer was “that most excellent Liturgy”

The Rev'd Dr. William H. Ralston died at the age of 73 on May 11, 2003, at St. Joseph's Hospital, Savannah, Georgia. His Memorial Service was at St John's Church on Tuesday 20 May.

He was a founding member and initial leader of the Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer from 1971 and used *The Book of Common Prayer* (1928) all his life and ministry. His account of the origins of the Society appeared in this magazine two years ago.

Born in Kentucky, he attended the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, before going to General Theological Seminary, New York City, and then to Harvard and Cambridge Universities. He was ordained deacon and priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA.

He taught at Sewanee both in the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of English for some years before being called to be the rector of St John's Church, Savannah, on March 12, 1974, as its twelfth rector. After a distinguished ministry he retired as Rector Emeritus in October 1999, being succeeded by his assistant, the Rev'd Dr. Michael L. Carreker.

Upon his retirement, in a Resolution of the

Vestry of the Church, it was written:

“For over 25 years with God as his preventing guide, and good humor as his assistant, he has been teacher, adviser, counsellor, persuader, coaxer, cajoler, friend and father to his sometimes

difficult, but always devoted parishioners, who love him clearly, thereby bringing them closer to, with a great knowledge of, the Triune God.”

His sole memorial derives from the Book of Ecclesiasticus: *He beautified their feasts.*

For those who would like to see a full obituary written by one who knew him and admired him, I commend “The Parish Paper of St John's Church” Vol. 34. No 25, May 18 2003 (phone 912 232 1251). Here Dr Carreker describes him eloquently as “Priest, Friend, Defender of the Faith.” The tribute

ends in this way: “He has gone home to hear Homer sing and to converse with Francis and Bonaventure. The Lord Jesus welcomes him as a good and faithful servant. Now William continues as who he is, but made perfect by the blood of the Lamb. He offers the priestly praise of heaven. He delights in sublime friendship. And he is lost in the clarity of vision that needs no defense and suffers no deception, but rests in the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.”



Human Sexuality

From the Letter of the Primates, May 2003

We take seriously the duty laid upon us by the Lambeth Conference 1998 to monitor ongoing discussion of this matter and encourage continued study and reflection in the context of common prayer and worship. We are grateful to the Archbishop of the West Indies, Drexel Gomez, for taking forward our discussion on matters of sexuality by introducing the booklet *True Union in the Body?*, which fruitfully illuminated our study. We are also grateful to Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold for drawing our attention to the Report of the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) on this issue. We commend the study of both documents.

The question of public rites for the blessing of same sex unions is still a cause of potentially divisive controversy. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke for us all when he said that it is through liturgy that we express what we believe, and that there is no theological consensus about same sex unions. Therefore, we as a body cannot support the authorisation of such rites.

This is distinct from the duty of pastoral care that is laid upon all Christians to respond with love and understanding to people of all sexual orientations. As recognised in the booklet *True Union*, it is necessary to maintain a breadth of private response to situations of individual pastoral care.

The Purpose & Content of Worship

The Exhortation in Morning and Evening Prayer

In *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662 & 1928) there is at the beginning of the services of Morning & Evening Prayer an Exhortation which declares concisely and with feeling the very purpose of the services. Indeed, the Exhortation may be said to give a general statement of the purpose of Christian worship. In 1662 it is compulsory while in 1928 it may be replaced by, "Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God." Let us go through it slowly and analyse it.

Dearlly beloved brethren... The Minister presumes that the congregation is made up of fellow Christians who like him are loved by God the Father for the sake of his Son, Jesus Christ the Lord, and further that they are baptized believers seeking to love one another.

...the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father... many times in the Bible the sinfulness of man is made clear and he is called not only to recognize and acknowledge his actual sins but also his internal wickedness. In the opening Sentences of the service, before this Exhortation, some of these biblical texts appear. Thus all those gathered for worship should not seek to hide or cover or escape from their sins before the all-searching eyes of God.

...but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart... after recognizing our sins and sinfulness and how these are offensive to the holiness and love of God, our clear duty is to confess them, not in parrot fashion, but in humility, repentance and with a view to obeying God in all things from the depths of our hearts.

...to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. God our Father does not usually forgive his sinful and disobedient children unless they ask him in a suitably penitent manner. Later in this service of Morning/Evening Prayer, the declaration will be heard, "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel." And this Absolution and Remission of sins proceeds from the infinite goodness and mercy of God the Father for the sake of Jesus Christ.

And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at

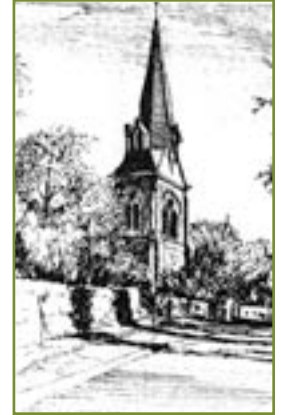
his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are necessary as well for the body as the soul. The confession of sins is an essential part of worship for by it we acknowledge and praise the divine holiness, mercy and judgment. It is not a kind of preliminary that we must get over in order to engage in true worship for it is a part of true worship in spirit and in truth. Here it is recognized that true worship consists at least of (a) Penitence; (b) Praise and Thanksgiving; (c) The Reading of the Scriptures; and (d) Petitionary Prayers. And all these elements are to be found in the service which follows. God is praised through the chanting of Psalms and Canticles, his Word is heard in the lessons from the Old and New Testaments and the prayers occur at the end, beginning with the Collect of the day/week. [It is, of course, possible to preach a sermon at the end of either Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer on the Lord's Day.]

Wherefore, I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me... Thus the Minister invites all to join with him in the act of worship beginning with the confession of sins. It is important that they all proceed in the right spirit—a pure heart and humble voice.

In the version of Common Prayer that was proposed in England in 1928 but never accepted by the Parliament, the following Exhortation was presented as a substitute for that in the 1662 Prayer Book.

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of Almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and shew forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all men such things as their well-being doth require. Wherefore let us kneel in silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

In the 1979 prayer book of the Episcopal Church, the Exhortation (p.41) is shorter than in the 1928 BCP and changes the doctrine concerning the confession of sins. Here it is seen as being a preparation for worship, not a necessary part of worship, and this is a major change of doctrine and emphasis, with important pastoral repercussions.



The General Confession in *The Book of Common Prayer*

A comprehensive Confession of Sin for honest Christians



The General Confession, which follows the Exhortation and precedes the Absolution, of Morning and Evening Prayer (in the BCP 1662 and USA 1928) is of exceedingly high quality as a spoken prayer of God's assembled people. It contains a remarkable union of simplicity and fervour of tone together with solidity and exactness of thought. It falls into three parts (a) the actual confession of sin; (b) the petition for pardon, and (c) the prayer for grace.

Let us examine these three parts:

Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from they ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is most appropriately addressed as both omnipotent and also merciful. Because of these eternal attributes he is well able to forgive and cleanse sin in the whole of mankind through all space and time.

The essential character of evil before God is made clear in terms of its practical reality, straying from his ways and following our own desires and paths. Herein is the root of sin revealed, the self choosing of our own "devices" and the self-will of our own "desires", which lead inevitably to acting contrary to God's revealed law and commandments. This disobedience takes the form of sins both of commission and omission and its general effect is to destroy the health of the soul, making a proper, creaturely, relation to God in friendship and communion impossible. The image of God in man is defaced and immersed in sickness and needs to be restored and renewed. In such a condition—as seen by God—are all of us, whatever our education and good manners, and whatever our human achievements and successes.

But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord.

The plea for pardon to the Father, who is the Lord, is not made glibly but earnestly and honestly. It is based wholly on the promise of absolution, remission and pardon declared in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and on the call for faith, penitence and confession of sins also contained

in that same Gospel. What God has promised, his people are wise to desire and ask for.

And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

The verb "grant" is a strong form of petition and is common in Collects; and it is matched by a powerful emphasis upon the mercy of God, the Father, who is not only addressed as "most merciful" but is reminded of the Atonement and Heavenly Intercession of his Son ("for his sake"). The forgiven children of God recognize that they are to live in godliness (always remembering their duty to God), in righteousness (always doing their duty to their neighbour) and in soberness (not forgetting their duty to themselves), and all being done exclusively to God's glory. Absolution, remission, forgiveness and pardon from God the Father for Jesus Christ's sake should produce a thankful, obedient and faithful people. Such is the perfect will of God. The "Amen" or "So be it" is the final underlining of what is desired and asked for.

In summary it may be noted that this Confession is based on St Paul's analysis of sin in Romans 7: 8-25 and verses cited or quoted in it are in this order: Isaiah 53:6; Psalm 119:176; 1 Peter 2:25; Proverbs 19:21; Jeremiah 18:12; 2 Chronicles 28:13; Matthew 23:23; Psalm 38:3; Luke 18:13; Psalm 51:1; Nehemiah 13:22; Psalm 51:12; Romans 15:8; 1 John 2:12; Titus 2:11-12 & John 14:13.

This Confession should be compared with that in the Order for Holy Communion:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Absolution

The Declaration of Pardon & Forgiveness

Following the General Confession in the Services of Morning and Evening in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662 & USA, 1928), there follows “The Absolution, or The Remission of sins.” It is pronounced by the priest alone, standing, as the people remain kneeling. This authoritative Declaration consists of three parts: (a) Preamble; (b) the Absolution itself, and (c) and Exhortation. It contains much godly wisdom and food for thought and action.

Let us take it part by part.

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power, and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins:

The source of forgiveness, pardon, absolution and remission of sins is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his Revelation, recorded in sacred Scripture, he has made very clear that he desires that his creatures, made in his image, be in friendship and communion with him not only in this age but in that to come. He does not wish that they be in a state of enmity and spiritual death. “As I live,” saith the Lord God, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live” (Ezekiel 33:11). Thus he sent his only-begotten Son into the world to save men from their sins and wickedness.

It is through the same Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is given all authority in heaven and earth, that forgiveness of sins is made possible and that Ministers are commissioned and given authority by him to pronounce in his Name the absolution and remission of sins (see Matthew 16:19; 18:18; John 20:22,23). “To absolve” is to deliver from the bondage of sin and “to remit” is to take away the guilt of sin, and they both belong together as one action of Jesus Christ.

He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

These words stand out and are the very center of this Absolution. As the Catechism in *The Book*

of Common Prayer makes clear, the conditions for both Baptism and the Holy Communion are Repentance and Faith (a faith that works by love). In repentance we cease to trust in ourselves, and in faith we trust in God. The actual Forgiveness is from the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, but pronounced by the Minister. These conditions of repentance and faith/trust are based upon the words of Jesus and his apostles—see Mark 1:14-15; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38,

Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy ; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



The Minister calls upon all who have received the word of forgiveness to pray to God the Father in the Name of Jesus Christ for two necessities—a repentant heart & the gift of the Holy Spirit to indwell the heart—in order that this act of worship will be pleas-

ing to God and that the church as a body, and each members thereof, will be pure and holy in daily living. Further, the Minister reminds the people of the End and Purpose of their Christian lives as repentant believers—the communion, peace and joy of the life of the age to come, where all, fully redeemed in soul and body, shall partake of the beatific vision, seeing the glory of the Father in the face of Jesus Christ, his Incarnate Son.

With this Declaration of Forgiveness should be compared the Absolution in The Order for Holy Communion: *Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

[When a Reader is taking the service of Morning/Evening Prayer it is customary for him to pray: “Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”]

The VERB

in Liturgical Absolutions

At the beginning of the Latin Mass after the Confession of sins, the Priest says, *Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis vestris, perducat vos ad vitam* and the people respond with “Amen”. Then the Priest says, *Indulgentiam, absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum, tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus* and the people respond with “Amen”.

Here we have the use of the Jussive Subjunctive, that form of the Subjunctive which normally expresses a command or order. *Fiat Lux*—Let there be light.

Now there is no doubt but that Roman Catholic doctrine presupposes that an ordained Priest has been given authority by the Lord Christ to pronounce surely and really the absolution, remission and pardon of sins to the penitent. Thus the use of the Jussive Subjunctive in the Absolution is to be understood as putting this doctrine into place and action so that what the Priest says is a sure word of the Lord to the penitent.

So in whatever way we translate the Latin into English we must communicate this certainty, which is a divine certainty.

If we look in *The Book of Common Prayer* at the Absolutions there, which were written in the sixteenth century as translations of Latin originals, we find that the jussive subjunctive is rendered thus: *“Almighty God, our heavenly Father,...have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins...”* Here the Priest utters a sure word of God to those who are repentant and believe the Gospel.

If we look in the Anglican Missals, produced by Anglo-Catholics to enrich the Order of Holy Communion in the Prayer Book from the Latin Mass, we find that the Latin quoted above is translated thus: *“Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life”* & *“The Almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of sins.”*

However, when we turn to several of the Missals of the 1950s and 1960s for use by Roman Catholic laity in the USA, and where the Latin is on one side and an English translation on the opposite side, we find a different approach to translation. For example, in *The Marian Missal* (Regina Press, NYC, 1963), the English translations are: *“May almighty God be merciful unto you, and forgiving you your sins, bring you to everlasting life”* & *“May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon,*

absolution and remission of our sins.”

And in the official translation of the modern Roman Catholic Mass, the use of “May” continues: *“May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.”* However, if one examines the German, French, Spanish, Portugese and Italian translations of the Latin they are more like the traditional English translation of the Anglican Missals, expressing a performative power of divine certainty.

Modern Anglican liturgists, while not abandoning completely the traditional English style and form of Absolution, seem to prefer the modern Roman Catholic way. In *Common Worship* (2000) of the Church of England, where a large variety of Absolutions is provided the greater proportion of them is in the “May” form.

Very few people understand the mysteries of the subjunctive, let alone the jussive subjunctive, but, generally speaking, most people regard the use of “may” as not communicating a certainty—e.g. “I may come to see you” is far from certain and “May you get better” is merely the expression of a wish.

Why this preference for “may” forms in the new liturgies? Here are four possible answers which need not be mutually exclusive. The first (which seems to have informed some RC translations) is a sense of humility and a lack of human presumption towards the Almighty (even though this method reduces the certainty of forgiveness being heard by the people). The second is the general ignorance and awkwardness of liturgical language devised by committees of liturgists who are not specialists in language per se. For some, it appears, inserting the word “may” makes the text more elegant. The third is the possible egalitarianism of members of these liturgical committees, so that they prefer to avoid giving the impression that the priestly office carries with it some special authority or power of absolution that is not inherent in “the whole people of God. The fourth is that with the generally lowered sense of sin in church people today, the desire for an absolution that is certain and clear is not so intense now in comparison with earlier times.

It would appear that Thomas Cranmer and his fellow editors of the Prayer Book had the right sense of the jussive subjunctive in Absolutions and their style of translation is the correct one, if, and only if, we intend that the Absolution be a sure word of God to the penitent and if the Minister is truly the minister of the Lord.



Biblical Preces

Lips and Mouth that declare God's Praise

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

This exchange or dialogue is from *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1662/1928 and occurs immediately after the first recital of the Lord's Prayer in Morning & Evening Prayer. Since the Lord's Prayer opens the service of praise it is in its complete form, with the Doxology ("For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory...").

From singular to plural

In fact in the first edition of *The Book of the Common Prayer* (1549) the Morning Office, called Mattins, actually began with these words and they were in the second person singular.

Priest. *O Lord open thou my lips;*

Answer. *And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

Here, in the use of the singular, the first English Prayer Book of 1549 is in accord with both the original in a Hebrew Psalm and also with the Latin Morning Office from which the versicles (short ejaculatory prayers, Latin, *prex, preces*) were immediately

taken by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

In this versicle there is a specific petition made of God followed by a statement of faith as to what will be the result when the petition is granted.

In the second edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1552), to serve a new situation in the parishes, the singular (my) became plural (our). Morning Prayer was being seen by many as a public service for Sunday and weekdays rather than as a daily office to precede the Holy Communion. Thus the plural was used in the versicle—**our** lips and **our** mouth. And the plural form has stayed in the various editions of the BCP since 1552 to cater for Mattins & Evensong being "the people's service".

Minister. *O Lord, open thou our lips;*

Answer. *And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

Origin in the Psalter

In origin, the words are from Psalm 51 verse 15, a psalm used for long centuries in the daily diet of psalmody by the religious in monasteries and con-

vents, and of course, a psalm read as a Christian prayer. Miles Coverdale translated the lines thus for the Psalter of the Book of Common Prayer:

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Here the prayer is less a petition than an assured and confident address to, and claim being made upon, God.

But the Authorized Version or King James Version (1611) and, surprisingly, the Revised Standard Version (1952) of the Bible followed Cranmer's 1549 rendering:

O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

However, the *New English Bible* (1970) followed by the *Revised English Bible* (1989) translated:

Open my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may proclaim thy [your] praise.

In all these various renderings the basic teaching is abundantly clear. It is only when the Lord our God by his Spirit opens our lips that from our mouths truly proceeds the praises of God. Let us therefore seek to examine

and apply this teaching or doctrine.

But before we do proceed to this examination and application let us note that in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549, 1552 & 1662), together with the versicle from Psalm 51, there is also another versicle, this time from Psalm 70 verse 1—Psalm 70 being yet another psalm much used over the centuries by religious in the early morning.

O God, make speed to save us;

O Lord, make haste to help us.

We may observe in passing that these lines were never part of the American editions [1789, 1892 & 1928] of the BCP. The standard Prayer Books of the PECUSA went straight from "and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise" to the lesser *Gloria*. (Why they did so is to be explained in terms of latitudinarian influence in the 1780s, influence which also kept the Athanasian Creed out of the Prayer Book.)

The Sursum Corda of the Daily Office

As we think about the double provision of



versicles and responses in the Prayer Book of 1662, it can be said that they represent for us the *Sursum Corda* of the Daily Services, the “Lift up your hearts” of the daily offices. Yet the nature of this psalm-based *Sursum Corda* is not celebratory in the modern sense of this over-used word, for the versicles are drawn from psalms which have a strong tone of humility and penitence before God, and this tone stays with them. It may be noted that the rubrics keep us kneeling until we have completed “make haste to help us.” Further, it is probably to contain the penitential flavour that the music note to which the first of them is said/ chanted is always a low one, being depressed as much as a fifth from the pitch in which the Lord’s Prayer has previously been recited.

So these versicles provide a solemn type of *Sursum Corda* within the Daily Office.

O Lord open thou our lips.

Here we have not only the direct addressing of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord our God, the Father Almighty, as “O Lord”; but, also, a further direct looking to him by the use of the word “thou” which is not strictly required for the petition to make sense. By the addition and use of “thou” the petition is given absolute clarity. We recognize and accept the basic truth that we are not merely mortals whose life is from our Creator; but also, at the same time, we accept the further truth that we are also sinners, whose ability to say anything truly belonging to the praise of Almighty God is only and solely by his inspiration, guidance and enabling.

Further, in these days of vague, careless and sometime heretical thinking and speaking to, and about, God, as God, the use of the second person singular pronoun emphasizes that we truly address and really call upon One and only One God, who is one Godhead, one Divinity and Deity, even though he exists eternally as Three Persons.

As creatures with free will we may think we have the ability to use our lips as we will, but, in fact, we can only use them to utter the praise of the LORD if and only if his Spirit energizes and moves them. Otherwise what we say is mere words, words without genuine divine content and divine energy.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

What our mouth and our lips together achieve follows from what God does in our minds, hearts and wills. That is, the basic cause of the praising of

the Father through the Son in Christian worship is the action of the Holy Spirit both in filling the soul/the heart with the desire to praise and also providing the inspiration for the verbal content of the praise that we utter and declare.

What occurs in authentic worship, that is in spirit and in truth, and what occurs in spiritual worship, that is in the beauty of holiness, is that the assembled people of God experientially know God both within them and above them. The Spirit of God inspires them inwardly and then in, by and with the same Holy Spirit they adore, praise and thank the Almighty Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator.

When God is known within the heart and praised by purified mouths and ready lips, then the **Gloria** becomes a ready means of expressing adoration and praise - *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.*

Yet before the assembled people of God are fully prepared to arise from their knees and utter the praise of their Creator, Redeemer and Judge, who is their heavenly Father, on their own behalf and [importantly] on behalf of the whole created order, they make one more petition of their Lord & God:

O God, make speed to save us;

O Lord, make haste to help us.

The Scriptures inform us that the people of God are those (a) who have been saved by the mighty, redeeming act of God in the once-for-all death and resurrection of Jesus, (b) who are being saved now in and from this evil age, and (c) who look forward to full, final and complete salvation after the resurrection of the Dead and the judgment of the nations. Thus in this versicle they renew their petition for retaining and experiencing God’s salvation, which is always wholly and only by grace and mercy. God is faithful but they know their own unfaithfulness—thus their earnest request. They are conscious that if they are to utter the praise of God on behalf of the world and the whole creation, they should do so as the being-saved people of God, those whom he is preparing for everlasting life and communion with the Father through the Son and by the Holy Spirit for ages to come.

Thus it is that the assembled people of God, led and inspired by the Spirit of God, utter the praise of the Holy Trinity, first in the lesser *Gloria* and then in the appointed Psalmody for the day.



The Archbishop of Canterbury in Brazil

The following is the text of the sermon preached from John's Gospel, chapter 17, by the Archbishop of Canterbury at a Celebration for the Unity of the People of God, which was held in Gramado, Brazil, on Saturday 24 May, at the Primates annual Meeting.

What is it that Jesus Christ gives us? And what is it that we are to give to the world? Jesus answers us in today's gospel, in the clearest possible way. He gives us glory; and what we are given, we must share. Certainly, he gives us forgiveness, life, confidence, the promise of eternal rest in God—but in this passage from John's gospel, he sums it all up in the word 'glory,' because what he longs to give us is ultimately just what the Father gives him.

It isn't a very easy word to translate or understand for many people these days. We associate glory with fame or success - and Jesus on his way to a humiliating and dreadful death is obviously not someone who possesses that kind of glory. Instead, he speaks, a few verses later, of a glory given by the Father before the world was made. And the picture conjured up for us is of a radiant light streaming from the Father, reflected without any loss or inequality in the face of the Son. The Son, who becomes human for us in Jesus never turns from the Father, and so never loses that radiant light; Jesus in his life on earth never loses it—though it is only for a moment, at the Transfiguration, that his face literally shows this eternal light. And if we keep ourselves turned to Jesus, then that same light is reflected in our faces, and it lights up the world around.

The relationship between Jesus and God his Father is the foundation for this radiance; and so, obviously, the relation between Jesus and us is what makes the light travel still further. But what is important in this gospel passage is that it is also the relationship between us as Christians that makes the light shine that causes the glory to radiate.

When we are turned to Jesus, glory is reflected - St Paul says just this in II Corinthians. But when we are turned to each other the same is true. The glory given by Jesus is given so that we may become one; and this implies that it is when we are one with each other that the glory shines out for others.

To turn to Christ is in practice always to turn to each other. Conversion is always conversion to one another if it is truly and fully conversion to Jesus. And when we are 'turned around' like this,

glory becomes visible. The Church is a place of glory when we see each other face to face and give thanks—like Jacob meeting Esau in the Genesis story: Esau welcomes and forgives his brother, and Jacob says, "Truly, your face is like the face of God to me." One of the great joys of belonging to a worldwide communion is that we can always encounter fresh and challenging contexts in which the Christian and Anglican tradition has come alive, and we find the glory of God in the face of the stranger. We have experienced it in our meeting as Primates; we experience it as we receive your welcome, dear friends. We trust that in these meetings

and welcomes, glory will appear: the world will see how our faithful gazing at each other in gratitude and delight makes room for God's own light to be reflected.

When that light is reflected, the landscape changes. Isaiah's prophecy speaks of the desert bursting into flower; the glory of the Lord appears in the glory of the actual physical surroundings—not difficult to understand in our surroundings here. When God's light shines on our world, it becomes infinitely more precious; we cannot in such a light believe that the world is there to



The Archbishop of Brazil, the Most Rev'd Glauco Soares de Lima, right, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the mass begins in Gramado to mark the end of the Primates Meeting.

Photos: Bira Mello/ACNS



A Celebration for the Unity of the People God was held in Gramado with hundreds of local Episcopalians joining in the mass. Here the Primates of Australia, USA, Sudan, Philippines, Indian Ocean and Southern Cone, are shown during the liturgy

exploit and ruin. This great country has had its share of tragedy in the exploitation both of the natural world and of human beings—sometimes both together as in the ravaging of the rain forests which has put so much life, human and non-human, at risk. And when God's light shines on the human faces around us, we cannot treat them as having no interest for us; wherever the light falls, there we see the possibility of a life reflecting God. So there we see yet another face which we must look at with gratitude and hope. This is the foundation of all the work done with those whom the world wants to forget; and it is a real proclamation of the gospel when we hear of the work done by your local churches with the forgotten and those without voices, the indigenous peoples and those who live in the favelas. The Brazilian Church, as we have learned, is one that has given to the poor a degree of loving support out of all proportion to its size, and we wish you every strength and blessing in this work. We pray that glory may dwell in this land, as the eighty fifth psalm puts it.

But we must return to what we do together as a communion, as Primates and people together. Jesus tells us in the gospel reading why our unity matters. Unless we are looking gladly and faithfully at each other, the glory we are given will fail to appear. That does not mean that we don't sometimes have the responsibility of calling each other to turn back to Jesus when it is difficult to see that the brother or sister is turning, to face the Lord, as fully as could be. And this is a service we must ask of each other: tell me when you see me turning from Jesus, when the glory that comes from looking at him has become invisible. Yet, even when we argue, rebuke and find ourselves in deep and painful division, the basic responsibility remains:

to keep looking, to refuse to be turned away from the brother or sister for whom Christ died; to look in hope, until the radiance begins again to appear.

Our Christian calling is to renew the face of the earth, by the Spirit's power. By looking in love at the world and one another, we somehow allow glory to come to light—so that the non-believer may find their own awareness of the world mysteriously changed by the way the Christian neighbour looks at it. "How can I learn to see what you see?" the neighbour asks, if we are living and looking as we should. God calls us to be at every level the agents of transformation—in a ruined and exploited natural environment, of deep divisions and much poverty, and in a Church whose communion can be undermined by fear or suspicion.

You cannot spend half a day in this country without realising that here the guitar is inseparable from the human voice! So I think of the poem by the American writer Wallace Stevens, about The Man with the Blue Guitar :

They said, You have a blue guitar,
You do not play things as they are.

The man replied, Things as they are
Are changed upon the blue guitar.

Things as they are, with human beings left to themselves, so often seem shadowed by death and cruelty. But we have been given another song to sing, we, the ransomed of the Lord returning to Zion with singing. As we sing what we have learned from Jesus, things as they are changed. Glory dwells in our land, the glory that the Son shares with the Father in the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Six Jewelled Miniatures

The Occasional Collects

The English Collects, translated and edited by Archbishop Cranmer, in the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* have been referred to as jewelled minia-

tures. The older an Anglican Christian gets and the more he experiences public & private prayer the more he learns to appreciate these spiritual gems that are in the Christian tradition, often ignored or neglected by churches today.

In *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) there are provided at the end of The Order for Holy Communion six collects which all come from the 1549 BCP. They are prefaced by this rubric: "Collects to be said after the Offertory, when there is no Communion, every such day one or more; and the same may be said also, as often as occasion shall serve, after the Collects either of Morning or Evening Prayer, Communion or Litany, by the discretion of the Minister."

This is a fairly broad permission and so it is not surprising that in the *American Book of Common Prayer* (1928) five of the six together with a further one were placed among the occasional prayers, printed after Evening Prayer, under the heading, "Collects." And here the rubric is: "To be used after the Collects of Morning or Evening Prayer, or Communion, at the discretion of the Minister." So it seems that the use of these Collects in England or America is wholly dependent upon the judgment of the parish priest and if he does not decide to use them they do not get used.

The first collect in the BCP of 1662 (and the second in the BCP of 1928) is: *Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servants towards the attaining of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

In its Latin original this first appeared in the Sacramentary of Gelasius under the general heading, "Prayers for one going on a journey." In the Sarum Use of medieval England it has become a prayer for pilgrims. In the BCP it has become a

prayer for all of us who journey through life. What we know from experience is that real prayer is not natural to the heart. To pray aright we need divine assistance. Further, to travel aright through life towards the goal of everlasting life, we need divine guidance and help. There are many changes in the situations in which we live and further we meet expected occurrences and incidents. Thus at all times we need to be within the care and defence of

our heavenly Father for the sake of his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The second collect in the BCP of 1662 (and found in the Communion Service in the BCP of 1928 after the Commandments) is: *O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy*

commandments; that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

In the Sarum Use this prayer comes at the end of Prime, the first devotions of the day. In the BCP (1662 & 1928) it is not only found in this collection but also as the last prayer of the Confirmation Service. The prayer focuses on the whole person as being both soul and body and looks for sanctification of both in this life in anticipation of the perfection of both soul/heart and body in the resurrected, glorified and immortalised spiritual body of the life of the age to come. Practical holiness in this life is obeying and being conformed to the ways and works of God's law and commandments as these are fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

The third collect in both the BCP of 1662 and of 1928) is: *Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words, which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may through thy grace be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and*



praise of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer made its appearance in the BCP of 1549 and reflects the new religious situation where the Bible is printed in English and generally available to be read not only in church but by the heads of households at family prayers and by teachers in schools. Not only the reading of the Old and New Testaments but also the practical exposition of them in sermons and catechism is in mind. The petition is that the word of God will enter via the senses into the heart and soul and there find a home wherein to grow and bear fruit. (Compare with this collect that for the Second Sunday in Advent: “Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures...”)

The fourth collect in the BCP of 1662 (and the fourth, but slightly amended in the BCP of 1928) is: *Prevent us, O Lord [Direct us, O Lord], in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

In the Sarum Use this prayer is to be said by the priest in the sacristy, when he has taken off the eucharistic vestments, and thus refers to his vocation in the Ministry. In the BCP it is adapted for use by all the people of God. The verb “prevent” is found also in the Easter Collect (“as by thy special grace preventing us...”) and carries the meaning of “anticipate,” suggesting that we need God’s grace to go before us, preparing the way for us, just as much as we need grace be with us in the present and to follow us on our path. The American rendering of “direct” makes good sense but introduces a different meaning into the collect. Perhaps the best commentary on “further us with thy continual help” is the content of the Tenth Article of Religion. “We have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.” Our vocation is to glorify God on earth by our good works that proceed from faith working by love and in hope of life everlasting.

The fifth collect in both the BCP of 1662 and of 1928 is: *Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking: We beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities; and those things, which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us for the worthiness of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

This collect first appeared in the BCP of 1549 and it has been well described as “A Prayer to supply the defects of our other devotions”. The prayer supposes not only that we are finite and mortal but also sinful, spiritually blind and unwor-

thy of divine blessing. It also supposes that God is omniscient, wise, compassionate and gracious who for the sake of his Incarnate Son delights to save and bless sinful creatures who turn to him. When these two lines of thought come together we have such a prayer as this which is a good prayer to offer at the end of our prayers.

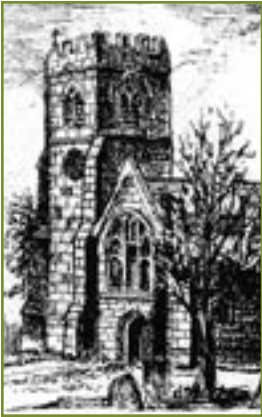
The sixth collect in both in the BCP of 1662 and of 1928 is: *Almighty God, who hast promised to hear the petitions of them that ask in thy Son’s Name: We beseech thee mercifully to incline thine ears to us that have made now our prayers and supplications unto thee; and grant that those things, which we have faithfully asked according to thy will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

This is a prayer to be used as a concluding prayer for it refers to supplications and prayers already offered to the Father. To ask in the Name of the Son is more than using a verbal formula, it is also living in union with the Son, abiding in him. Also this collect suggests two further conditions of genuine prayer—importunate and persevering (suggested by the word “supplications”, earnest prayer), and also faithful (proceeding from faith and out of faithfulness to God’s known will). God answers such prayer in order to meet our genuine needs and necessity as also to enhance his own glory through us his servants.

What is left now is the first collect in the BCP of 1928: *O Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst unto thine apostles, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; Regard not our sins, but the faith of thy Church; and grant to it that peace and unity which is according to thy will, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.*

This is addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Second Person of the Blessed, Holy and Undivided Trinity and it ends with a doxology to the same Trinity. In origin it was a Latin prayer used by the priest as he prepared to give the *Pax*, the gift of peace. It is based on John 16:27. As adapted to general use, the petition presupposes the merits and life-giving words of the Lord Jesus and his presence in his Body, the catholic Church, and asks that what is in the Head of the Body may also be in the Body itself—peace and unity. (In the 1979 prayer book of the ECUSA this collect is included in “The Collect at the Prayers” [p.395] and also in the office for noonday [p.107].)

All these prayers were written, and translated, to be spoken. In their traditional form as given above they possess a winsomeness when they are prayed audibly and clearly with understanding. If they are rendered into modern English and the relative clauses are dropped, then they lose much of their power to be memorable—to be remembered in order to be within the heart.



The King James Version

The Washington Post & Jonathan Yardley

GOD'S SECRETARIES

The Making of the King James Bible

By Adam Nicolson

HarperCollins. 281 pp. \$24.95

The King James Bible, Adam Nicolson writes, "can lay claim to be the greatest work in prose ever written in English." True enough, so far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. The King James Bible is the greatest work ever written in English, period. That alone is quite enough to inspire awe, but there is more. The King James Bible is not the work of a single inspired genius -- a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Dickens -- but of a committee. Too many cooks made it the most splendid broth imaginable. Translated from the Hebrew and Greek in the early 17th century by order of the newly crowned James I, it is a work of such majesty, passion and literary power that even the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies must bow before it.

The story of how it came into being has been told many times -- told, that is, to such extent as it can be told. Commissioned by James early in 1604, apparently in response to a petition from ministers of the Church of England for "one only translation of ye byble to be authentically and read in ye church," it was the work of about four dozen men and took seven years to complete. So few documents have survived this labor -- apart, of course, from the translation itself -- that piecing together the tale is at least as much a matter of intelligent guesswork as of hard research.

This is what Adam Nicolson has done, and he has done it extraordinarily well. A grandson of Vita Sackville-West and the author of several well-received books, he has written *God's Secretaries* for the lay reader rather than the scholar, but this lay reader suspects that it would win the approval of all but the most biased and/or self-interested scholars. In fewer than 250 pages of generously spaced text, it places the King James Version in historical context, brings vividly to life many of those who worked on it (most notably the king himself and Lancelot Andrewes, the churchman who presided over the translation), gives a plausible account of how the task was accomplished, and conveys in Nicolson's own passionate prose the full grandeur of the translation.

There were in 1604 three important English translations of the Bible: William Tyndale's immensely influential New Testament, done in 1525-26, the Geneva Bible, done in the late 1550s "by a small team of English Calvinists" with a

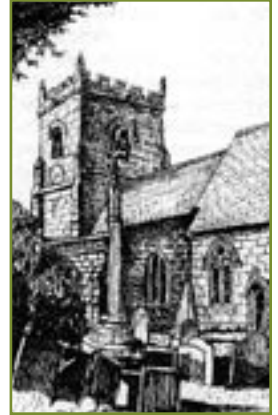
strongly Puritanical bent, and the Elizabethan Bible, done in 1568 by Her Majesty's order, "a Bible of the hierarchy, not of the people."

With the zealous support of Richard Bancroft, newly installed as archbishop of Canterbury, the project got under way in the summer of 1604 even though it "was short of cash." There "could be no waiting for money before the other elements -- above all the organization, the control and checking systems -- were put in place." Bancroft "recognised from the start that the translation had to be a joint enterprise." This was true to the spirit of the age, which treasured "jointness" over individuality, precisely the opposite from what "the modern frame of mind, trained up on . . . the overriding importance of individual freedoms," values most highly.

"Joint committees know nothing of genius," we believe today, and the committees we form sustain us in that conviction. Yet the committee authorized by Bancroft and assembled by Andrewes produced, indisputably, a work of genius. Leaning heavily on earlier translations, Tyndale's most especially, they took the best of the old and embellished it -- with multiple readings and re-readings in various committees and sub-committees -- with the best of the new, producing in the end an astonishing document possessing "immediacy, dignity, a sense of deep, musical rhythm, an intuitive and poetic understanding of the connection between the present and the past, a tangible empathy, a precision . . . a careful elaboration of arrangement and structure."

It is no exaggeration to say, as Nicolson does, that over the centuries the King James Bible came "to seem like the language spoken by God." Its influence upon writers and orators was incalculable: "Lincoln's Gettysburg address . . . would have been impossible without the King James Bible." So too would have been the incomparable oratory -- far and away the greatest, in English, of the 20th century -- of Winston Churchill and Martin Luther King Jr. Yet today, the King James is a relic of the past, relegated to the back of the shelf... replaced with flat, banal language [of modern versions]. Language which submits to its audience, rather than instructing, informing, moving, challenging and even entertaining them, is no longer a language which can carry the freight the Bible requires. It has, in short, lost all authority.

Jonathan Yardley is the book critic of The Washington Post and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism. His e-mail address is yardley@twp.com. © 2003 The Washington Post Company.



The Book of Common Prayer: *Why Does Its Language Work So Well, and Where May I Obtain a Copy?*

First published in 1549 and, in revised and edited forms, published many times since, *The Book of Common Prayer* is still in print and still works in a dignified and efficient way for public worship. Why so?

It is written in a formal, not informal, language, composed of texts produced to be spoken/chanted aloud either by a single person or by the congre-

gation. Further, it is characterized by being the address of an inferior to a superior, never of an equal to an equal. Its purpose is not primarily the communication of information but the vocal expression of the inner convictions of faith, hope and love. It is designed to be read out not once only but often, week by week or day by day, and become the more meaningful by this constant use.

Obtaining a Prayer Book

1. Copies of both the English 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* and the American 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* (in leather and cloth) may be obtained from Oxford University Press in New York City (1-800-334-4249, Bible Department). Discounts for bulk orders from churches.

2. A pew edition of the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* is also available in red binding from the Anglican Parishes Association, 225 Fairway Drive, Athens, GA. 30607 for \$19.95 including postage; a box of 14 copies is available for \$195.30, postage included. Call 706-546-8834.

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