

The ***Book of Common Prayer***<sup>[1]</sup> is the foundational prayer book of the Church of England. It was one of the instruments of the Protestant Reformation in England, and was also adapted and revised for use in other churches in the Anglican Communion. It replaced the various Latin rites that had been used in different parts of the country with a single compact volume in English so that "now from henceforth all the Realm shall have but one use". First produced in 1549, it was drastically revised in 1552 and more subtly changed in 1559 and 1662. It remains, in law, the primary liturgical prayer book of the Church of England, although it has, in practice, been largely replaced by more modern prayer books, the most recent of which is *Common Worship*. A modern liturgical text bearing the BCP name is widely used in the Episcopal Church of America as well as some Methodist churches.

## The Prayer Books of Edward VI

The work of producing English language books for use in the liturgy was, at the outset, the work of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury under the reign of Henry VIII. Whether it was Cranmer who forced the pace or whether the King was the prime mover is not certain, but Cranmer was not one of the "advanced thinkers" who were in touch with contemporary German reform, but rather an observer. His first work, the earliest English-language service book of the Church of England, was the Exhortation and Litany. This was no mere translation: its Protestant character is made clear by the drastic reduction of the place of saints, compressing what had been the major part into three petitions. Published in 1544, it borrowed greatly from Martin Luther's Litany and Myles Coverdale's New Testament, and was the only service that might be considered to be "Protestant" to be finished within the lifetime of King Henry VIII.

It was not until Henry's death in 1547 and the accession of Edward VI that the reform could proceed faster. Cranmer finished his work on an English Communion rite in 1548, obeying an order of Parliament that Communion was to be given as both bread and wine. The service existed as an addition to the pre-existing Latin Mass.

It was included, one year later, in 1549, in a full prayer book, set out with a daily office, readings for Sundays and Holy Days, the Communion Service, Public Baptism, of Confirmation, of Matrimony, The Visitation of the Sick, At a Burial and the Ordinal (added in 1550). (This text of the Communion is online here). The Preface to this edition, which contained Cranmer's explanation as to why a new prayer book was necessary, began: "There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted". The original version was used until only 1552, when a further revision was released.

The 1549 introduction of the Book of Common Prayer was widely unpopular especially in places such as Cornwall where traditional religious processions and

pilgrimages were banned and commissioners sent out to remove all symbols of Roman Catholicism. At the time the Cornish only spoke their native Cornish language and the forced introduction of the English Book of Common Prayer resulted in the 1549 Prayer Book Rebellion. Proposals to translate the Prayer Book into Cornish were suppressed and in total some 4,000 people lost their lives in the rebellion.

The 1552 prayer book marked a considerable change. In response to criticisms by such as Peter Martyr and Martin Bucer deliberate steps were taken to excise Catholic practices and more fully realize the Calvinist theological project in England. In the Eucharist, gone were the words Mass and altar; gone was the 'Lord have mercy' to be replaced by the Ten Commandments; removed to the end was the Gloria; gone was any reference to an offering of a 'Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving' in the Eucharistic prayer, which ended with the words of institution (This is my Body..This is my blood...). The part of the prayer which followed, the Prayer of Oblation, was transferred, much changed, to a position after the congregation had received communion. The words at the administration of communion which, in the prayer book of 1549 described the eucharistic species as 'The body of our Lorde Jesus Christe...', 'The blood of our Lorde Jesus Christe...' were replaced with the words 'Take, eat, in remembrance that Christ died for thee..' etc. The Peace, at which in earlier times the congregation had exchanged a greeting, was removed altogether. Vestments such as the stole, chasuble and cope were no longer to be worn, but only a surplice. It was the final stage of Cranmer's work of removing all elements of sacrifice from the Latin Mass. In the Baptism service the signing with the cross was moved until after the baptism and the exorcism, the anointing, the putting on of the chrysome robe and the triple immersion were omitted. Most drastic of all was the removal of the Burial service from church: it was to take place at the graveside. In 1549, there had been provision for a Requiem (not so called) and prayers of commendation and committal, the first addressed to the deceased. All that remained was a single reference to the deceased, giving thanks for their delivery from 'the myseryes of this sinneful world'. This new Order for the Burial of the Dead was a drastically stripped-down memorial service designed to definitively undermine the whole complex of traditional beliefs about Purgatory and intercessory prayer.

Before the book was in general use, however, Edward VI died. In 1553, Mary, upon her succession to the throne, restored the old religion. The Mass was re-established, altars, rood screens and statues were re-instated; an attempt was made to restore the Church to its Roman affiliation. Cranmer was punished for his work in the Protestant reformation by being burned at the stake on March 21, 1556. Nevertheless, the 1552 book was to survive. After Mary's death in 1558, it became the primary source for the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer, with subtle if significant changes only, and Cranmer's work was to survive until the 1960s as the only authorised prayer book in the Church of England.

## The 1559 prayer book

Thus, under Elizabeth, a more permanent enforcement of the Reformed religion was undertaken, and the 1552 book was republished in 1559, along with laws requiring conformity to the new standards. In its Elizabethan form, scarcely altered, it was used for nearly 100 years, thus being the official prayer book under the Stuarts as well as being the first Anglican service in the United States of America. This was the prayer book of Queen Elizabeth I, John Donne, and Richard Hooker. It was also at the core of English liturgical life throughout the lifetime of Shakespeare.

The alterations of the 1559 Prayer Book from its 1552 precursor, though minor, were to cast a long shadow. One related to what was worn. Instead of the banning of all vestments save the rochet (for bishops) and the surplice for parish clergy, it permitted 'such ornaments...as were in use...in the second year of K. Edward VI'. This allowed substantial leeway for more traditionalist clergy to retain at least some of the vestments which they felt were appropriate to liturgical celebration. It was also to be the basis of claims in the 19th. century that vestments such as chasubles, albs and stoles were legal. At the Communion the words 'the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ' etc. were combined with the words of Edward's second book, 'Take eat in remembrance..' etc. The prohibition on kneeling at the Communion was omitted. The conservative nature of these changes underlines the fact that Elizabeth's Protestantism was by no means universally popular, a fact which she herself recognised; her revived Act of Supremacy, giving her the ambiguous title of Supreme Governor passed without difficulty, but the Act of Uniformity passed through Parliament by only three votes.

Still, the 1559 Prayer Book offered enough to both traditionalists and radical reformers to establish it at the heart of the first relatively stable Protestant state in Europe -- the "Elizabethan settlement." However, on her death in 1603, this book, substantially the book of 1552, having been regarded as offensive by the likes of Bishop Stephen Gardiner in the sixteenth century as being a break with the tradition of the Western church, as it was, by the seventeenth century had come to be regarded as unduly Catholic. On the accession of James I, following the so-called Millenary Petition, the Hampton Court conference of 1604, a meeting of bishops and Puritan divines, resisted the pressure for change (save to the catechism). By the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) the Puritan pressure, exercised through a much changed Parliament, had increased. Government-inspired petitions for the removal of the prayer book and episcopacy 'root and branch' resulted in local disquiet in many places and eventually the production of locally organised counter petitions. The government had its way but it became clear that the division was not between Catholics and Protestants, but between Puritans and those who valued the Elizabethan settlement. The 1559 book was finally outlawed by Parliament in 1645 to be replaced by the Directory of Public Worship which was more a set of instructions than a prayer book. How widely the Directory was used is not certain; there is some evidence of its having been purchased, in churchwardens' accounts, but not widely. The Prayer Book

certainly was used clandestinely in some places, not least because the Directory made no provision at all for burial services. Following the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Lord Protector Cromwell, it would not be reinstated until shortly after the restoration of the monarchy to England.

## The 1662 prayer book

The 1662 prayer book was printed only two years after the restoration of the monarchy, following the Savoy Conference convened by Royal Warrant to review the book of 1559. Attempts by Presbyterians led by Richard Baxter to gain approval for an alternative service book were in vain. In reply to the Presbyterian Exceptions to the book only fifteen trivial changes were made to the book of 1559. Among them was the inclusion of the Offertory. This was achieved by the insertion of the words 'and oblations' into the prayer for the Church and the revision of the rubric so as to require the monetary offerings to be brought to the Table (instead of being put in the poor box) and the bread and wine placed upon the Table. Previously it was not clear when and how bread and wine were produced. After the communion the unused but consecrated bread and wine were to be reverently consumed in church rather than being taken away and used for any other occasion. By such subtle means were Cranmer's purposes further subverted, leaving it for generations to argue over the precise theology of the rite. Unable to accept the new book 2,000 Presbyterians were deprived of their livings. This revision survives today as the "standard" Parliament-approved *Book of Common Prayer* in England, with only minor revisions since its publication (mostly due the changes in the monarchy and in the dominion of the former Empire), but few parishes actually use it. In practice, most services in the Church of England are from Common Worship, approved by General Synod in 2000, following nearly forty years of experiment.

The actual language of the 1662 revision was little changed from that of Cranmer, with the exception of the modernization of only the most archaic words and phrases. This book was the one which had existed as the official *Book of Common Prayer* during the most monumental periods of growth of the British empire, and, as a result, has been a great influence on the prayer books of Anglican churches worldwide, liturgies of other denominations in English, and of the English language as a whole.

## Further developments

After the 1662 prayer book, development ceased in England until the twentieth century; that it did was, however, a bit of a close run thing. On the death of Charles II his brother, a Roman Catholic, became James II. James wished to achieve toleration for those of his own Roman Catholic faith, whose practices were still banned. This, however, drew the Presbyterians closer to the Church of England in their common desire to resist 'popery'; talk of reconciliation and

liturgical compromise was thus in the air. But with the flight of James in 1688 and the arrival of the Calvinist William of Orange the position of the parties changed. The Presbyterians could achieve toleration of their practices without such a right being given to Roman Catholics and without, therefore, their having to submit to the Church of England, even with a liturgy more acceptable to them. They were now in a much stronger position to demand even more radical changes to the forms of worship. John Tillotson, Dean of St. Paul's pressed the king to set up a Commission to produce such a revision The so-called *Liturgy of Comprehension* of 1689, which was the result, conceded two thirds of the Presbyterian demands of 1661; but when it came to Convocation the members, now more fearful of William's perceived agenda, did not even discuss it and its contents were, for a long time, not even accessible. This work, however, did go on to influence the prayer books of many British colonies.

By the 19th century other pressures upon the book of 1662 had arisen. Adherents of the Oxford Movement, begun in 1833, raised questions about the relationship of the Church of England to the apostolic church and thus about its forms of worship. Known as Tractarians after their production of 'Tracts for the Times' on theological issues, they advanced the case for the Church of England being essentially a part of the 'Western Church', of which the Roman Catholic Church was the chief representative. The illegal use of elements of the Roman rite, the use of candles, vestments and incense, practices known as Ritualism, had become widespread and led to the Public Worship Regulation Act 1874 which established a new system of discipline, intending to bring the 'Romanisers' into conformity. The Act had no effect on illegal practices: five clergy were imprisoned for contempt of court and after the trial of the saintly Bishop Edward King of Lincoln, it became clear that some revision of the liturgy had to be embarked upon. Following a Royal Commission report in 1906, work began on a new prayer book, work that was to take twenty years.

In 1927, this proposed prayer book was finished. It was decided, during development, that the use of the services therein would be decided on by each given congregation, so as to avoid as much conflict as possible with traditionalists. With these open guidelines the book was granted approval by the Church of England Convocations and Church Assembly. Since the Church of England is a state church, a further step—sending the proposed revision to Parliament—was required, and the book was rejected in December of that year when the MP William Joynson-Hicks argued strongly against it on the grounds that the proposed book was "papistical" and insufficiently Protestant. The next year was spent revising the book to make it more suitable for Parliament, but it was rejected yet again in 1928. However Convocation declared a state of emergency and authorised bishops to use the revised Book throughout that emergency.

The effect of the failure of the 1928 book was salutary: no further attempts were made to change the book, other than those required for the changes to the

monarchy. Instead a different process, that of producing an alternative book, led eventually to the publication of the 1980 *Alternative Service Book* and subsequently to the 2000 *Common Worship* series of books. Both owe much to the *Book of Common Prayer* and the latter includes in the Order Two form of the Holy Communion a very slight revision of the prayer book service altering only one or two words and allowing the insertion of the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) before Communion. Order One follows the pattern of modern liturgical scholarship.

In 2003, a Roman Catholic adaptation of the BCP was published called the *Book of Divine Worship*. It is a compromise of material drawn from the proposed 1928 book, the 1979 ECUSA book, and the Roman Missal. It was published primarily for use by Catholic converts from Anglicanism within the Anglican Use.

## Prayer books in other Anglican churches

A number of other nations have developed Anglican churches and their own revisions of the Book of Common Prayer. Several are listed here:

### United States of America

The **Episcopal Church in the United States of America** has produced numerous prayer books since the inception of the church in 1789. Work on the first book began in 1786 and was subsequently finished and published in 1789. The preface thereto mentions that "this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship...further than local circumstances require," and the text was almost identical to that of the 1662 English book with but minor variations. Further revisions to the prayer book in the United States occurred in 1892, 1928, and 1979. The revisions of 1892 and 1928 were minor; the version of 1979 reflected a radical departure from the historic Book of Common Prayer, and led to substantial controversy and the breaking away of a number of parishes from the ECUSA. Each edition was released into the public domain on publication, which has contributed to its influence as other churches have freely borrowed from it. The typeface used for the book is Sabon.

### Australia

The **Anglican Church of Australia** has successively issued several local versions of the Book of Common Prayer. The current edition is *A Prayer Book For Australia* (1995). The extreme theological divergence between Australia's largest and most prosperous diocese, the deeply conservatively evangelical Diocese of Sydney, and the rest of the Australian church has not proved as problematic for prayer book revisers as one might have supposed, as Sydney frowns on prayer books, as it does other conventionally Anglican appurtenances such as communion tables, robed clergy, and chanted and sung liturgies.

### Canada

The **Anglican Church of Canada** developed its first Book of Common Prayer separate from the English version in 1918. A revision was published in 1962, largely consisting of minor editorial emendations of archaic language (for example, changing "O Lord save the Queen/Because there is none other that fighteth for us but only thou O Lord" to "O Lord save the Queen/And evermore mightily defend us"). This edition, is considered the last Anglican Prayer Book (in the classic sense, though some churches, such as the USA and Ireland, have named their contemporary liturgies "Prayer Books"). A French translation, *Le Recueil des Prières de la Communauté Chrétienne*, was published in 1967. Some supplements have been developed over the past several years to the

prayer book, but the compendious *Book of Alternative Services*, published in 1985, which *inter alia* contains rites couched in Prayer Book phraseology, has largely supplanted it.

## **Scotland**

The **Scottish Episcopal Church** has had a number of revisions to the Book of Common Prayer since it was first adapted for Scottish use in 1637. These revisions were developed simultaneously with the English book till the mid-17th century when the Scottish book departed from the English revisions. A completely new revision was finished in 1929, and several revisions to the communion service have been prepared since then.



## Papua New Guinea

The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, separated from the ecclesiastical province of Brisbane in 1977 after Papua New Guinea's independence from Australia, contends with the unusual problem that its adherents are largely concentrated in one province, Northern, whose inhabitants are largely Orokaiva speakers, little acquainted with the country's largest lingua franca, New Guinea Pidgin (see Tok Pisin). However, there are pockets of Anglicans elsewhere in the country including in the New Guinea Highlands and the New Guinea Islands, areas where Pidgin is used, as well as foreigners who use English in the towns. The Anglican Province has settled on a simple-English prayer book along the lines of the *Good News Bible*, including simple illustrations.

## Religious influence

The *Book of Common Prayer* has had a great influence on a number of other denominations. While theologically different, the language and flow of the service of many other churches owes a great debt to the prayer book.

John Wesley, an Anglican priest whose teachings constitute the foundations of Methodism said, "I believe there is no Liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety than the Common Prayer of the Church of England." Presently, most Methodist churches have a very similar service and theology to those of the Anglican church. The *United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992, ISBN 0-687-03572-4) uses the *Book of Common Prayer* as its primary model. In the 1960s, when Roman Catholicism adopted a vernacular revised mass, many translations of the English prayers followed the form of Cranmer's translation. Indeed, a number of theologians have suggested that the later English *Alternative Service Book* and 1979 American *Book of Common Prayer* borrowed from the modern Roman Catholic vernacular liturgy directly.

## Secular influence

On Sunday 23 July 1637 efforts by King Charles I to impose Anglican services on the Church of Scotland led to the Book of Common Prayer revised for Scottish use being introduced in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. Rioting in opposition began when Dean John Hanna began to read from the new Book of Prayer, legendarily initiated by the market-woman or street-seller Jenny Geddes throwing her stool at his head. The disturbances led to the National Covenant and hence the Bishops' Wars; the first part of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, which included the English Civil War.

Together with the King James Version of the Bible and the works of Shakespeare, the Book of Common Prayer has been one of the three fundamental underpinnings of modern English. As it has been in regular use for centuries, many phrases from its services have passed into the English language, either as deliberate quotations or as unconscious borrowings. They are used in non-liturgical ways. Many authors have used quotes from the prayer book as titles for their books.

Some examples are:

- "Speak now or forever hold your peace" from the Marriage liturgy.
- "Till death do us part", from the marriage liturgy.
- "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" from the Funeral service.

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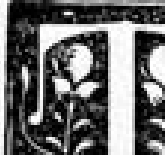
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As mentioned above, the American book is always released into the public domain. Trial use and supplemental liturgies are however copyrighted by Church Publishing, the official publishing arm of the church.



THE Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, as revised in 1661, was the liturgy in use in this country at the time of the Revolution. Immediately after the Declaration of Independence in 1776, [it was altered by Rectors and vestries here and there](#), and in Virginia by the State Convention, in order to adapt it to the changed political conditions.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Maryland Conventions, 1783.*

But the first concerted action, looking towards an authoritative revision of the Prayer Book, was taken in a meeting of clergymen at Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland, on the 13th of May, 1783. As the Church in this State was still established by law, a memorial and petition to the General Assembly was drawn up praying "that the said clergy might have leave to consult, prepare, and draft a bill," enabling them "to make such alterations in the liturgy and service as might adapt the same to the revolution, and for other purposes of uniformity, concord, and subordination to the State." The memorial was signed by William Smith and Thomas Gates as a Committee.<sup>2</sup> The petition having been granted, another meeting of the clergy was held at Annapolis, August 13th, 1783, at which there was drawn up *A Declaration of Certain Fundamental Rights and Liberties of the Protestant Episcopal<sup>3</sup> Church of Maryland, &c.* In this document it was declared, "That as it is the right, so it will be the duty, of the said Church, when duly organized, constituted, and represented in a Synod or Convention of the different orders of her Ministry and people, to revise her liturgy, forms of prayer, and public worship, in order to adapt the same to the late revolution, and other local circumstances of America; which it is humbly conceived, may and will be done without any other or farther departure from the venerable order and beautiful forms of worship of the Church from whence we sprung, than may be found expedient in the change of our situation from a daughter to a sister church." <sup>4</sup>

#### *Pennsylvania Convention, 1784.*

the following is the third article: "That the doctrines of the Gospel be maintained as now professed by the Church of England; and uniformity of worship continued, as near as may be, to the liturgy of the said Church."<sup>2</sup>

#### *Convention at Boston, 1784*

copy of these resolutions was sent to the clergy of Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania, together with a letter urging the necessity of "adopting some speedy measures to procure an American Episcopate." "We are extremely anxious for the preservation of our Communion and the continuance of an uniformity of doctrine and worship, but we see not how this can be maintained without a common head."<sup>1</sup> That such was also the view of the Connecticut clergy, will appear from the following extract, probably written about this time by the Rev. Mr. Jarvis in their name: "The clergy in Connecticut consider the Church in which they officiate as collected and formed upon the principles on which the Church was at first founded by her great Head. Therefore what they have to deliberate upon and endeavour to carry into effect, in the first place is, that she be settled in the full enjoyment of the spiritual powers and officers essential to her: viz., a Bishop, from whom alone all the other officers in the Ministry derive their commission. And when this is accomplished, and our Church thus completed in her members, then, 2. The clergy of this State will consider it as their duty, as that is ascertained by Scripture and primitive example, to revise the Liturgy and render as perfect, as they may be able, whatever shall be found needful for a pure and Scriptural worship for all Christians of her communion."<sup>2</sup>

was answered by the right reverend bench."<sup>21</sup>

[The revised Prayer Book](#) was published in April, 1786, and almost immediately was referred to as the "Proposed Book," a name by which it has ever since been known. In the preface it was declared that, "It is far from the intention of this Church to depart from the Church of England, any farther than local circumstances require, or to deviate in anything essential to the true meaning of the thirty-nine Articles." Notwithstanding the many departures from the English Book, there is no reason whatever for doubting the perfect sincerity of this declaration.

The Proposed Prayer Book of 1786 was the first effort of the U. S. Episcopal Church to produce its own Book of Common Prayer, a process which was necessitated by the separation of that church from the Church of England caused by the Revolutionary War.

Although many assumed that only minor, necessary revisions would be made to the English 1662 Book, quite a number of changes were actually made, mostly along the same Latitudinarian lines which inspired the abortive [1689 attempt](#) at revision (note the great praise accorded to the 1689 book [in the Preface](#)). Some of the main changes include:

- The term "Minister" is substituted for "Priest" in most places where it occurs.

- Although the Absolution of Sins is included, the term "absolution" isn't used.
- Some grammatical changes were made in the Lord's Prayer (retained in subsequent books).
- The phrase "He descended into hell" was omitted from the Apostles' Creed.
- The *Gloria Patri* was omitted in most places.
- Prayers for the King and Royal Family were altered or dropped.
- Parents were allowed to be sponsors in Baptism (retained in subsequent books).
- The sign of the Cross was made optional in Baptism (retained until the 1928 Book).
- The Nicene Creed was omitted in Holy Communion (this proved to be probably the most controversial change).
- The Communion service closely follows the English 1662 service, rather than the Scottish Rite, as in subsequent books.
- The Athanasian Creed is omitted.
- Everything after the Blessing is omitted in the Marriage service (retained in subsequent books).
- Burial was allowed to those unbaptized.
- Several services were added, namely the Visitation of Prisoners ([taken from the Irish BCP](#)), a Harvest Thanksgiving service, and a service for Independence Day; the first two were retained in subsequent books.
- The Churching of Women and Communion Services were dropped; the first was later restored, while the Communion was not.
- The 39 Articles of Religion underwent extensive revision, and were reduced to 20 in number.
- The Psalter was totally revised, resulting in 60 "psalms", each made up of individual verses chosen from different Psalms.

The work of the revision in the Convention of 1789 occupied thirteen days. On the last day a committee was appointed to edit the book thus revised, and in August, 1790, the [first American Prayer Book](#) was set forth, bearing not the Ratification of a Parliament, but the Ratification of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church itself. In the preface, the declaration so often made before, was again repeated, even more explicitly: "This Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or farther than local circumstances require." Everywhere the new book was received without opposition, and at once went into use. In Connecticut where some of its omissions were not regarded altogether with favour, it was nevertheless formally approved and received by a resolution of Convocation at Newtown, September 30th, 1790. At the same time it was agreed "that in the use of the New-Prayer-Book, we be as uniform as possible, and for that purpose that we approach as near the *Old Liturgy*, as a compliance with the Rubrics of the New will allow."<sup>12</sup> In a little while however the new Prayer Book had become as dear to the members of the Church everywhere as the old book had ever been.

Hitherto the action of one General Convention sufficed to make alterations in the Prayer Book, but in 1811 an addition was made to the eighth article of the Constitution, requiring that "No alteration or addition shall be made in the Book of Common Prayer, or other Offices of the Church, unless the same shall be proposed in one General Convention, and by a resolve thereof made known to the Convention of every Diocese, and adopted at the subsequent Convention. The same provision was in 1829. extended to the Articles of Religion. The Prayer Book as set forth in 1789 with the additions made In 1792, 1799, 1801, 1804 (1808), remained without change until 1886. Corrections of what were thought to be errors were made from time to time by order of the Convention, or by Editing Committees, but these were merely verbal, or in matters of punctuation. Various attempts however were made to inaugurate a revision, or to secure alterations of one kind or other, but in every case the General Convention set its face against such efforts, and they came to naught.

#### *General Convention of 1883.*

"In accordance with a resolution of General Convention," says the report of the Committee, "which recommends all Committees, appointed to sit during the recess, to meet for the purpose of organizing immediately after the close of the session; the Committee came together Later it was agreed that the official title of the Committee should be *The Joint Committee on the Book of Common Prayer*.

The report of the Committee was made public a short time before the meeting of General Convention. It was drawn up in the form of a series of resolutions, embodying about two hundred and fourteen distinct alterations. To this report there was attached a Prayer Book, (referred to as the *Book Annexed*<sup>5</sup>), in which all the suggested changes were incorporated in their proper places, thus presenting to the eye what would be the appearance of the Common Prayer Book should the alterations be adopted by the Church. The consideration of the report occupied the greater part of the session of the Convention of 1883. No little praise is due to the skill, courtesy and patience with which the Rev. Dr. Huntington guided the House of Deputies through a work the like of which it had not been engaged in for a hundred years, and for which, it may be said without any disrespect, its members were but little prepared by previous training in liturgiology. On the thirteenth day of the session, a Committee of Conference, consisting of those who were members of the Joint Committee on the Enrichment of the Prayer Book, was appointed to reconcile disagreements between the two Houses. On the evening of the last day (Oct. 26), a short time before adjournment, it presented its report. This report proposed the passage of some one hundred and six alterations in the Prayer Book, most of them modifications of those originally presented in the Report of the Joint Committee. Owing to the lateness of the hour, the alterations thus presented by the Committee of Conference were adopted without being read.<sup>6</sup> The result of the work of this Convention was that most of the alterations of the Book Annexed were adopted substantially as presented; some were considerably modified; only a very few wholly failed to receive the assent of both Houses.

Before adjournment an editing Committee was appointed to republish The Book Annexed, incorporating all the alterations adopted by the Convention.<sup>7</sup> Criticisms on the proposed changes in the Prayer Book were now heard from all sides. The subject of liturgiology in general and of Prayer Book revision in particular was dealt with by Episcopal charges, reports, and resolutions of Committees in the Diocesan Conventions, articles in the religious and secular periodicals and even in the daily newspapers, and by pamphlets privately printed and circulated. The Book Annexed as Modified was scrutinized from every possible point of view. The doctrinal significance of its alterations, and their liturgical fitness; the grammatical construction of the new prayers, the felicity of their phrases, and the smoothness of their rhythm, all came in for searching examination. Even so small a matter as the position of a point of punctuation drew forth more than one contribution to the literature which gathered around the Book Annexed.

The next General Convention met in Chicago in 1886. No less than twenty-eight dioceses sent in Memorials, Resolutions, or Petitions on the subject of Prayer Book revision.<sup>1</sup> Their unanimous judgment was that the Book Annexed as modified ought not to be adopted as it stood.

*General Convention of 1889.*

The Convention of 1889 met in the city of New York. Five dioceses presented memorials praying that the work of Prayer Book revision might not be continued beyond the session. On the second day the report of the Joint Committee appointed in 1886 was presented in both Houses. This report proposed eighty-one alterations extending to almost every office in the Prayer Book. The Committee had also prepared "A Book of Offices to be allowed for use where it shall be authorized by the Ordinary." A minority report signed by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Thompson, the Rev. Dr. Swope, and the Rev. Dr. Gold was also presented. This second report objected "that it was not strictly within the province of this Committee to take up the business of revising the Prayer Book as a whole," and deprecated the continuance of the work of revision as calculated to "excite uneasiness, shake the feeling of confidence and security with which devout people have rested upon the precious formularies of the Prayer Book, and impair the unquestioning loyalty which is the very foundation of the Christian character."

The Convention ratified all the alterations proposed in 1886. The majority report of the Committee was afterward considered in detail, and forty-eight of its eighty-one propositions for change were adopted and proposed to the dioceses for final action in 1892. A Resolution was afterwards adopted appointing three members of each order as a Committee "to prepare and to submit to the next General Convention for its approval, a new edition of the Standard Prayer Book."

*General Convention of 1892.*

The Convention of 1892 met in Baltimore. On the second day of the session the alterations in the Prayer Book proposed in 1889 were taken up and continued the order of the day until disposed of. All the other alterations proposed in 1889 were adopted and made part of the Prayer Book. The work of revision having been thus concluded, the Joint Committee presented in both Houses on the sixth day of the session a copy of the Prayer Book as amended, which was "accepted as the correct text of the Book of Common Prayer of this Church, with the Offices and Articles." And the Committee was "instructed to cause to be printed on vellum a corresponding book, which book, after having been duly authenticated, shall be by them delivered to the Custodian for careful preservation according to the provisions of the canon."<sup>6</sup> Within a few months afterward editions of the Prayer Book bearing the certificate of the Custodian had been published and were in the hands of the people.

One of the founding principals of the Church of England when it originally broke with Rome was that church services should be "understood of the people" (as it is stated in the Articles of Religion) so that everyone present might be able to follow the liturgy and know what is going on. Accordingly, once the Book of Common Prayer was created in English, it was therefore subsequently translated into many languages, as needed. David Griffiths, in his *Bibliography of the Book of Common Prayer*, records translations and original BCP's in 199 languages other than English.