In Spirit and Truth

A Vision of Episcopal Worship

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Introduction

IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH has been a labor of love collaboratively created by the Anglican Colloquium of the North American Academy of Liturgy, a community of Anglican scholars who meet annually to discuss the liturgical life of our Anglican and Episcopal Churches. This group of scholars have spent their adult lives studying and often teaching about the nature of liturgy in a changing world. Trained in liturgical history, liturgical theology, and many also in the field of ritual studies, the colloquium has tremendous wisdom to offer the Episcopal Church as we move toward a new period of liturgical revision. Deeply convinced that the worship life of our churches is central to the life of faith and the mission of the church, these scholars give their lives to the work of encouraging meaningful, life-giving worship across the numerous denominations we represent.

When the colloquium gathered in January 2019, we heard a significant report from two of our members who are currently serving on the Episcopal Church's Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision, the Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers of Church Divinity School of the Pacific, and the Rev. Dr. Kevin Moroney of General Seminary. The task force was created by the 2018 General Convention and has been tasked with leading the church forward in sound liturgical revision processes that are both deeply respectful of our Anglican and Episcopal liturgical traditions and also allow us to address needs for other liturgical resources for the twenty-first century.

As the colloquium discussed the work before the task force and the critical role that congregations and dioceses would play in

gathering new and revised rites, it became clear to us that one element not addressed by Resolution A068 of General Convention, but absolutely critical to the success of liturgical revision efforts, was the role adequate formation plays in preparing individuals and communities for revision. Our knowledge of the history of the development of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer illustrated how necessary education and formation were to positive reception of a new prayer book. In other words, we learned that it does not work to abruptly impose new rites on communities when the goal is true and transformative liturgical revision. True liturgical revision gives worshippers the time, space, and capacity to embrace a new prayer language for their personal and communal lives. If we want Episcopalians to embrace new liturgies, we must first invite them to see the need for new rites. We must invite those who have prayed with our 1979 rites and may anticipate praying with new liturgies into an open conversation that then shapes the direction our worship life will move in response to our current historical, social, and religious context. Effective formation involves providing needed information, engaging in dialog around issues that people are passionate about, and allowing experience coupled with conversation to form and perhaps reform perspectives, attitudes, and postures in worship.

As a group of scholars, many of whom teach or have taught in seminaries, the colloquium recognized its somewhat unique ability to support the work of the task force by offering educational resources that the task force had not been mandated to create or disseminate. At that January 2019 meeting the colloquium began to map out a process by which its members and others with special expertise in liturgy could provide educational resources for the church. This volume of essays directly related to aspects of the resolution that created and mandated the task force was our way forward. Through the variety of essays, with their discussion questions and suggested bibliography for more in-depth reading, our goal was to provide churches with tools for intelligent, cogent, accessible historical and theological conversation illuminating the liturgical revision envisioned in resolution A068. We believe that Episcopalians will be much more likely to embrace

liturgical revision if they have an opportunity to understand the priorities General Convention emphasized in its call for revision before they are asked to pray with these revised liturgies.

Nancy Bryan of Church Publishing Incorporated, a longtime colloquium member, offered the possibility of turning these articles into a book that could be used as a Christian formation resource by Episcopalians across the church. She chose an editorial board of the Rev. Dr. Kevin Moroney (of General Seminary and also a member of the task force), the Rev. Dr. Stephanie Budwey (of Vanderbilt Divinity School), the Rev. Dr. Samuel Torvend, (a parish priest and historian at Pacific Lutheran University), the Rev. Dr. Sylvia Sweeney (of Bloy House and the convener of the colloquium), and herself. The goal was to have our work completed in time for the colloquium's January 2020 gathering so that in addition to offering this resource to the church, we could use it as a starter for further academic conversations about liturgical revision.

We hope that churches across the country will now use this book and its discussion questions to begin the long and important process of preparing for liturgical revision. While it is too early to know exactly where those revisions will lead us, there are some things we can know already based upon the resolution. We know that the beauty and eloquence of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer will continue to be cherished by our church; that we are committed to moving more fully and consciously into a lived understanding of the centrality of our baptismal faith identity to every aspect of our Christian life and church's governance; that we remain committed to being a eucharistically centered worshipping community. We know that our authorized rites must be more linguistically and culturally accessible to those in the Episcopal Church who do not pray in English. We know that there must be new rites or adaptations of old rites that respond to pressing issues of inclusion and diversity. We know that there is need for a deeper expression of our human limits and responsibilities as created beings situated within God's expansive, blessed, and beloved creation.

With a shared understanding of our deepest held Christian values, we look forward to what the future brings for our worship lives

and our missional lives as bearers of Christ to a troubled and broken world. May you be as blessed in your conversations growing out of this resource as we have been in ours.

Sylvia Sweeney, convener
Anglican colloquium, North American Academy of Liturgy

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Changing to Remain the Same

The Evolving Prayer Book Tradition

Jeffrey D. Lee

"THE PRAYER BOOK has to change in order to remain the same," the late Lee Mitchell, one of the great liturgical scholars of the Episcopal Church, was known to say when lecturing on the history of the development of the Book of Common Prayer. In significant ways, that *is* the story of the development of the Book of Common Prayer. Just as every generation in its own context must come to terms with the meaning of scripture or the understanding of God, so too the way we worship, the way we pray together must evolve and adapt in order to be understood in ways that are faithful to the living tradition in which we stand. For the Episcopal Church, The Book of Common Prayer 1979 is simply the most recent example of a long line of versions of the prayer book that embody an ancient pattern of prayer and sacraments that extends to the earliest generation of Christians.

It is arguable that at the heart of the English Reformation was this very question of how to remain faithful to a pattern of worship that would be faithful to and remain in continuity with the faith and practice of the ancient church. In fact, a central question for all the reformers both in England and on the European continent was how

to reform what had been received from medieval liturgy in order to recover greater faithfulness to the biblical and early church's understanding and practice of worship and the sacraments. The answer of some Protestant reformers was a radical reshaping of worship in ways that bore little resemblance to the church's worship through the Middle Ages. In England the reforms began somewhat more gently and became more substantial in subsequent revisions of the Book of Common Prayer. From the first modest provisions for prayer and scripture to be delivered in English rather than medieval Latin, successive revisions of the prayer book built on liturgical patterns that were recognizably continuous with those of the medieval church but which began to incorporate more and more elements of reformation theology. This reflected increased attention to what was thought to be premedieval liturgical practice.

The first Book of Common Prayer was authorized for use by Parliament in 1549. Its principal author was the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. Revisions followed in 1552, 1559, 1604, and finally through to the Book of Common Prayer of 1662, which is still the authorized version in the Church of England. The theological controversies and political complexities of those years all had their effects on these revisions. From the introduction of Reformation influences under Henry VIII and his son Edward VI to a sudden wholesale return to medieval Roman Catholicism under Mary Tudor to the greater stability achieved under Elizabeth I and beyond, monarchical and political concerns and conflicts dominate the story of prayer book revision. An important side note here has to do with political realities in Scotland, where the Reformation took a different course than in England. Under King James I and his son Charles I there were attempts to require Anglicans in Scotland to use the authorized prayer book of the Church of England. Those attempts failed and the result was that the Scottish Church was allowed to produce its own version of the Book of Common Prayer in 1637. The Scottish Prayer Book was more in line with the first prayer book of 1549 and incorporated material that was later to influence the first American version of the Book of Common Prayer (for

reasons we will see), influences which are still recognizably present in the Prayer Book 1979.

So it was that after the American Revolution, Anglicans in the new nation were suddenly faced with the existential question of how they were to remain faithful to their identity as Christians whose faith was shaped by a prayer book dominated by royal provision and authorized by Parliamentary decree. How were they to understand themselves as remaining the same while undergoing profound change in a radically new context? No longer a state church, they were now a body of believers free to order their understanding and practice of the Christian faith in ways that were in recognizable continuity with the tradition that formed them, and to do so without reference to Parliament or the crown. Freedom to revise, ongoing liturgical scholarship, and the changing social realities of the new country were to be the driving factors of American prayer book revision in the years to come.

In 1785, a convention of Anglicans from states south of New England met in Philadelphia. The purpose of this first post-revolutionary convention was the pressing question of how to organize the fledgling Episcopal Church. Among several issues before this convention was the place of bishops in the governance of the newly independent church. Bishop Samuel Seabury of Connecticut was the first bishop ordained for the American church, but he had been ordained by bishops in Scotland, where the role of bishops was rather different than that in England as were important aspects of the Scottish Communion Office that had great influence on Seabury. He refused to attend this first convention in part because its proposals did not provide adequately for the role of bishops. Despite the controversies and the absence of representation from the New England states, the 1785 convention did authorize Bishop William White of Pennsylvania, assisted by other bishops, to work on a revision of the Book of Common Prayer. What they produced was a version of the prayer book adopted for use by the Southern states as the proposed prayer book of 1786.

This version was essentially a modification of the 1662 prayer book, but very much influenced by the rationalism and deism of the day. It downplayed core doctrines such as the atonement and the

Holy Trinity. Both the role of bishops and the centrality of the sacraments were likewise less obvious in this book. Naturally, prayers for the monarch were eliminated, but so was the Nicene Creed. The Apostles' Creed remained but the phrase, "He descended into hell" was removed from it. As with almost every revision of the Book of Common Prayer that has followed, it was not popular. Given the variety of conflicting viewpoints and political realties affecting the church at that time, it is difficult to see how any revision could have been received with much general enthusiasm. The Anglican insistence on public adherence to common prayer was in serious doubt, as was the very existence of the church in the United States. A new version of the Book of Common Prayer was sorely needed, and one which could be agreed upon by a majority of both clergy and laity in the newly independent church.

It is remarkable that the first General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, meeting just three years after that first convention of the Southern states, was able in the space of only ten days to produce a revision of the Book of Common Prayer for the church in the United States of America. That the convention of 1789 was able to meet at all, including representation from the New England states, was due in part to the willingness of the Southern states to give up their commitment to the proposed Prayer Book of 1786. There is evidence that the first General Convention was as diverse a gathering as any convention has been since. There were competing opinions about what should be included and what should not. Those who wanted references to the Trinity eliminated and all prayers addressed simply to the Father. Those who wanted to include elements from early church sources and from the Scottish Prayer Book, and those who thought only the slightest adjustments to the Church of England's 1662 book were necessary. In the end, against all the odds, the convention of 1789 produced the first Book of Common Prayer for use in the American church, published in 1790 and titled *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: together with the Psalter, or Psalms*

of David. With the subsequent simplification of the church's name to *the Episcopal Church*, it is the title of every revision of the American Prayer Book down to the Book of Common Prayer 1979.

The 1789 Prayer Book was in use for the next one hundred years. It contains language and liturgical forms that would be recognizable to users of today's prayer book. Importantly, it included a reordering of the eucharistic prayer that can be traced to the 1637 Scottish Prayer Book. Free from the need to adhere strictly to the 1662 Prayer Book of the Church of England, the Scots based this structural rearrangement on scholarly study of ancient West Syrian liturgical models. It included an invocation of the Holy Spirit to "make these gifts for us the Body and Blood of Christ." That invocation of the Spirit over the gifts of bread and wine had been lost in the English Book of 1552 and its recovery has been a permanent one in all authorized versions of the prayer book in the United States since 1789. While individual texts might be familiar to worshipers who pray according to the Book of Common Prayer 1979, other aspects of that first American Prayer Book might not. Overall, ceremonial and architectural settings have changed dramatically since the late eighteenth century—think of the contrast between the simple or even austere setting of a colonial-era church to the elaborate style of a neo-Gothic building from the Victorian era. Musical tastes have evolved and so too has the prayer book's provision for flexibility and choice. The 1789 Book of Common Prayer provided officially for one lengthy, invariable pattern of public prayer on Sundays: Morning Prayer followed by the Litany *and* Holy Communion (although this was often shortened to be the service of Holy Communion only up to and including the sermon). In the nineteenth century, calls for more flexibility and richer ceremonial were to be critical factors in the desire for further prayer book revision.

The nineteenth century witnessed massive and rapid social changes in the United States. From the upheavals precipitating the Civil War and its consequences, to the large scale influx of immigrants into the country, revolutionary industrialization of the economy, the growth of cities and the reality of poverty, slums, and the marginalization of

whole communities of persons—all these presented their own challenges to the prayer book's insistence on one, inflexible pattern of worship on the Lord's Day, one that demanded a certain privileged amount of time simply to observe it and a reliance on a literate appreciation of the written word rather than a deeper engagement of the other senses. Gradually it seemed clear to significant leaders in the church that more flexibility and enrichment of the prayer book was necessary in order to meet the pastoral and evangelical needs of the Episcopal Church in a rapidly changing American society.

One name in particular to mention is that of William Augustus Muhlenberg. Born into a distinguished Lutheran family, as a boy he converted to the Episcopal Church and was ordained to the priesthood in 1820. Muhlenberg was a noted educator, the founder of influential church schools, and the rector of the Church of the Holy Communion in New York City. It was there that he initiated practices that would later become in some sense the norm in the Episcopal Church. His motivation was to make the church's worship more appealing and engaging in the lives of the people he served. At the Church of the Holy Communion, he moved the altar to a central position with the pulpit to one side, the worship space was decked with flowers, parts of the service were sung. Muhlenberg allowed the three sections of the required Sunday service to be observed as separate services, and Holy Communion was celebrated weekly. In 1853, in a form called a "Memorial," he called on the General Convention of the Episcopal Church to authorize greater flexibility in the direction of these practices. The Memorial was defeated, but it exercised an ongoing influence on future calls for revisions of the prayer book. In fact, three years later, the House of Bishops agreed that Morning Prayer, the Litany, and Holy Communion could be conducted separately. A genuine revision of the prayer book, however, would not come until 1892. Perhaps Muhlenberg's most important influence has to do with his insistence that the liturgy of the church should have a deep connection with the reality of peoples' lives

In addition to the challenges presented by the changing social and cultural context in which the church pursued its mission, in the

nineteenth century a renewed interest in the history of liturgical practice was blossoming. The Oxford Movement arose in the Church of England as a result of controversies about the fundamentally catholic, or universal, character of the church. That is, could Anglicanism genuinely claim continuity with the church of the Middle Ages and earlier? While this movement was not initially concerned primarily with liturgical issues, over time it fostered a greater interest in sacramental theology and the study of liturgy. That interest led to a recovery of ritual in places that was more recognizably "catholic." There were controversies in England, sometimes violent, over matters such as altar candles, vestments, and crosses. In England, these were formal concerns—questions of what was *legally* permissible or not. In the Episcopal Church, although occasionally the cause of conflict, such matters have been left to custom and taste rather than legislated. The adoption of sometimes medieval-looking rituals was thus free to spread quite broadly in the United States.

Through the last half of the nineteenth century, there were ongoing calls in the General Convention for flexibility and enrichment of the prayer book. A priest named William Reed Huntington, an influential member of the House of Deputies, called persistently for revision of the Book of Common Prayer. His leadership was influential in the printing of a version of the prayer book in 1883 known as *The Book Annexed*, which seems to have been intended to demonstrate what a formally revised prayer book might look like. Changes in 1883 and then again in 1886 were approved by the General Convention that went beyond simply the shortening of services, including, for example, the placement of the sermon immediately following the Gospel instead of the Creed, where it had been placed in every version of the prayer book since 1549. The General Convention was demonstrating that it was possible and indeed advisable to revise the prayer book, however cautiously. Against the backdrop of tensions in the church over social issues, as well as theological and liturgical matters, in 1892 the General Convention authorized what was perhaps a predictably modest revision of the Book of Common Prayer. But it was clear that other changes were coming.

The Prayer Book of 1892 was in use just twenty-one years when the official gears were put in motion for further revisions. In 1913 the General Convention formally approved a process for "revising and enriching" the Book of Common Prayer and between then and the General Convention of 1928 that is precisely what happened. At the conventions of 1919 and 1922 large sections of the prayer book were revised for inclusion in the next version. There were again significant differences of opinion on matters to be included or not in the next revision; the 1928 Prayer Book reflected the ongoing evolution of the church's response to a changing world. Significant influences of the day included concerns for issues of social justice, a growing realization of the importance of ecumenical relationships, and (in the shadow of the First World War) the horrific results of global conflicts. Specific changes included the addition of prayer for "The Family of Nations," a collect for Independence Day, the dropping of the word "obey" from the wife's vows in the marriage rite, and provision for the Visitation of the Sick, including the laying on of hands and anointing. Of the more controversial additions were propers for the celebration of the Eucharist at burials and marriages as well as prayers for the departed and the placement of the Lord's Prayer as the conclusion of the Prayer of Consecration. These particular changes were resisted by some out of concern that they were steering the prayer book too far in the direction of Roman Catholic practice, but in fact, the motivation stemmed from then-current liturgical scholarship. Proposals of more obvious similarity to the Roman Rite were rejected, including the *Agnus Dei* (O Lamb of God) and the *Benedictus* (Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord) at the conclusion of the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy).

In addition to a significant revision of the Book of Common Prayer, the General Convention of 1928 did something else that no previous convention had done in relationship to prayer book revision. It established a Standing Liturgical Commission consisting of eight bishops, eight priests, and eight laypersons for the express purpose of guiding future revisions of the Book of Common Prayer. As recorded in the journal of that convention, the work of the Commission was the "preservation and study, (of) all matters relating to the Book of

Common Prayer, with the idea of developing and conserving for some possible future use the Liturgical experience and scholarship of the Church." This was a frank admission of the need for ongoing evolution of the prayer book in order to remain faithful to its role in a living church.

In the early years of the twentieth century, while the Episcopal Church was engaged in the revision of its Book of Common Prayer, a movement of ecumenical proportions was underway that would eventually transform the worship of all the historic churches. In significant ways, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation both set the stage for the emergence of what came to be called the Liturgical Movement. The reformation period had awakened interest in the origin and roots of Christian worship. Important biblical and historical scholarship was employed by Protestants and Catholics alike to justify their positions. The roots of the contemporary Liturgical Movement can be traced to certain Roman Catholic monastic communities in Europe, and while initially it had little direct impact on either the Church of England or the Episcopal Church, by the 1930s that began to change, and change rapidly.

By the early twentieth century, scholarship had deepened its understanding of source materials describing the fundamental patterns of early church worship and liturgical practice. So much so, in fact, that it was clear that both Protestant and Catholic liturgical practice had become quite removed from that of the early church. The origins of Christian worship are rooted in a fundamental pattern of a community of baptized Christians gathered with its ordained servants to proclaim scripture, to pray, to celebrate and share the eucharistic meal, and then depart to engage in its mission to the needs, hopes, and concerns of the world. All that stood in stark contrast to what had become a clergy-dominated, privatized vision of the liturgy as essentially an act of personal piety. The sweeping liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) were the harbingers of similar reforms soon to be adopted across the Christian world.

In the Episcopal Church, the years between 1928 and 1979 saw an explosion of scholarly work on both the theology and practice of

Christian worship. The names of William Palmer Ladd, who taught at the Berkley Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut, and his student Massey Shepherd, who taught at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in California, figure prominently in the spreading appreciation for the insights of the Liturgical Movement. The publication of *The Hymnal 1940* with its rich collection of congregational song also reflected that movement. In 1946, Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission was founded: through its publications and conferences, it was to have enormous influence on the development on the Book of Common Prayer 1979.

The General Convention of 1964 called for a plan for a trial usage of a proposed revision of the prayer book. It was a plan for revision unlike any previous one. Involving the work of roughly three hundred consultants and writers who worked with members of the Standing Liturgical Commission, it undertook proposed revisions of every section of the Book of Common Prayer. From 1967 to 1973, the Commission published three books of liturgies for trial usage: *The Liturgy of the Lord's Supper* in 1967, *Services for Trial Use* in 1970, and *Authorized Services* in 1973 (these last two books were known as the "Green Book" and the "Zebra Book" respectively because of the design of their covers). These books for trial liturgies were used throughout the church with responses, critiques, and suggestions collected and considered. One notable outcome of this process of trial use and feedback was the decision to provide both Morning and Evening Prayer and the Holy Eucharist in both contemporary and Elizabethan language (Rite I and Rite II).

The trial changes provoked controversy of course. It was a shock to many members of the church to find suddenly in the pews paperback versions for their use with services containing choices and options to a degree never experienced before. Nevertheless, the trial rites were received thoughtfully for the most part and in 1976 the General Convention approved by overwhelming majorities in both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops *The Proposed Book of Common Prayer*. Three years later, the General Convention, by nearly unanimous votes, approved the proposed book without any further revisions.

The Book of Common Prayer 1979 continues to shape the life of the Episcopal Church in profound ways that are ongoing. Chief among them are these: the insistence that Holy Baptism is the fundamental sacrament of ministry, that the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the normative form of worship on the Lord's Day, that participation in the liturgy is the primary source of nourishment for Christian engagement with the world. These convictions endure even as new questions arise about prayer book revision for the twenty-first century and beyond. Indeed, the prayer book changes precisely in order to remain the same.