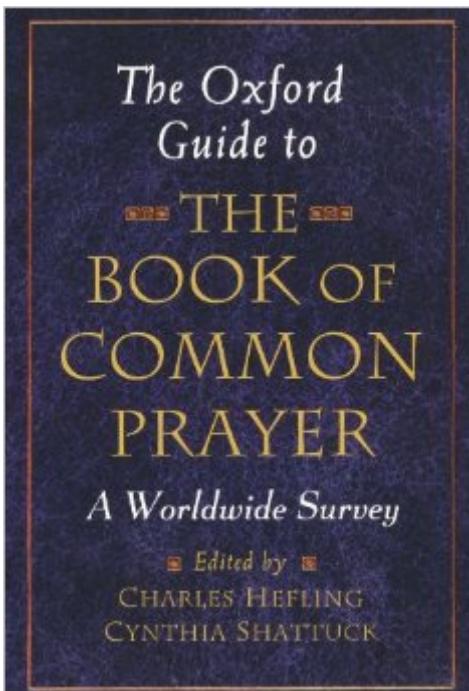


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The Oxford Guide To The Book Of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey



Synopsis

The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer is the first comprehensive guide to the history and usage of the original Book of Common Prayer and its variations. Expert contributors from around the world and from every major denomination offer an unparalleled view of The Book of Common Prayer and its influence. The Oxford Guide to Common Prayer is more than simply a history: it describes how Anglican churches at all points of the compass have developed their own Prayer Books and adapted the time-honored Anglican liturgies to their diverse local cultures. The Guide examines how the same texts - Daily Prayers, the Eucharist, Marriage and Funerals, and many others - in dozens of editions now in use throughout the world, both resemble and differ from one another. A brief look at "electronic Prayer Books" also offers a unique and exciting modern perspective. The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer offers a fascinating journey through the history and development of a classic of world literature from its origins in the 16th century to the modern day. Oxford is pleased to offer The Book of Common Prayer in a variety of formats and prices to match readers' needs and budgets - perfect for study or gift-giving. Visit our website to order your copy today.* A comprehensive survey of the rich history of the original Book of Common Prayer and all of its varied descendants. * Explains, characterizes, and illustrates the dozens of Prayer Book versions in current use throughout the world. * Lays out a path that will enable any reader, Anglican or not, to learn why the BCP is a classic of liturgy and literature.

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Customer Reviews

This book combines an enjoyable read with heavyweight scholarship. About a third of it is historical, starting with Cranmer's first Book of Common Prayer and the background to it. But the focus is mainly on the Prayer Books now being used in the many Anglican churches all over the world. There's a section that has articles on each of these books, full of fascinating information about how Anglicanism developed in particular countries. There is also a section of articles that compare the contents of the same Prayer Books, service by service, showing how "inculturation" is happening and how different churches "do" each of the liturgies. The historical articles tell not only how the text of the Book of Common Prayer developed, but also how it was used in real life. Sprinkled through the volume are panels with excerpts from the versions being discussed, and there are illustrations, charts, and a very full glossary. The subtitle is "A Worldwide Survey," and the list of authors bears this out. They come from all over the world.

It's difficult to describe the contents of this book in few words, but here's my best shot. The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer looks not only at the development of the BCP as a document, but common prayer as a concept and uniting characteristic of the Anglican Communion. It then looks at all the prayer books used across the communion and how they've taken the structure of common prayer and adapted it to incorporate culturally specific practices: the mourning rituals of Africa, the close intertwining of Burmese culture with Buddhism, the architecture of the Far East. The language used in the South African prayer book takes on much more poignance when read in the context of the struggle against Apartheid. For anyone interested in how a worldwide church adapts to culture, the source of the BCP, or where common prayer might go in the future, this book will hold an endless fascination. Plus, it has pictures!

"This a brilliant, accessible, and Virgilian guide to that most influential of texts: The Book of Common Prayer. Anyone who cares about language, about sacramental life, and about Anglicanism will find Hefling and Shattuck's volume indispensable, for it takes readers to the roots of the faith, shedding new light on old words, bringing our past into vivid focus, and reminding us that what unites us is far greater than what divides us."---Jon Meacham, Managing Editor of Newsweek and author of "American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation"

This hefty tome is a logical follow-up to the 120-page WELCOME TO THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. Nobody will confuse it with a work of systematic theology, but it does what it does

brilliantly: elucidate and critique (by this I mean explicate, not 'criticize') present-day versions of Cranmer's fifteenth-century original all over the world. Some surprises are in store: many Episcopalians in the USA casually call the BCP the "prayer book"; moreover, some English-language countries have named their version "Prayer Book" without any "common"ality of book title. Judge for yourself whether the Anglican BCP in general is getting more diverse within most of the many, many nations in which a nation-specific version serves; or whether it is globalizing. Perhaps there's a bit of truth in both.

THE OXFORD GUIDE TO THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A WORLD-WIDE SURVEY is an excellent source book to have as a desk or library reference, not only for clergy but for people who are just plain interested. Note that the hardcover version goes for only about ten dollars more than the paperback; I for one recommend the extra investment. If you're not yourself an Episcopalian (Anglican), but merely looking for a more entry-level (and much shorter!) book, try WELCOME TO THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER as mentioned above or WELCOME TO THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, both widely available.

From one Book of Common Prayer to many over five centuries, this text provides an outstanding and excellent analysis of the historical and functional evolution of the current Books of Common Prayer currently in use. This Oxford Guide stands out as a primary reference for all. Richard W. Wheeler

This is a must read for anyone who enjoys using the Book of Common Prayer for worship. I gained incredible insight into the history and use of the Book of Common Prayer. I love the way it is organized, nice short essays that are topically arranged. This book will stay with me for years and I am sure I will refer to it many times.

This is a very ambitious project and you get a bargain for your buck. The print is small and there is a lot of information packed into these fine print pages, but I was disappointed by the lack of detail concerning the Prayer Books of 1549, 1552, 1559, 1604 and 1662. I would have preferred some indepth discussions of the significant theological developments in these versions before launching into the variations of the BCP in the worldwide Anglican communion.

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