

## The Daily Offices in the Prayer Book Tradition

PAUL F. BRADSHAW\*

*After tracing in some detail the evolution of the services of Morning and Evening Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer, from their roots in the revision of the medieval Breviary by Cardinal Francis de Quiñones in 1535 down to the modern forms in use today, this essay then compares the principles underlying them against the patterns and concepts of daily prayer in early Christianity that have been laid bare through recent research. It concludes by suggesting that the future direction of Anglican daily worship might be enhanced by incorporating elements from what scholars term the ancient “cathedral” tradition alongside the more monastic character of its inherited forms.*

From the perspective of the clergy, the major problem with the pattern of daily offices imposed on them in the course of the Middle Ages was that it was excessively time-consuming and therefore burdensome. These offices had been created primarily for monastic communities able to spend a great part of their day in the praise of God—and even some of those found the sheer quantity of material difficult to accommodate in relation to the other demands on their time. But for clergy and members of other religious orders who were required to undertake other activities, and especially those attached as teachers or students to the universities that were springing up all over Europe in the late Middle Ages, it was impossible to adhere to the seven times of prayer each day and a further vigil of prayer and reading during part of the night that the monastic offices expected of

---

\* Paul F. Bradshaw, an Anglican priest, is Professor of Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, an honorary Canon of the Diocese of Northern Indiana, a Priest-Vicar of Westminster Abbey, and a Consultant to the Church of England Liturgical Commission. Author or editor of more than twenty books and over a hundred essays and articles in the field of liturgical studies, he is a former President both of the North American Academy of Liturgy and of the international *Societas Liturgica*, and was Editor in Chief of the journal *Studia Liturgica* from 1987 to 2005.

them. It is no wonder, therefore, that there was a tendency to group these different offices into two major blocks to be performed at the beginning and at the end of the day.

It is similarly no wonder that many got even further behind in their obligations to the office, and found themselves trying to catch up with what should have been said several days previously—or even longer, as Martin Luther himself testified:

When I was a monk I was unwilling to omit any of the prayers, but when I was busy with public lecturing and writing I often accumulated my appointed prayers for a whole week, or even two or three weeks. Then I would take a Saturday off, or shut myself in for as long as three days without food and drink, until I had said the prescribed prayers. This made my head split, and as a consequence I couldn't close my eyes for five nights, lay sick unto death, and went out of my senses.<sup>1</sup>

He eventually fell three months behind and gave up altogether. This experience must have contributed to his questioning of the idea that such practices were “works” necessary to satisfy God when his reading of St. Paul suggested that Christians were on the contrary justified by faith alone.

### *Quiñones's Breviary*

It was obvious to many and not just to Luther that some reform of the system of daily offices was desperately needed as far as the clergy were concerned, and in 1529 Pope Clement VII entrusted Spanish Cardinal Francis de Quiñones, the General of the Franciscans, with the task of producing a revised Breviary that would make the daily offices more manageable for those who recited them privately. The fruits of his labors were published in 1535 and authorized by the new Pope, Paul III, for use by clergy on receipt of a license from the Holy See.<sup>2</sup> While retaining all seven daily hours of prayer, together with the night office (long known as Mattins and attached to the morning office of Lauds to form a continuous whole, as was already common

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, 495; English translation from Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *Luther's Works*, vol. 54 (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1967), 85.

<sup>2</sup> Reproduced in John Wickham Legg, ed., *Breviarium Romanum a Francisco Cardinali Quignonio, Editum et Recognitum Iuxta Editionem Venetiis A.D. 1535 Impressam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1888; republished Farnborough: Gregg International, 1970).

practice), Quiñones drastically shortened and simplified each of them, allocating no more than three psalms to any office and removing their antiphons, while restricting daily Bible reading to just three lessons at the night office, with a patristic or hagiographical reading substituted for the third on a feast day.

His reforms went further than mere abbreviation, however. The limited amount that was known at the time of the early Christian practice of the daily office suggested that its roots lay in the monastic movement, where the principal aim had been to complete the whole 150 psalms as the worship of God in a particular period of time. The influential *Rule of St. Benedict*, for example, had insisted that “those monks show slothful service in their devotion who in the course of a week chant less than the whole Psalter with its customary canticles; when we read that our holy fathers strenuously accomplished in one day what we lukewarm ones should fulfill in a whole week.”<sup>3</sup> In the course of the Middle Ages, however, this primitive monastic ideal had become so overlaid with a succession of proper offices for saints’ days and other festivals with their own selected psalms and readings that the regular course was only followed on a relatively few days in the year. Quiñones, therefore, sought to restore the older practice both by eliminating the repetition of any psalm in the course of a week (except for the long established Psalm 95 at the beginning of each day) and by refusing to allow the cycle to be interrupted by any festal observance, even Christmas Day and Easter. The psalms were not recited in their biblical order but seemingly distributed randomly throughout the offices, the only signs of purpose being an apparent tendency to assign the longer psalms to Mattins and to appoint psalms appropriate to the character of the day on Sunday and Friday. Similarly, the readings at the night office covered most of the Old Testament each year and all of the New Testament except for part of the Book of Revelation, with relatively few special readings for holy days being permitted to disrupt this sequence.

In a preface to the book, Quiñones set out the principles underlying his revision. He believed the original aim of the office had been threefold: first, that the clergy might make propitiation to God for the people through their prayers; second, that they, who ought to set an example of virtue and sanctity to others, might through assiduous prayer give less opportunity to the devil and devote themselves to the contemplation of divine things; and third, that they “may be instructed

<sup>3</sup> *Rule of St. Benedict*, chapter 18.

by daily reading of sacred scripture and ecclesiastical histories and understand, as Paul says, that faithful word which is according to the teaching and be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who speak against [it]" (Titus 1:9). However, human negligence had gradually deserted the institutions of the ancient fathers. "First, the books of sacred scripture, which were to be read through at specific times of the year, having hardly yet been begun, are abandoned by those who pray." He goes on to cite Genesis and Isaiah as examples, noting that only a few chapters are read in Advent before moving on to other books, and lamenting that "in the same way we sample rather than read the other books of the Old Testament; nor is it otherwise with the Gospels and the rest of the scripture of the New Testament, in place of which other [readings] take over that cannot be compared to these either in usefulness or importance and that are daily inculcated by the movement of the tongue more than by the application of the mind."

He had further criticisms of the existing forms to add: "While many of the psalms which were intended for each day of the week are omitted, just a few are repeated nearly all year. Then, writings from the lives of the saints are selected so crudely and with such poor judgment that they seem to have neither authority nor importance. The ordo has become so complicated and the set order of praying so difficult that often only a little less work is spent in finding it out than in reading when you have found it."<sup>4</sup>

He then went on to explain in detail the form and rationale for each of the offices in the new Breviary, ending by pointing out that it was not so much a new invention as a more commodious version of the old and a restoration of a more elegant form, with certain things that had crept in being removed.

But if it seems laborious to anyone that nearly everything is to be read out of the book in this breviary, when much that is learned by heart because of its frequent repetition can be recited from memory in the other, let him balance with this labor his knowledge of sacred scripture, which in this way will increase each day, and the application of his mind, which God requires above all in those who pray (for the latter is inevitably present more in those who read than in those quoting from memory), and he will judge labor of this kind not only fruitful but also salutary.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Translated from the Latin text in Wickham Legg, *Breviarium Romanum*, xix–xx.

<sup>5</sup> Wickham Legg, *Breviarium Romanum*, xxiv–xxv.

It was, however, the drastic simplification that caused a storm of protest from conservatives in the church when the Breviary was published, and especially from the academics of the Sorbonne in Paris. Quiñones attempted to mollify them by bringing out a second edition the following year, 1536, that restored some of the antiphons eliminated in the first revision,<sup>6</sup> but this was not sufficient to win them over.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, while the disappearance of the festal offices and the consequent lack of variety ensuing from that may not have been to the taste of other clergy, its comparative shortness certainly made it popular with them, and the book went through more than a hundred editions in the course of the next thirty years.<sup>8</sup>

Although intended only for private recitation, its brevity led to it also being adopted for use in corporate worship in some places, and this intensified the conservative opposition to it and was a major factor behind the decision made by the Council of Trent in 1568 to annul every breviary that did not have a two-hundred-year tradition behind it and replace it with the form of the Roman Breviary then authorized. Thereafter Quiñones's work exercised no further influence on the Roman Catholic Church, but it did profoundly affect the practice of the Anglican Communion in subsequent centuries.

### *The 1549 Book of Common Prayer*

Although the chief architect of the 1549 Prayer Book cannot be established definitely, it is generally accepted that it was Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. Not only did the committee appointed to draw up the book produce the finished version very quickly, already in 1548 the services of "Mattins" and "Evensong" were said to have been sung in English in St. Paul's Cathedral and other London churches,<sup>9</sup> and so some preliminary form must have been prepared at that early date. Indeed, two draft texts of revised offices exist among Cranmer's papers: both presume the continuing use of Latin, the first retaining all the traditional hours of prayer, the second reducing them to two, morning and evening. Even earlier, in 1543, Convocation had

<sup>6</sup> Reproduced in John Wickham Legg, ed., *The Second Recension of the Quignon Breviary*, 2 vols., Henry Bradshaw Society 35 and 42 (London: Harrison, 1908–1912).

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed exposition of the criticisms levelled against it, see J. A. Jungmann, "Why was Cardinal Quinonez' Reformed Breviary a Failure?" in J. A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (London: Challoner, 1962), 200–214.

<sup>8</sup> See Wickham Legg, *Second Recension of the Quignon Breviary*, 1: xiii–xix.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Procter and W. H. Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 40, 45–47.

ordered that a chapter of the Bible should be read in English at Mattins and Evensong every Sunday and holy day, thus paving the way for the later revision.<sup>10</sup>

Cranmer was not only familiar with Quiñones's work but heavily influenced by it in the compilation of the daily offices in the first English Prayer Book, and as we shall see shortly, he drew upon parts of its preface for the preface to his own work.<sup>11</sup> But Cranmer's intentions went beyond those of Quiñones. He wanted to create not just an office for the clergy but a pattern of daily worship that would include laypeople as well. For that reason, his services had to be in English rather than Latin and consisted simply of two times of prayer each day, morning and evening, no doubt because he imagined these to be the only occasions on which it might be practicable for ordinary people to gather in church, and as we have already observed these were often the times of day that the clergy had tried to utilize to get through all the offices to which they were committed. This meant that the psalmody had to be extended over a longer period than a week for its completion, and so a monthly cycle was established instead. As simplicity was another keynote of this revision, the psalms were to be recited rigidly in their biblical order, beginning with Psalms 1–5 on the morning of the first day of the month and ending with Psalms 147–150 on the thirtieth evening (instructions are given regarding months with less or more than thirty days), without any account being taken of the traditional hours of the day or days of the week with which various psalms had been associated or of special treatment for Psalm 119 with its 178 verses, which was simply broken up into sections to be used continuously from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-sixth evening.

In addition to simplicity of construction, a second principle governed Cranmer's pattern of daily offices for the English church: his conviction that it was the reading of scripture that had been the central purpose of daily services in early Christianity. Both these principles can be clearly seen in the pattern of Mattins and Evensong (as the book continued to call them). Not only did the two services share a common structure with one another while drawing on elements from several of

<sup>10</sup> Both drafts are printed in Francis Gasquet and Edmund Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Hodges, 1891), 16–39, 311–382. See also Procter and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 31, 34, 354–356.

<sup>11</sup> An earlier version of Cranmer's Preface, in Latin and also based on Quiñones, had also been included in the second of the draft schemes he drew up.

the medieval offices that had preceded them, but at the heart of each were two substantial Bible readings (a whole chapter in length each time), one from the Old Testament and one from the New. The accompanying lectionary adhered to the principle of simplicity by having the biblical books read in order, beginning with Genesis in January, read continuously morning and evening, with Matthew as the second reading at Mattins and Romans as the second reading at Evensong.

## *The Book of Common Prayer, 1549*

MATTINS		EVENSONG	
MATTINS	Lord's Prayer	VESPERS	Lord's Prayer
	Versicles & responses		Versicles & responses
	<i>Gloria Patri</i>		<i>Gloria Patri</i>
	<i>Venite</i>		
	Psalms		Psalms
	Old Testament reading		Old Testament reading
	<i>Te Deum Laudamus</i>		<i>Magnificat</i>
LAUDS	New Testament reading	COMPLINE	New Testament reading
	<i>Benedictus</i>		<i>Nunc dimittis</i>
PRIME	<i>Kyries</i>		<i>Kyries</i>
	Creed		Creed
	Lord's Prayer		Lord's Prayer
	<i>Preces</i>		<i>Preces</i>
LAUDS	Collect of the day	VESPERS	Collect of the day
	Collect for peace		Collect for peace
PRIME	Collect for grace	COMPLINE	Collect for aid

These same principles were expounded more explicitly in the Preface to the book, which was really a preface to the daily services rather than the work as a whole. Here Cranmer adopted and expanded only the second and third of the principles Quiñones had claimed lay behind the church's practice of daily prayer. Ignoring the idea that it had been intended so that the clergy might intercede for the people, Cranmer asserted that the "first and original ground" of the "common prayers in the church, commonly called divine service" according to "the ancient fathers" had been "for a great advancement of godliness":

For they so ordered the matter that all the whole Bible (or the greatest part thereof) should be read over once in the year, intending thereby that the Clergy, and especially such as were ministers of the congregation, should (by often reading, and meditation in God's word) be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be the more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth; and further, that the people (by daily hearing of holy scripture read in the Church) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true religion.<sup>12</sup>

After going on to paraphrase Quiñones's complaint that the ancient system of reading the Bible in order and reciting all the psalms had in the course of time been destroyed, resulting in great complexities in using the medieval offices, the Preface claimed that the new forms would redress those weaknesses. The calendar and rules to order the service were simple and easy to understand; and everything that used to break the continuous course reading of scripture, "an-thems, responds, invitatories and such like things," had been eliminated," so that

here you have an order for prayer (as touching the reading of Holy Scripture) much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old fathers, and a great deal more profitable and commodious than that which of late was used. It is more profitable because here are left out many things, whereof some be untrue, some uncertain, some vain and superstitious; and is ordained nothing to be read but the very pure word of God, the Holy Scriptures, or that which

---

<sup>12</sup> *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI*, Everyman's Library, no. 448 (London: Dent, 1968; New York: Dutton, 1968), Preface (spelling modernized).



is evidently grounded upon the same, and that is such a language and order as is most easy and plain for the understanding, both of the readers and hearers. It is also more commodious, both for the shortness thereof, and for the plainness of the order, and for that the rules be few and easy.<sup>13</sup>

If these considerations did not convince others of the advantages of the new forms, the Preface had one more argument—they would save money: “By this order, the curates shall need none other books for their public service, but this book and the Bible, by the means whereof the people shall not be at so great charge for books as in time past they have been.”

Interestingly, a footnote to this Preface acknowledged that the use of English was necessary only for the edification of the congregation in the church, and when the offices were said privately, they could be said in any language that the users themselves understood. Moreover, the obligation to say the office was no longer laid on all clergy by virtue of their ordination, as it had been in the later Middle Ages, but only on those with pastoral responsibility for cathedrals, collegiate and parish churches, and chapels annexed to them.

### *The 1552 Book of Common Prayer*

Several changes were made to the daily offices when the 1549 Prayer Book was revised. The services were now renamed “Morning Prayer” and “Evening Prayer,” further distancing them from their medieval predecessors, and were provided with a lengthy penitential introduction, much of it based upon Reformed sources.<sup>14</sup> Proper psalms were included as alternatives to the gospel canticles, as the use of the latter was disliked by extreme reformers, and the *Kyries* were now placed after the Creed together with the other prayer material instead of before it.

The earlier note at the end of the Preface was also modified. Although the use of a language other than English was still permitted in private, the Preface now required that all priests and deacons (and not just those with pastoral duties) “shall be bound to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, except they be letted by preaching, studying of divinity, or some other urgent cause”

<sup>13</sup> Preface to the 1549 BCP, in *First and Second Prayer Books*.

<sup>14</sup> See Procter and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 368–372.

(reduced to “sickness or some other urgent causes” in 1662). Those who ministered in parish churches or chapels, “being at home and not being otherwise reasonably letted,” were to say the offices in the church or chapel and were to toll a bell shortly beforehand, “that such as be disposed may come to hear God’s word and to pray with him.”<sup>15</sup>

### *Later Revisions of the Book of Common Prayer*

When the Prayer Book was revised once more at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth’s reign in 1559, it appears that it had now been recognized that it was an unrealistic hope to persuade the laity to attend the services daily in any numbers, because proper first lessons were introduced for Sundays and additions made to the proper readings for holy days, so that people might then encounter something more edifying than the next portion of the continuous reading from the weekdays. Proper psalms, however, continued to be limited to just four occasions in the year, and even in 1662 that was increased only to six in total. Also in 1662 the singing of an anthem was permitted after the collects, and further prayers appended at the conclusion of the services. Except for periodic attempts to revise the lectionary and to provide proper psalms for Sundays and other holy days, the Prayer Book offices continued in this form down to the twentieth century.

Even in the twentieth century nearly all revisions have adhered unswervingly to the principle that fundamental to the offices is the orderly recitation of the whole Psalter and the systematic reading of the whole Bible. As a result, when the offices have been judged too long and too monotonous for modern tastes, these problems have been dealt with by extending the period in which the Psalter is to be completed so that fewer psalms need to be said on any one occasion, and by providing a greater variety of canticles so that the same ones need not be said every day. The basic principles behind the offices have generally not been questioned. Among examples of this point of view may be cited the classic textbook by Procter and Frere at the beginning of the century: “It is hardly too much to say that Divine Service traces its origin to the desire for the orderly recitation of the Psalter and reading of the Bible, and still exists for that purpose.”<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Preface to the 1552 BCP, in *First and Second Prayer Books*.

<sup>16</sup> Procter and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 312.

*Recent Research*

In the last few decades, however, liturgical scholars have become increasingly aware that the daily office was not a new creation in the fourth century but developed organically out of earlier traditions of daily prayer among Christians going back to the very beginnings of the church, and moreover that the monastic form was not the only pattern that the office took as it developed in the period from the fourth century onwards.<sup>17</sup>

Based on the practice of some—but not all—Jews in the first century, early Christians were expected to pray several times a day, and again in the middle of the night, the latter not being quite as extreme as it sounds to modern ears in an age when not all the hours of darkness were needed for sleep and little else could be done in the limited artificial light available. These times of prayer, usually observed by individuals on their own or within their households rather than in larger gatherings, did not center around the reading of the Bible—the limited availability and cost of obtaining manuscript copies of the text, to say nothing of the low level of literacy among many of the believers, would in any case have rendered this extremely rare—but in praise on behalf of all creation and intercession for the salvation of the world. At first such occasions did not even include the use of psalms, which—like the public exposition of the rest of the scriptures—belonged instead to the periodic corporate gatherings of the local Christian community, and especially their eucharistic meals. Only gradually did some psalms of praise begin to form a part of the times of daily prayer for those who were able to observe them communally.

In the changed world of the fourth century, when under the Emperor Constantine the church emerged into the public arena, this pattern of praying was continued in its fullness only by what have been called urban monastic communities, really households of like-minded Christian men or women committed to maintaining a highly disciplined spirituality in the midst of the now less rigorous atmosphere of the church around them. The rest went in one of two other directions. A minority, for whom such a life was not ascetic enough, withdrew to the deserts to spend the whole of their waking hours in continual prayer of a more meditative kind, with minimal interruptions for

---

<sup>17</sup> For more detail on what follows, see Paul F. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2009/Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press 2010), 101–128.

meals and sleep. Believing the Book of Psalms to have been composed by King David under the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit and to be speaking prophetically of Christ, they learned it by heart and meditated on every verse of it, either alone or in communities, praying that they might grow into the stature of Christ.

The majority, on the other hand, continued their normal way of living, participating in the daily services morning and evening that were now celebrated publicly in church buildings and led by the clergy. These services still centered round praise and intercession, as the earlier times of prayer had done, but the praise now took the form of a very small number of psalms and hymns, usually repeated every day. The evening service often began with the lighting of the evening lamp and thanksgiving for the gift of light, a common domestic ceremony now taken over into an ecclesiastical setting. Services of the word, at which the Bible was read and expounded, belonged only to a limited number of other occasions in the week, usually Sundays (in conjunction with the eucharist) and Wednesdays and Fridays. In contrast to the desert monastic offices, these daily services have been labeled "cathedral" offices by modern scholars.

What survived in later practice was neither the pure desert tradition nor the cathedral office, but a hybrid of the two, because of the growing influence on the church as a whole, and especially the Western church, of the urban monastic movement. Here a full round of seven hours of prayer each day and prayer in the night was retained, rather than just the morning and evening tradition of the cathedral office, but composed now of both selected psalms in connection with certain hours and also of the use of the whole Psalter distributed over some, or (as time went by) all, of the daily times of prayer, along with regular Bible reading. The psalms were understood as being both meditation on Christ (under the influence of the desert tradition) and at the same time praise of God (influenced by the cathedral tradition), even if the words of the text did not seem either immediately Christological or an articulation of God's praise. Such was the basis out of which the medieval offices grew, and formed the historical background of the Prayer Book tradition.

### *The Future Tradition*

In the light of the above, the traditional Anglican assertion that the daily offices ought to be founded upon the recitation of the whole Psalter and the systematic reading of the Bible is at least questionable.

The regular use of every single psalm has a long history, but arises only out of the monastic movement. The rest of the church in the fourth century, and Christians in the centuries prior to that, felt no obligation to do so, and seem to have restricted their use of the Psalter in worship to very few psalms or parts of psalms. Nor is there any sign that Jewish worshippers before them made much use of the canonical psalms, and the claim sometimes made that Jesus would have known them all and sung them regularly in the synagogue lacks any evidence. Even the modern synagogue only ever makes use of about half the psalms in the course of the year.

As for Bible reading rather than praise and intercession having been at the heart of early Christian daily devotion, that too seems to be a false reading back of Anglican practice into the world of the first believers. This is not to say that studying the Bible was not important to them or that they did not take the opportunities that were possible for them to do that. But it is to say that it was something different from their practice of daily prayer, which had quite a distinct orientation. As God's priestly people, Christians were committed both to the oblation of their whole life to God and to priestly worship—the constant offering of praise to the creator and redeemer of the world on behalf of all creation and of prayer and intercession for its present needs and its ultimate salvation. It could therefore be argued that the intense emphasis on the recitation of the Psalter and the reading of scripture each day has rather obscured this older tradition. Regular Bible reading is—or should be—a vital part of the healthy spiritual life of all Christians, but it is not—or should not be—to the detriment of their vocation to engage in prayer of a rather different kind.

Only two Anglican provinces have so far begun to recognize this essentially dual character of the daily office in their official revisions of their rites, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Church of England. The Canadian *Book of Alternative Services* provided a substantial historical introduction to the divine office and an explanation of the revised forms that are included in the book, and by means of a complex series of rubrics enabled the services to be used in different ways for different purposes.<sup>18</sup> Among these is the possibility of choosing from a very wide range of introductory responses, readings, sponsories, canticles, and forms of intercession in order to create for

---

<sup>18</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 36–43.

daily use by individuals and small groups (at least by those who know what it is they are trying to do) something more akin to the cathedral offices of the fourth century. The evening office may also be prefaced with a Service of Light,<sup>19</sup> and replaced on Saturday evening by a Vigil of the Resurrection.

The *Common Worship* series of services produced by the Church of England at the turn of the millennium went a step further and published a complete office book, *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*<sup>20</sup> that is flexible enough to be used either according to the more traditional Anglican pattern for Morning and Evening Prayer, though much enriched by a variety of canticles, or in a modified form in which one of the brief readings from the short office called "Prayer During the Day" may be substituted for the usual two substantial readings at Morning or Evening Prayer, thus giving it a quite different feel and emphasis. In addition, while psalmody for the rest of the year continues to follow the conventional Anglican sequential pattern, that prescribed for the "solemn seasons" is chosen for its appropriateness to the time; and an additional daily lectionary has been compiled that does not attempt to work its way through the whole Bible but is made up of selected passages intended to stand alone and be intelligible to worshippers who might not be present at the office every day. It is thought this lectionary will be particularly valuable for Evensong in English cathedrals, which attract a large number of occasional worshippers, but will also be welcomed by those who wish to pursue their main systematic Bible study outside the daily office and to read there instead selections that stimulate worship and intercession.

While the traditional Anglican emphasis on daily psalm recitation and Bible reading continues to offer spiritual sustenance to those familiar with its rhythms, it may be that the recovery of more ancient patterns of daily prayer within official publications will better serve the needs of new generations of worshippers and offer a richer experience of participation in the church's praise and prayer than that found in many of the books of private prayer and daily devotion on the market today.

---

<sup>19</sup> Something that had already been included as an option in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church in the USA.

<sup>20</sup> Church of England, *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005).



#### Copyright and Use:

**As an ATLAS user, you may print, download, or send articles for individual use according to fair use as defined by U.S. and international copyright law and as otherwise authorized under your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement.**

**No content may be copied or emailed to multiple sites or publicly posted without the copyright holder(s)' express written permission. Any use, decompiling, reproduction, or distribution of this journal in excess of fair use provisions may be a violation of copyright law.**

This journal is made available to you through the ATLAS collection with permission from the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder for an entire issue of a journal typically is the journal owner, who also may own the copyright in each article. However, for certain articles, the author of the article may maintain the copyright in the article. Please contact the copyright holder(s) to request permission to use an article or specific work for any use not covered by the fair use provisions of the copyright laws or covered by your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement. For information regarding the copyright holder(s), please refer to the copyright information in the journal, if available, or contact ATLA to request contact information for the copyright holder(s).

#### About ATLAS:

The ATLA Serials (ATLAS®) collection contains electronic versions of previously published religion and theology journals reproduced with permission. The ATLAS collection is owned and managed by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and received initial funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The design and final form of this electronic document is the property of the American Theological Library Association.