

## Ten reasons for using the Book of Common Prayer...

- (1) It's easy to understand. Notice this: whenever the BCP get down to really serious matters such as marriage and death it condenses into words of one syllable: "With this ring I thee wed"; "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live"; "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust"
- (2) It is familiar. Evensong is always Evensong. The prayers in the Holy Communion follow in the same regular sequence. This is vital because when you're not having to check which page you should be on, you can concentrate all your attention on God
- (3) It expresses continuity. As Christians we draw great comfort from knowing that we are the church that was, that is and is to come. The BCP unites us across the generations.
- (4) Its Epistles and gospels subtly follow the seasons of the English year, thus uniting words with landscape. Nothing disembodied about BCP religion
- (5) It is spiritually true. It has us psychologically "bang to rights". You want a definition of human nature? Try this from the BCP version of St Paul: "The thing I would not, that I do and what I would, I do not". That's what we're all like
- (6) Prayers learnt by heart stand us in good stead when the going gets rough. Even when we're too ill to read, we can say, "Lighten our darkness we beseech thee O Lord" or "God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble".
- (7) Beauty is not a merely secular category. Beauty is part of holiness – "the beauty of holiness", remember. So the BCP gives us meditative poetry of surpassing wonder: "Like as the hart desireth the water brook", "Yea the sparrow hath found her an house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young"
- (8) The BCP is what goes with the constitution of the English and prays for our ancient and abiding institutions: the Queen, Parliament, the magistrates, the army. We live by our institutions. We have institutions so we don't die of politics
- (9) It provides an English education. Most of the significant writers from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards use Prayer Book phrases naturally and as a matter of course. To understand their origin and context is a wonderful enrichment of thought and enjoyment
- (10) All the great musical settings of religious English in such as Te Deum Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis are BCP settings.

