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The Book of Common Prayer in Methodism: a Cherished Heritage or a Corrupting Influence?

Le Book of Common Prayer dans le méthodisme : héritage précieux ou cancer à extirper ?

Jérôme Grosclaude

- 1 Given the origin of Methodism, it is hardly surprising that the Book of Common Prayer should have played a part in its history. What is more remarkable, however, is that in spite of a long history of Methodist ambivalence towards the Prayer Book, contemporary Methodism has increasingly learnt to affirm it a lot more unanimously as a welcome resource. The continued relevance of Anglican liturgy in a denomination which had to come to terms with its separate identity is a testimony both to the appeal and adaptability of the Anglican liturgical tradition.
- 2 When Methodism was founded in 1738, John Wesley had no intention to split off from the Church of England – in which he had been a priest for ten years – , but, on the contrary, he wanted to revitalize it from the inside. However, in his own lifetime, Methodism functioned like an independent movement, ultimately answerable to no one but to the Founder, even though he regularly protested of his and his disciples' loyalty to the established Church.¹
- 3 The status of The Book of Common Prayer within Methodism illustrates the ambiguous relation of Methodism to the Church of England. More than two centuries after the *de facto* separation of the two Churches, British Methodism is still influenced by the liturgy of the Church of England. Although the Book of Common Prayer was instrumental in shaping the spirituality of John Wesley and his early disciples, its place was later disputed within the Methodist Church. However, since the late 19th century it has become a lasting inspiration for the denomination.

The Book of Common Prayer as a constitutive element of Methodist identity (1738-1791)

- 4 Without retelling the history of Methodism, its birth and rise in the British Isles and then in the colonies (notably in North America)², let it be noted that John Wesley showed a good deal of pragmatism when it came to organizing and leading his movement. He freed himself from everything that could check the progression of Methodism, such as the life-long appointments of ministers to their livings, or the monopoly on preaching then enjoyed by ordained ministers in the Church of England. It seemed to John Wesley that these things stood in the way of real conversions. However, he kept these “things indifferent” which did not hinder the task of spreading the Gospel that he had assigned to himself and to his disciples. In which category did John Wesley put the Book of Common Prayer and more generally fixed forms of worship?
- 5 John Wesley loved the Book of Common Prayer, declaring in September 1784: “I believe there is no liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England.”³ John Wesley’s writings were studded with quotations from the Book of Common Prayer almost as numerous as biblical quotations. In a 15-page letter to the Bishop of Gloucester, for example, written in 1762 to answer anti-Methodist attacks, John Wesley explicitly or implicitly referred 17 times to the Book of Common Prayer and 13 times to *The Books of Homilies*.⁴ As for his Journal (21 volumes covering the years 1735 to 1790), its editors, W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heintzenrater, have found no less than 152 quotations from the Book of Common Prayer.⁵
- 6 Such intimate knowledge of one of the founding texts of Anglicanism is naturally unsurprising, coming as it did from an Anglican minister (whose father and brother were also Anglican priests), who defined himself as “a High Churchman, son of a High Churchman”.⁶ However, such proximity must be rightfully set in context.
- 7 John Wesley found himself constantly repeating that the Methodists were, and had to remain, members of the Church of England. In 1777, he delivered the following warning: “God is with you, of a truth [cf. 1 Co., XIV, 25]; and so he will be, while you continue in the Church: but whenever the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them.”⁷
- 8 In Wesley’s view Methodists *were* Anglicans. For him this Anglican identity was based on two main features: Sunday service attendance in the parish church and doctrinal unity with the Church of England. Thus, on 13 September 1739, John Wesley recorded the following episode in his Journal:
- A serious clergyman desired to know in what points we differed from the Church of England. I answered: “To the best of my knowledge, in none. The doctrines we preach are the doctrines of the Church of England; indeed, the fundamental doctrines of the Church, clearly laid down, both in her Prayers, Articles and Homilies.”⁸
- 9 Time was not to modify John Wesley’s opinion, as he dramatically showed almost fifty years later when he published a service book for his disciples in the United States. The previous year, Britain had conceded independence to the Thirteen Colonies, and it seemed difficult for the Methodists to continue using the Book of Common Prayer (since it was the service book of the State Church of the former colonizer). Rather than

producing an original service book, John Wesley chose to publish an abridged version of the Book of Common Prayer entitled *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*.⁹

- 10 However, this decision can be seen as a sign of John Wesley's ambiguous position with regard to the Church of England. If the structure remained the same in the two service books, the father of Methodism introduced several changes. All the saints' feast days disappeared,¹⁰ as well as the Black Rubric in the Lord's Supper.¹¹ He also deleted all references to clerical garb.¹² Finally, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* did not contain any of the three references to the *Books of Homilies* contained in the Book of Common Prayer.¹³
- 11 John Wesley's work seemed to be mainly motivated by a desire for simplification in the context of life in the United States at the time, but we can also discern theological motivations behind some of the changes he introduced. It is particularly visible in the version of the Thirty-Nine Articles which, as was customary in all editions of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, were included in the 1786 service book. However, they appeared in an abridged version, the doctrinal statement of the Church of England being reduced to 25 Articles. In what can logically be considered as the statement of faith of the Methodists, John Wesley had deleted two articles which could have undermined the Anglican credentials of Methodism:
- _ Article XX, whose opening sentence is: "The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith"
 - _ Article XXIII, according to which "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same."¹⁴
- 12 The articles which contradicted John Wesley's Arminian vision of salvation were also deleted: article XVII (on predestination)¹⁵ and the part of article XXVII on baptismal regeneration¹⁶ (for John Wesley no one could be saved if he had not had a personal encounter with God). Other passages were probably deleted for the sake of brevity, and an article of religion was added: "*Of the Rulers of the United States of America*", which affirmed the independence of the USA and the legitimacy of the federal and state governments.
- 13 For all the love and respect he had for the Book of Common Prayer, John Wesley did not think it was perfect, nor wholly theologically sound. This became obvious in 1786 when he had *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* reissued, with no mention of the United States so that the service book could be used in Scotland and in the colonies.¹⁷
- 14 While professing the utmost fidelity to the Church of England, John Wesley *de facto* put his movement outside the Church's control. His conception of the Book of Common Prayer was a good illustration of this ambiguity since he came to the point where he asked his disciples to use an abridged, revised version instead of the original, even though he repeated time and again how much he admired the liturgy of the established Church. Consequently, after his death his followers were compelled to wrestle with this ambiguity, even though they eventually managed to clarify the status of the Book of Common Prayer inside Methodism.

The Book of Common Prayer in Methodism: a controversial and problematic status (1791-1897)

- 15 The death of John Wesley, aged 88, on 2 March 1791, left the movement bereft of its charismatic founder, thanks to whom Methodism had flourished beyond all expectations. In another liturgical illustration of the ambiguous place of Methodists within the Church of England, the itinerant preacher, Henry Moore, who presided over John Wesley's burial decided to use the Office for the Dead from the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁸ However Moore, although ordained an "elder" by John Wesley in 1784¹⁹, would not have been authorised to perform the ritual by the established Church, since the Book of Common Prayer explicitly specifies that only a priest ordained by a bishop in the apostolic succession was allowed to read the office.²⁰
- 16 In the years immediately following the death of John Wesley, the Conference, the supreme body of Methodism, composed of all its itinerant preachers, regularly protested its fidelity to the established Church. As when John Wesley was alive, Methodists still had the obligation to attend Sunday services in their parish churches (and to take communion if the Lord's Supper was celebrated), as well as to participate in the Methodist preaching service on the same day.²¹ In the few cases where Methodists (from at least 1786) were allowed not to attend the parish church (mainly because it was too far away or because the Minister was "notoriously wicked" or preaching "a false doctrine"),²² the Conference recommended that "the Psalms and Lessons with part of the Church Prayers"²³ should be read, which confirmed the central place of the Book of Common Prayer in the liturgical life of Methodism. In addition to this reiteration, the Conference of 1792 repeated the prohibition against holding preaching services at the same time as the Sunday service in the parish church.²⁴
- 17 However, a growing majority of Methodists wanted the itinerant preachers to be given true ministerial status. The Conference was then torn between the desire to have the itinerant preachers administer communion,²⁵ and the desire not to break with the Church of England. A way out was found in 1795 thanks to the "Plan of Pacification": this compromise solution reaffirmed the link between Methodism and the Church of England, while at the same time allowing for the administration of the Lord's Supper and of Baptism in preaching houses by the itinerant preachers, provided a majority of the faithful were in favour and subject to ultimate approval by the Conference.²⁶ The document stipulated that Methodist services should not be held at the same time as the office in the parish church but that, if it was nonetheless the case, the Book of Common Prayer, or at least the version abridged by John Wesley, should be used.²⁷ There was an absolute prohibition on celebrating the Lord's Supper in the preaching house on the same day as in the parish church,²⁸ however this recommendation seemed to have remained a dead letter once the itinerant preachers had gained the right to give communion. The separation between the two denominations was thus *de facto* accomplished, even if the Methodist movement long continued to claim that its rightful place was within the Church of England.
- 18 To what extent was the Conference's injunction to use the Book of Common Prayer or the Prayer-Book based *Sunday Service of the Methodists* obeyed? It is difficult to answer the question with certainty, but two elements tend to indicate that it was indeed acted upon, and that Methodist services long followed the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer.

First, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* was reissued twenty-seven times between 1792 and 1882 (a new edition every 3 years and 4 months on average), which would imply that the book was fairly successful. Secondly, in 1828 an anonymous Methodist pamphleteer thought himself justified in defending the use of the Book of Common Prayer or of its abridged version by arguing that “[t]he Liturgy has, in times past, proved a standard, to which, without fear of contradiction, we could always appeal in support of Methodistical [sic] doctrine”²⁹ and that the Book of Common Prayer represented “a very complete and concise epitome of the doctrines we profess”.³⁰ The same pamphleteer also asserted that to listen to the liturgy of the Church of England helped the Methodists immerse themselves in the Holy Scriptures since they were heavily quoted in the Book of Common Prayer.³¹ Nine years later, in 1837, a great Methodist figure, the minister and historian Thomas Jackson (1783-1873), twice president of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference (the main British Methodist denomination), challenged his reader to find a Wesleyan chapel where the Book of Common Prayer was not in use: “[Y]ou shall attend any of the chapels where our regular ministers officiate on the forenoon of the Lord’s Day as you please, and if you do not find the liturgy or the lessons read, I will forfeit five pounds [that is to say, three months of the wages of an unmarried Wesleyan Minister]”.³² Eight years later, when the Wesleyan Conference allowed its ministers to celebrate weddings, they were asked to use the Book of Common Prayer ritual revised by John Wesley in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*.³³

- 19 Thanks to other testimonies, it is possible to assert with confidence that the Book of Common Prayer (or its abridged version) was greatly used by the Wesleyans. In his 2006 book on Methodist liturgy, David Chapman comes to the conclusion that the Book of Common Prayer was indeed used more often than *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, and that it was not until 1882 that they were both supplanted by *The Book of Public Prayers and Services*.³⁴
- 20 It should be noted that, in addition to possibly bringing spiritual benefits, the use of the Book of Common Prayer (or of its abridged version) had the advantage of being a token of respectability for the Methodists who used it, while also bringing credence to the oft-repeated claim that Wesleyans represented the purest Anglican orthodoxy.³⁵
- 21 However, the Book of Common Prayer and its abridged version also had their detractors among Methodists, especially among those who belonged to the minority sects. The Book of Common Prayer and the “popish” influence which, for some, pervaded it, appeared shocking to them. In their view, Church of England services were still too similar to Roman Catholic services. This accusation was made more particularly by non-Wesleyans, that is to say those Methodists who had broken away from the main denomination from 1797, usually because of the excessively great powers given to ministers in Methodism. Hugh Bourne, for example, who co-founded the Primitive Methodists in 1812 (the main non-Wesleyan denomination), would use the image of the “great whore” from the Book of Revelation — usually reserved to excoriate Popery— to describe an Anglican service:
- After the service began, it ran through my mind, “get thee out of this place [cf. Gn XIX, 14], and beware of the woman that has the golden cup in her hand, and those that are with her; their ways are death” (...). It then struck me, “These people draweth nigh unto me with their lips,” [Mt XV, 8] &c. (...) I took my hat as soon as they had done the *Te Deum*, and went out and the burden was removed.³⁶
- 22 With every schism, the newly born Methodist Churches (the Methodist New Connexion in 1797, the Primitive Methodists in 1812, the Bible Christians in 1815 and the United

Methodist Free Churches in 1857) rejected the use of the Book of Common Prayer or of *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* and chose not to prescribe any service book to their preachers.³⁷ Until the end of the 19th century, the non-Wesleyan services were of a great variety and could be celebrated wholly or partly extempore, or find their inspiration in Nonconformist services. It seems that non-Wesleyan ministers would use a general outline which served as a basis for a service which they devised rather freely, alternating sermons, hymns, readings and impromptu prayers.³⁸

- 23 In the early 19th century, a clear difference existed between Wesleyan Methodists (who generally cherished the Book of Common Prayer and mainly refused the “Nonconformist” epithet) and non-Wesleyans, who had no consideration for “popish” prayers and even refused any set liturgy. This divide continued for most of the 19th century and things only began to change in 1860 when an increasing number of Methodist denominations started to use new service books.

The adoption of new Methodist service books: what posterity for the Book of Common Prayer?

- 24 Beginning in the 1860s, but gaining steam from the 1870s, the Methodist Churches started to adopt new service books. Such a step demonstrated the self-confidence of the Methodist denominations which, one after the other, had incorporated the word “Church” (instead of “Society” or “Connexion”) in their official names.³⁹
- 25 The adoption of service books by Methodists remained a delicate affair for two apparently conflicting reasons. Given that the use of the Book of Common Prayer was supposed to warrant the Anglican orthodoxy of the Methodists (cf. the above quotations by Thomas Jackson), to discontinue the use of the Book of Common Prayer and of *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* could be interpreted as renouncing this orthodoxy; it is however true that, when the Wesleyan Conference ordered the publication of a service book to replace the Book of Common Prayer in 1880, this objection seemed irrelevant to a great many Methodists.
- 26 Another argument against the adoption of a specifically Methodist service book was linked to a peculiar feature of the movement created by John Wesley: *extempore prayer*. In the early years of Methodism, itinerant preaching often led John Wesley and his assistants to utter prayers when they believed to be moved by the Holy Spirit to do so.⁴⁰ John Wesley attached so much importance to this, that he even had the following indication included in his revisions of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism: “Then the Elder [i. e. the Minister], if he see it expedient, may put up (conclude with) a prayer extempore”.⁴¹ Methodist Ministers had continued this usage, guaranteed by the 1795 Plan of Pacification,⁴² and it still exists today. There is no doubt that some Ministers feared the introduction of a (compulsory) service book which would eliminate any possibility of uttering impromptu prayers. This was why in 1880 the itinerant preacher John Bate advocated “the absolute and universal abandonment of Prayer-Books”⁴³ so that Wesleyans might come back to the general use of extempore prayer, upon which he marvelled with these words:

[W]hat power with God, what pouring of the soul before Him, what signal revelations of the Divine presence in light, comfort, peace, salvation, what overwhelming glory falling upon the congregations, should we see! Could a similar history be given of the use of read prayers?⁴⁴

- 27 John Bate was probably not the only Wesleyan to entertain such fears, but *The Book of Public Prayers and Services for the use of the People called Methodists* was nonetheless published in 1882.⁴⁵ Its content must have reassured those Wesleyans who were worried by such an innovation since it contained many elements taken from *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* and it also allowed extempore prayers in the Orders for the Lord's Supper and Baptism.⁴⁶ *The Book of Public Prayers and Services* came to be generally used by the Wesleyans and supplanted both the Book of Common Prayer and John Wesley's version.⁴⁷
- 28 By the time the Wesleyans published their first service book, two other Methodist Churches had already produced theirs: the Primitive Methodists in 1860 and the United Methodist Free Churches in 1865. Two more – the Bible Christians and the Methodist New Connexion – were to follow in 1897. Such a development may appear surprising, since non-Wesleyan Churches often associated set prayers with the Church of England that they had come to hate and despise.
- 29 However, it should be noted that the use of service books was in every case optional, since none of these denominations declared them to be mandatory. The full title of the Primitive Methodist service book, for example, was *Forms for the Administration of Baptism, the Solemnization of matrimony, maternal Thanksgiving after Child-birth, Administration of the Lord's Supper, Renewing our Covenant with God, and for the Burial of the dead, drawn up by the Order of the Primitive Methodist Conference, for the use of such Primitive Methodist Ministers as may require them* (my emphasis).
- 30 Similarly, the Book of Services for the Use of the Bible Christian Church opened with an explanatory foreword:
- [T]here are certain special and solemn occasions in our Church life, which ought not to be left entirely to the discretion of the ministers and other presiding brethren; occasions when both ministers and people would gladly welcome the aid of a service book.⁴⁸
- 31 The authors also expressed their desire that their work should be used more as an assisting tool than as a compelling rule preventing any innovation from ministers.⁴⁹
- 32 Two significant differences between non-Wesleyan rituals and the 1882 Wesleyan service book can be noted. First, non-Wesleyan works clearly distanced themselves from the Anglican heritage, visible in *The Book of Public Prayers and Services*. The former seldom followed the framework of the Book of Common Prayer, and indications concerning postures and gestures were very rare. Congregational responses were similarly scarce, no doubt to give them more latitude⁵⁰. Finally, non-Wesleyan service books were seen more as a source of inspiration for the minister than as a pattern to be rigidly followed⁵¹.
- 33 When in 1932 the major British Methodist Churches united to form the Methodist Church of Great Britain, it was felt necessary to produce a new service book. *The Book of Offices*, published in 1936, was heavily influenced by the Wesleyan tradition – and consequently, the tradition of the Book of Common Prayer. Methodists from non-Wesleyan backgrounds thus discovered offices following an Anglican framework, even if two orders of service for the Lord's Supper had been produced. The first followed the Wesleyan structure and was very similar to the Communion Service of the Book of Common Prayer⁵²; the second, on the contrary, was very simple and closely resembled plain non-Wesleyan ceremonies. Despite the historic hostility of non-Wesleyans towards Wesleyans, few eyebrows were raised, it seems, when the decision was made.⁵³ When the 1936 service book was superseded in 1975 by *The Methodist Service Book*, the (Wesleyan) first order was

maintained and the second was replaced by a new version entitled “Sunday service”, showing the influence of the Liturgical Movement⁵⁴. The latter order in turn influenced *The Methodist Worship Book* (1999), the current Methodist liturgy, which proposes ten different orders of service for the Lord’s Supper, depending on the liturgical season, but whose general structure echoes that of the “Sunday Service”. Other elements are similar to those of the Anglican Lord’s Supper or the Roman Catholic Mass.⁵⁵ The other ceremonies show the same twin influence of the Liturgical Movement (notably the “Marriage Service”, practically unchanged between 1975 and 1999, which bears a strong resemblance to the Anglican and Roman Catholic services⁵⁶) and of the Book of Common Prayer (transmitted through the “Sunday Service” and the Wesleyan tradition). Prayer Book influence is particularly visible in the Burial Office which follows the same structure as – and borrows some prayers from – the 1928 Prayer Book⁵⁷. As this article has made plain, Wesleyans were able to preserve their liturgical tradition after the 1932 Union, even if the now unified British Methodist Church has also turned to other sources for inspiration.

Conclusion

³⁴ Born in the Church of England, it was only logical that Methodism should bear some resemblance to the established Church, and that it should have influenced John Wesley. From the end of the 18th century to the last third of the 19th century, Methodist denominations had no choice but to define themselves with regard to the Book of Common Prayer: Wesleyans, the majority Church, saw it as a heritage to be protected and officially decided to continue using it, while non-Wesleyans, on the contrary, saw its Popish ceremonies as a corrupting influence one had to get rid of. The same dichotomy remained when Methodist Connexions, one after the other, took to producing their own service books. It was only in 1936 that non-Wesleyans, without disclaiming their history and their love for the Protestant Reformation, (re)discovered the heritage of the Book of Common Prayer which had been preserved by the Wesleyans for almost 150 years. The present situation is an interesting compromise and today’s British Methodist liturgy is the result of the quadruple influence of the Book of Common Prayer, John Wesley (extempore prayers have always been allowed in the united Church since 1936⁵⁸), non-Wesleyan traditions and the interdenominational Liturgical Movement.

NOTES

1. Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (1970) (London: Epworth Press, 2000), 311-314; John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley. The Bicentennial Edition. Journal and Diary* [hereafter *Journal*], ed. W. Reginald Ward & Richard P. Heintzenrater, vol. 20 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 91.

2. For a history of Methodism, see, *inter alia*, George Eayrs, William Townsend & Herbert Workman, eds., *A New History of Methodism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 2 vols; Rupert

E. Davies & Gordon Rupp, eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965-1988), 4 vols; Frank Baker, *op. cit.*

3. John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. – Standard Edition*, [hereafter *Letters*] ed. John Telford, vol. VII (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 239.

4. John Wesley, “A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester”, *The Works of John Wesley. The Bicentennial Edition*, vol. 11; *The Appeals to Men of reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, ed. Gerald R. Cragg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 521-536.

5. John Wesley, *Journal*, vol. 24, 417.

6. Letter to Lord North and Lord Dartmouth (14 June 1775) in John Wesley, *Letters*, vol. VI, 161.

7. John Wesley, “On Laying The Foundation Of The New Chapel, Near The City-Road, London” in John Wesley, *Sermons*, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-132-on-laying-the-foundation-of-the-new-chapel-near-the-city-road-london> (DOA: 26/6/2013).

8. John Wesley, *Journal*, vol. 19, 96.

9. Frank Baker, *op. cit.*, 242-243. The name was misleading since it contained offices for other days of the week.

10. James F. White, ed., *John Wesley’s Sunday Service of the Methodists of North America* (Nashville, TN: Quarterly Review, 1984), 17 [hereafter *SSM*].

11. Frank Baker, *op. cit.*, 245.

12. *SSM*, 10.

13. Frank Baker, *op. cit.*, 250. For a complete list of the deletions and additions, see *ibid.*, 242-252.

14. *Ibid.*, 249-250.

15. “Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, (...), He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity. (...)”

16. “[T]hey that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.”

17. Frank Baker, *op. cit.*, 254-255.

18. It should be noted that Henry Moore used “our father” instead of “our brother” throughout (Richard P. Heintzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley, Volume 1: John Wesley His Own Biographer* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984], 153).

19. On Henry Moore’s ordination, see H. Edward Lacy, “John Wesley’s Ordinations”, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 23 (1962): 120 and John C. Bowmer, “Ordinations in Wesleyan Methodism, 1791-1850”, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 39 (1974): 125.

20. Cf. the Order for the Burial of the Dead in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

21. *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, From the First, Held in London, by the Late Rev. John Wesley, A.M., in the Year 1744*, vol. I (London: John Mason/Wesleyan Conference Office, 1862), 193 [hereafter *MMC*].

22. *Ibid.*, 193

23. *Ibid.*, 193.

24. *Ibid.*, 271.

25. The question is mentioned in the Minutes of every Conference from 1792 to 1795 (*ibid.* 270, 273, 292, 314-315, 340-341).

26. *Ibid.*, 340.

27. *Ibid.*, 340.
28. *Ibid.*, 340.
29. Layman (A), *Objections to the Introduction of the Liturgy of the Established Church into Wesleyan Methodist Chapels, Considered and Refuted, By a Layman* (London: John Mason, 1828), 9.
30. *Ibid.*, 10.
31. *Ibid.*, 11.
32. [Thomas Jackson], *The Wesleyans vindicated from the calumnies contained in a pamphlet entitled, "The Church of England compared with Wesleyan Methodism", in a dialogue between a Churchman and a Methodist* (1837), 2nd edition (London: John Mason, 1837), 22.
33. David M. Chapman, *Born in Song: Methodist Worship in Britain* (Warrington: Church in the Market Place Publications, 2006), 201.
34. [Thomas Jackson], *The Wesleyans vindicated...*, *op. cit.*, 25.
35. Thomas Jackson remarked in 1842: "For the Church of England as a whole and as a Protestant Establishment I have long entertained what I conceive to be a just and sincere respect; nor shall anything absolutely alienate me from her ordinances", [Thomas Jackson], *An Answer to the Question, Why are you a Wesleyan Methodist?* (London: John Mason), 1842, 5.
36. Quoted in John Walford, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Late Venerable Hugh Bourne, By a Member of the Bourne Family* (1854) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 145.
37. David M. Chapman, *op. cit.*, 24-29.
38. *Ibid.*, 51-55.
39. The Methodist New Connexion was the only Methodist denomination never to have adopted the word "Church" in its official name, but the denomination into which it merged in 1907, the United Methodist Church, did.
40. Frank Baker, *op. cit.*, 311 and 321.
41. *The Sunday Service of the Methodists late in Connexion with the Rev. John Wesley, M. A., with other occasional services* (1784), 6th edition (London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference Office, 1817), 136, 140.
42. Paragraph 9 of the Plan of Pacification read: "The Lord's Supper shall be always administered in England, according to the form of the Established Church: but the person who administers, shall have full liberty to give out hymns, and to use exhortations and extemporary prayers", MMC (1795), vol. I, 340.
43. John Bate, *The Desire for a Methodist Liturgy: A Protest* (London: E. Stock, 1880), 5.
44. *Ibid.*, 10.
45. David M. Chapman, *op. cit.*, 25.
46. *The Book of Public Prayers and Services; for the use of the People called Methodists* (1882) (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1883), 230, 252.
47. David M. Chapman, *op. cit.*, 25.
48. *Ibid.*, 29.
49. *Ibid.*, 29.
50. *Ibid.*, 25.
51. *Ibid.*, 25.
52. *Ibid.*, 82.
53. However, it is probable that some congregations continued to use the old service books, just like former Wesleyan communities were still using the 1880 service book as of 2006. (*ibid.*, 31).
54. *Ibid.*, 82-83.
55. *Ibid.*, 85.
56. *Ibid.*, 213-214.
57. *Ibid.*, 231.
58. *Ibid.*, 31.

ABSTRACTS

For a long time, Methodism had a complicated relation with its “Mother Church”, the Church of England, and the liturgical question provides a good illustration of this. Even though they separated from the Church of England in the 1790s, Wesleyan Methodists (the majority group) followed the instructions and practice of the founder, John Wesley, by making it compulsory to use the *Book of Common Prayer* for their offices, while allowing at the same time for impromptu prayers (also dear to their founder’s heart). Non-Wesleyans, on the contrary, eager to distinguish themselves from the detested Church of England, did not use a set form of worship for most of the 19th century and their services were generally improvised.

After describing the (Wesleyan and non-Wesleyan) Methodist vision of the liturgy of the established Church in the 18th and 19th centuries, this article will study the reasons why the British Methodist Churches adopted set liturgies from the 1860s, and how they were created. Finally, we will see to what extent these 19th- and 20th- century rituals were indebted to the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Né d’une scission d’avec l’Eglise d’Angleterre, le méthodisme entretint longtemps une relation compliquée avec son « Eglise mère » et la question de la liturgie en est un bon exemple. Tout en rompant avec l’anglicanisme, les méthodistes wesleyens (majoritaires), fidèles en cela aux souhaits et à la pratique du fondateur, John Wesley, étaient, en effet, officiellement tenus de fonder leurs offices sur le *Book of Common Prayer*, tout en laissant une place aux prières impromptues, à laquelle leur fondateur accordait également une grande importance. Les non wesleyens, en revanche, soucieux de se démarquer d’une Eglise d’Angleterre honnie ne disposèrent, pendant une bonne partie du XIX^e siècle, d’aucun rituel, et improvisaient donc largement leurs offices. Cet article, après avoir rappelé la vision qu’avaient les méthodistes (wesleyens et non wesleyens) de la liturgie de l’Eglise d’Angleterre, se propose d’étudier les raisons qui poussèrent les confessions méthodistes, à se doter, les unes après les autres, à partir des années 1860, de rituels, et comment ceux-ci furent conçus. Enfin, nous étudierons dans quelle mesure les liturgies méthodistes du XIX^e et du XX^e siècles sont inspirées du *Book of Common Prayer*, et dans quelle mesure elles s’en écartent.

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Mots-clés: anglicanisme, méthodisme, culte, John Wesley, liturgie

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