

Review of *Creating a New Zealand Prayer Book: A Personal Reminiscence of a 25 Year Odyssey 1964-89* by Brian Carrell

Review by
Malcolm Falloon

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A New Zealand Prayer Book, published in 1989, was the culmination of 25-years of revision, beginning in 1964 with the General Synod's appointment of a liturgical Commission. Our author, Brian Carrell, was a part of that process almost from the beginning, being appointed as a young vicar of 32 to replace Maurice Betteridge, who had resigned to accept a church appointment in Australia.

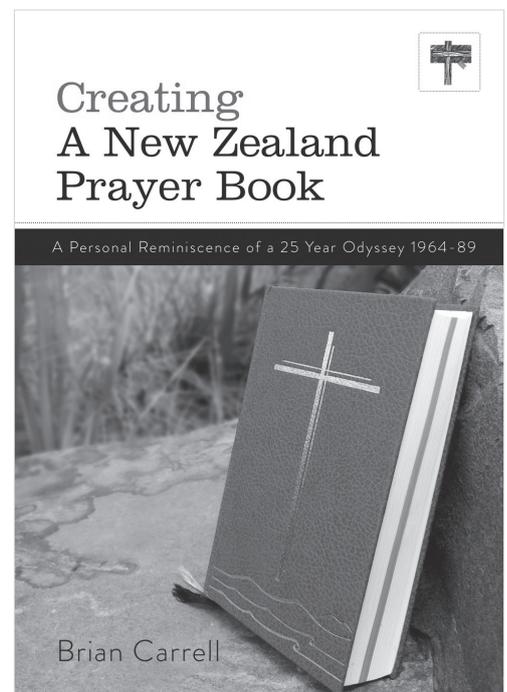
It is this insider knowledge that makes the book so full of interest. Brian, drawing on privately held records and a memory he hopes is "still sharp", gives his own personal account of the process. He does give a disclaimer that he is not attempting a definitive account, yet the book is perhaps all the better for that, being full of characters and anecdotes that cast fresh light the Commission's work. Latimer Focus readers will also welcome the perspective of one who has been an acknowledged leader of Anglican evangelicals over a number of years.

In the book, Brian follows the chronological stages of the Commission's work, and by dividing the period into 10 chapters (126 pages in total), the writing moves at a lively and easy pace. Some of the highlights include Brian's discussion of the criticism that originated from the Auckland Diocese over the revision of the Psalms, and the account given of the context from which each of the Eucharistic liturgies emerged. I particularly appreciated Brian's open, yet modest, account of the development of An Alternative Great Thanksgiving (NZPB, 436), a text of which he was largely the architect.

Brian's concluding chapter raises a number of provocative questions concerning the future direction of liturgical revision in our Church. He is well aware of the drastically different context in which Anglican worship is now celebrated, but sees the 1989 Prayer Book as a least creating a benchmark for others to follow. Brian also wishes

to urge the Church not to lose sight of the Anglican concept of 'common prayer', through a multiplicity of local parish 'template' liturgies.

Undoubtedly, Anglican evangelicals today owe a considerable debt of gratitude to those young evangelical leaders of the 1960s, like Brian (and others around the world), who committed themselves to fully engaging with the wider Anglican Church and thus ensuring that a continuing evangelical perspective could be heard and appreciated. Not only does this book make their contribution clearer, it also points the way for the same on-going challenge today.



Brian Carrell's book is available for \$30 from the Theology House website, www.theologyhouse.ac.nz