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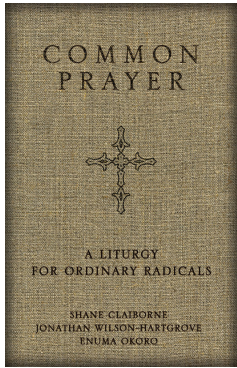
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Bridging Division Through a *Common Prayer*

Social activists Shane Claiborne & Jonathon Wilson-Hartgrove offer a modern take on an ancient way of practicing faith

Grand Rapids, Mich., Sept. 23, 2010 – With the Christian faith home to more than 38,000 different denominations, it's a known fact that the greatest barrier to becoming a Christian is the alarming amount of division seen within the church. Social activist, renowned author and the often controversial Shane



Claiborne and sought after speaker and author Jonathon Wilson-Hartgrove are setting out to change that perception through an ancient and historical practice called "liturgy" in their newest release, *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* (Zondervan, November 2010). An all-inclusive invitation, Claiborne holds certain that liturgy, a traditional act of praying collectively, has the power to transcend culture, create community and move hearts.

"Liturgy," the authors note "invites us into a new 'we'...The Church actually reflects the most diverse community in the world—white, black, and all shades in between, rich and poor, all walks of life... called together to bring our lives and our cultures and become a new community."

Although liturgy and prayer books evoke an antiqued, outdated image, Claiborne, along with co-authors Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove and Enuma Okoro, claim that this fresh take on the ancient practice is more than just a ritual – it's powerfully transformative and, against most assumptions, relevant.

"The world the liturgy reveals may not seem relevant at first glance, but...the world it reveals is more real than the one we inhabit day by day...outlasting McDonalds and Wal-Mart, America and South Africa," they write. "The songs and readings and prayers of the liturgy are more ancient and true than any culture or empire."

Broken into easy-to-follow sections, *Common Prayer* is accessible to someone who's followed the Christian faith their whole life and someone who's never held a Bible in their hands. Divided into segments for different parts of the day, *Common Prayer* aims to connect people of faith around the globe, across cultures, theologies and continents. For one year, they will be praying the same prayers every day and subsequently discover the richness and power in this tradition. *Common Prayer* contains the following:

- Evening prayers: Seven prayers; one for each night of the week
- Morning prayers: 365 prayers; one for each morning of the year
- Midday prayer: One prayer; to pray during the day throughout the year



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- Occasional prayers: Multiple prayers; to be used on special occasions like holidays and gatherings
- Songbook: Collection of best-loved songs of faith from all around the world

"This is a different kind of book," the authors share. "It's not a book you try to pick up and read straight through. In fact, this book is not designed to be read alone. It is a book...meant to be spoken aloud and shared together in some form of community."

-more-

In a world where social classes are extremely divided and cultures remain separate rather than unified, *Common Prayer* may just be the common prayer that a socially, racially and politically segregated world needs to be transformed.

About *Common Prayer*

Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals

By Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove and Enuma Okoro

Zondervan

9780310326199

512 Pages

\$24.99

PUB DATE: November 2010

About Zondervan

Zondervan is the world's leading Christian publisher of books whose authors are noted for their excellence in the craft of writing as well as their worthy contribution to the ongoing global evangelical conversation. The works published by Zondervan not only confirm readers' faith and understanding, they also challenge and stretch readers' thinking. For more than 75 years, Zondervan has delivered transformational Christian experiences through general, ministry, and academic resources by influential leaders and emerging voices, and been honored with more Christian Book Awards than any other publisher. Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan publishes bestselling books, audio, video, curriculum, software, and digital products in such categories as biblical languages and studies, biography, business, contemporary issues, counseling, cultural, devotional, evangelism, family, fiction, history, inspiration, leadership, ministry, pastoral, personal development, prayer, philosophy, reference, relationships, textbooks, theology, youth and more. Zondervan resources are sold worldwide through retail stores, online, and by Zondervan ChurchSource, and are translated into nearly 200 languages in more than 60 countries. Visit Zondervan Books on the Internet at www.zondervan.com/books.

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Possible Interview Questions for Shane Claiborne, Jonathon Wilson-Hartgrove & Enuma Okoro Authors of *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*

1. What propelled you to write *Common Prayer*?
2. What are the differences between your first book, *The Irresistible Revolution*, and this new release, *Common Prayer*?
3. In what ways do you expect this book to revolutionize the Christian faith and the younger generation?
4. For those who are not accustomed to liturgy, how can this book help their faith come more alive to them?
5. This book was co-authored between you and two others. What brought you together to write *Common Prayer* and how did you work together?
6. What is the biggest message or takeaway you hope readers receive from *Common Prayer*?
7. Can you explain the concept behind merging the church's calendar and the traditional secular calendar?
8. You write that "The world the liturgy reveals may not seem relevant at first glance, but...the world it reveals is more real than the one we inhabit day by day...outlast[ing] McDonalds and Wal-Mart, America and South Africa." This is a very bold statement - can you explain your thoughts behind it?
9. In a world where open-mindedness is encouraged and everything is "relative," how does *Common Prayer* apply to the readers living in today's world?
10. In what ways has writing *Common Prayer* helped you appreciate the many different practices and views within the Christian faith?
11. How does this liturgical approach relate to your New Monastic way of life?
12. What else do you want readers to know and understand about this new book?

**For an interview with the authors, contact
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Story Ideas: *Common Prayer* by Shane Claiborne

Building Unity Among the Divided

We live in a world where the Christian faith is looked at as something that's chock full of division and arguments. Even though Christians claim to be people of peace and unity, "unified" is the last word often used to describe them. This story could focus on the task Claiborne and the authors are taking to bridge differences among those in the church around the world and the potential global impact it could have on what we currently know as the Protestant church.

Mirror, Mirror on the Church

Common Prayer states that "the Church actually reflects the most diverse community in the world." That's a bold statement and an ironic one as well, since churches seem to be some of the most segregated communities in the world. Focusing on the fact that most American churches do not actually mirror a diverse community, this story could dig into the ways the Church has portrayed an image of segregation and how it has huge potential to change and transform.

Movers and Shakers

The authors of *Common Prayer* have had a huge impact on the Christian world, creating a sort of revolution with the idea of New Monasticism. Now delving into a historical practice, used by people of faith across the globe for hundreds of years, there's a chance this could actually turn into a movement. This story would focus on what the authors have developed with their individual earlier writings and experiences and what they hope to see happen in this new wave, when people start praying the same prayers together.

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Author Biography: Shane Claiborne



Shane Claiborne is a prominent activist, sought-after speaker, and writer. He travels extensively to speak about peacemaking, social justice, and Jesus. With tears and laughter, he unveils the tragic messes we've made of our world and the tangible hope that another world is possible.

Claiborne is one of the founding members of The Simple Way (www.thesimpleway.org), a community in inner-city Philadelphia that has helped birth and connect radical faith communities around the world, many of which have become known as "new monasticism" communities. Claiborne and The Simple Way do much work to expose the fundamental structures that create poverty and to imagine positive alternatives.

Claiborne graduated from Eastern University and did graduate work at Princeton Seminary. His ministry experience is varied, from a 10-week stint working alongside Mother Teresa in Calcutta, to a year spent serving at Willow Creek Community Church outside Chicago, and three weeks in Baghdad with the Iraq Peace Team.

He is featured in the DVD series *"Another World Is Possible"* and is the author of the *The Irresistible Revolution* (Zondervan, 2006) and *Jesus for President* (Zondervan, 2008). In his downtime, Claiborne is quite a dynamic circus performer.

Shane has been featured in numerous media outlets including *USA Today*, *National Public Radio*, *CNN*, *Fox News*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Sojourners*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Spin*, *Christianity Today*, *Relevant*, and the popular national radio program, *Speaking of Faith*.

Author Biography: Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove



Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is an associate minister at St. Johns Baptist Church. A graduate of Duke Divinity School, Jonathan is engaged in reconciliation efforts in Durham, North Carolina, directs the School for Conversion (newmonasticism.org), and is a sought-after speaker and author of several books. The Rutba House, where Jonathan lives with his wife, Leah, their son, JaiMichael, daughter, Nora Ann, and other friends, is a new monastic community that prays, eats, and lives together, welcoming neighbors and homeless. Find out more at jonathanwilsonhartgrove.com.

Author Biography: Enuma Okoro

Enuma Okoro was born in the United States and raised in Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and England. She holds a Master of Divinity degree from Duke Divinity School where she served as Director for the Center for Theological Writing. Currently, she is a writer, speaker, and workshop/retreat leader. The author of *Reluctant Pilgrim*, Enuma lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. <http://reluctantpilgrim.wordpress.com>.