

The English Reformation and the Development of the Prayer Book

An Inquirer's Class about Christianity and The Episcopal Church

Revised 17 March 2009

A Brief History of the Church in England before the Reformation - 1

- The first mention of Christianity in England is by Tertullian who spoke about Christians in Britain; this would have been about 200 C.E.
- One theory is that when persecutions broke out against the Christians in Gaul (France), Christians traveled northward, and across the channel.

A Brief History of the Church in England before the Reformation - 2

- During the third century C.E., the nascent church in England grew. Books were written, and churches and schools were built. By 314 C.E., there were several bishops in England.
- Alban was the first recorded Christian convert in England. Alban befriended a priest who was fleeing persecution during the reign of Diocletian. When soldiers came to arrest the priest, Alban dressed in the priest's cloak, and was taken by the soldiers, condemned, and martyred on the hill where St. Alban's Abbey Church now stands.

A Brief History of the Church in England before the Reformation - 2

- St. Patrick was an Englishman who lived near the sea. He was the son of Colpornius, a deacon of the church.
- When Patrick was about 15 or 17 years of age, he was captured and sold into slavery as a swineherd to the hose of Niall of the Nine Hostages.

A Brief History of the Church in England before the Reformation - 3

- After 6 years, he escaped, and apparently spent some time in Gaul (France) perhaps at the University of Paris and/or in a monastery of St. Martin of Tours.
- In 432 he returned to England, and was consecrated as a bishop for work in Ireland. He served in this capacity for 30 years. Patrick's see was at Armagh.

English Versus Irish Christianity

- The invasion of England by the Angles and the Saxons caused a set back of Christianity in England of about 150 years, with the exception of Wales.
- During this period, Christianity advanced in Ireland, which was largely untouched by these invasions.
- Bede wrote that there was no attempt to convert the Saxons; the majority of early Christian conversion took place in Ireland.

Saint Columba and the Irish influence on Northumbria

- Columba left Ireland and sailed northward to Iona, a small Island off the west coast of Scotland.
- Iona became a center of missionary work to the Scottish mainland, and the islands of the Hebrides.
- Columba spent 30 years as a missionary leader in Iona.

St. Augustine of Canterbury and the Roman Influence - 1

- Pope Gregory the Great selected Augustine in 596 to become the first papal missionary to England.
- Augustine arrived in Kent in 597 C.E.
- King Ethelbert of England had a Christian wife who facilitated Augustine's quest to press Christian conversion.

St. Augustine of Canterbury and the Roman Influence - 2

- Gregory divided England into two provinces each with an archbishop, and 12 suffragan bishops.
- Augustine was named Archbishop of Canterbury (York is the other province). Augustine held the position of archbishop for 7 years until his death in 604.

Roman versus Ionian (Celtic-Irish) Influences - 1

- During the 6th and 7th centuries, the Ionian (Celtic) and the Roman influences clashed.
- The principle problem was the date for the celebration of Easter in the year 663 C.E. The Roman calendar suggested one date for Easter, which was in the middle of Lent for the Celtic churches.



Roman versus Ionian (Celtic-Irish) Influences - 2

- This was a particularly severe problem because the King of Northumbria, Oswy, was of the Celtic persuasion, and his wife, was a Roman. This conflict was resolved at the Synod of Whitby under the Abbess, Hilda. Not surprisingly, the King adopted the Roman calendar. His reason was that he would rather be on good terms with the Keeper of the Keys of Heaven (St. Peter) than with St. Columba.
- In 609, Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, united England under the Roman calendar and the Roman tradition.

The Viking Invasions and the Battle of Hastings - 1

- During the 8th and 9th centuries England was invaded by Vikings.
- In 878, England was split between Denmark and what remained of England under Alfred the Great, often claimed to be the greatest ruler in Europe since Charlemagne.

The Viking Invasions and the Battle of Hastings - 2

- In 1065 King Edward the Confessor died having promised the throne of England to his kinsman, William, Duke of Normandy. William, with the backing of Pope Alexander II, invaded England and defeated Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Harold was a leader of several powerful Earls who opposed the idea of foreign (i.e., Norman) influence on English affairs.

The Middle Ages Under the Normans: The Beginning of King vs. Pope - 1

- William the Conqueror of Normandy considered himself a church reformer.
- The popes, particularly Alexander II and Gregory VII thought William would increase Papal influence in the English Church. But that was not the case.
- From the very beginning of his reign, William regarded himself as the head of the church in England.

The Middle Ages Under the Normans: The Beginning of King vs. Pope - 2

- In 1093 the theologian and philosopher, Anselm, reluctantly became the Archbishop of Canterbury
- Anselm was a papal supporter, who had lived and worked in Italy during the years of Papal reform (See Class 4).
- By his death in 1109, Anselm had broken the independence of the English Kings over the Pope. But the battle between church and state would continue through the reign of Henry II (Thomas Becket) and beyond.

The Sixteenth Century English Reformation - 1

- By the beginning of the 14th C, England had a weak government, heavy papal taxation, was in the middle of the Hundred Years War with France, the Black Death had come to England, and by the end of the century, civil war would erupt.
- By the mid 14th century, the government took up the question of whether the taxes collected by Rome were being used for policies that were favorable to the interests of the English people.
- Parliament passed five acts based on the assumption that the papal power in England needed to diminish.

John Wyclif and the English Bible

- Into the civil and ecclesiastical unrest of the 14th C, John Wyclif was born in 1328.
- He conceived of the idea of translating the Bible into English, which was accomplished during the last years of his life.

The Close of the Middle Ages - 1

- The Hundred Years War
 - The Hundred Years War with France (1337-1453) was an expensive and wasteful expenditure of English resources.
 - In the end, the French throne remained in the hands of the French.

The Close of the Middle Ages - 2

- In 1399, the War of the Roses brought Henry Tudor to the throne.
- Under Henry, England experienced a kind of unity it had not experienced for many years. Humanism was growing, and the merchant class was increasing in numbers and in power.

The Close of the Middle Ages - 3

- Since about 1100 C.E. there had been a growing uneasiness about papal power, and the Babylonian Captivity put the papacy and England in direct conflict.
- This situation reached its zenith at the beginning of the sixteenth century with the reign of Henry VIII.

Henry VIII and the Church of England - 1

- Henry VIII (1491 - 1547) came to power with the death of his father Henry VII in 1509.
- Not too unlike the controversy between Henry II and Becket, Henry VIII saw the power struggle between himself and the pope as an issue of who is the ultimate authority.
- Eventually Henry will claim that the State, and not the Pope is the unifying authority in people's lives.

Henry VIII and the Church of England - 2

- In 1521, Henry VIII wrote against Luther - particularly Luther's views on the sacraments.
- As a result Henry was granted the title of "Defender of the Faith" by pope Leo X (this title is still carried by the English monarch).



Henry's Defense of the Faith - 1

- In the 1520's when Luther's works were being widely read and discussed, a group of men including Robert Barnes, Thomas Bilney, John Frith, Thomas Cranmer, Matthew Parker, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley thoroughly discussed his work.
- Henry felt these men were discussing more than religious reform, bordering on sedition.
- Bilney, Frith, and Barnes were executed for treason.

Henry's Defense of the Faith - 2

- William Tyndale, a printer, printed an English version of the Bible in Worms between 1525 and 1526.
- This was also considered treason, and after hiding on the Continent for a while, Tyndale was eventually captured and strangled and burned near Brussels in 1536.

Henry's Problem With Women - 1

- Henry's marriage to Katherine of Aragon had not produced a surviving male heir (they had three sons and two daughters, but only one - Mary) had survived.
- Henry needed a male heir, and he had fallen in love with Ann Boleyn.

Henry's Problem With Women - 2

- Henry wanted to divorce Katherine, and devised this plan:
 - Katherine had been married to Henry's brother, and was allowed to marry Henry only through a special dispensation granted by Pope Julius II.
 - Henry reasoned that the pope had no business granting that initial dispensation, and therefore the pope had to grant that his marriage to Katherine was null.

Henry's Problem With Women - 3

- Henry instructed Archbishop Wolsey to make application to Rome for a divorce. After a two year period, Henry was furious (the delay was intentional, because the then pope, Clement VII could not afford to upset Charles V who was Katherine's aunt).
- Wolsey was targeted as a failure, and he was indicted under the statute of *Praemunire* (taking orders from a foreign power, in this case, the pope).
- Wolsey was replaced by Thomas Cranmer, a sympathizer to the reformation.

John Jewel Adds Fuel to the Fire

- While Henry was arguing for the separation of the Church in England on political grounds, John Jewel (1522-1571) argued for separation on theological grounds.
- Jewel claimed that the reason the English church deviated from the Roman church was because the Roman church strayed from the faith. He stated that the *Ecclesia Anglicana* was fully catholic.

Henry Becomes Supreme Head of Church by Acts of Parliament

- Henry insisted that all clergy swear allegiance to him as "Supreme Head of the English Church and clergy."
- The clergy agreed to acknowledge Henry as the "Singular Protector, only supreme Lord, and as far as the law of Christ allows, even Supreme Head of the Church in England."
- The crown had now become part of the official constitution of the English Church.

Parliament Backs Henry's Position

- Henry finally had passed seven bills passed through Parliament which would forever sever all ties with Rome (see the web page for a description of these).
- In 1536, Oliver Cromwell, acting under Henry's orders, began a systematic process of closing the monasteries in England and claiming all monastic lands for the crown.
 - Monies that previously went to Rome, now stayed in England.
 - Some of the monies were also used to provide pensions for ex-monks and ex-nuns.

Henry Insists Upon Uniformity

- Just before Henry's death, he issued the *Six Articles Act* which abolished any diversity of opinion. This act made heresy a felony. The six articles were:
 - The doctrine of transubstantiation
 - The adequacy of communion in one kind only
 - The necessity of clerical celibacy
 - The obligation of the laity to observe chastity
 - The importance of private masses
 - The necessity of sacramental confession

The English Bible

- The first English Bible was issued by Cromwell and Cranmer in 1539.
- This put the Holy Bible in the vernacular tongue into the hands of the people.

Upshot of the Reign of Henry VIII

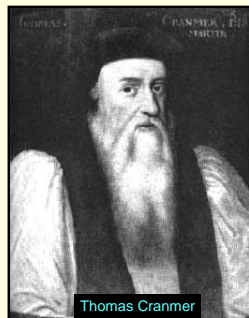
- It was *not* Henry VIII who made the Church of England the Church *in* England.
- It was Parliament that accomplished that.
- The separation of the Church of England from Rome was an act of state, not the act of Henry VIII.
- But Henry had declared that he, and he alone, as the supreme head of the Church of England, had the power to make doctrine.

The Reign of Edward VI – (a)

- Edward crowned in 1547.
- The Act of Six Articles and the heresy laws were ignored and then repealed in November of that year.
- This effectively allowed the Protestant movement freedom of expression in the mid sixteenth century.
- It was during this period that the first Prayer book was assembled by Thomas Cranmer.

The Reign of Edward VI – (b)

- The 1549 Act of Uniformity abolished the Latin mass and made a new English language liturgy the legal form of worship.
- This gave the Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer legal standing.



A Call for Greater Reform - 1

- Liturgical reform during this period was severe.
- The "Catholicity" of the mass was removed by men who later became known as the Edwardian Robbers.
- They stripped churches of things that seemed idolatrous; altars were replaced with tables.
- This reflected the desire by some to make the mass "pure." This would give rise to Puritanism.

English Church Doctrine: The Forty Two Articles and the Prayer Book - 1

- While the Duke of Northumberland was the protector of Edward, great progress in Protestantism took place in England. Simplified liturgies in English were developed, and a Swiss doctrine of the Eucharist was introduced.

English Church Doctrine: The Forty Two Articles and the Prayer Book - 2

- The Forty Two Articles of Religion were introduced defining the English Church view of the principles of the European reformation. These would be modified and reduced to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion under Elizabeth, and which are still in the Historical Documents of the Episcopal Prayer Book today.
- Together with the Book of Common Prayer, the Articles defined the doctrinal standards of the English Church.

The Sixteenth Century Reign of Bloody Mary (1553-1558) - 1

The daughter of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon, Mary was a fanatical Roman Catholic.



The Sixteenth Century Reign of Bloody Mary (1553-1558) - 2

- She was determined to restore the Roman Catholic faith to England.
- Ridley, Cranmer, and Latimer (among others) were imprisoned.
- About 2000 clergy were deposed because they had married.

The Sixteenth Century Reign of Bloody Mary (1553-1558) - 3

- All legislation passed under Edward was abolished, including the Act of Uniformity, and the right of clergy to marry.
- Mary promised to maintain the rights of the Holy See in England.
- Mary made the papal legate, Reginald Pole, the new Archbishop of Canterbury (replacing Cranmer).

The Burnings Under Queen Mary -1

- Between 1555 and 1557 nearly 300 people were burned as heretics.
- Bishops Ridley and Latimer and Archbishop Cranmer were among those who died. Check out the web page for a paper about the English Martyrs.

The Burnings Under Queen Mary - 2



Growth of Protestantism During the 16th and 17th Centuries - 1

- Protestantism in 1529
 - Centered in the Germanys and Switzerland
 - Lutheran
 - Reformed



Growth of Protestantism During the 16th and 17th Centuries - 2

- Protestantism in 1555
 - Spread to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Pockets in England
 - Lutheran
 - Reformed



Growth of Protestantism During the 16th and 17th Centuries - 3

- Protestantism in 1600
 - Spread continues
 - Lutheran
 - Reformed
 - Anglicanism in England, Wales, and N. Ireland



The Seventeenth Century English Church and the Via Media - 1

- When Mary died, Elizabeth was brought back to England by the Protestants who labeled her their champion.
- She was a skilled diplomat, but very undiplomatically withdrew the English envoy from Rome, severing relations with the Pope.
- In 1570, the pope issued the *Regnus in excelsis* excommunicating Elizabeth.

The Seventeenth Century English Church and the Via Media - 2

- Elizabeth faced serious domestic and foreign problems.
 - The treasury was impoverished
 - The French laid claim to the English throne through Mary Queen of Scots
 - There was a Spanish army in the Netherlands
 - England was virtually undefended.
- Note that the Council of Trent met during the reign of Elizabeth. Thus Elizabeth ruled at the time of the Counter-Reformation

Elizabeth I – (a)

- Elizabeth was a Protestant, but was also the daughter of Henry VIII via Anne Boleyn, and hence she was anxious to restore religion like her father had left it.
- But she ruled a religiously divided country. The reign of Mary left the Catholics more Roman and the Protestants more reformed. Some wanted the Pope, and others wanted the Prayer Book for which Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer had died.

Elizabeth I – (b)

- Religion and politics merged in Elizabeth. She needed the help of Spain against the French. In order to obtain Spain's help, she could not appear too Protestant.
- She needed a compromise solution, and she needed the power to enforce her will.

It is Good to be the Queen

- Parliament eventually passed the Supremacy Bill giving Elizabeth the title of Supreme Headship.
- She took the power but changed the title to Supreme Governor.
- The Prayer book of 1552 was reissued under an *Act of Uniformity*, making it the legal form of worship once again.

The Theology of Richard Hooker and the Elizabethan Settlement

- In 1600 Hooker wrote the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in which he argued that it was necessary that the monarch be the head of the church.
- Richard Hooker is especially important, because his legacy is what lies at the heart of the worldwide Anglican Communion.
- It was Hooker who pointed toward a middle way, the *via media*, and the Elizabethan Settlement.

The Stool

- Hooker developed the concept of the three-legged stool: Scripture, Reason, and Tradition.
- He argued that scripture itself presupposes that the reader is a reasonable inheritor of tradition.
- Under the leadership of scripture, therefore, reasonable people will come to the same conclusion.

James VI and the Bible

- Elizabeth died in 1603 and James VI of Scotland (the great-great Grandson of Henry VIII, a Stuart, and the son of Mary Queen of Scots) was invited to become King of England and unite the crowns of England and Scotland. James VI of Scotland became known as James I of England
- He based his claim to supremacy on the theological view of the Divine Right of Kings.
- The reformers, particularly the Puritans had hoped for much from James called a conference at Hampton Court in 1605.

Hampton Court

- The Great Bible was issued by Cromwell and Cranmer in 1539 and then the Bishops Bible of 1568.
- But the most popular Bible was the Geneva Bible published by the Protestant English exiles during the reign of Mary Tudor.
- During the Hampton Court Conference, James authorized a new version of the Bible to be produced (The Authorized King James).

Charles I and the Civil War - 1

- "I owe the account of my actions to God alone."
(Charles I)
- In 1629, the King dissolved Parliament and governed by royal prerogative.
- The country rebelled against James' royal despotism. Oliver Cromwell was the leader of the Parliamentary forces.



Charles I and the Civil War - 2

- Charles lost the battle with Parliamentary forces.
- In 1644 the *Solemn League and Covenant* became law which meant the legal end of the Church of England.
- Charles was executed on January 30, 1649. The average Englishperson was outraged; when the renegades cut off Charles head, they slit their own throats.

Cromwell and the *Inter Regnum*

- The death of Charles I marked the triumph of the Puritan influence. The hope was that the tyranny of the King was at an end, and the Reign of God could begin.
- Cromwell became the Protector of the Commonwealth, and this began the *Inter Regnum* which lasted from 1645 to 1660.
- Replacement of the 1552 prayer book with the Westminster Directory of Worship.

Charles II – (a)

- Cromwell's son became protector when his father died in 1658, but he was a failure.
- The army was able to oust the old Parliament, called for the election of a new Parliament, and invited Charles II to return from Holland.
- Under Charles II, the Episcopacy was restored.



Charles II – (b)

- Many of the Puritans fled England and came to North America. Those who stayed formed the first English Presbyterian churches and Congregationalist Churches
- The Clarendon Code (1661)
 - A string of legislation designed to restore uniformity in the Church.
 - All persons holding civic office in England had to be members of the Church of England.
 - The Prayer Book was restored for use by an Act of Uniformity (1662).

James II and the Catholic Fear

- Charles brother James II, a devout Roman Catholic became king in 1685.
- Made it possible for Roman Catholics to hold positions of prestige and power in universities and in government.
- Anglican Bishops protested, fearing that the papacy would once again regain power in England. The Bishops were sent to the Tower for trial. The mood in England at the time was very much Anti-Jamesian, and the Bishops became folk heroes.

William and Mary

- James had a daughter, Mary, by his first wife. She was married to William of Orange, a Dutchman who was a staunch Calvinist.
- The Anti-Jamesian forces in England made overtures to William and Mary to return to England and take the crown.
- On November 5, 1688, William invaded England, and in 1689 William and Mary became co-regents of England and Scotland.

The Non-Jurors

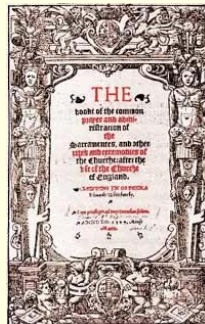
- Since James had not abdicated, he was considered by some to be the rightful king.
- Those loyal to James could not swear allegiance to William and Mary.
- These people became known as the non-Jurors, and they included four hundred clergy and six bishops.
- Many of the non-jurors left England for Scotland.

The Act of Toleration (1689)

- People could meet and worship, but had to meet with the knowledge of the Anglican Bishop, and with the doors of the church unlocked.
- Roman Catholics, Unitarians and Jews, however, were still not tolerated.
- But, for the first time, the idea of a nation that prays together was developing.

Cranmer and the 1549 BCP – (a)

- By Cranmer's time, Holy Eucharist in the Roman Church was more of a spectator activity than a participatory one. Cranmer wanted to increase congregational participation.
- Cranmer also wanted the congregation to have a deeper personal understanding of the liturgy.



Cranmer and the 1549 BCP – (b)

- English history reflected a desire on the part of the king for uniformity. The prayer book is part of that trajectory.
- Up to now there were several ordinals and other books in use by the clergy.
- Cranmer's idea was to make one book that would be commonly used by all churches in worship and administration of the sacraments.

The Edwardian Prayer Book of 1552

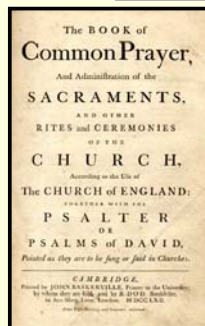
- More nationalistic and more Protestant than 1549 BCP.
- The words of the Eucharistic prayer are more of a remembrance of Christ's death rather than an acknowledgement of the real presence of Christ. This was made explicit in the 1552 BCP by the insertion of the "**Black Rubric**" (inserted by royal decree) denying the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
- The 1552 BCP became the official Book of the English Church.

The 1559 and the 1662 BCP – (a)

- The 1559 BCP was the product of the Elizabethan Settlement.
- The Black Rubric was removed.
- But when the prayer book was made the official book of worship by an act of Parliament in 1662, the black rubric was restored, and the doctrine of transubstantiation was completely excluded.

The 1559 and the 1662 BCP – (b)

- The prayer book in use today in the Church of England is the same as it was in 1662.

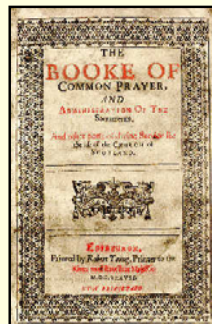


The 1637 Scottish Prayer Book – (a)

- The Scottish prayer book evolved from the English prayer book of 1549. It was introduced into Scotland by Archbishop Laud.
- Laud desired that the Scots be brought into compliance under the English king, and introduced the prayer book to Scotland in order to impose the liturgy on them.

The 1637 Scottish Prayer Book – (b)

The text of Laud's 1637 Scottish Prayer book became cherished by the people and the text survived.



The Wee Bookies

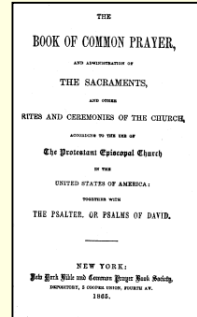
- In 1722, the first of a number of little booklets known as the "Wee Bookies" was published.
- They were printed for the nonjuring Anglicans who left England after William and Mary were crowned.
- The 1722 Wee Bookie was a reproduction of the 1637 Scottish prayer book, but it had elements if the Eucharistic prayer from the 1549 prayer book that had been eliminated from the 1552 and later editions of the English prayer book.
- The Wee Bookies together with the 1637 were the foundation of the first American Prayer book.

The American Prayer Book – (a)

- Development of the Book
 - The first interstate convention, New York, October 6-7, 1784
 - Second convention, Philadelphia, September 27-October 7, 1785
- The Proposed Book was issued in April, 1786 and received after three years of trial use.

The American Prayer Book – (b)

- First general convention, Philadelphia in 1789
 - The Proposed Book was revised again. Some of the changes reverted back to the 1662 English Prayer Book, and material was inserted from other sources.



The American Prayer Book – (c)

- The 1789 Prayer Book has undergone three revisions:
 - 1892
 - 1928
 - 1979. The 1979 book is the form currently in use.
- There is an authorized supplement to the prayer book called *Enriching Our Worship*.