

The Development of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America; the American Prayer Book and Hymnal

An Inquirer's Class about Christianity and The Episcopal Church

Revised 25 March 2009

The Founding of the Church in the Americas (1585-1688) - 1

- The first colony of Anglican settlers in America was at Roanoke Island in the late 1600's.
 - Named the colony "Virginia" after Elizabeth I (the virgin queen).
- Jamestown is the more well known colony north of Roanoke, which was settled at the beginning of the 17th century, and named after James I of England.

The Founding of the Church in the Americas (1585-1688) - 2

- Manteo was the first Native American baptized by an Anglican
- John Rolfe's marriage to Pocahontas was "for converting to the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, an unbelieving creature"



The Founding of the Church in the Americas (1585-1688) - 3

- Under Charles I, colonization by protestants who favored Parliamentary rule increased. Many of the colonists who left England were from the Puritan end of the spectrum. They were also people who disliked the Episcopacy.
- The settlers in New England limited church membership to those people who abandoned the use of the Book of Common prayer.

The Founding of the Church in the Americas (1585-1688) - 4

- Under Charles II and his brother king, James II who succeeded him, there was a greater tolerance to dissenting Protestants. That toleration extended to the colonies.
- About 300,000 people including Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and independents, withdrew from the Church of England (CoE) and formed separate denominations.

The Founding of the Church in the Americas (1585-1688) - 5

- In the colonies, Congregationalists and other denominations outnumbered members of the CoE by three to one.
- By 1688 denominationalism – something unique to the United States – was already in place.
- Anglicans, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Congregationalists, and Baptists had all established areas of influence.

Establishment of Anglican Parishes - 1

- By the 17th C, there were churches and congregations, but nothing of a higher polity.
- Following the ascent of William and Mary to the throne of England, previously granted charters were cancelled and the territories became Royal Colonies.

Establishment of Anglican Parishes - 2

- Massachusetts, Bermuda, New York, and Maryland were among the first such colonies.
- Once these colonies were officially part of the British Empire, it was a simple matter to establish the Anglican church in them. Maryland and South Carolina were instructed to establish the CoE in 1702 and 1706, respectively.

Establishment of Anglican Parishes - 3

- The first parishes were:
 - Massachusetts (King's Chapel, Boston, 1688)
 - Pennsylvania (Christ Church, Philadelphia, 1694)
 - New York, (Trinity, New York City, 1697)
 - New Jersey (St. Mary's Burlington, 1703)
 - Connecticut (Christ Church, Stratford, 1707)

Missionary Societies

- The SPCK and the SPG
 - Thomas Bray organized the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts (the SPG).
 - The SPG started schools for the Blacks in America.

George Whitefield and The Great Awakening (1740-1776) - 1

- In 1740-41, George Whitefield (1714-1770) came to the colonies to support the Bethesda orphanage in Savannah.



George Whitefield - 2

- Whitefield was trained at Oxford, and studied with and learned from John and Charles Wesley (the founders of the American Methodist movement).
- Whitefield was fabulously successful, drawing crowds of up to 15,000. He could speak and be heard by a crowd of 30,000.

George Whitefield - 3

- He broke away from the Anglican style of reading a sermon with no or little eye contact, using instead a passionate oratory style.
- Was a "Sentimentalist" preacher playing on human affections.
- Was critical of certain Anglican doctrines, including the necessity of apostolic succession.

Anglicans Oppose Whitefield and the Revivalist Movement

- American churches had little choice but to align themselves with the revival movement or be considered critical of it.
- Anglicans educated people about the "errors of the awakening." They established King's College in New York (later renamed Columbia), and helped support the College of Philadelphia.

The Revolution (1776-1800)

- Recast the religious awakening in political terms: "Give me liberty or give me death" (Patrick Henry)
- "Depending on one's point of view, God would guarantee either the success or failure of the Revolution. The choice, therefore, between the patriotic or loyalist side was a choice between faithfulness and infidelity" (Prichard, 1999)

The Anglican Church Sides with the Losers - 1

- **Northern Colonies:** The 1662 Book of Common Prayer required loyalty to the King at the time of their ordination. The moral obligation was clear: they had to support the King and oppose the patriots and the American Revolution.

The Anglican Church Sides with the Losers - 2

- **Southern Colonies:** Southern legislatures ordered clergy to omit references to the King in their liturgy. As a result, two thirds of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Anglican lay persons from the Southern regions of the colonies.

Revolution = Disestablishment

- Southern parishes had been established and supported by their legislatures. Once revolution was underway, church properties were no longer public.
- Clergy stipends ended.
- Nonetheless, clergy supported disestablishment.

Effect of Revolution

- Church was to become self-defining (and in many ways still is).
- William White of Maryland called for a convention process and a governing body called the "General Vestry"



The First Bishops

- Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island did not attend the General Conventions of 1785 and 1786, objecting to the "grass roots" policies described by White.
- They favored the historic episcopacy. Samuel Seabury of Connecticut was elected as a candidate for Bishop.



Seabury Consecrated in Scotland

- 1784 Seabury sailed to Scotland where he was consecrated by three non-juring Bishops.
- He signed a concordat with the Scottish church recognizing that church's legitimacy, and agreed to advocate for the use of the Scottish prayer book.

English Bishops

- In June 1786, the British Parliament passed legislation providing for consecration of three Bishops for the American church. William White and Samuel Provost were consecrated to the episcopate for Pennsylvania and New York.
- James Madison of the College of William and Mary was also consecrated, but he failed to gain endorsement from the General Convention.

Multiple Episcopal Denominations

- By 1789, the American Episcopal Church had three denominations:
 - The middle and Southern states' church with its ties to the British church through Madison, White, and Provost;
 - The New England Church headed by Seabury;
 - **The Methodist Episcopal Church that came about through the actions of John Wesley.**

The General Convention of 1789 - 1

- At the convention of 1789 in Philadelphia, concessions were arrived at that appeased both Seabury and the Southern and Middle churches.
- The convention formed a bicameral form of governance with a House of Bishops and House of Deputies, with Seabury as the first presiding Bishop.

The General Convention of 1789 - 2

- The Book of Common Prayer of 1789 was adopted, which was based on the Proposed Book of 1785-86.
- In 1792, Seabury, Provoost, and Madison consecrated Thomas Claggett of Maryland; Claggett became the first bishop consecrated on American Soil.

Worship and the Prayer Book

- Worship is at the center of the Anglican life, and the BCP is the anchor of our corporate worship.
- Worship is at the center of our existence as individuals and as a Christian community.
- Our prayer defines both our worship and our mission.

Lex Orandi Lex Credendi - 1

- Anglicanism never developed a confessional or creedal expression of belief like Lutheranism.
- Anglicanism did not have a Thomas Aquinas or Luther; Zwingli or Calvin.
- No authority equivalent to the *magisterium* of the Roman church developed in Anglicanism.

Lex Orandi Lex Credendi - 2

- Anglicanism developed the Book of Common Prayer.
- The Anglican tradition is a form of "Christian praxis" whereby Christian theology and Christian practice are interdependent.
- "The law of praying is the law of belief:" We are what we pray.

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer

**Open your prayer books
to the title page**

The Hymnal 1982

**Open your hymnal
to the title page**

Social Upheavals and Current Controversies in the Church

- Racial Issues
- The Industrial Revolution
- Slavery
- Civil Rights
- Ordination of Women
- Sexuality

The Civil War and Black Episcopalians (1800-1880)

- Black Episcopal Churches
 - Black Americans who had gained their freedom during the eighteenth century began to assert their right to self-determination when it came to matters of religion.

Racial Issues: The Founding of Black Episcopal Churches

- In Philadelphia, Absolom Jones and Richard Allen left St. George's Methodist Church and formed their own church, taking the name St. Thomas' African church.
- St. Thomas' joined the Episcopal Church.



Absolom Jones

Slavery

- 1808 - Congress banned the importation of slaves, creating a booming internal slave trade.
- In the deep South there was a huge need for slaves.
- Black leaders like Absolom Jones and others fought slavery, as did a few white Episcopalians.
- However, by the mid 1800's all denominations in the U.S., with the exception of the Quakers, dropped their protests against slavery.
- Slavery had become an accepted institution.

Two Conventions During the Civil War

- Between 1861 and 1865, Episcopalians met in two separate bodies:
 - The General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (PECUSA)
 - The General Council of the Confederate States of America.

Reconstruction

- During reconstruction (1865-1877) the church reunited and established the Episcopal Freedman's Commission as a department of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to help rebuild the church in the south.
- It initially concentrated on building schools.

Civil Rights and the Episcopal Church - 1

- From the end of the Civil War to the mid twentieth century, the United States lived under the rubric of "separate but equal" policy.
- Civil Rights Act of 1875
- Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) upheld the "separate but equal" status for Blacks.
- These actions legitimized the segregation of blacks from whites in the United States.

Civil Rights and the Episcopal Church - 2

- The civil rights movement began in earnest in the United States in 1954 with the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v Board of Education*.

Civil Rights and the Episcopal Church - 3

- In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to move to the Black section of a bus in Montgomery, Ala. This was a crystallizing event in the Civil Rights movement and led to the prominence of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the leader of the civil rights movement and the head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

The Church Response to Desegregation - 1

- The Most Rev. John Hines called for equality within the church.
- Most of the Episcopalian seminaries began to admit Black students in the 1950s.
- The seminary at Sewanee objected to desegregation, and retained its racist admission policy. School faculty resigned in protest, and students transferred to other schools. It was not until 1953 and 1954 that Black students entered the University and the Seminary at Sewanee

The Church Response to Desegregation - 2

- In 1954, South Carolina became the first Diocese to desegregate its convention.
- The 1955 General Convention was a testing ground for the Church, in that it was set to take place in Houston, TX, and was to be an integrated event. However, when Houston tried to enforce segregation on the general convention floor, the convention was moved to Hawaii, where Black and White congregations could meet together.

The Church Response to Desegregation - 3

- In 1959, the Episcopal Society for Cultural & Racial Unity (ESCRU) was formed. Interracial marriages were high on its agenda.
- In an effort to show solidarity with Blacks in the South ESCRU joined the Freedom Riders.
- But, the House of Bishops was conspicuously silent on racism during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Equality in the Church - 1

- 1963, John F. Kennedy proposed the Civil Rights Act.
- 1963, Presiding Bishop Lichtenberger declared that racial discrimination was insupportable, and asked Episcopalians to become involved in the civil rights movement.
- 1964, The Civil Rights Act signed into law.
- 1964, Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed the general convention to speak for civil rights.

Equality in the Church - 1

- 1968, the Union of Black Clergy and Laity (later known as the Union of Black Episcopalians) formed in New York in an effort to increase the voice of Black Episcopalians policy and decision making on the Diocesan and parochial levels.
- 1969, Bishop John Melville Burgess became the first Black Diocesan Bishop in the United States.

Women in the Episcopal Church - 1

- During the 1940s, in response to the influx of new members in the church and a clergy shortage during the war years, women began to teach at seminaries.
- Women, who focused on becoming teachers of Christian Education in parishes began to appear at the same time
- Rectors wanted to have women teach Sunday school.

Women in the Episcopal Church - 1

- Between 1964 and 1976, the General Conventions of the church began processes to increase female participation in the church beyond the role of Sunday school teachers.
- In 1967 Convention authorized women to serve as lay readers, and to serve as Deputies to convention.

Women in the Episcopal Church - 2

- In 1970, distinctions in pension benefits, educational requirements, and ordination rites between male and female deacons were addressed.
- In 1973, a caucus of women's groups asked General Convention to open the priesthood and the episcopate to women. The resolution failed.

Women in the Episcopal Church - 3

- On July 29, 1974, eleven women were ordained to the priesthood without the approval of their Diocesan bishops or their standing committees. Four other women were ordained on September 7, 1975.



Women in the Episcopal Church - 4

- Up until just a few years ago, there were still three dioceses that continued to refuse to ordain or recognize the priesthood of women (Fort Worth, Texas, Quincy, Illinois, and San Joaquin, California).

Women in the Episcopal Church - 5

- Women now comprise approximately 25% of all ordained clergy in the Episcopal Church, up from 14% in 1998 and 20% in 2001.



Non-Heterosexuals in the Church - 1

- In November 2003, the Episcopal Church consecrated The Rev. Gene Robinson as Bp. of New Hampshire. Bp. Robinson is the first openly gay man to be consecrated as a bishop in the church.
- His consecration caused international furor and continues to threaten the integrity of the world wide Anglican communion.

Non-Heterosexuals in the Church - 2

- The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev. Rowan Williams, said that the action of the Episcopal Church would have dire consequences for the Anglican Communion.
- He then appointed a Commission to explore ways in which the Anglican Communion might live with the differences that exist within the world wide fellowship of Anglican provinces and dioceses.

Non-Heterosexuals in the Church - 2

- That Commission finished its work and the report issued on October 18, 2004 is called the Windsor Report.
- The Commission was not charged with giving a definitive position on homosexuality.
- The commission was to seek ways of keeping the Anglican Communion intact when some provinces take action on issues that other provinces find controversial.

The Episcopal Church Response to the Windsor Report - 2

- In response to the invitation in the Windsor Report that the Episcopal Church effect a moratorium on public rites of blessing for same sex unions, it is important [to note that] the Episcopal Church has not authorized any such liturgies, nor has General Convention requested the development of such rites. The Bishops pledged not to authorize any public rites for the blessing of same sex unions.

The Episcopal Church Response to the Windsor Report - 3

- The U.S. Bishops also pledged not to cross diocesan boundaries to provide Episcopal ministry in violation of church canons and that they would hold themselves accordingly accountable. They also held bishops and clergy canonically resident in other provinces likewise accountable.