



Timeline of the English Reformation and Development of the Anglican Church

1517-1563 The English Reformation

The church is in terrible shape, and everyone agrees change is necessary. Lutherans rediscover justification by faith and personal relationship with Christ. They popularize the Bible, and retain most of the traditions of the church (though not scholasticism, allegory, or the historic episcopate). Calvinists (Presbyterians, Puritans, Reformed, Congregationalists, etc., also Zwinglians) reject everything not expressly commanded in the Bible. Anabaptists (Baptists, charismatics, etc.) deny there has been any continuity in the historic Church. Humanists (liberals, Unitarians) introduce scientific study of old documents and traditions and emphasize the ethical teachings of Jesus. Roman Catholics rediscover scripture, tradition, reason, and mystical experience in their own counter-reformation. Ultimately, Anglicans are influenced about equally by all five movements. The history of the English reformation, however, is not very edifying....

Henry VIII and the Revolt from Rome

- 1509** Henry VIII becomes King of England and marries Catherine of Aragon, the Daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella.
- 1521** Lutheran books appear in England. Cambridge students form a study-group at the White Horse Tavern; Thomas Cranmer is perhaps among them. Henry VIII writes a book on the sacraments against Luther. The bishop of Rome gives him a golden rose and names him "defender of the faith".
- 1525** Henry VIII, who long ago got special permission from the bishop of Rome to marry his brother's virgin widow Catherine, has been upset because she cannot bear him a son. This is the year Henry meets pretty Anne Boleyn. This begins the "King's affair." The bishop of Rome will not annul Henry's marriage to Catherine, because Catherine's nephew, Charles V, is holding him prisoner....
- 1526** Cardinal Wolsey presides at a massive burning of Lutheran books. Wolsey is one of the most powerful and corrupt men in England.
- 1527-28** Thomas Bilney, respected Cambridge preacher and Lutheran sympathizer, is dragged from his pulpit. (He is burned in 1531.) Simon Fish, a London attorney and amateur actor who has fled to Antwerp after spoofing the clergy, writes "*A Supplication for Beggars*", which urges an end to taxes for Rome. (Henry VIII really likes this book.)
- 1529** Henry VIII decides he does not need to get permission from the bishop of Rome to have his marriage annulled. (The idea is probably Thomas Cromwell's.) He declares himself head of the English church (whatever that means), forcibly cuts the Anglican bishops off from communion with Rome, calls the Reformation Parliament, and marries Anne Boleyn. Services at the churches, however, remain essentially the same. (The mass is in Latin, there is no sermon or systematic Bible reading, and the people are passive and receive communion only at Easter, getting only the consecrated bread.)
- 1532** Cranmer made archbishop of Canterbury. (This effectively ends clerical celibacy among Anglicans, as Cranmer is twice-married). The "*Act in Restraint of Appeals*" prohibits appeals to the bishop of Rome.
- 1534** "*Act of Succession*." Everyone must swear allegiance to Henry VIII as head of the English church. Thomas More, his Prime Minister and author of "Utopia", and John Fisher, saintly bishop of Rochester, refuse to swear.
- 1535** Henry VIII beheads Fisher and More after the bishop of Rome makes Fisher a cardinal. Henry is sorry to have to do this, and his court wears mourning for two weeks. Henry had intended to execute Mary, his daughter by Catherine, who also refused to swear. He was dissuaded from doing this by Cranmer.
- 1536** Henry VIII executes Anne Boleyn and marries Jane Seymour. He continues to oppose the introduction of an English-language Bible for his people. (Brussels) William Tyndale, a priest and Lutheran sympathizer who is responsible for an illegal English translation of the Bible, is strangled at the stake. Tyndale's last words are "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

- 1536 Henry VIII ensures the permanent popularity of the English reformation by abolishing the monasteries and sharing the loot with almost everyone.
- 1538 John Rogers (alias Thomas Matthew) prints the Tyndale Bible translation (finished by Miles Coverdale) in Paris. It is approved by the Henry VIII as the "*Great Bible*" to be read by all his people.
- 1538 Jane Seymour dies following the birth of Henry VIII's only legitimate son, Edward.
- 1539 *The Six Articles*, against Lutheranism. Hugh Latimer, bishop of Winchester, resigns in protest. Henry VIII is still occasionally burning Lutherans and hanging Roman Catholics.
- 1540 Henry VIII marries and divorces Anne of Cleves, executes the now-unpopular Thomas Cromwell, and marries Katherine Howard.
- 1543 Katherine Howard beheaded. Henry VIII marries Katherine Parr.
- 1544 Cranmer instructed to write prayers and a litany (for the army) in English. He does this so well that he is asked to make a prayer book in English, based on the service at Salisbury Cathedral.
- 1545 Henry VIII's last speech to Parliament. He says Papist, Lutheran, Anabaptist are names devised by the devil to sunder one man's heart from another.
- 1546 (Germany) Council of Trent. Bishops in communion with the bishop of Rome decide that the church "venerates equally" the Bible and the written and unwritten traditions (whatever that means). This is the beginning of the Tridentine Church (today's Roman Catholic church). England is becoming a haven for Protestants from the continent.

Thomas Cranmer's Reforms under Edward VI – The Church becomes Protestant

- 1547 Henry VIII dies. He has executed around 60 people for "religious" reasons, among a total of about 130 political executions. **Henry is succeeded by his sickly teenaged son, Edward VI**, who had been raised Protestant by the Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland. Chantries suppressed.
- 1548 *Prayer of Humble Access*, for the people to say in English, introduced into Latin mass.
- 1548 "Images" ordered removed from all churches by the council of regents. This also means no vestments, ashes, palms, holy water, or crucifixes. This causes so much resentment that an order suppressing all preaching follows.
- 1549 *First Book of Common Prayer* (Cranmer's work), introduced on Day of Pentecost. It is written in English, emphasizes the people's participation in the eucharist, and requires the Bible to be read from cover to cover. Fast days are retained (supposedly to help fishermen), but saints' days are not. Roman Catholic rebels in Cornwall claim they cannot understand English.
- 1550 New ordinal requires that a Bible be given to newly-ordained bishops (not a staff) and priests (not eucharistic vessels). Foreign reformers such as Martin Bucer, Fagius, John Laski, John Knox and Peter Martyr, as well as ample correspondance with Theodore Beza and Heinrich Bullinger in Switzerland brings about a strong Reformed and presbyterian influence.
- 1550 "Hooper's visitation". A bishop surveys the parish priests and finds them concerned about their work but poorly educated. John Hooper pushes for a purer church and opposes vestments.
- 1552 *Book of Common Prayer revised* to suit Protestants. No more "real presence" at the eucharist (the "black rubric" permits kneeling, however). No vestments, no signing of the cross at confirmation, no holy oil, no reserved sacrament, no prayers for the departed.
- 1553 *Forty-two articles* drafted. The Calvinist influence is obvious. (Geneva) Calvin burns Michael Servetus, a Unitarian who has fled to escape the Spanish Inquisition. Liberals lose their illusions about Calvinism.

Martyrs and Exiles as Mary 1 tries to restore Catholicism

- 1553 Edward VI dies. People are tired of Protestant looting of churches. **An attempted Coup** by Lord Dudley (Northumberland) to place Lady Jane Grey on the Throne fails after two weeks. **Mary Tudor ("Bloody Mary"), a militant Roman Catholic, becomes queen.** Popular at first, she soon marries the hated Philip II of Spain. Persecution of Protestants begins; Mary appoints new bishops and fires all married priests. During her reign, about 300 Protestants are burned, including 5 bishops, 100 priests, 60 women. Most Protestants are forced into exile or hiding. Over 200 including 8 pastors and 2 bishops found refuge in Knox's congregation in Geneva and there were many more English Protestants in exile elsewhere. An attempt by Cardinal Pole (Mary's archbishop of Canterbury) to restore monasticism fizzles when, among 1500 surviving monks, nuns, and friars, fewer than 100 are willing to return to celibacy. All this ensures Roman Catholics will remain unpopular in England.

1555 Mary burns bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley at the stake as Cranmer watches. Later John Hooper and John Bradford are also burned.

1556 Mary succeeds in brainwashing Thomas Cranmer, who signs a retraction which he later repudiates. Mary burns him at the stake anyway.

The Settlement of the Church under Elizabeth I: A Middle Ground sought

1558 Mary dies. (Cardinal Pole dies minutes later.) **Elizabeth I, a Protestant, becomes queen.** Despite many problems (including frequent assassination plots from Roman Catholics), she supports the enterprising middle class and England prospers. The Marian Exiles, many of whom were be strongly influenced by Calvinism and Reformed theology, worship and church order start returning to England where they would have much influence especially on the Puritans.

1559 Ordination of the moderate Matthew Parker as archbishop of Canterbury.

1559 *Book of Common Prayer revised.* Elizabeth I reintroduces the surplice, explaining that it is a clergyman's uniform. The Black Rubric is gone. A special license is required to preach. There is no church music except metrical psalms sung to ballad tunes.

1560 Saints' days are reintroduced. John Jewel writes "*An Apology for the Church of England*". Rome, not England, is schismatic.

1563 *Thirty-Nine Articles* drafted as a doctrinal statement by a convocation of the Church of England.

1563 "*Foxe's Book of Martyrs.*" The bishop of Rome is portrayed as the Antichrist; Foxe writes speeches as needed for such "Protestant martyrs" as Thomas Cromwell.

1568 Archbishop Matthew Parker produces the "*Bishop's Bible*".

1564-1660: The Era of Puritanism

1564 The word "Puritan" appears for the first time. The Puritans are Calvinists, legalists, and name-callers. They are very serious, and oppose most things that are fun for themselves or others. They want: a skilled, educated preaching ministry, based on the Bible; as few ceremonies in church as Biblically possible (no surplice, no signing of the cross); abolition of the traditional role of bishop; and replacement of the episcopate by a presbyterian system and one legal government church, controlled by Puritans. (Contrast the Separatists who want independent churches.)

1569 Thomas Cartwright of Cambridge outlines the Puritan program. Walter Travers is another prominent Presbyterian spokesman.

1575 The "*Geneva Bible*", an inexpensive edition with Calvinist notes, is published. (Shakespeare quotes this version.)

1581 Separatist Robert Browne's "*Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Any*". This will be the manifesto of the Puritans who found the Massachusetts Bay colony.

1581 Richard Hooker ordained priest; his anti-Puritan book "*Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*" reflects natural-law and rationalist ideas then popular.

1590 William Shakespeare ridicules Puritans in his characterizations of Falstaff, Malvolio, Flavius, and others.

1593 Puritan assemblies and activities outlawed. A few Separatists are hanged.

The English Church and the Stuarts of Scotland

1603 Elizabeth I succeeded by James I., who is also James VI of Scotland.

1604 *Book of Common Prayer revised.* The only change is an expanded catechism. The sacraments are "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace". At the eucharist, "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful".

1605 "Gunpowder plot" by Roman Catholic fanatics seeking to blow up Parliament.

1611 *King James Version of the Bible.* Most of the language is Tyndale's.

1618 James I's "*Declaration of Sports*" is read in all churches to encourage healthy fun and games on Sundays. This outrages the Puritans.

1622 John Donne, priest and metaphysical poet, becomes Dean of St. Paul's cathedral, London.

- 1625 James I is succeeded by Charles I**; his colorful court fills with refugees, including Roman Catholic counter-reformation types. Christopher Wren begins rebuilding St. Paul's Cathedral.
- 1628** The narrow-minded William Laud is made archbishop of London. He oversees the persecution of Puritans. He is immensely unpopular in Scotland.
- 1637** *Scottish Prayer Book* published. (This is unpopular in Scotland, though it does call priests "presbyters". It will be the basis for the future *American Prayer Book*.)
- 1638** The Scots, crying "Popery", excommunicate their bishops, and adopt the *National Covenant*. This results in war.
- 1640** Charles I calls Parliament to approve funds for the war with Scotland; Parliament instead raises an army against the king. In the civil wars that follow, Oliver Cromwell leads the "New Model Army" rebels and becomes Lord Protector; John Milton is his Latin Secretary. Puritan morality becomes the law. (Today, Cromwell might be considered a Baptist; he says, sincerely, "I had rather that Mahometanism were permitted among us than that one of God's children should be persecuted.")
- 1643** Scots adopt the *Solemn League and Covenant*. The Westminster Assembly gathers 121 clergy and 30 laymen - a majority being Presbyterian and Puritan - to advise Parliament and achieve uniformity of religion in England. Meanwhile the civil war rages.
- 1645** William Laud is beheaded by the Puritans.
- 1647** Westminster Assembly drafts its "*Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*", the major Presbyterian statement of belief, as well as a *Form of Church Government* and a *Directory of Public Worship*.
- 1649** Cromwell and his government behead ("martyr") King Charles I. Cromwell, a Congregationalist however, prevents the establishment of Westminster's Presbyterianism. **Oliver Cromwell rules England as Lord Protector** till 1658, when he died. "diggers" (communists), "Levellers" (egalitarians) and "Ranters" (atheists, hedonists) cause problems for the Puritan regime. (The latter are targets of the new "*Blasphemy Act*".)

1660-1689: Restoration of the monarchy under Charles II – End of the Stuarts

Everyone is tired of Puritan rule. Puritan laws and censorship are repealed; the theaters re-open. The "Declaration of Breda" results in tolerance for Puritan views within the Anglican fold. The conflict with Puritanism leaves distrust for religious individualism and emotionalism ("enthusiasm") among Anglicans. This will continue through the "Great Awakening". Oppression of Ireland under both Royalists and Puritans makes it certain that Anglicanism will never be popular there.

- 1662** "*Act of Uniformity*" makes it impossible for Anglican bishops to continue in communion with other Christians whose ministers lack apostolic succession. *Revised Book of Common Prayer* makes many practices optional, and reintroduces many saints' days.
- 1667** John Milton publishes "*Paradise Lost*". (A "Socinian" and "Arminian", he depicts the devils as the first Calvinists.)
- 1677** A Greek Orthodox rite church is built in London. A plan for ecumenical relationship with the Orthodox fizzles when the Ecumenical Patriarch finds out that the bishop of London will be in charge.
- 1685** Last execution for witchcraft in England.
- 1692** Salem witchcraft fiasco in New England.
- 1685** Charles II dies a Roman Catholic, and is **succeeded by his brother, James II**, a militant Roman Catholic.
- 1688** "Trial of the Seven Bishops", for publishing a grievance against the king. The king's prosecution of Archbishop Sancroft and his six colleagues ends with the Glorious Revolution; **Parliament bloodlessly replaces James II with William III (of Orange)**. The Church of Scotland is officially made Presbyterian, as part of the settlement. Thomas Ken, bishop of Bath and Wells, refuses to swear allegiance to King William III and is deprived of his see. He is joined by Archbishop Sancroft and several others. (In 1700, Ken writes the hymn, "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.") The Scottish bishops also refuse to swear allegiance. During the next century, they will reintroduce customs from the ancient church, including adding water to the wine, prayer for the departed, invocation of the Holy Spirit during eucharist, speaking of the eucharist as "sacrifice".
- 1689** *Act of Toleration*, partially restores civil rights to Roman Catholics and Dissenters. The events since the Reformation have finally convinced most Anglicans of the virtues of tolerance and mutual forbearance.
- 1707** Isaac Watts, a dissenter, publishes "*Hymns and Spiritual Songs*."
- 1726** Jonathan Swift publishes "*Gulliver's Travels*".