

Anglicanism 101

Class 2: How did we get to where we are? [Anglican Foundations & Cranmer]

I. **Historical Context of Thomas Cranmer's life and work:** Review notes from Dr. Strong's intro.

- **The Continent of Europe and the Reformation:** Tensions between Christianity's expressions. Luther (95 Theses, 1517) and Protestantism: 1529 (Diet of Speyer – Luther a heretic!), 1545 (Council of Trent – Protestants are heretics!). Issues regarding faith, works, salvation, authority.
- **England:** Reformation ideas (i.e. Luther's *translation in vernacular, sola scriptura*) imported to the U.K. during Henry VIII's reign; push for English translations of the Bible (Wycliffe as 14th cent. "Morningstar" of Reformation, printing press 1450, Tyndale 1530s), influence of Erasmus and Luther. By 17th cent., it was said that each home had 3 books: Bible, BCP, Foxe's *Martyrs*.
- **The Church and its Influences:** Papal Authority or Royal Authority? Masses and Bible in Latin or Greek, not understood by masses. Need for liturgy ("public work") that is understood. "Stream of tradition" is deeper than 16th century! Liturgy has historic roots (from the *Didache* of c. 100 – "teaching" - earliest church order), and was developed in 2nd-4th century by Tertullian, Athanasius, Sarapion, Cyril, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Theodore, Augustine, etc. Other influences: St. Benedict's Rule (c. 530), 6th-9th century foundational writings of liturgy and Roman service book, Thomas Aquinas – greatest scholastic theologian who authored texts for Mass and Office (1225-74), 14th century missals and breviaries (Mass and liturgy of hours in a single book), 1517 (Luther's 95 Theses), etc.

II. **Who was Thomas Cranmer?**

- **Early/Personal Life:** b. 1489. 1503 – Divinity school, eventually became a fellow at Jesus College (Cambridge), married at 19 (1508), lost fellowship, resumed when wife died in childbirth; remarried before appointed Archbishop.
- **Henry VIII:** Cranmer influenced "annulment" issue; ambassador; close to Henry VIII. Act of Supremacy (1534) makes Henry VIII the head of the Church of England.
- **Archbishop (1532):** The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Thomas Cranmer. English Reformation begins (royal supremacy instead of papal supremacy - 1534), emerging independence and evangelicalism.
 - **Henry VIII:** Enabled progressive, gradual reform
 - 1536 – 10 Articles (1st doctrinal statement of CoE)
 - 1537 – The Institution of a Christian Man (not as reformed yet)
 - 1539 – Assists Coverdale/Tyndale with English Bible translation
 - 1540 – "Great Bible" supported by Cranmer – importance of Bible translated into the local language (for those who have "refused it and abused it").
 - Cranmer's passion: godly reformation of the Church of England, not power; English liturgy, Biblical alignment, "read, mark, inwardly digest scripture"
 - 1543 – Accused of heresy – Prebendaries Plot
 - 1547 – Henry VIII dies, Cranmer grew his beard to show his grief



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- **Reform under Edward VI:** Boy king raised as Protestant, Cranmer continues reforms
 - 1547 – *Homilies* (preaching focus)
 - 1548 – involved in English translation of Latin catechism (not understood!)
 - 1549 – first edition of *Book of Common Prayer* - “bible arranged for worship”
 - Morning/Evening prayer – Anglican liturgical tradition; Baptism/Communion liturgy – Cranmer drawing on diverse sources; Matrimony (1st married Archbishop); Collects – written/translated by Cranmer (3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th cent. sources – knows his scripture, Church fathers, and ancient writers)
 - 1552 – second edition of *Book of Common Prayer*
 - 1553 – 42 Articles
 - Early 1550s – appointed European reformers and academics to key posts
- **Persecution under Mary:** Returns England to R.C., relieves Cranmer of his duties
 - 1553-1556: Condemned, jailed, tortured, recanted, burned at the stake.
- **Martyrdom:** Final exhortations: 1. Seek to please God, 2. Obey king/queen, 3. Love like brothers/sisters, 4. Rich must show charity, Great Thing – renounces recanting and renounces Pope. Then Cranmer burned his right (writing) hand first!
- **Cranmer’s Legacy:** English Protestant Reformer, Book of Common Prayer - Anglican Liturgy that imitates the Biblical pattern of public worship/private devotion, influenced Richard Hooker, George Herbert, Lancelot Andrewes, John Donne, Jeremy Taylor, etc.
 - 1558 – Elizabeth I succeeds Mary, re-established CoE as separate from Rome.
 - 1559 – BCP re-issued (1662- “final form” of BCP issued)
 - 1563 – 39 articles (edited from Cranmer’s 1553 42 articles)

III. Questions to Consider?

- Does page flipping inhibit prayer? Does liturgy aid memory? Does it aid faith?
- Is tradition the “living faith of the dead” or the “dead faith of the living?”
- Does intelligibility increase with translation, or lead to decrease in memory?
- What application does the BCP have in a culture that is individualistic, therapeutic, privatistic? Does it promote a vision that is communal, eschatological, missional?
- Does prayer shape belief? Does belief shape prayer? (*lex orandi, lex credendi*)
- How does faith shape belief? (faith seeking understanding - *credo ut intelligam*)
- How would you describe “Cranmer’s church”? Bible? Cross? Conversion? Evangelism?
- How would you describe Anglicanism? *Via media*? Catholic and Evangelical? Synthesis of different strands? The treasure of the gospel in the “most appropriate” container? Comprehensive? Unity without uniformity? Symbolism as “outward signs” of reality?

John Yates: “He was one who wavered and broke, just like you and I have time and time again. I think that’s why I love him so. And yet, he regained his faith and courage, and you and I have, too. We love the church for which he died. We wish it could be perfect. We know from time to time it needs to be awakened and reformed. We believe such a time is here again.” (*The Awakening of Washington’s Church*).