

# A Candle in England



Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.

*The  
roots  
and  
results  
of the  
English  
Reformation*

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*A well-educated Englishman should know enough about his literature to have heard of '1066 and All That' and enough about his history to find it funny.*

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## Part 1: 1662 and All That

### Introduction

Although the most well-known date in the Church of England is undoubtedly 1662 because of the 1622 *Prayer Book*, the events that gave us the Church of England as we know it took place over 100 years earlier. The history of that period is, however, a bit of a ping-pong match. Until 1533, England was happily Roman Catholic. By 1547 it was rapidly becoming Protestant. By 1552 was decidedly so. But a year later it was back in the Roman Catholic fold, only to Protestant again from 1558.

To understand how and why this happened, and where this leaves us in the present, we have to understand a bit about the Continental Reformation and England's response to it.

### Martin Luther

Humanly speaking, the Continental Reformation was fathered by a German monk and lecturer in theology called Martin Luther. The story of the Reformation is, in the first instance, the biography of Luther.

The church of Luther's day believed, and the Roman church today continues to declare, that salvation is by grace. No one disputed that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And everyone agreed that salvation involved grace. However, the church taught that effect of grace was to provide both the impetus and the energy for the Christian life, whereby the believer became worthy of heaven.

Grace was provided in nature and also through the church's sacraments. And God would not deny grace, so the argument ran, to anyone who gave of their best. So the sinner (the medieval term was *viator* or pilgrim) could find forgiveness of sins, and grace to grow in goodness until at last they attained to heaven.

### Luther's Personal Problem

Luther's problem, however, was with unconfessed sin. The sacrament of penance allowed absolution to the sinner who confessed, but what if you forgot about something? Luther was back and forward to his Superior in the monastery like a weaver's shuttle,

confessing new sins he had remembered. It seems funny to us and it was certainly irritating to his confessor, but Luther feared for his salvation.

He said later that he came to hate the very name of the God who was always looking at his sins. But his confessor decided to sidetrack Luther by appointing him as lecturer in the Bible at the new University at Wittenberg.

It was during these lectures that Luther finally realized that God's righteousness is not the righteousness he requires from us before he will accept us, but is his own righteousness given by grace *alone* through faith *alone* on the basis of Jesus' death on the cross for our sins. And it was this idea which formed the core of the Reformation which rapidly spread through Northern Europe and France. In 1521, Luther stood before the Emperor at the Diet of Worms and made his speech which ended in the words, 'Here I stand'.

### Meanwhile, Back in England

However, it was 12 years before this revolution had any significant impact in England. The English King at this time (and also king of part of France, going back to the Norman conquest) was, of course, Henry VIII. But Henry had a problem. Back in 1509 he had married Catherine of Aragon, the widow of his own elder brother, Arthur. But Catherine had only one surviving child - a girl called Mary. Bearing in mind that it was Henry's father had won the Wars of the Roses over the question of who would be king, the lack of a male heir was deeply troubling to Henry, and he thought he knew where the problem lay.

Henry's marriage to Catherine actually came within the 'prohibited degrees' laid down in Leviticus 20:21, where it says, 'If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonoured his brother. They will be childless.' Henry had had to obtain a special dispensation from the Pope in order for the marriage to take place. But neither Pope Leo X nor his successor Hadrian VI were keen to annul the marriage (notice, it was not a *divorce* he was after as such) because Catherine was the aunt of Charles V, the King of Spain and Emperor of all Europe.

Henry therefore launched a two-pronged campaign to resolve what became known as 'The King's Great Matter'.

### The King's Great Matter

The first prong engaged scholars at the leading European universities to argue his case from a legal and theological standpoint. Significantly, this idea seems to have arisen from a dinner conversation between two members of the staff of Cardinal Wolsey and a then-obscure church official called Thomas Cranmer.

The second prong was a series of steps at home designed to loosen the control of the Pope over the ecclesiastical institutions of England. It is this *second* campaign which finally led to the English Reformation and the emergence of the Church of England as an entity in itself.

Henry's campaign at home was completely ruthless. First, he whipped his clergy into line with a succession of Acts of Parliament. The first, the 'Act for the Pardon of the Clergy', passed in 1531, accused all the clergy of complicity with the Pope and simultaneously 'pardoned' them at the expense of fining the Province of Canterbury £100,000 and the Province of York £18,840 for the Province of York, which were colossal sums.

Henry then invoked a political principle which, he held, had vital theological implications. This principle was that England was, and always had been, an empire. Therefore Henry, as the emperor, had the right to govern *all* the institutions in his empire, including the church. In 1533, this claim became the basis for the 'Act in Restraint of Appeals', which declared in its opening paragraph that 'this realm of England is an empire ... governed by one supreme head and king'.

Henry also called on an even earlier principle enshrined in the *Statute of Praemunire* passed by Richard II in 1393, which drew on legislation enacted earlier still by Edward III. Edward's statute forbade appeals by English citizens to foreign courts, and Richard had used this to stop the Pope appointing non-resident foreigners to lucrative top posts in the English church. Henry's 'Act in Restraint of Appeals' extended the principle of *praemunire* to many other legal matters, including, as it happened, appeals for the annulment of a marriage. No longer could a decision on this made in England be contested by an appeal to Rome as that would be considered an act of treason.

### Thomas Cranmer

Inevitably, as some people began to fall out of favour with Henry suitable replacements were sought. One of those who caught his eye was the Archdeacon of Taunton, Thomas Cranmer. Contrary to popular mythology, however, Cranmer was an innate theological conservative. We know, for example, that as late as 1523 Cranmer was certainly no fan of Martin Luther, whom he described as arrogant. Henry had himself written a tract against Luther in 1521, which had earned him the title 'Defender of the Faith' from the Pope.

Cranmer had been recognized as an able diplomat and had been sent abroad on a succession of trips in pursuit of 'The King's Great Matter'. It was during this period, however that he fell under the influence of the Continental Reformers.

Cranmer became a particular friend of Martin Bucer. But even more significantly, on visit to Nuremberg he got married to Margarete the niece of the wife of Andreas Osiander, a Lutheran reformer. This, of course, was completely forbidden to clergy at the time, and Cranmer's marriage became a not-very-well-kept secret.

It was perhaps the combination of his conservative personality and yet an ability to stand his ground once he'd decided what it was that meant that when the Archbishop of Canterbury died in 1532, Cranmer was summoned by Henry to be his replacement. However, it is also important to be aware that Cranmer and Henry were genuine and lifelong friends, in spite of occasional fierce differences.

### Gradual Reform

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that either Cranmer or England had suddenly become Protestant. On the one hand, Henry remained basically theologically Conservative, and as a result Conservative church forces in England remained immensely strong.

On the other hand, Cranmer was just as happy to burn the wrong sort of Protestant as he was the wrong sort of Conservative. [In 1538, the Protestant John Lambert was burned for *denying* the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine of communion. And in 1534 Elizabeth Barton, the so-called 'Maid of Kent', had been executed when her visions of the Virgin Mary led to her denunciation of the King.]

Instead, Henry continued to play Conservatives off against Reformers whilst Cranmer gradually deepened his commitment to Reformed theology and his influence on the Church.

### The Break with Rome

The break with Rome was political rather than theological. But it came about abruptly when in 1534, Henry published the Act of Supremacy. This is one single sentence (274 words long) which reaffirms the conclusion already reached by Henry and his theological advisors:

... the King our Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England, called *Anglicana Ecclesia* ...

Notice two things, however. First, The Act of Supremacy claims that the King of England has *always* been the head of the English Church. Second, Henry's headship of the Church of England is not the claim to a special theological relationship with one institution to

the exclusion of all others. Article XXXVII of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* makes this clear.

Where we attribute to the King's Majesty the chief government ... we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments ... but that only prerogative which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule *all* estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal [...].

The theology of *monarchy* undergirding the English Reformation says that the King is the head not of the *denomination* of the Church of England but of '*all* estates and degrees committed to their charge'. The *practical* point of this, however, is not just that the 'headship' of the king is affirmed but, as Article XXXVII goes on, 'The Bishop of *Rome* hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of *England*'.

### **Progressive Reformation**

The political break was now complete. The theological break would follow. But under Henry's guidance the Reformation in England went even backwards almost as often as it went forwards.

Nevertheless, three crucial actions shaped the religious future of the country. The first was the decision to make the Bible available in English. In 1543 the Convocation of Canterbury ordered that a chapter of the New Testament should be read in English at Evening Prayer. The second was the production of a series of statements of the church's evolving theology. Central to these were a series of 'Articles of Religion', mostly based on the Lutheran Augsburg Confession and still largely reflected in our own *Thirty-Nine Articles*. (The exception to this was the so-called 'Six Articles' of 1539 by which Henry temporarily put the doctrinal clock back for the rest of his own life.) The third action was the re-writing of the church services. As his Protestant convictions took shape, Cranmer decided first that these should be English and second that the services in general, and the Communion service in particular, should reflect a thoroughly Protestant theology.

### **Cranmer's Book**

The actual publication of a new *Prayer Book* had to wait until the death of Henry VIII and the accession of Edward VI. Until then, the uneasy civil war in the church continued and was partly reflected in parish life, depending whose 'side' the vicar was on! However, 1549, the second year of Edward's reign, saw the publication of Cranmer's

first prayer book, which was introduced by the 'Act of Uniformity' on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1549. This made all other forms of worship illegal.

We'll look at the details of Cranmer's liturgical reforms in a later session. The problem with the new Prayer Book, however, was that it not only made many enemies but won few friends. Indeed in the West Country it sparked a rebellion. This revolt, and the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536-7 show how fragile was the grip of Protestantism on the country as a whole. Moreover, the Conservatives still loyal to Rome, decided that with a bit of ingenuity they could still read the old theology into the new Prayer Book. In the event, it seems likely that Cranmer was already working on a revision, because in 1552 a new book was published with a far more deliberately Reformed theology.

### **Paradise Lost**

However, from the Reformers' point of view, dark clouds were gathering. King Edward had always been sickly and in 1553 he died and Mary Tudor, daughter of Catherine of Aragon was swept to the throne on a wave of popular support. There was an abortive attempt to forestall Mary's succession by crowning Lady Jane Gray as Queen. Jane had a legitimate claim to the title. However, in the manner of the times, Jane, her husband, and her main supporters, were all executed in 1554. Cranmer was himself implicated in the plot and arrested, but his trial which began in 1555 was for heresy, not just treason.

Cranmer's trial reveals an interesting side to his personality. Under the pressure of the trial and the threat of execution, he initially recanted his Protestant beliefs about the Communion service. However, it soon became clear that he was not going to be spared. Indeed, he had already seen his fellow-bishops Latimer and Ridley burnt at stake in the market in Oxford.

In 1556 Cranmer was brought to St Mary's church for what was supposed to be his showpiece confession before execution. However, to the clear dismay of his accusers he used the occasion to recant his recantation, and affirm his earlier beliefs. When he was finally burnt at the stake, his deliberately put his right hand into the flames because he had used it to sign his earlier recantation.

### **Paradise Regained?**

Within two years, however, Mary herself was dead. Not only that, but she had failed to produce an heir and had alienated the English people through her evident loyalties to her mother's home country of Spain and her violent persecution of people who may have been Protestant, but were clearly good English people.

Mary's half-sister, Elizabeth, the daughter of Anne Boleyn, ascended to the throne in 1558, and has become a heroine of English Protestantism. However, Elizabeth played the same political game with the theological sympathies of her people as her father had. She now played the Conservative Protestants off against the radical Puritans. The result was that the English church took on a peculiarly English character, sometimes described as both Catholic *and* Reformed, but equally describable as neither fish nor fowl.

### **An Assessment**

How, then, should we assess the English Reformation? What it achieved was a decisive break with Rome and a politically and theologically independent national church which later, through the expansion of the British Empire, became the basis of a worldwide communion. Moreover, the official foundation documents of the Church of England - the Prayer Book and the Thirty-Nine Articles - are clearly Protestant and Evangelical.

But the architects of the English Reformation were not the systematic theologians of the Continental Reformation. Cranmer was an honest man, but he was not an imaginative man. He was able to learn from others, and he had an ability to express himself in writing. In fact in liturgical terms he was an undoubted genius. But his grasp on reformed theology was not as thorough as it might have been. We may see this later in our discussion of his communion service. Cranmer was a political churchman, where Luther was a monk and educator. As a result, the English Reformation lacked control in the wake of the events from Henry to Elizabeth. The English Conservatives were too hesitant and the English radicals too volatile for their own good (or ours).

Later that century, an English Puritan was to describe the Church of England as 'but halfly reformed' and that is, I think, a fair description. Whether further reform will be possible in our own day and in the face of modern pressures remains to be seen.

## **Part 2: Divisions and Denominations**

### **Introduction**

In our first session a number of names and movements were mentioned which may have sounded familiar, but about which most people know very little: Martin Luther, John Calvin, the Anabaptists, the Puritans and so on. All these personnel and movements became the basis of later divisions, and ultimately denominations, in the church. However, the a major division in the Church had place 500 years before the Reformation, between the Orthodox East and the Roman West, in 1054.

The Eastern Churches had developed in some different theological directions from the Western churches, but the key issue was the refusal of the Eastern churches to accept that the bishop of Rome had authority over all the other bishops. That division still exists, and though the Roman church accepts the Orthodox churches as true churches (unlike the church of England, which it regards as not a church in the proper sense) it still regards them as renegades.

On the other hand, the Orthodox churches - which include what we sometimes call the Greek and Russian orthodox churches - equally regard the whole of the Western church as basically schismatic and heretical.

### **Luther and Lutheranism**

For the time being, however, we're going to concentrate on divisions and denominations in the Western church, and the first of these is, of course, Lutheranism.

Thomas Cranmer's own conversion to Reformed theology seems to have taken during the period when he met and met and married the niece of a leading Lutheran on his visit to Nuremberg. Subsequently, Henry VIII and the leaders of the English Church engaged in several dialogues with Lutheran theologians. One direct result of this is that our own 39 Articles reflect a document called the Augsburg Confession which was written by a group including Luther himself.

Eventually, however, Cranmer adopted a basically Swiss-Calvinist rather than German-Lutheran view of the Communion service, which

means that today Luther is very much neglected and misunderstood by Anglicans.

## Luther and the Law

Many evangelical Christians think of Luther as being almost a Roman Catholic, but nothing could be further from the truth. Luther didn't simply tinker with Roman teaching, he stepped away from it completely.

There are several key points to Luther's theology, but perhaps the most important from our present perspective is his views on the Law. Luther was quite clear that the gospel and the Law were opposed in principle. We might think we take the same view, but Luther's application of this was quite different from ours. Take, for instance, the matter of the elevation. I suspect that most people would be fairly horrified if, during the communion service, I lifted the bread and wine above my head as I said the words 'This is my body, which is given for you.' Certainly many of Luther's colleagues were horrified. But Luther said there is nothing in the Bible which says you *mustn't* do this. So Luther said it is a matter of liberty, and we must *not* make it a matter of Law.

On the contrary, he said, the Pope makes a law that you *must* elevate the bread and wine, and so drives Christ out of the front door. But those who make a law that you must *not* elevate the bread and wine kick Christ out of the back door.

## Calvin and the Swiss

This attitude to the Law, however, marks a key difference between Luther and the Swiss Reformers such as John Calvin.

Calvin was a lawyer by training. After conversion to Protestantism in his home country of France, he got into trouble with the authorities in Paris and so travelled across Europe, eventually ending up in Geneva, where the Church pastor, Guillaume Farel, persuaded him to stay.

The myth of Calvin is that he was a kind of religious dictator who ruled the city of Geneva with an iron fist and executed people for eating sweets in church. In reality he didn't like Geneva very much and Geneva sometimes didn't like him. Although he only finally settled there in 1541, he didn't even become a citizen until 1559.

Geneva, however, was typical example of what became known as the 'Magisterial Reformation' - that is to say, reformation carried out by the magistrate, in the Romans 13 sense of the government. Calvin's influence in Geneva was thus entirely subject to, and exercised through, the city authorities.

## One Kingdom or Two

Luther viewed the kingdom of God as quite separate in principle from the kingdoms of this world. *By definition*, no law could establish the kingdom of God, since Law and Gospel are like oil and water. So although one could and should hope and pray for godly princes and laws, Calvin never imagined these would do the church's work. This meant, in particular, legal persecution of so-called heretics was not an option for the Church.

Calvin and the Swiss, on the other hand, took the view that it was *through the state* that true religion could and should be established and maintained. Luther did not believe in the *secular* state - the state, as in Romans 13, was God's instrument. But it was his instrument for *wrath*, not for the mercy of the gospel.

A little thought will show that the *English* reformation was essentially Calvinist in practice. In fact, our Reformation was not merely 'magisterial' but what is called 'Erastian' - named after Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus - whereby the State *ran* the Church.

## The Anabaptists

The Lutherans and the Calvinists had a number of other areas of disagreement, but one thing they were united on was their opposition to the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists have also been called the 'Radical Reformers'. Their name means 'Without Baptism' - not because didn't believe in baptism, but because they didn't believe in *infant* baptism.

However, the Anabaptists weren't simply the forerunners of modern Baptists - they were also Communists and Charismatics, and as such they excited opposition from all the mainstream churches, including our own. If you look at the back of the *Book of Common Prayer*, in the Thirty-Nine Articles, Article XXXVIII titled *Of Christian men's Goods, which are not common* says this:

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast.

The Anabaptists also claimed new prophetic powers. The older version of what is now Article VII used to say this:

[...] they are not to be hearkened unto, who affirm that Holy Scripture is given only to the weak, and do boast themselves continually of the Spirit, of whom they say they have learned such things as they teach, although the same be most evidently repugnant to the Holy Scripture.

Luther called the Anabaptists, *Schwarmgeister* - Buzzing with the Spirit. Spirit. But it was their revolutionary tendencies which really go them into most trouble.

One of the most famous Anabaptists was Thomas M nzer. Originally a Lutheran, he turned against Luther, calling him 'Brother Fattened Swine', 'Pope of the Lutheran Scripture Perverters' and 'Dr Liar!' M nzer wanted the authorities to use force to establish true religion, but eventually decided to adopt force himself. He encouraged the Peasants Revolt and was eventually captured and executed.

## England

All these continental movements of course influenced England, though distance and the Channel moderated their impact. England did not, for example, experience a 'Peasants' Revolt', but the general turmoil on the Continent had a direct impact on events here. After the death of Mary Tudor, Elizabeth the daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn became Queen.

The English church was deeply divided between Conservatives, still *theologically* loyal to Rome, and Protestants who largely saw themselves allied to Geneva, rather than Germany. Many of the leaders of English Protestantism had actually been refugees on the continent during Mary's reign, and had taken on a more radical Calvinist spirit, both because of their experiences there and what they saw of Mary here. When they came back to England they not unnaturally wanted sought major change.

## The Puritans

Because of their desire for a purified church, these 'hotter' Protestants were nicknamed 'Puritans'. We mustn't simply equate the Puritans of Elizabeth's reign with the Puritans of the next century. However, they had a lot in common with one another and, in fact, with modern Evangelicalism.

The heart of Puritan theology was the Bible, and the heart of Puritan ministry was preaching. The Puritans were appalled at the low standard of preaching in the English Church. In Cranmer's day it was so poor that Cranmer and others had produced an official book of what were called 'Homilies' - sermons which could read by the minister who was unable to preach.

The Puritans set about organizing what they called 'prophesyings' - meetings where ministers would come together and present a sermon before a panel of judges who would then criticize the sermon and the preacher. One of the most famous of these gathering was

the conference at Dedham, near Colchester. And in fact Essex as a whole was quite a hotbed of the Elizabethan Puritan movement.

The Puritans encouraged the congregation to question and even challenge the preacher. One observer described how 'men and women, boys and girls, labourers, workmen and simpletons' all joined in the discussion after the sermon. (Collinson, p 175)

## The Puritan Agenda

However, the Puritans also had other targets in their sights. During Mary's reign the church itself had been instrumental in the persecution of Protestants. To many of the returning refugees, therefore, the symbols of Roman Catholicism were symbols of evil. The Puritans were determined, therefore, to rid the churches of *everything* which they identified with the 'old' - and essentially unbiblical - church. For many of them, even Cranmer's Second Prayer Book had far too much popery - such as the signing with the cross during baptism, the ring in marriage and so on.

The Puritans also objected to all vestments and even the surplice, the white 'frock' worn by clergy was seen as a symbolic of a Church which had persecuted and martyred English men and women. The Puritans were also very unhappy with the system of episcopal government. They didn't like the word 'priest', preferring to talk about 'presbyters' (though the English word 'priest' actually derives from the word 'presbyter') and they thought the bishop should be treated as simply a senior presbyter, so the form of church government they advocated was called 'Presbyterianism'.

## Elizabeth's Response

Inevitably, this put Elizabeth in a difficult position. In a situation where the monarch had a major voice in the appointment of bishops, and attack on the bishop was indirectly an attack on the monarch. Moreover, it seems that Elizabeth was something of a closet traditionalist - she was certainly not a convinced Evangelical like her half-brother, the late Edward VI. Elizabeth's approach was to steer a middle course between conservatives and radicals.

At the same time, Elizabeth's regime was under attack from the Pope theologically and Spain militarily. Elizabeth herself was finally excommunicated by Pope Pius V in 1570. And of course it was during her reign that the Spanish Armada (the Navy) was launched against this country and then came to grief by a lucky combination of English naval skill and providential bad weather. However, what Elizabeth did not need - and moreover had no personal sympathy for - was a church of a radically independent mind which encouraged democratic and critical thinking amongst the people.

The traditional 'reading' of Elizabeth is that she was 'Good Queen Bess', who saved the country from wicked continental forces of Roman Catholicism and preserved its Protestant heritage for future generations. My own reading is that she was a spiritually private person, who was no friend of Evangelical Protestantism (as opposed to cultural 'English' Protestantism), and who made jolly sure that the Church of England couldn't threaten her own powers.

### **Machiavelli and the English Church**

The approach Elizabeth took was quite literally Machiavellian, bearing in mind that Nicolo Machiavelli had been a contemporary of her father, Henry VIII. Elizabeth followed Machiavelli's advice and used other people to do her dirty work, whilst simultaneously enjoying the admiration of her people. The people Elizabeth used were her bishops.

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the Puritans reasonably hoped for the Reforming process not only to continue but to accelerate. By the end of it, they were a frustrated, demoralized party facing defeat, and during the reign of James I they were effectively driven out of the Church of England.

The fate of Edmund Grindal was typical of Elizabeth's approach. Grindal became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1575, following the death of Matthew Parker. Parker had been in hiding during much of Mary's reign, but he was not friend to the Puritans. Grindal was much more an Evangelical's evangelical and sought to change episcopacy to a much more cooperative style with the other clergy. But Elizabeth was unhappy with the prophesyings - the sermon classes of the Puritan preachers - and tried to get Grindal to suppress them. Grindal refused, and the result was virtually house arrest until he died in 1583.

Grindal was succeeded by John Whitgift, and he set about suppressing the Puritans with enthusiasm. It has to be said that the Puritans didn't always help their own case, being rather too keen to pick a fight, but under the bishops appointed by Elizabeth, the Church of England was taking on an intolerance of independent thinking which has unfortunately become a long-term habit. Whitgift's enthusiasm for opposing the Puritans was matched by other bishops, to the extent that one Puritan writer said,

I see such worldliness in many that were otherwise affected before they came to cathedral chairs, that I fear the places alter the men. (Collinson, p 49)

### **Hooker**

The Big Bertha of the Elizabethan opposition to Puritanism, however, was Richard Hooker. Hooker did not achieve high church office, but he was recognized as an able opponent to the Puritans. Hooker's attack on Puritanism is contained in a large work called *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Hooker is often hailed as the greatest of English theologians and his works are sometimes seen as expressing the best of Anglicanism. He is, however, almost completely unreadable, never using five words where fifteen will do. What Hooker did succeed in doing was make a case for the existing Anglican status quo, over against the Puritans.

But from a theological point of view, the title of Hooker's work is noteworthy - *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Hooker's basic thesis was that everything in God's world runs according to Laws. And so just as there are Laws in nature, so we need to look for the 'laws' by which the Church is run. But you will remember that Martin Luther saw Law and Gospel as entirely opposed - and this, in summary, is the weakness inherent in the English Reformation, which still affects the Church of England today.

### **Retrospective**

The English Reformation was a mixed success. It has given us a church, as one Puritan described it, 'but halfly reformed'. Typical of this was the Act of Uniformity Elizabeth introduced in 1559. At one level, it restored the Church to what it was in the days of Edward VI. But at another level, Elizabeth deliberately intended it to steer a course between Rome and Geneva. What it in fact led to, indirectly, was the English Civil War, but the Church of England has *institutionally* reflected Elizabeth's policy of settling for half a reformation as better than a whole one!

Elizabeth's reign also reaffirmed the legalistic character of the English Reformation. We must remember that instruments which separated the Church of England from Rome were in the first instance legal, not theological. Similarly, Hooker's work was fundamentally a legalist approach to theology. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Church of England has always had a certain 'legalism' to it. We are much too fond of laws, and insufficiently fond of *theology*. And that was also true of the Puritans, for although they wanted the Church reformed, they would also have enforced their reforms through the Law.

The final outcome of the Puritan movement was, of course, the Pilgrim Fathers and the attempt to found a new society which was, on the one hand, meant to be a haven of religious freedom, but was on the other hand an attempt to found a theocracy - a government by God's Laws - in the New World.

The other legacy of the Elizabethan era was nonconformity, for the Church of England adopted a deliberate policy of squeezing out its disaffected members. Even today, the attitude of the institution to dissenters is 'If that is how you feel, why don't you join another denomination?', when of course if people took a biblical view of church, they would see that the idea of a denomination is a heresy!

My own view is that the title 'the Church of England' should mean exactly what it says on the tin: '*the Church of England*' - we should aim at nothing more and nothing less than being the Church in this country. But until we can learn once again to think theologically, and until we can stop acting legalistically, there is not much chance of that goal being achieved.

## Part 3: Is Any Body There?

### Introduction

As we've seen, the project to reform the Church of England in the sixteenth century depended heavily on the use of the law. However, the English Reformation was very far from being just a legal exercise. Like their Lutheran and Calvinist contemporaries on the Continent, the English Reformers saw themselves as engaged in a spiritual programme to bring the truth of the gospel back into the life of the church. The souls of men were at stake, and the dividing line between truth and error was between what the teachings of the Reformers and those of Rome.

Nowhere was this clearer than in the services in the local churches. Thomas Cranmer therefore set in train a programme to revise the liturgy of the Church of England.

### A Two-Pronged Program

This revision had two components. The first was to put the services into English. The second was to make them express the Reformed and Calvinist theology Cranmer himself had now adopted.

Throughout this period the Church of England remained deeply divided, with many of its clergy and bishops strongly committed to Rome. Loyalty to king and nation made life difficult for these Conservatives, but they were determined to withstand reform where they could and they had significant allies in the secular leaders of the nation. And the reversal of the Reformation after the death of Edward VI shows how powerful these forces were.

Inevitably, therefore, the Reformers would use the force of law to carry forward their programme. The good side of this, however, is that we can trace some of the Reformers' thinking by the official documents they have left behind.

### The Principles of the Prayer Book

Cranmer introduced an English Litany during the reign of Henry VIII, but his major liturgical work was the introduction of two Prayer Books during the reign of Edward VI - the first in 1549, and a subsequent revision in 1552. The Introductions and Prefaces to

these books give us the principles of Cranmer's liturgical reform. These principles were *intelligibility, Biblical instruction* and *brevity*.

Intelligibility meant the public prayers of the church had to be in English. In the Preface to the 1549 book, which is now an essay headed 'Concerning the Service of the Church' in our own 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, Cranmer gives this explanation:

... whereas Saint *Paul* would have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same; The Service in this Church of *England* these many years hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understand not; so that they have heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind, have not been edified thereby.

Cranmer also sought brevity by getting rid of accretions to the service and putting the Bible at the centre:

... here you have an Order for Prayer, and for the reading of the holy Scripture, much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers, and a great deal more profitable and commodious, than that which of late was used. It is more profitable, because here are left out many things, whereof some are untrue, some uncertain, some vain and superstitious; and nothing is ordained to be read, but the very pure Word of God, the holy Scriptures, or that which is agreeable to the same; and that in such a Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers. It is also more commodious, both for the shortness thereof, and for the plainness of the Order, and for that the Rules be few and easy.

These principles guided all Cranmer's reforms, but it is in the service of Holy Communion that we see the most dramatic expression of his new thinking, and also Cranmer's brilliance as a liturgist. However, to understand the changes we have to know what Cranmer was changing and why.

## The Biblical Background

When you read the New Testament, it is hard to detect anything remotely resembling a formal 'service' of Holy Communion, and impossible to know what the church did to keep the Lord's Supper. The *Last Supper* in the Gospels, is essentially a Passover meal. In almost every respect it is quite *unlike* a modern service of Holy Communion - it is annual, it is based in the home, it is presided over as a family meal and it involves cooking.

In the book of Acts we have reference to the early church sharing in 'the breaking of bread', but once again this looks more like a fellowship meal than a formal service. Neither Acts nor any other part of the New Testament gives us enough information to allow us to reconstruct a 'typical' meeting of the early church.

In 1 Corinthians 11 we have a reference to the 'supper' of the Lord (*kuriakoVn dei'pnon*), but once again the evidence points to a fellowship meal, not a formalized service. Apart from that, there is a doubtful reference in Jude 12 to people who are 'blemishes at your love-feasts', and even more doubtful reference in 2 Peter 2:13, and that is about it. As Martin Luther wrote 1500 years later,

we note how seldom the Evangelists and Apostles make mention of the Eucharist, a fact that has led many to wish they had said more about it. ('Concerning the Ministry', *LW* 40:25)

## The Roman Mass

Nevertheless, by the middle of the third century AD, a formalized and ritualized service had evolved, referred to as the Eucharist, from the Greek word for thanksgiving, referring to what Jesus did with the bread and wine at the Last Supper. These eucharists varied from place to place, but they were essentially Church rituals, not fellowship-meals from which one might go home fully fed.

By the Middle Ages, the eucharist had become known as the 'Mass' - probably from the words of the final dismissal - '*Ite, missa est*', 'Go, there is a dismissal'. However, in addition to now being entirely in Latin, the eucharist had changed not only its name and language but its character, taking on two further developments.

The first was the notion of the transformation of the elements of bread and wine. What actually happened when the priest repeated the words of Jesus, 'This is my body,' and 'this is my blood'? The answer the medieval theologians put forward was *transubstantiation*. The Greeks believed that things consisted of two aspects - 'substance', which was the essential nature of a thing, and 'accident', the various forms in which a thing could come. All fish, for example, have the 'substance' of fish, but display different 'accidents' - trout, herring, cod, barramundi, etc. The theory of transubstantiation said that in Communion the bread and wine retained their 'accidents' (the physical character of bread and wine) but changed their *substance*. So what looked and tasted like bread and wine was in actuality the body and blood of Jesus.

The other development was the notion of 'eucharistic sacrifice'. Each eucharist was seen as an effectual offering of Jesus own

sacrifice, with the power to bring the forgiveness of sins or remission from purgatory, or to enlist God's aid in other ways.

## The Reformation of the Mass

All the Reformers - Lutherans and Calvinists alike - agreed on rejecting the notion of the Mass as a sacrifice. The death of Jesus on the cross was 'once and for all', and the eucharist was *not* a sacrifice in itself, nor a sharing in that original sacrifice, nor a re-presenting of that sacrifice.

An area of profound *disagreement*, however, was the manner of Christ's presence in the Holy Communion. Martin Luther rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, but he nevertheless insisted, over against the Swiss Reformers, that Christ was *locally* present in the forms of the bread and wine.

Luther's concern to maintain the idea of local presence arose from his anxiety about mysticism. Like the earlier Luther himself, many enthusiastic members of the church were still hungry in their search for God. And God was found in mystical contemplation and in the experience of union between the soul and God. Luther knew this strand of Christianity, but after his rediscovery of the biblical gospel fiercely rejected it. God was *not* to be found inwardly through the journey of the soul towards the 'ground' of its being, but outwardly - in Christ, and in his word, *including* his word offered through the forms of the sacraments. For Luther, if at the eucharist Christ was not encountered *outwardly* in the forms of bread and wine which offered the gospel to people, people would seek him *inwardly* - as the Anglican service says, by feeding on him *in the heart*. But Luther knew that out of the heart comes only wickedness - Christ was not to be found, or looked for there!

On the other hand, the Swiss Reformers, led by Ulrich Zwingli, took the approach that the bread and wine were only *symbols* of Christ's body and blood. Their anxiety was the Roman doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice, and if Christ was *not* present in the forms of bread and wine there was not much danger that he could be re-sacrificed.

The Swiss and the Lutherans met at the town of Marburg in 1529 to try to reach an agreement, but Luther fiercely rejected what became known (slightly confusingly) as the *Reformed* position, and the Reformation itself suffered a serious division.

## Cranmer's Eucharist

In England it was the Swiss view that prevailed. Having once held a thoroughly Roman view, and having dallied temporarily with a Lutheran view, Cranmer now went wholeheartedly for a Zwinglian view and proceeded to write it into the Lord's Supper. This process of

revision took place in two stages - in 1549 and in 1552. The 1549 service, although in English, was still similar in some respects to the old Latin service. Even the title, 'The Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass', shows this link.

The 1552 service was a much more radical revision, not only because of what Cranmer did with the words of the service, but because of what he did with the structure.

## Sacrifice

As regards the words, Cranmer got rid of every trace of potential sacrifice or physical presence. We see the elimination of the idea of sacrifice clearly in the words which begin the prayer before the Administration:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only son Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made *there* (by his *one* oblation of himself *once* offered) a *full, perfect, and sufficient* sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, *for the sins of the whole world* ...

Cranmer, as it were, hammers repeated nails into the coffin of eucharistic sacrifice. Then, just to make sure the old doctrine couldn't get out, he moved the Prayer of Humble Oblation. This prayer contained the words,

... entirely desiring thy fatherly goodness, mercifully to accept this our Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

And in 1549 it came *before* reception of the bread and wine. But they were dangerous words to leave at this point, since they allowed Conservatives to cling on to the idea that the bread and wine formed part of this 'sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving'. So in 1552 Cranmer moved the whole prayer to follow reception, when there was less danger of misunderstanding them.

Another subtle change concerned the 1552 Prayer for the Church militant, which contains the line,

We must humbly beseech thee most mercifully to accept our alms and to receive these our prayers ...

Next to these words, however, a note was added:

If there be no alms given unto the poor, then shall the words of accepting our alms be left out unsaid.

Otherwise, 'alms' might be taken to apply to the bread and wine which, once again, would imply a sacrificial offering. In fact the

whole notion of the 'Offertory' was one thing which Cranmer was keen to eliminate.

## Presence

Cranmer also changed the words of the service to eliminate any possible notion of real presence - in fact he went to greater lengths on this front than he did on the notion of sacrifice.

One crucial step was the elimination of the *epiclesis*. Up until the Reformation, the words of the liturgy invoked the presence of the Holy Spirit on the elements of bread and wine in order to *consecrate* them - making them sacred things in themselves. Cranmer's 1549 service still contained just such an *epiclesis*:

... and with thy holy spirit and word, vouchsafe to bl+ess and sanc+tify these thy gifts, and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved son Jesus Christ.

In the 1552 service, the *epiclesis* over the bread and wine becomes a prayer for worthy reception by the *people*:

... and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood ...

Cranmer also got rid of the manual acts. In 1549 there were instructions to the priest to take up the bread and cup at specific points in the prayer before Administration. In 1552 they have disappeared.

In fact by 1552 even the bread and wine have virtually disappeared. In 1549 there were instructions that after the offering for the poor, the priest was to prepare the Bread and Wine on what was still at that stage called the altar. In 1552 there are no instructions anywhere about when to bring out the bread and wine - they might as well be in the vestry, for all the attention Cranmer gives them. And since the bread and wine aren't changed into the body and blood of Jesus during the service, it doesn't matter what you do with them after the service. So the rubrics at the end of the service simply say,

And if any of the bread or wine remain, the Curate shall have it to his own use.

Cranmer also altered the words of administration between 1549 and 1552. In 1549, communicants received the bread with the words, "*The body* of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life".

Obviously this still left room for misinterpretation, so in 1552 the words were amended to "Take and eat *this* in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him *in thy heart, by faith* with thanksgiving."

## Structure

### I. Table

However, it was in his structural changes to the eucharist that Cranmer's genius was most subtly displayed. One not-so-subtle structural change was the moving of the communion table. In 1549, this was still an 'altar' which would have been hard up against the east wall of the church, with the priest facing it with his back to the congregation. However, at the beginning of the 1552 service comes this instruction:

The Table having at the Communion time a fair white linen cloth upon it, shall stand in the body of the Church, or in the chancel, where Morning prayer and Evening prayer be appointed to be said. And the Priest standing at the north side of the Table, shall say the Lord's prayer, etc.

The table now stood lengthwise down the church, with them minister standing on one of the long sides - the idea being that the people would gather at the table itself, rather come to a rail.

### ii. Consecration

However, the biggest change was the elimination in the 1552 service of any moment of 'consecration' and the shift of the climax of the service entirely to the point of reception.

By the medieval period, the most important part of the eucharist had become the consecration, where the bread and wine became the body and blood of Jesus. At the moment where the priest said, 'This is my body', a bell was rung three times as the priest first genuflected and then raised the bread, or 'host' (from the Latin word *hostia* meaning victim) in the sight of the people. Much the same was done with the wine, and then the priest prayed,

Deign to regard them [the bread and wine] with a favourable and gracious countenance, and to accept them as it pleased thee to accept the offerings of thy servant Abel the Just, and the sacrifice of our father Abraham, and that which thy great priest Melchisedech sacrificed to thee, a holy offering, a victim without blemish.

Reception was very much secondary (and in any case, the laity only received the bread, not the cup). But really it was enough just to be there.

Cranmer got rid of all this, not only by changing the words, but by changing the actions. The priest now did nothing with the bread and wine - there are no signings with the cross or picking up or putting down of the plate or the cup. *Nor*, most significantly, is there an 'Amen' at the end of the prayer before Administration. Instead, the movement of the service goes straight from what Christ said to giving people the bread to eat and the cup to drink.

There *is* no consecration in Cranmer's 1552 service, which is why there are no instructions about what to do if you run out of 'consecrated' bread and wine. Instead, the whole emphasis falls on that point where the communicant is told, 'feed on him *in thy heart by faith* with thanksgiving'.

### The Black Rubric

Nevertheless, Cranmer still ran into trouble with his own supporters, because the people still knelt to receive communion. Some seized on this as an opportunity to adore the 'real presence' of Christ. Others objected to it just as enthusiastically for the same reason. This led to a rather tetchy addition to the rubrics at the end of the 1552 Communion service. Because this was added on after the first print run in red ink, it was printed in black and therefore became known as the 'Black Rubric'. However, it gives a comprehensive account of Cranmer's view of the Communion service, as well as an idea of the irritation he was feeling by this time:

Although no order can be so perfectly devised, but it may be of some, either for their ignorance and infirmity, or else of malice and obstinacy, misconstrued, depraved, and interpreted in a wrong part: And yet because brotherly charity willeth, that so much as conveniently may be, offences should be taken away: therefore we [*sic*] willing to do the same. Whereas it is ordained in the book of common prayer, in the administration of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants kneeling should receive the holy Communion: which thing being well meant, for a signification of the humble and grateful acknowledging of the benefits of Christ, given unto the worthy receiver, and to avoid the profanation and disorder, which about the holy Communion might else ensue: Lest yet the same kneeling might be thought or taken otherwise, we do declare that it is not meant thereby, that any adoration is done, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental bread or wine there bodily

received, or unto any real and essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For as concerning the Sacramental bread and wine, they remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful christians. And as concerning the natural body and blood of our saviour Christ, they are in heaven and not here. For it is against the truth of Christ's true natural body, to be in more places than in one, at one time.

### The Real Absence

So complete was Cranmer's elimination of the notion of the 'real presence' of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine that we can describe Cranmer's position on this as a doctrine of 'real absence'. But this creates something of a problem in Anglican practise. The inscription above the Communion table in the chapel of Moore Theological College in Sydney Australia expresses Cranmer's theology exactly by quoting Matthew 28:6: 'He is not here, he is risen'.

But if he is not here, why are we here? Or more specifically, why are we here doing *this*? In Luther's theology, the bread and wine function as tokens of the gospel itself. Luther said that in preaching the gospel is, as it were, broadcast to the congregation through the spoken word. But in the communion it is given specifically and personally to each one in the physical token of bread and wine.

The irony is, of course, that Cranmer himself and many other English Protestants perished for denying what the original reformer, Martin Luther, absolutely affirmed.

A further difference between Cranmer and Luther is on the question of preparation to receive. You will notice that in the Black Rubric it says that the benefits of Christ are given to the 'worthy receiver'. But who is worthy? The answer Cranmer gave is in the long Exhortation still found in our 1662 Prayer Books, which tells people to first to examine themselves to see whether they have lived by God's commandments, to bewail their sins and confess them 'with full purpose of amendment of life', to make restitution to anyone they have wronged, to forgive others and, if necessary, make private confession to the priest beforehand and receive absolution. Then you can receive without imperiling your soul. Luther, on the other hand, writes,

Whoever is in despair, distressed by a sin-stricken conscience or terrified by death or carrying some other burden upon his heart, if he would be rid of them all, let him go joyfully to the sacrament of the altar [...].

Again,

... this holy sacrament is of little or no benefit to those who have no misfortune or anxiety, or who do not sense their adversity. For it is given only to those who need strength and comfort, who have timid hearts and terrified consciences, and who are assailed by sin, or have even fallen into sin. How could it do anything for untroubled and secure spirits, who neither need nor desire it?

Cranmer basically implied that those *who have dealt with sin* are worthy of the sacrament. Luther said the sacrament *deals with sin*.

## 1662

However, you will have noticed that the service of 1552 is *unlike* our Prayer Book Service in several crucial respects. How did this happen? The answer is that between the reign of Elizabeth I and the accession of Charles II after the English Civil War, the Book of Common Prayer, and particularly the Communion service, was gradually amended to reflect a more traditionalist, and Roman Catholic, view of Christianity in general and the Communion service in particular.

One of the chief architects of change in the church was Archbishop William Laud, who served under Charles I and was eventually executed by Parliament for treason. Laud moved the communion table back from the body of the church to the 'east end' altar position - though Protestant ministers continued to follow the Prayer Book rubric and celebrated 'north end' in what later became known as the 'ping-pong' position.

Following the restoration, in 1662 the Prayer Book was fixed in its present form. So over Cranmer's Zwinglian service was laid a distinctly 'Romish' series of amendments - back came the manual acts suggesting a moment of consecration, and therefore, inevitably, 're-consecration' if the bread and wine ran out and the consumption of the 'consecrated' bread and wine at the end of the service. Even the 'Amen' at the end of the prayer before the Administration was a 1662 addition which broke the flow of Cranmer's service and spoilt its intention.

However, enough of Cranmer was left, and Cranmer was enough of a genius, for generations of English users of the Prayer Book to imbibe a reformed understanding of Christ's death through their weekly liturgy. All that has, of course, almost gone, and the implications of that we will look at in our final part.

## Part 4: To Our Own People Only

### Introduction

Diarmaid MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer's latest, and perhaps greatest, biographer, gives this verdict on the Church of England in his *Tudor Church Militant*,

In [its] work of re-creation and subtle adaptation, the Church of England created a new theological synthesis called Anglicanism. It is a creation which has had some happy and fruitful results, but it is something that Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley would have deplored. (P 221)

This is a painful, but accurate, verdict. In this last session of our Lent course, therefore, we're going to consider what the Church of England has become since the Reformation and where it might be going.

### To Our Own People Only

Crucial to our self-understanding is a statement which appears in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer under the heading 'Of Ceremonies, Why Some be Abolished and Some Retained':

And in these our doings we condemn no other Nations, nor prescribe any thing but to our own people only [...].

To the Reformers, the only *distinctive* thing about Anglicanism was its location in England. Its beliefs were those of the Catholic, *universal*, church - only its local practices were specifically 'Anglican'.

This is reaffirmed in Article XXXIV. God's word was the standard by which all things should be judged, but local custom - 'the diversities of countries, times and men's manners' - meant that local practices could vary. Nevertheless, in England local diversity would *not* be allowed. Thus from 1549 onwards, a series of Parliamentary 'Acts of Uniformity' enforced the Book of Common Prayer, with severe penalties (up to and including life imprisonment) for those who used any other rites or encouraged others to do so.

## By Law Established

This involvement of the national legislature in the life of the Church of England is what it means to be a church *established* by law. When, for example, the Church of England's General Synod passes a major piece of legislation it takes the form of what is called a 'Measure' which goes to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament for final approval. This Committee can only approve a Measure or send it back. But it has done the latter, most recently with one affecting the right of bishops to get rid of churchwardens.

The Church of England could lose many of its privileges, such as bishops in the House of Lords, without being disestablished, so long as the legal institutions of the nation are used to regulate and enforce the beliefs and structures of the church itself.

## From Henry to Elizabeth

This involvement of the national institutions in the life of the Church of England, however, means that the history of the church and the history of the nation continued to overlap for several hundred years following the Reformation. After the death of Henry VIII, the English Reformers tried to push through changes which would make the Church of England thoroughly Protestant. They were frustrated in this, first by opposition during Edward's reign and then by Edward's death and Mary's policy of re-Romanising both church and nation.

The accession of Elizabeth I, however, brought mixed blessings. On the one hand, the Church of England once again swung firmly towards Protestantism. On the other hand, Elizabeth opposed the Puritans and, by her own Act of Uniformity, fixed the Church of England in the theological and liturgical stance of Edward's reign known as the Elizabethan Settlement.

## James I

In many respects this really did settle the Church, preventing either an outright return to Romanism or movement towards a greater expression of Protestantism. Elizabeth, however, died childless in 1603, and so the English throne passed to the Scottish king James VI, who in a reversal of the 'Braveheart' mythology, became James I of England.

The Reformation in Scotland had proceeded along more distinctively Calvinist lines, so the Puritans in England once again hoped for a wind of change. But once again they were disappointed. James found the system of Episcopalianism in England more to his liking than the Presbyterianism of his home country, and gave very little ground to the Puritans.

A Royal conference at Hampton Court conference in 1604 made it clear that the Puritans would get almost none of the changes for which they are hoping (but incidentally paved the way for the Authorized Version of the Bible). After that, therefore, many of the Puritans began to separate from the Church of England, though some continued to work reluctantly within it.

## The Civil War

James took the view that the king ruled by 'divine right'. In his own words,

Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth. [...] Judges over all their subjects, and in all causes, and yet accountable to none but God only. (Quoted in I Bradley, *God Save the Queen* [London: DLT 2002] p 100)

James consequently took a very 'hands on' approach to church matters, but his son Charles I, took this too far. Charles appointed a 'High Church' Archbishop, William Laud, who pushed through a programme which restored many of the old practices of the pre-Reformation church, such as the east-end, railed-off altar, stained glass, crucifixes, and so on. Laud also fiercely persecuted the remaining Puritans in the Church of England. However, Charles' big mistake was in trying to impose the English Prayer Book and Episcopal system on the Scottish church - an act of arrogance and folly which led directly to the Civil War.

Not surprisingly, the victory of the Parliamentary forces led to a resurgence of Presbyterian church government in England and the Prayer Book was actually abolished in 1645.

## Restoration and Ejection

However, with the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 came also the restoration of the Prayer Book and the old style of episcopal government. The 'High Church' party was now in the ascendancy, and although the Savoy Conference of 1661 was called to bring Puritans and bishops together, the bishops were in no mood for compromise and had the power of the crown behind them. Puritan objections about the Prayer Book were overridden, and (*pace* our quote from MacCulloch above) the book was amended in a direction decidedly against the theology of its author, Thomas Cranmer.

In 1662 a new Act of Uniformity was passed requiring the use of the revised Book of Common Prayer and re-ordination by a bishop of those presbyters who had not been so ordained. This Act and three other Acts of Parliament made up the so-called Clarendon Code,

designed to push Nonconformists out of the church of England (and also incidentally from national and local government). The resultant 'Great Ejection' affected about 2,000 clergy who, as a result of the Five Mile Act of that same name, were now not even allowed within five miles of towns and conurbations. The *theological* legacy was that vast numbers of English Evangelical Christians saw the institutional Church of England as an enemy almost on a par with Rome itself.

## Democracy and Empire

Charles II was succeeded in 1685 by James II of England, VII of Scotland, but James was an outright Roman Catholic, and neither England nor Scotland were prepared to accept his attempts to move religion and society back in that direction. James was thus ousted in favour of his daughter, Mary, and her Dutch Calvinist husband, William of Orange, who became William III of England in 1689. But William was king by the invitation of the Parliament and people. The old power of the monarchy, and hence of the Church of England, was beginning to be broken.

Meanwhile, Britain found itself with increasing territories abroad. Article XXXVII referred to 'The King's majesty in ... this Realm of England, and other his [sic] Dominions'. But whereas this once simply included bits of France, it was now becoming an Empire on which, for a while at least, the sun would not set. The expansion of the Empire meant an expanding Church of England, although actual *missionary* work overseas was largely carried out by para-church bodies from many denominations.

The institution of the Church of England extended its own institutional influence rather more slowly. Hence at one stage Australia was part of the Diocese of Calcutta. However, the global Empire meant that Anglicanism became a global Communion, albeit roughly the same shape as the British Empire.

## Methodists and Movements

Meanwhile, the Church of England continued to be affected by pressures from within. Chief amongst these was the Methodist movement which began with the 'Holy Club' in Oxford, in the early eighteenth century. The members of this club tried to apply biblical *method* to the life of holiness, but the movement spread rapidly following the personal conversion and preaching of the Anglican minister John Wesley.

Along with his brother Charles, and George Whitefield, Wesley remained a lifelong Anglican, but the Church of England had by now perfected the art of dealing with its own wayward children via the denominational system. Inevitably, therefore, following Wesley's

death, the Methodists became a separate denomination - and the Church of England once again cheerfully wasted the energies of some of its best members.

In the nineteenth century, however, the Church of England produced a spiritual movement much more congenial to its own tastes. This was the Tractarian Movement which later became the so-called Oxford Movement, since many of its key members were originally based there. The Tractarian Movement began as a reaction to establishment, due legal efforts being made to reduce the number of bishoprics in Ireland. The Tractarians felt that this was an unjustifiable interference by a religiously pluralist body - Parliament - in the affairs of the 'true', ie Anglican, church.

The Tractarian movement attracted initial support from Evangelicals, but it soon became clear that the emerging Oxford movement was distinctly friendly towards Rome and hostile towards the Reformation. Indeed, John Henry Newman, one of the key leaders of the Oxford Movement, eventually went over to Rome, eventually becoming a Cardinal.

The Church of England lost Newman, but under the continuing influence of the Oxford Movement it regained many of the Roman Catholic practices which had long seemed defunct, such as vestments, the reserved sacrament, altars and candles, seasonal colours, bishop's mitres and so on. Some Evangelicals attempted to resist the Oxford Movement by taking legal action, as a result of which some clergy were sent to prison. But this only created martyrs for the cause. By the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, the Church of England was set on a decisively Anglo-Catholic course.

## The 1928 Prayer Book

Not surprisingly, there was now a demand for liturgical change. A new prayer book - basically a revised version of the old prayer book, but with decidedly Roman additions, such as prayers for the dead - was thus drawn up and brought before Parliament in 1927. However, Evangelicals felt it conceded far too much to Rome, and Anglo-Catholics felt it gave far too little scope for their own practices. Inevitably, therefore, the book was rejected by a small majority.

The bishops, who were responsible for drawing up the book, determined not to take accept defeat. They made a few changes, and represented the book to Parliament in 1928, where it was duly rejected again, this time by a larger majority. However, the bishops then proceeded to show that they were no mean fighters themselves when it came to dirty politics and set about making absolutely sure that such a defeat could not happen again.

First, they ensured that the rejected book was published privately. Then, in spite of the fact that they had previously gone through Parliament for authorization, they declared that, for the time being, they would not view use of the 1928 Book as incompatible with loyalty to the Church of England. Then thirdly they set in train a series of negotiations with Parliament which would allow them to create a whole new process of liturgical revision. This resulted in the Alternative Services Measure of 1966, which led eventually, via Series 2 and Series 3 services, to the 1980 *Alternative Services Book* and thence to the present *Common Worship*.

One does not have to be a liturgical genius, however, to notice that the new communion service are basically similar to Cranmer's 1549 effort that his 1552 service which undergirds the Book of Common Prayer. Once again, the Reformation principles have lost out in the historical processes of the church.

### Post-War Anglicanism

The end of the Second World War saw a brief but remarkable upsurge in organized religion:

During the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s, organised Christianity experienced the greatest per annum growth in church membership ... since the eighteenth century. (C G Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p 172)

Evangelicals in the Church of England, however, were a beleaguered minority. What kept them going, apart from theological conviction, was a strong sense of shared identity.

In this, the Church Pastoral Aid Society played a vital rôle. The patronage system meant that CPAS, along with a number of other evangelical bodies, controlled appointments to a large number of parishes. Thus, in spite of the Anglican drift first to Anglo-Catholic practice and then to theological Liberalism, Evangelical continuity was maintained in many places. CPAS staff visitors maintained contact with Evangelical clergy, whilst CPAS also published books and resources. CPAS also provided a 'cradle to University' young people's programme, known by the acronym of CYPECS - CYFA, Pathfinders, Explorers and Climbers.

Moreover, at University, the post-CYFA student was picked up by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. This was a non-denominational body which originated in Cambridge in the early part of the twentieth century as a reaction to increasing Liberalism in the Student Christian Movement. In the late-nineteenth century, the SCM had been a world-wide student body encouraging students into

missionary work in the hope of hastening the return of Christ. By the 1950s it was a thoroughly Liberal body, hugely influential in the Church of England through its publishing house, SCM books, but paradoxically declining in the Universities and kept alive largely by the efforts of the chaplains who were themselves usually Liberals.

IVF meanwhile had itself become a global body, and also had a publishing house, IVP, which, for a while, was virtually the only body in England publishing serious Evangelical bible commentaries. IVP also published a solid Bible Dictionary and this, together with the one-volume New Bible Commentary, formed the dietary staple of Evangelical students in the 1960s. The effectiveness of IVF in nurturing existing Christians and evangelizing amongst students meant that a steady supply of high quality recruits were being fed back into the churches throughout the 50s and 60s.

Other leaders in church and society were being created through the Iwerne (pronounced You-an!) camps run by E J H 'Bash' Nash. Dick Lucas and John Stott both numbered amongst Bash's boys.

### Keele, Charismatics and Congresses

It was under John Stott's leadership that Anglican Evangelicalism took a further significant step. For some time, there had been pressure under the influence of Dr Martin Lloyd-Jones for evangelicals to leave Anglicanism and join the Nonconformists.

This pressure was resisted by Stott and others, who responded with the first National Evangelical Anglican Congress, held at Keele University in 1967. Keele became a watershed for Anglican Evangelicals, who were committed from that point onwards to not merely staying within, but *working with the structures of*, Anglicanism. This decision reflected a growing confidence amongst Anglican Evangelicals. However, at the same time another influence was about to make itself felt. Since the end of the nineteenth century, so-called Pentecostal churches had been slowly growing in size and influence.

The Pentecostal churches emphasized speaking in tongues as evidence of a post-conversion 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'. But since the early 1960s, increasing numbers of mainstream church members had been having a 'Pentecostal' experience of tongues-speaking whilst staying in their own denominations. This neo-Pentecostalism eventually metamorphosed into the Charismatic Movement. Initially, it existed almost as an underground grouping within Church of England. However, in the 1970s it burst out with an unstoppable impact, bringing fresh signs of life to the somewhat 'worthy but dull' image of mainstream Anglican Evangelicalism.

The public emergence of the Charismatic Movement coincided with a resurgence of Evangelical influence in the Church of England, and brought a greatly desired liveliness to the somewhat 'worthy-but-dull' image of mainstream Evangelicalism. Unexpectedly, Evangelicals suddenly found the ball at their feet. Under the influence of Francis Schaeffer, representing a Reformed and Calvinist tradition, Evangelicals had discovered a new interest in social and political involvement, and in the arts and popular culture. The former was represented by the magazine 'Third Way', and the latter by the Greenbelt pop festival.

When the second National Evangelical Anglican Congress took place at Nottingham in 1977, it was therefore no longer a meeting of people on the defensive, but of those who felt the Church of England and the future belonged to them.

### **Beyond Evangelicalism**

Why, then, is the Church of England at the beginning of the third millennium not an Evangelical church continuing the work begun in the sixteenth century Reformation?

One answer is that the Evangelicalism of the 1960s and 70s lacked theological undergirding. With the spread of Liberalism in the Universities and theological colleges, Evangelicalism in England had become mistrustful of any form of academic study, including their own traditions. Furthermore, but connected with the first point, Evangelicals were remarkably poor at handling the Bible. Amongst other things, the 'Martin Lloyd-Jones' model of exhaustive (and sometimes exhausting) attention to a 'verse by verse' exposition of Scripture overlooked the 'big picture' of the Bible and its books.

Meanwhile, a systematic approach to theology failed to excite ministers or percolate down to church members. The response to Charismatic theology typified the weakness of Evangelical thinking at the time. Evangelicals were pragmatists, not theorists, doers not thinkers. Jonathan Fletcher, a leading Anglican Evangelical, made a telling comment about the visit of the Anglican Australian evangelist John Chapman in the late 1970s:

We didn't need to be encouraged in evangelism - we've always been flat-out at that. We needed to be rescued for reformed theology. (M Orpwood, *For the Sake of the Gospel*, p 202)

Significantly, the invitation to John Chapman came from Dick Lucas, the rector of St Helen's Bishopsgate, and St Helen's became the focus for a revival in traditional, conservative Evangelicalism, through the work of the Proclamation Trust.

Unfortunately, many - perhaps even most of the Evangelicals of the 1960s and 70s went in what became known as an 'Open Evangelical' direction - some even adopting the term 'Post-Evangelical' coined by a former house church leader and now Anglican clergyman, Dave Tomlinson. Open Evangelicalism is typically characterised by on the one hand a desire to see people converted and a 'lively' style of church meeting, but on the other hand by a sitting-light to some of the classic and traditional Evangelical views on doctrinal and moral issues.

Open Evangelicals will also tend to look at other strands within the Church of England, such as Anglo-Catholicism or Liberalism, as viable alternatives to Evangelicalism, rather than as expressions of doctrinal error. At the same time, however, they will tend to characterize Conservative Evangelicalism as narrow in both mind and theology.

### **Wither Anglicanism?**

Meanwhile, English Anglicanism as a whole has failed to move in a notably more Reformed direction in spite of the relatively high proportion of Evangelicals - open or otherwise - in its ranks. Instead, the *institutional* church has tended increasingly to define itself in terms of episcopacy. Paul Avis, a champion of modern Anglican ecclesiology, writes,

The 'local church' in Anglican ecclesiology denotes ... the community of word and sacrament gathered, governed and led by the bishop. For Anglican ecclesiology, the 'congregation' in the strict sense is the diocese. (P Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church*, p 77)

This emphasis on the bishop, however, goes back at least to the nineteenth century, to the influence of the Oxford Movement and also to a decision of the third 'Lambeth Conference' in 1888. There, the bishops of the Anglican Communion adopted a resolution put forward two years earlier by what was then the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA (now, significantly, just ECUSA!). The fourth principle of the Lambeth Quadrilateral is that the 'Historic Episcopate' - that is to say a succession of bishops going back to the Apostles, following the Roman model - is essential to any reunion scheme with other denominations.

The adoption of this viewpoint led to a curious result when in 1993 the Porvoo Common Statement agreed between the Church of England and the Scandinavian Lutheran churches committed the Lutherans to a view of the historic episcopate which Luther rejected and the Anglicans to a view of the eucharist which Cranmer similarly

rejected. Thus on the eucharist itself, the Statement confidently declares:

We [ie Anglicans as well as Lutherans] believe that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received under the forms of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper (Eucharist).

This, of course, is specifically contrary to what Cranmer held after he moved from his Lutheran understanding to his final position expressed in the 1552 communion service. In this and many other ways (revealed in a plethora of official documents and reports) the institutional Anglican church seems no longer to be capable of thinking in any coherent theological fashion consistent with its own past.

### Changing the Church

If the Church of England in these islands is to change for the better, it cannot be left to those at the top of the institution. On the contrary, the present structures of the Church of England rely on things being left in the hands of an oligarchy in order for them to continue in the same vein. Worried that the first thing an oppressive Government would do to maintain its power was take away all the guns, the Second Amendment to the American Constitution guarantees to the people the right to bear arms.

In the church, power comes not from guns but from truth. Jesus said, 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' Part of the 'truth which frees', however, is knowing how the truth of the gospel has been applied and lived out, or opposed and inhibited, within our own church.

Just as a 'well-regulated militia', possessing the power to resist oppression, was seen as essential to guaranteeing the freedom of the United States, perhaps we should see a 'well-informed laity' as crucial to the life of a church.

Faithful clergy can do so much, but only so much, particularly when their own livelihood is tied to the institution. Reformation, however, has only succeeded where lay people have risen to support it. The time has surely come for that to happen once again.

## Reading and References

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Oliver Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain, 1935-1995 - A Personal Sketch* (Leicester: IVP, 1997) 159 pp, index. Fills in some of the bits Neill misses out.

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