

# The Reformation in England – Part 1

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – An overview of the reformation in England, including the various Protestant groups
2. aim – To cause us to understand the roots of the reformed church in America

### b. outline

1. The Early Reformation in England
2. The Puritan Reformation in England

### c. overview

1. the **state** of the Reformation
  - a. our timeframe (up to this point) has been the first-half of the 16<sup>th</sup> C – the reformation is in *full swing* throughout Europe
    1. the theological epiphany of Luther, the simultaneous rise of Zwingli, the appearance of the *radical reformers*, and the life and legacy of Calvin in Geneva
    2. the movement of Lutheranism and Protestantism throughout C and W Europe
    3. **i.e.** a great movement of the Spirit of God throughout the church during a period of only about 50 years (out of 1500 in the Church Age)
2. **our next steps** will be to examine how the Reformation, which started in Germany and Switzerland, spread even further, and how the Catholic church responded to it:
  - a. **i.e.** from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> C forward through the 17<sup>th</sup> C and into the 18<sup>th</sup>
  - b. the Early reformation in England, followed (later) by the Puritan reformation
  - c. the Catholic *counter*-Reformation and the Council of Trent
  - d. the rise of Arminianism, and the Synod of Dort
  - e. the rise of Rationalism, Empiricism, and Deism
  - f. the establishment of the Thirteen Colonies and the church in America
  - g. **i.e.** by necessity, we cannot talk about *every aspect* of Reformation history; the amount of material is simply too large – so, we will focus on those things **most relevant to us**
    1. **e.g.** the spread of the Reformation to Scotland, Spain, and many other parts of Europe
3. the **place** of the English-speaking Reformation
  - a. in two parts: 1) the Early Reformation, occurring during the 16<sup>th</sup> C, 2) the Puritan Reformation occurring during the early 17<sup>th</sup> C
  - b. **note:** to understand the English Reformation fully, I am going to bring together two *disparate* time-periods across two lectures, and then “go back” and talk about events *intervening* between them
  - c. **i.e.** a discussion of the *entire* Reformation in England, even though it is broken over time

## I. The Early Reformation in England

### Content

#### a. the early reformation under Henry VIII (1491-1547; r. 1509)

1. Henry VIII was born June 28, 1491 (**my birthday!!**), and began his reign at the age of 17
  - a. **note:** Henry VIII came to the throne in 1509, just *before* Luther's *95 Theses* – he ruled England through the entire first-half of the 16<sup>th</sup> C, thus was king during the rise of Protestantism in Europe
2. the 16<sup>th</sup> C had Great Britain divided: the house of Tudor in England, the Stuart kingdom in Scotland
  - a. the relationship between them *at this time* was one of enmity and open warfare
  - b. England was an ally of Spain; Scotland an ally of France
3. Henry Tudor was third child (and second son) of King Henry VII (and Elizabeth of York)
  - a. his elder brother was Arthur, Prince of Wales; his older sister was Margaret (younger was Mary)
  - b. Henry was baptized by Richard Foxe, the Bishop of Exeter, a Franciscan order near the palace
4. to seal the relationship between England and Spain, Henry VII arranged for his heir, Arthur, to marry Catherine of Aragon (a daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella)
  - a. but, Arthur died only 4 mos. after the wedding – so, Henry VII agreed to the marriage of Catherine to Henry, her deceased husband's *younger* brother (**i.e.** his *second-born* son)
  - b. but ... church (canon) law *prohibited* a man's marriage to his brother's widow – so, English representatives in Rome obtained a *papal dispensation* for the marriage

1. there was *significant* doubt as to whether the pope possessed such authority – thus, the *legality* of the marriage hung as a shadow over them
2. and, Henry and Catherine did not bear a male heir – their only surviving child was Mary Tudor
- c. so ... Henry proposed the solution that his marriage to Catherine be *annulled* (*i.e.* declared non-existent) by the pope, so he could marry another and father a male heir
  1. *i.e.* he argued that the marriage was *illegal* anyways, and that the lack of (male) children was proof that God was displeased (**based on Leviticus 20:21**)
  2. but, because Catherine was the aunt of emperor Charles V (who virtually owned the pope), Clement VII refused to do so (in 1527)
  3. thus, Henry began a policy that would eventually lead to a break with Rome
5. the growing animosity between Henry and the Catholic church was the “opening” for reformation
  - a. the king began putting the clergy more directly under his control, and he threatened to “withhold” funds that normally went to Rome (*e.g.* he forced Rome to name Thomas Cranmer [his religious advisor] as archbishop of Canterbury)
  - b. however, Henry was no Protestant, and had no sympathy for the movement
    1. the ideas of Luther had come to England shortly after they began spreading in Europe
    2. and, Henry had (**earlier**) written a treatise against Luther (in 1521) – he was granted the title “defender of the faith” by Leo X, but his “defense” of papal authority was *highly contingent*
    3. what Henry believed was *truly needed* was not a “reformation” of the church, but a *restoration* of the rights of the crown against papal intervention (*i.e.* his right to govern the church)
  - d. at this point, Lutheran ideas were circulating in England, and those who held to them rejoiced over Henry’s growing distance between himself and the Roman church
    1. Wycliffe’s program of reformation had included the creation of a *national church* under the direction of civil authorities, and Henry’s policies were leading in that direction
    2. the break took place in **1534** – Parliament enacted a series of laws forbidding payment of annates to Rome, that Henry’s marriage to Catherine was void, and that the king was the supreme head of the **Church of England**
      - a. anyone calling the king a heretic (or not the lawful head of the church) would be guilty of treason, the reason that Sir Thomas More was executed for *refusing* to affirm it
      - b. so, after 24 years of marriage, Catherine was banished, and Henry then went on to marry Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr (each of whom would either aid or limit the advance of reformation in the country; **too complex**)
    3. the schism was *not* an attempt at reformation (few doctrinal positions were changed), but many in England saw this as an opportunity for a *thorough* reformation itself
6. under Henry’s reign (with and without his support) ideas of reformation spread throughout the nation
  - a. Cranmer ordered that the Bible be translated into English, and placed in every church, where all could read it – this allowed advocates of reform to go from place to place and point out passages in Scripture that supported their teachings
  - b. the suppression of monasteries (as Henry took their funds) lessened the power of the “conservative” wing in the support of the Catholic church
  - c. the humanists (numerous and powerful) saw in Henry’s policies an opportunity to achieve a reformation without the “excesses” of German Protestants (*i.e.* a better Catholic church)
  - d. **the result:** at Henry’s death the advocates of reformation had ample support throughout England
- b. the early reformation under Edward VI (1537-53; r. 1547)**
  1. Edward VI was the only male heir of Henry VIII, born to Jane Seymour
    - a. he came to the throne at the age of 9, and never reached “maturity” (he died at 16) – his realm was governed by a regency council led (at first) by his uncle, Edward Seymour
    - b. Edward was raised as a Protestant, due to the influence of his mother, and this *furthered* the causes of reformation in England
  2. during his regency council:
    - a. the cup in communion was restored to the laity, members of the clergy were allowed to marry, and images were removed from the churches – all realities of reformation in C Europe
    - b. Cranmer published *The Book of Common Prayer*, which gave the people a liturgy in their own language – it replaced the Latin rites in the Anglican Church with uniquely *English* ones
    - c. in later editions, the Zwinglian influence is highly notable, particularly in the words of the minister in regards to the offering of bread to the communicant:
      1. before: “the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life” (shortened today in the Catholic church to: “the body of Christ”)

2. after: “take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving”
  3. **IOW**: the effects of Zwingli in his view of the Lord’s Supper have arrived in England
3. under Edward’s short reign, the leaders of the reformist party, increasingly inclined towards Reformed theology (note the dates overlapping with the end of Calvin in Geneva) were hopeful that their views would now become “normalized” in England

**c. the early reformation under Mary Tudor (1516-58; r. 1553)**

1. as Edward VI’s terminal illness became obvious, he wrote up a succession plan designed to prevent the country’s return to Catholicism – he named his first cousin, Jane Grey, as his heir
  - a. she took the throne, but was deposed after only 9 days, replaced by Mary Tudor
2. Mary I was the only child of Henry VIII by Catherine of Aragon to survive to adulthood
  - a. she was a *staunch* Catholic, and this was only *exacerbated* by the movement of reformation that had begun when her father had declared his marriage to her mother illegitimate (making *her* illegitimate also) – thus, she was committed to the goal of restoring Catholicism in England
3. Mary began this process by consolidating her position in England – she married her cousin Philip of Spain (Philip II) who was in the Catholic house of Hapsburg, garnering the support of her cousin Charles V and a number of conservative bishops deposed during the previous two reigns
  - a. in 1554, she declared that England had officially return to obedience to the pope
  - b. feast days of the saints were restored, married clergy were ordered to set their wives aside, and open persecution of Protestant leaders became official policy – more than 300 were burned
    1. John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* (from Strasbourg) chronicled this persecution
    2. **e.g.** Thomas Cranmer was condemned as a heretic and burned in effigy – later, he recanted, a moral victory for the queen over Protestants – however, he was still found guilty and withdrew his words of recantation, and his death heartened the Protestants, forcing Mary to take even harsher methods to eradicate Protestantism in England
  3. the sheer numbers of Protestants she had killed earned her the nickname **Bloody Mary**

**d. the early reformation under Elizabeth I (1533-1603; r. 1558)**

1. Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII with Anne Boleyn
  - a. Charles V (Mary’s cousin) had often suggested that Mary execute her half-sister
  - b. Elizabeth began the long process of undoing her predecessor’s policies
    1. she believed that her father had done right in proclaiming himself head of the Church of England – this over against the papal declaration that the marriage of Henry VIII to Catherine was valid, making her illegitimate to an illegal “second” wife
2. many who had left the kingdom during Mary’s persecution began to return, bringing with them Zwinglian and Calvinistic ideas
  - a. Elizabeth was not a Protestant extremist – she desired a church whose practices were *uniform*
  - b. uniting the kingdom in a common worship, but with latitude for varying opinions
  - c. **e.g.** the divergent statements re: the bread in communion was *combined* in a new edition of *The Common Book of Prayer* – to accommodate both Lutheran and Zwinglian views
  - d. in 1562, the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of the Church of England were established as its doctrinal foundation – a somewhat *via media* view that tried to maintain a “centrist” position (even to today)
3. a number of attempts by Catholics to regain control through conspiracies against Elizabeth were tried
  - a. as a result, many Catholics were executed, including her cousin Mary Stuart (of Scotland)
  - b. the total number executed equaled that of Mary, but Elizabeth’s reign was 10 times longer
  - c. and ... it was during her reign that the *Puritans* began to rise, inspired by Calvinist ideas – insisting on the need to restore the pure practices and doctrines of the NT (**see next lesson**)