

CRANMERIAN REFORMS
A GODLY ORDER AND THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER
RELIGIOUS REFORMS DURING THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

- In the medieval Church of England many books were used for worship. The most used of all were:
- Missal: The Ordinary (set of texts) of the Mass which were generally invariable; the Canon (consecration prayer); Collects and various other parts of the Mass
- Primer: These were also known as *The Book of Hours* or *Horaē*. They were illustrated prayer books that usually contained a calendar of Church feasts, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Psalms, Litany of Saints and an Office for the Dead.
- All were written in Latin and were used by the clergy as the vast majority of the laity were illiterate.
- The most generally used in England followed the practice of Salisbury Cathedral, the *Sarum Use*

CRANMER'S DOCTRINAL AND LITURGICAL REFORMS

- As one of the important reformers of the English Reformation Cranmer was largely responsible for initiating the formation of a doctrinally Protestant Church within a Catholic tradition.
- This is evident in the biblically based content of the Book of Common Prayer and the liturgical shape of the various services.
- At the same time Cranmer had to ensure that everyone, the literate and the illiterate could participate and so it was important for all teaching and worship to be in the vernacular.
- This resulted in the abolition of Latin in worship and the publication of an English Book of Common Prayer; a Prayer Book for all.

THE EXHORTATION AND LITANY

- The Exhortation and Litany was the first form of worship to be compiled in English by order of Henry VIII.
- Litanies were a common form of prayer in the medieval Church. They were sung in procession as invocations to God in times of national crises.
- Henry VIII noticed that many people were not participating and attributed it to the fact that they never understood Latin; (they) "*understode no parte of suche prayers or suffrages as were used to be songe and sayde*".
- In June 1544 Henry VIII decreed that there were to be "*set forth the certayne godly prayers and suffrages in our natyve Englyshe tongue*".
- The compilation of the Exhortation and Litany was the work of Archbishop Cranmer. Some of the parts were his own composition.
- As with many of Cranmer's liturgical works, he drew from a number of sources that represented reformed, Protestant doctrine. In this compilation he drew on the following:

- The Sarum processional
- Luther's Litany
- The Orthodox Litany of St John Chrysostom
- The Litany has remained substantially unchanged, throughout the entire history of the Book of Common Prayer, down to modern times.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

CRANMER'S OBJECTIVES

- Before examining what is arguably Cranmer's liturgical masterpiece, *The Book of Common Prayer*, it is important to mention his reasons for wanting a new prayer book.
- These reasons are to be found in the *Preface* which begins with the words:
- *"There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted."*

HOLY SCRIPTURE

- If a manne woulde searche out by the auncient fathers, he shall finde that the same was not ordeyned, but of a good purpose, and for a great advauncement of godlines: For they so ordred the matter, that all the whole Bible (or the greatest parte thereof) should be read over once in the yeare, intendyng thereby, that the Cleargie, and specially suche as were Ministers of the congregacion, should (by often readyng and meditacion of Gods worde) be stirred up to godlines themselves, and be more able also to exhorte other by wholsome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the trueth. And further, that the people (by daily hearyng of holy scripture read in the Church) should continuallye profite more and more in the knowledge of God, and bee the more inflamed with the love of his true religion.

VERNACULAR

- And moreover, whereas s. Paule would have suche language spoken to the people in the church, as they mighte understande and have profite by hearyng the same; the service in this Church of England (these many yeares) hath been read in Latin to the people, whiche they understoode not; so that they have heard with theyr eares onely; and their hartes, spirite, and minde, have not been edified thereby

PSALMS

- And furthermore, notwithstanding that the auncient fathers had devided the psalmes into seven porcions, wherof every one was called a nocturne, now of late tyme a fewe of them have been dailye sayed (and ofte repeated) and the rest utterly omitted.

RULES

- Moreover the nombre and hardnes of the rules called the pie, and the manifolde chaunginges of the service, was the cause, that to turne the boke onely, was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times, there was more busines to fynd out what should be

read, then to read it when it was faunde out.

ONE BOOK TO REPLACE MANY

- Furthermore by this ordre, the curates shal nede none other bookes for their publique service, but this boke and the Bible: by the meanes wherof, the people shall not be at so great charge for bookes, as in tyme past they have been.

SUMMARY

- To summarize: Cranmer's intentions in compiling the Book of Common Prayer were:
- All worship in the vernacular.
- The public reading of the Scriptures, according to a lectionary, to be integral to all services.
- The Psalms to be recited according to a lectionary
- All rules (rubrics) to be few and simple
- One book containing a lectionary, the Psalms and all the services, including those reserved for the bishop

1549 BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

HISTORY

- Although a formal break with the Papacy came about during the time of Henry VIII, the Church of England continued to use liturgies in Latin throughout his reign.
- When the Protestant Edward VI became king 1547 the religious life of the country was set on a Protestant course.
- A team of bishops met and produced the first Book of Common Prayer. It is generally assumed that this book is largely the work of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer
- Cranmer used several sources:
- First and foremost was the Sarum Rite widely used in England in the 13th century.
- The reformed Roman Breviary of the Spanish Cardinal Quiñones
- A book on doctrine and liturgy by Hermann von Wied, Archbishop of Cologne.
- Many phrases are characteristic of the Protestant German reformer Martin Bucer and an Italian, Peter Martyr
- While it was promulgated for use by an *Act of Uniformity* it was not widely accepted. The Catholics felt that it favoured Protestants while the latter complained that it was still too "Catholic".

CONTENT

Baptism, both public and private.

- Confirmation, where also is a Catechism for children.
- Matrimony.
- Visitation of the sick, and Communion of the sick.
- Burial.
- The purification of women.
- A declaration of scripture, with certain prayers to be use the first day of Lent,

commonly called Ash Wednesday.

- Ceremonies omitted or retained.
- Certain notes for the more plain explication, and decent ministration of things contained in this book.

VESTMENTS

- “Upon the day, and at the time appointed for the ministration of the Holy Communion, the Priest, that shall execute the Holy ministry, shall put upon him the vesture appointed for that ministration, that is to say: **a white Albe, plain, with a vestment or Cope.** And where there may be many Priests or Deacons, there so many shall be ready to help the Priest in the ministration, as shall be requisite; and shall have upon them likewise the vestures appointed for their ministry, that is to say, **Albes with Tunicles.**” (*The Ornaments’ Rubric*)
- In the saying and singing of matins and evensong, baptizing and burying, the minister was to wear a **surplice.**

1552 BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

- Many, including Bucer and Peter Martyr, were dissatisfied with the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. And Archbishop Cranmer consequently set about compiling a new draft to be presented to a conference of Bishops.
- The revisions were distinctively Protestant which displeased the Catholics. It was however, not destined for a long life (July 1553)
- The result was attached as an appendix to the Second Act of Uniformity which was passed by Parliament in April 1552 and was implemented on All Saint’s Day (1 November 1552)
- The contents of the book were much the same as those in 1549

VESTMENTS

- “And here it is to be noted, that the minister, at the time of the Communion, and at all other times in his ministration, shall us neither alb, vestment, nor cope but.....being a priest or deacon, **he shall have and wear a surplice only**” (*Ornaments Rubric 1552*)

CRANMER’S HOLY COMMUNION SERVICES

CRANMER’S LITURGICAL REFORMS: HOLY COMMUNION

- Apart from compilation of a Book of Common Prayer in which his aims expressed in the Preface were applied, and the Exhortation and Litany (already discussed), Archbishop Cranmer was also instrumental in reforming the Holy Communion Service and the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer.
- Holy Communion Services:
- 1548: The Order of Holy Communion (an interim service)
- 1549: The Supper of the Lorde and holy Communion, commonly called the Masse.

- 1552: The order for the Administration of the Lordes Supper, or Holye Communion.

THE ORDER OF THE COMMUNION 1548

- In 1548, Thomas Cranmer finished work on an English Communion, obeying an order of Parliament that Communion was to be given as both bread and wine.
- This was the first service to reveal Protestantism that was beginning to influence the English Church.
- The service was an insert to the pre-existing Latin Mass.
- Much of Cranmer's language in this service has survived through the many subsequent revisions of the Book of Common Prayer to the present day.

The Supper of the Lorde and holy Communion, commonly called the Masse (1549)

- The Holy Communion service was the most important and quite revolutionary innovation, shifting the doctrines of the church from a Catholic to a moderate form of Protestantism.
- Although the wording of the Canon (Consecration Prayer) was only slightly altered the rubrics demanded radical shifts from the Catholic Sarum Rite. These included:
- Forbidding the elevation of the Host which was central to the ancient rites.
- Allowing members of the congregation to receive communion with the priest
- The bread and wine were no longer deemed to be the *corporeal* body and blood of Christ but now imbued with the spiritual presence of Christ.
- The symbolism of the service was no longer considered to be an act of sacrifice offered by the priest on behalf of the people (the Sacrifice of the Mass) but rather a commemorative meal in which the whole congregation participated.

The Order for the Administration of the Lordes Supper, or Holye Communion. (1552)

- The order of the Communion was much simplified, the term "Mass" altogether omitted and the words of distribution changed to 'take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee', thus shifting the whole emphasis of the service in the direction of commemoration.
- A dispute developed over the requirement to receive the Eucharistic elements kneeling. John Knox and John Hooper argued that this was superstitious but Cranmer defended his decision in terms of decency and order.
- Eventually it was decided to add a rubric explaining the requirement - the so-called "Black Rubric". It explained that kneeling was an expression of "humble and grateful acknowledging of the benefits of Christ, given unto the worthy receiver" and did not imply any adoration of the bread and wine or of the real and essential presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

- Cranmer's work of simplification and revision was also applied to the Daily Offices, which were to become Morning, and Evening Prayer.
- From the Benedictine Liturgy of the Hours he constructed two daily services.

PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE REVISION OF THE DAILY OFFICES

- The principles behind Cranmer's revisions were:
- The Psalter to be read consecutively throughout each month
- The New Testament to be read through three times in a year and the Old Testament, including Apocrypha, to be read through once.
- Morning and Evening Prayer should be a form of daily devotion for both clergy and laity.
- A Lectionary based on the calendar year was compiled to indicate the Psalms and the Scripture readings for daily Morning and Evening Prayer

REVISED BOOKS OF COMMON PRAYER AFTER CRANMER'S DEATH: 1559, 1662, 1928

1559 BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

- The Prayer Book of 1559 was brought about by the accession to the throne of Elizabeth I and the restoration of the Prayer Book after the six-year rule of the Catholic Queen Mary.
- It was in use until the Long Parliament of 1645 outlawed it as part of the Puritan Revolution.
- It was a conservative revision of the 1552 revision which made it somewhat less "Protestant".

1559 REVISIONS

- The two versions of the sentences used for administration of the elements during Communion from the previous two Prayer Books were combined:
- **The bodie of our lord Jesu Christ, which was geven for the, preserve thy body and soule into everlasting life:** and take and eate this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, feede on him in thine heart by faith, with thankesgevyng.
- *And the minister that delivereth the cuppe shall saye.*
- **THE bloude of our lorde Jesu Christ, which was shedd for the, preserve thy body and soule into everlasting life:** and drinke this in remembrance that Christes bloude was shedde for thee, and be thankful.
- Prayers against the Pope from the Litany were removed.
- A rubric prescribing the use of traditional vestments was added.
- A number of Saints' days and festivals were added to the Kalendar in 1561.
- When James I ascended the throne in 1604 some minor changes were made. The most important of these was to lengthen the Catechism by adding sections on the Sacraments.
- It was made clear that the very last rubric in the Communion service, the "Black Rubric",

which had sought to assure that kneeling during Communion, did not in any way imply worship of the elements.

- The translation of the Scriptures, including the Psalms, was that of the Great Bible of 1539

1662 BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

- The Book of Common Prayer was banned during the Commonwealth period (1649 – 1660).
- After the restoration to the monarchy revisions of the Prayer Book were debated at the Savoy Conference between April – July 1661. Convocation then added minimal revisions.
- On 19 May 1662 King of England, Charles II gave royal assent to an Act of Uniformity which reintroduced and enforced The Book of Common Prayer as the only prayer book of Church of England.
- Only a few minor revision were introduced.
- The 1662 Book of Common Prayer is still the official prayer book of the Church of England and some Provinces of the Anglican Communion)

1928 BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

- The production of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer was the end of a long and controversial road.
- Many calls were being made for revisions in the liturgy which conformed more to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. An example of this was the call to relocate the Prayer of Oblation follow immediately after the Prayer of Consecration.
- There was also a call for provision to made of reserving the Sacrament on a continuous basis.
- While the measures to authorize the Prayer Book received a majority vote in the House of Lords (15 December 1927), it failed to gain approval in the House of Commons by 33 votes (205 for and 238 against)
- It has therefore, never become an authorized Prayer Book in the Church of England.
- Nature of the Church
- In the Anglican understanding of church as seen in the BCP, church is not to be centred on any earthly mediator, whether that is a celebrity pastor, a mediating priest or a worship band leader.
- In 1662, church was about gathering to hear God speak through his Word, confessing our sins and our faith, and responding to the Spirit, in prayer for each other and for the world.
- There is a balance between the preaching of the Word and the Administration of the Sacraments
- Through the Pastoral Offices the pastoral role of the Church in the lives of God's people is recognized,

The Lord's Supper

- The Reformers Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer refused to subscribe to the doctrine of transubstantiation — the changing of the substance of the bread and wine in the Lord's

Supper into the body and blood of Christ himself.

- This was the great dividing issue of that era. The Reformers opposed it because they did not find such a doctrine in the Scriptures.
- The English Reformers taught Anglicans to pray and to remember as they gather around the Lord's Table? They taught that the Lord's Supper is a divine instrument of assurance. In the liturgy we:
- Confess 'our manifold sins and wickedness' to God with the scriptural assurance that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' and that 'he is the propitiation for our sins'.

God's Grace

- We come to the Lord's Table 'not trusting in our own righteousness, but in God's manifold and great mercies'. We come with nothing in our hands to receive God's mercy. It's all about God doing something, not us.
- The movement of the action in the BCP liturgy is from God to us — God in his grace reaching down to us in our sinfulness. We simply take and eat, in remembrance of what Jesus has done.
- Theologically, the 1662 service shows us that, although we are sinners, we are also more loved by a merciful God than we ever dreamed. The result is that, pastorally speaking, our consciences are assured of God's love towards us in Christ, even when we've been most searingly honest about our shortcomings and failures.
- We praise God that, 'by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his Passion'. 1662 makes it very clear that what is going on at the Lord's Table is not a sacrifice on an altar made by a mediating priest on behalf of the people, which has to be repeated again and again each week to be effective.

Christ's Once-for-all Sacrifice

- In the Mass of the medieval church the sacrifice of Christ is offered to God. The BCP says, however, is that Christ's once-and-for-all sacrifice on the cross for us was utterly, completely and totally sufficient to pay for our sins. No additional sacrifices are necessary: 'Almighty God, our heavenly Father, which 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...'
- The language of us making a sacrifice is kept until after we have partaken of the bread and wine, Only then do we pray that God would accept from us a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. So after we've fed on Christ in our hearts by faith, we offer and present to God not the bread and wine but ourselves as a holy and lively (or living) sacrifice. There is of course more we could say about the BCP as it was definitively ordered in 1662.
- One thing that was specifically added in 1662 was a service for the baptism of adults or 'those of riper years', who may not have been baptised as infants during the confusions of the tumultuous Civil War period.