

Church History

Unit 7

The English Reformation

Manuscript



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Church History

Unit Seven: The English Reformation

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How did the Reformation take root in England?

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

The England Reformation was very different from the Reformation in most other countries because it was from the top down rather than from the bottom up. Martin Luther started a popular movement which gained the support of some of the secular rulers of Germany at the time, but they were not the initiators. I mean, they were followers, really, of Luther and his group. It then spread, of course, to France and Calvin, and the history of the French Reformation was that it never managed to acquire the levers of power in Paris, or something like that, so in the end, it was defeated, you might say. But in England, the curious situation is that the Reformation started as an act of state at the very top. I mean, King Henry VIII broke with Rome over the question of his marriage and potential successor to the throne. And so, what you had in England was a country which was Protestant in name, but a kingdom that had no Protestants in it, or very few. And, he had to appoint people who were themselves, at the time, learning what Protestantism was. And one of the curiosities you see, the leaders of the English Reformation were themselves finding out what it was as they went along; it was a gradual thing in that way. But it made a difference in the end because they realized that if the Reformation was ever to take root in England it had to be taught. And so, the English Reformation actually took root by being planned from the top in terms of the pattern of worship, the pattern of preaching. The English reformers wrote sermons which they then wanted the clergy to preach in the pulpit. They wrote prayers. They organized everything from the top down. They wrote school textbooks for children to learn. And so, it was something that people were taught, that people learned and studied, and it was in that way that it really sank in.

Now it was, I suppose, under Queen Mary, when she started persecuting people for Protestant belief, and the general population realized, they saw for the first time, that there were martyrs, people who were actually prepared to go to their deaths because of this belief that they held. I mean, some people would say that Mary did more for the Protestant cause than any of the actual Reformers by stirring up feeling in this way so that people who might not have understood the complexities of the doctrine nevertheless thought, well, this is something important because people are prepared to die for it. And so that really had a tremendous impact. But that's the way it spread

and took root. And we see the results, because after two or three generations of this in this 16th century, when it was called into question, there really was no large movement away from it. When the Church of England split up in the 17th century because of the Puritans and so on, there were very few Catholics left. That would have been a great opportunity for them to come out of the woodwork, and attempt to take over the state as well, but there just weren't enough of them around because, by then, the arguments were between different kinds of Protestants, and the Catholics really had been marginalized. And we can say, well, the Reformation had taken root. It might not have been agreed by everybody what root it had taken, but nevertheless, you know, in principle England had become a Protestant country.

Why did King Henry declare himself the head of the Church of England?

Dr. John Hannah

Henry VIII ... he had been married to Catherine of Aragon. She was postmenopausal, she had one child, and she also had four miscarriages. So, he wanted to dump her, essentially. And at that time, he had a teenager quite pregnant, so there had to be hurry. He appealed through his cardinal, Cardinal Wolsey, to the Pope to annul the marriage, and the Pope refused because of ties to the Spanish throne. And that created animosity with Henry, so he made himself the head of the English church but did not deviate from the church's Roman Catholic orientation... In effect, what he did is he separated himself from the papacy but not from the church, making himself the head of what will become the English church.

Dr. Ryan Reeves

Yeah, Henry VIII and the declaring — it's called "The Royal Supremacy" — where he merges church and state, it's not really a theocracy, but it's close to one. It's essentially seeing the church as a visible wing of government, and the king, almost like David, is protector of it in this very strange way. Of course, we come to find out that the problem is that he's also the enforcer of whatever he *wants* to believe is good theology, which becomes the later reason to separate church and state. But Henry does this, really, he almost has a conversion. If there's any man in the English Reformation who was Catholic without the pope, it would be Henry. He wanted to maintain seven sacraments. He wanted to maintain all kinds of what we'd call "traditional features" of the Catholic Church. But he wanted the pope gone because he comes to this conclusion that biblically — again, basing it most off of the notion of the king of Israel — that he ought to answer to nobody in the visible church. Now, he doesn't see himself as pastor of the church or this kind of a surrogate pope. It's a real strange relationship. He sees himself as head of it, as the one meant to protect it, and then he appoints people to run the church in that sense. But he sees himself in this strangely idiosyncratic, and what he thought was biblical way, as the one appointed by God to make sure that the church in England under his domain had good pastors and was run on good foundations.

....

Henry has this curious belief that this is how it was always supposed to be, and he invents this conspiracy theory story that the pope had, sort of, usurped the English crown's authority, and so he thought he was going back to the way it should have been from the beginning. Over time, that relationship is relaxed a little bit, but it's still relatively in effect, even today. I mean, Queen Elizabeth II is still considered governor of the church. She still gives a sermon on Christmas day to, sort of, reinforce this reality. Bishops are appointed by the crown, this kind of a thing. But for Henry, it was almost conversion to this belief that he is the appointed magistrate, the appointed king who is supposed to govern the visible church, and that his views were supposed to be unassailable. He was supposed to be the one who governed the church in this way, like David. In fact, one of the first things that happens after he's declared head of the church is he has a picture of himself painted where he looks like Solomon on the throne. And you might say, it's an attempt to do something new that he thought had been the old way of doing it.

Why was Henry VIII called “defender of the faith”?

Dr. Scott Manor

It's an interesting thing, isn't it, that Henry VIII, of all people, ends up being called the “defender of the faith,” that earlier on in his reign we saw infiltration — if you could use that term — of a lot of the Reformation ideas from Luther in particular into England, especially the university system. And so, there was some resistance to this because, of course, that stood in opposition to the Catholic Church in Rome. And so, for his part, Henry VIII agreed to sign a statement of orthodoxy which basically upheld the Catholic principles at the time, and as a result of this statement of orthodoxy, that he probably didn't write up himself; he had some theologians draft, but he took credit for it... Pope Leo X, who was the pope at the time, gave him this honorific title of the “defender of the faith,” which is interesting for two reasons. One is that it's still the title held by anyone who has the crown in England, but also, it wouldn't take very long for Henry VIII to be anything but the defender of the Catholic faith.

Why was William Tyndale executed?

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

William Tyndale was put to death for heresy because he was arrested in what is now Belgium and tried for his Protestant beliefs. The King of England, Henry VIII, was in a difficult position because he had outlawed Tyndale for wanting to translate the Bible, and so Tyndale had had to flee England for that reason and was living in exile... And he was traveling around Europe, really, trying to escape persecution one way or the other. So most of his work was kind of underground activity at the time. But he was discovered, betrayed, put on trial for heresy. The King of England ... although he didn't support Tyndale's efforts at Bible translation, actually tried to save

his life, really for reason of national prestige — he didn't want one of his subjects to be put to death by a foreign power. But he failed in that attempt. Tyndale was executed in Belgium and he was never rehabilitated in England either. Even years after his death, his name was never mentioned because he had been an outlaw in England as well.

What was Henry's "scruple of conscience" regarding Catherine of Aragon?

Dr. Sam Pascoe

In order to understand Henry's "scruple of conscience" regarding his wife Catherine of Aragon, we need to do just a little bit of background. People who don't know anything about the Protestant Reformation or anything about the history of England, think they know about Henry VIII, and they probably do know something because he was one of those characters that was bigger than life, not only in terms of his stature but also in terms of his impact... Catherine was a little bit older than Henry, so she was immediately married off to Henry who became Henry VIII. They tried to have children. They together were not able to produce a male heir. In England at that time it was not believed that a woman could rule the country. There had been one female monarch in the history of England, a woman named Matilda, many, many years before that. It had not worked out well. And so, Henry was waiting for a male heir to be born. He needed a son. Catherine was not producing a son. She only produced one daughter who later became Mary — the famous "Bloody Mary," but that's another story. So, Henry started casting around to try to figure out what was going on. In the meantime, he'd fallen in love with another young lady, and he needed an excuse to get out of the marriage. Henry was a bit of a Bible scholar, an amateur one at that, but he found a verse back in the Old Testament that said if a man marries his brother's wife he will be cursed, and they will be childless. He kind of took that verse out of context, and he went, and he went to the pope, and he said, "Look, I'm being cursed here. I don't have a male heir, and it's because I'm violating this very clear biblical mandate that says I shouldn't marry my brother's wife." Of course, there are other biblical mandates that say if the brother dies the man must marry his... He conveniently ignored those. The pope normally would have granted an annulment in that situation. It was kind of a *pro forma* deal. The problem was that the pope was being held captive, quite literally, by Catherine of Aragon's nephew ... King Charles. And so, he could not issue an annulment. He even at one point suggested polygamy. He just said, "Hey, do whatever you need to do," but Henry said, "I don't want there to be any cloud over my successor." And so, his crisis of conscience, his scruple, was that he was in what he may have, and probably did on some level, believe was an illegitimate marriage, not only in the eyes of the state, but in the eyes of God. And he felt that, until he was out of that marriage, his conscience would not rest, England would not have the king it needed, and everything that he had worked to build would be for naught. So that was the crisis of conscience, and it led to one of his many marriages that then produced other heirs, and the story goes on from there.

Dr. Scott Manor

Henry VIII's "scruple of conscience" is something that I think that all of us as Christians do on some level. We sort of mine Scripture to find some little clause somewhere that might justify an action that we know to be wrong. But we misuse Scripture to sanction something that we know to be inherently sinful. And so, in this case, he was married to Catherine of Aragon, and unhappily so. She had failed to produce a male offspring, and so there was some question about the next generation of kings that would come as a result of his marriage to her. And he was unhappy. He had already fallen in love with Anne Boleyn and was trying to find a way out of the marriage. And so, this "scruple of conscience" is really a funny way of putting his desire to get away with divorcing her. And so, what it boils down to is he mined Scripture and found a passage in Leviticus 18 that mentioned something along the lines of "You should not sleep with your brother's wife." And of course, his wife at the time, Catherine of Aragon, had briefly been married to his brother who had since passed away. And so, he pointed to that, and he says, "This is my scruple of conscience. I'm having a hard time reconciling the fact that I, as a true believer in the Word of God and in Jesus Christ, can live accordingly, being married to this woman who was once married to my brother, given this passage in Leviticus." And so that was what he said was his scruple of conscience, but really, it was an attempt to get out of a marriage that he simply didn't want to be in.

How did King Edward VI help the cause of Protestantism in England?**Dr. Ryan Reeves**

Edward VI, the "boy-king" — also called "King Josiah"; was the analogy that was often used of him, at least at his coronation — and the way Edward helped was, if you look at Henry, he is, as I like to say, the man who was really Catholic without a pope. He's thrown the pope out, but he wants to keep a lot of traditional things. He's overthrown some of the monasteries that opposed him, but a lot of the traditional fabric of Catholic faith was still there. There were still things called "votaries," which is places that prayers for one's soul, once departed into purgatory, were to be said. Lots of things like this. There was still a full monastery structure in some ways. Edward comes to the throne, and by a curious twist of history, he had been raised from a very young age and all of his tutors were Protestant and evangelical. And so, when he comes to the throne, even at the age of nine, he is self-consciously, as far as we can tell, very committed to this. And everyone knows it... And so, for the five years that he's on the throne, Edward kicks the Reformation into high gear by opening up the floodgates, pushing aside the Catholic leaders in the court, and giving folks like Cranmer more rein. So, the *Book of Common Prayer* is written not once, but a second edition comes out. All of these old traditional monastic houses were suppressed, their money's taken, and they were put back into the labor force, they would have said. And all the things that are very part and parcel to the Reformation on the Continent — in Germany or the Swiss regions — were now being done in

England about a generation later, because what Edward says is, “We have to get on with this Reformation,” so much so that historians say, if he had not died — probably of tuberculosis — that the Reformation of England would have looked very much like the Reformation in other Reformed areas as well. It got short-circuited because his sister Mary comes to the throne and, of course, she restores Catholicism. But Edward wants a Reformed and a Protestant church in England, and he is pursuing it with the utmost zeal, and so, during those five years are the heyday of the early English Reformation.

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

Well, King Edward VI’s biggest contribution to the Protestant cause in England was to be too young to rule himself. He inherited the throne when he was only nine years old, and so a regency council had to be appointed, and church affairs were put in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who was moving at the time very much towards a Protestant position, so he was given free rein to do with the church what he liked, more or less. And although it was all done in the name of the king, in actual fact, of course, it was the Archbishop and his friends who introduced the changes into the church. Now we know that Edward, although he was quite young, was supportive of these things. He wanted this to continue and, had he lived to attain his majority, would undoubtedly carried on in this way. I mean, that much we can say. But he died, of course, when he was only 16 and then was succeeded by his older sister who tried to reverse everything that had been done in his name.

What sympathies did Edward VI have with Protestantism, and in particular, Reformed Protestantism?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

Edward VI is the boy-king. They called him Josiah. He was the great hope of Protestant England... But what happens in England is that the monarch is always the one controlling, or at least heavily influencing, the Reformation. And so, you have this tension where you have a young boy — he’s age nine when he comes to the throne, and he grows into his early teen years before he dies tragically of tuberculosis — but what happens is you realize from the beginning he’s actually very self-consciously Protestant and actually has a Reformed side to him. He is leaning Reformed. So, it’s under Edward that two leading Reformed voices come up to Oxford and Cambridge — Peter Martyr and Bucer. Bucer, no less, was the mentor to Calvin, so it just gives you some of the flavor of the sense of the Reformed influence. We have a letter from Calvin to King Edward saying, “Great job on the Reformation! Keep it going!” essentially a commendation for the work he’s doing. The other thing is in Edward’s relationship to his sister, Mary, who will become Mary Tudor after him; she is self-consciously Catholic until the day she dies. In fact, that’s what she gets best known for, is her torture and execution of so many Protestants during her reign. Edward took very personal notice of her ongoing Catholic position, and he kept writing her, and, you might say, stressing that she needs to come over to his side as the Protestant faith. So, here’s he not just simply enforcing something but

commending it to his family member, saying, “You need to come to my side on this.” So, we’re not used to nine to 14-year-olds being so precocious and being so forthright in their faith, at least in the modern world, but Edward does seem from the very beginning to know where he stands, that he’s Protestant, and that he is a Reformed person as well.

What role did the *Book of Common Prayer* have in 16th-century England?

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

The Book of Common Prayer was the way in which the teachings of the Protestant Reformation reached the people in the pews in the churches. Until 1549, when the first prayer book was issued, services had taken place in Latin, even several years after the break with Rome. I mean, this was, you know, a Protestant church already, but that part of the Reformation hadn’t actually taken place. And so, it was put into English so that people could understand it. But, of course, the way it was formulated, the way the prayers were set out, also taught the doctrine and, in particular, the doctrine of justification by faith was very clearly set out in the different worship services, and so on. It was a way of inculcating knowledge of the Bible, because what *The Book of Common Prayer* did was take the Scriptures and turn the Scriptures into prayer. This is its unique capacity, unique ability. And of course, people, by praying these words, by learning to pray in this way, were actually learning to use the Scriptures as a way of approaching God. And so, gradually, they were formed in their way of thinking as to what the elements of prayer and worship are, to what our attitude towards God should be, to who we are, sinners in need of grace, and how we approach God in our worship, in our life, in our spiritual understanding. And so, *The Book of Common Prayer* gradually over time, you know, inculcated these ideas into the minds of the population and united the country also because everybody was praying the same thing at the same time. And so, there was a uniformity — in fact, it was called that at the time — uniformity across the country so that everybody was on the same page, and it really created not just a Protestant church but a unified Protestant church.

Dr. Ryan Reeves

The Book of Common Prayer is, I think, misunderstood very often because of its context. Often, it’s said that *The Book of Common Prayer* was kind of a halfway between Protestant and Catholic type of liturgy. Well, it’s not the case because, when the first edition of it came out, there were actually not one, but two Catholic riots about it. It went down to two sacraments. It threw all kinds of things out that were considered traditional liturgy. And it is very clearly Protestant. To understand it, though, you have to realize that if you were to stand in 1500, and if you were to look for one country that is the least likely to embrace the Reformation, England would be at least at number one or number two. Spain probably would be right up there jostling for number one. England was very, very united around its Catholic identity, its Catholic monarchy, and the very strong clergy, people like Thomas More and others.

So what Cranmer does is when he comes into the reign of Edward, and he's given free rein to begin a Reformation, he is aware that the populace, by and large, does not want it, and he comes up with this unique idea that if we get them praying with the text of Scripture on their tongue, if we get them worshiping in a Protestant way, take away the things that have been so familiar in a high Catholic service, that over time we will actually see the Word of God have an effect on them that we would not have seen otherwise. So, he doesn't want, necessarily, a legislated Reformation — "We're now all Protestant, congratulations." — but rather, he wants them to taste and see the Protestant message before that legislation really begins to take an effect. And that explains why there's two of them by Cranmer. The first is a first step out; again, seven sacraments to two, a lot of very Protestant things are put in place. Then you get to the next one just several years later, and it is very, now, self-consciously taking that one step forward to where, now, even the communion service is no longer a mass. There's no longer a physical eating. The great line in *The Book of Common Prayer* is, "feed on him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving," which is really hallmark Protestant language about the spiritual eating of Christ in the Lord's Supper. So, *The Book of Common Prayer* becomes the yeast that leavens England towards a Protestant direction, slowly, versus a legislated, confessional-driven, "Here is the new faith all at once." It's, rather, very, very slowly worked into the consciousness of the English peoples.

Dr. Sam Pascoe

The Book of Common Prayer, when it came out in the 16th century, was revolutionary, and we need to understand that. The idea that the liturgy of the people — *The Book of Common Prayer* — would be available to the people was something that had never been tried before in English history and, indeed, almost in Christian history. It was usually the prerogative just of the clergy. The liturgy would often have been in Latin, in a language people didn't understand. It was something the clergy did. Often the clergy didn't even understand it. They would memorize enough of it, and they would spout it off. And the idea that people could actually hold in their hand this new technology, the idea of actually having a book. We have to remember how revolutionary that in itself was ... and open it up and read in their own language — those who could, and those who couldn't could use it as a way to learn to read — these prayers that were common to the people. And it was intended as a liturgy for all of the people, that all would participate. And so, it regularized the liturgy of the people. It gave them some rails to run on. It gave them some boundaries on the river. But at the same time, it made the worship of God accessible to the people.

What was the significance of Thomas Cranmer for the Reformation in England?

Dr. Sam Pascoe

In the canon of great Reformers of the 16th century, we think of Zwingli, we think of Calvin, we think of Luther. One that is often forgotten and overlooked is Thomas

Cranmer. Thomas Cranmer was the Archbishop of Canterbury, and as such, he was a powerful person. The reason he became the Archbishop of Canterbury marks a turning point in the intellectual history and in the spiritual history of Europe, in the sense that when Henry VIII was looking for justification for what he wanted to do in divorcing Catherine of Aragon. In the past, sovereigns and people who wanted answers to a question — “How do you interpret the Scripture?” “How do you interpret canon law?” — would have gone to the magisterium. They would have gone up the chain: bishops, archbishops, cardinals, popes. Henry did something different. He went to the university, and he grabbed out of the university the scholars — Thomas Cranmer being one of them — and he said, “You help me interpret this. I’m not going to go up the ladder of the magisterium; I’m going to go to the university.” Now, we take it for granted that if we want an answer, we go to institutions of learning. Well, this was kind of the first time that that had happened. Thomas Cranmer was that guy. He became the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in that capacity, he did three things that literally changed the course of English history and, in so doing, changed the course of world history because the English church was populated around the world when England ruled the seas.

The first thing that he did was he gave expression in very eloquent language to the prayers of the people and the liturgy of the people in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Articles of Religion. Cranmer was, next to Shakespeare, I think he was probably one of the greatest English writers. His turns of phrases are phrases that still resonate in the English language, you know, the wedding service, for example. Many churches that would never use *The Book of Common Prayers* use the words of *The Book of Common Prayer* for the wedding service and funeral service, the words of the Eucharist. Those were all penned by Thomas Cranmer. The second thing he did was he “chickened out.” He chickened out at a time when he needed to stand firm. And people thought, “Well this guy is back and forth. He waffles. He’s a political creature.” And it gave people pause, and it made people look at him as a complex human figure. He wasn’t a Superman. He was a regular guy. He had some gifts, but got scared. He got scared when he was threatened. And then the third thing that he did was, at the end, he finished strong. At the end, when the chips were down, and he knew what he had to do, they took him to the place where they were going to burn him at the stake, and they were expecting a recantation of his recantation. They were expecting him to say, “Yes, I go to my death as a good Roman Catholic, and I believe in the primacy of the pope,” etc. And instead, he said, to the crowd gathered around he said, “This is the hand with which I signed away my faith, and let this be the first to burn,” and he stuck his hand into the fire until his hand was burned to a stump. And people saw that and they said, “That’s what he really believed.” And at the end, he finished strong. And that image and his words became a rallying cry for Protestants throughout England who were willing to stand up for their faith. And so, he really did change the course of English history.

Who were the Marian exiles?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

The Marian exiles were those who, after the reign of Edward VI, when he dies, his sister comes to the throne, his half-sister, Mary, famously known as “Bloody Mary.” She was the daughter of Henry and Catherine of Aragon, so in many ways, she was the embodiment of the family that had been passed over when Henry pursued his reformation and Anne Boleyn. And you might say Mary was not happy about that when she came to the throne. She was staunchly Catholic, she saw her mother as a martyr for the faith, and she saw her brother’s actions to effect the Reformation during his reign as a betrayal really of the heritage of the faith. So, when she comes to the throne, she does a more or less systematic persecution of those who had led the charge towards the Reformation, people like Cranmer. And what she did is she targeted the bishops and the leaders in particular. They were not allowed to escape. They were arrested and put in prison, and many of them were burned at the stake. As many as 300, in fact, lost their lives. The exiles would be lay folks or mere priests who were given the opportunity to flee to the Continent, and that’s why they’re called “the exiles.” They were in literal exile. They had to leave home and their churches and all these things and flee. And where they landed very often were in Reformed lands, places like Geneva and Frankfurt and others that were sort of the hallmark, the core areas, the core cities of the Reformed movement. By and large, they were not allowed to go to Lutheran lands because Mary, as it turned out, had married the Holy Roman Emperor’s son who was in charge of the Lutheran lands. A lot of political fighting. But the exiles were people who lost everything. They were pushed out. Some of them lost family members to the burnings, and they certainly lost their bishops and their pastors to it. And so, they go to the Continent and they have to be treated as aliens and strangers in cities where they didn’t speak the language, and they didn’t know where they were going. And they lived there for about four or five years as exiles until Elizabeth brought them back.

Dr. Sam Pascoe

There were probably about three or 400 people who, when Mary came to the throne of England after the death of her half-brother Edward VI — and I know it’s easy to get lost in all these names, but the important thing to remember is that Edward VI was a Protestant — Mary, who was the daughter of King Henry VIII, had been declared an illegitimate child by Henry in order to facilitate his marriage, his second, third marriage. And she was upset. She was mad. She had been treated very, very badly, and when she came to the throne, she was angry. She was angry, she was vengeful, and she was in love with Philip, who was the King of Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor, a staunch Roman Catholic. She herself was a Roman Catholic. And she sought to reinstate, re-impose through the force of the state, using execution if necessary, the Roman Catholic faith on an England that had already turned toward Protestantism. Many Christians stayed, and some of them paid with their life, but many other Christians went to Europe, right across the English Channel. And they went there to get away from Mary, number one, but they also went there to learn what

it meant to be a Protestant Christian because the Protestant faith was further down the road in places like Geneva and Germany. And a lot of these English exiles landed in those places and learned from the continental Reformers: “Well, this is how you understand the Scripture.” “This is how we understand the ordained ministry.” “This is how we understand the sacraments.” And they spent the five years of Mary’s rule over there just kind of absorbing what it meant to be Protestant Christians. On Mary’s death, Elizabeth’s succession to the throne, they were welcomed back into England, and they brought back with them these new understandings of what it meant to be Protestant Christians. They had benefited very much from what they had learned on the Continent from the continental Reformers. They had a whole new body of knowledge, a whole new way of looking at how to do church, and they brought that with them, and they began to slowly implement that in England. And England was the richer for it. And one of those Marian exiles was a guy named Foxe, and he chronicled the death of many of the people who had died under Mary’s rule in what came to be known as *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, which was one of the most important books of the Protestant Reformation and a book that has guided Christians for many years since then. Because he survived, he was able to tell the story of those who didn’t.

How did Elizabeth I impact the Protestant cause in England?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

Elizabeth I is Protestant. I think that’s a big myth that sometimes is lurking out there that she was not, but as one scholar has put it, she was the physical embodiment of the Reformation. She is Anne Boleyn’s daughter. She is the symbol of what Henry wanted when he left the papacy and declared himself head of the church. She was the third of his children to take the throne, so she was last in line in that sense, but she was very much self-consciously Protestant. For example, she was very notorious for funding Dutch Calvinists and French Calvinists in their fights against Catholic regimes in other lands. What Elizabeth does, though, in her regime, much like a lot of monarchs, is she was willing to give the Protestant leaders free rein in the church, but she is also not willing to let them tell her what to do. That’s a very monarchical thing — they don’t want to be bossed around. And so, she will do little actions, little gestures, to let them know that she hears their advice, and she does not always agree.

So, for example, the crucifix. She has a crucifix that she keeps in her personal chapel where she goes for prayer and to hear sermons. Now, she doesn’t make it a law that every church must have a crucifix, but she liked it. She just thought it was beautiful, and she kept it. And it drove some of the Protestants nuts that she would do this... Elizabeth also ordered all the priests to wear vestments, which looked a bit like the old Catholic priestly vestments. She said they’re not to be superstitiously worn, but rather, she wanted her priesthood, the clergy, to look united. She wanted them to look as if they were one. And that irked some folks. So, she has this way of not allowing folks to boss her around and to push her, and she keeps some things that she knows are not everyone’s favorite, but they become almost symbols of the challenge that the

Puritans will eventually raise, which is, “Why are you keeping things that look traditional when we have reformed the church? Shouldn’t we get rid of them as well?” And Elizabeth’s answer was always, “I do not make windows into men’s souls, and so, therefore, I cannot say that having a crucifix or wearing vestments is the litmus test for the faith.” ... And of course, this gives rise to the very earliest Puritans, those who will eventually say that the king needs to be checked on this, or the queen needs to be checked on this. But in Elizabeth’s day, they are happy enough that she is returning England to the Protestant fold. That is a miracle, as far as they were concerned, after Mary. But towards the end, especially, they’re not too happy with what they considered to be stall tactics where she was not quite willing to go the full distance and give in to all their demands. So, Elizabeth, in many ways, sets the stage for the great fight over worship and vestments and Puritan versus Anglican that will come in later decades. But under her regime, people were, by and large, pretty happy.

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

Well, Queen Elizabeth I was really the architect of the Protestant settlement of the Church of England. Things had gone back and forth before her time, of course. It started with her father who moved a little bit that way, and then her brother Edward VI who was more Protestant, her sister who went back in the Catholic direction, and Elizabeth wanted to establish a kind of balance in between the two, but one which was definitely more Protestant in orientation. She had to do this because the Catholic Church did not recognize the legitimacy of her parents’ marriage, and therefore, if she had gone to the Catholic Church she would probably have had to abdicate as an illegitimate ruler. So that, of course, is a very important aspect. But she established the pattern of worship; she established the doctrine; she established the system of government which is still in force in the Church of England today. It has been slightly modified but, you know, basically that is it. She also impacted the Protestant cause in a different way because once she had made her decisions and established this system, she maintained it through the 44 years of her reign. And when there were attempts to go further, to be more Protestant later on, she resisted that because she said, “I’ve made my decision. This is where it stands,” and so on. So, in a sense, she not only established the church over against Roman Catholicism but also over against a more radical form of Protestantism that we would today call “Puritanism.” So, in a sense, you could say she was also the creator of Puritanism, in a way, by resisting that kind of change, and the division that there is in English Protestantism to this day, between the state church and conformity, and nonconformity, which is Puritan in different forms, really goes back to her.

Why did some of Reformed Protestantism become iconoclastic?

Dr. Kenneth V. Botton

During the Reformation, the level of animosity between Rome and the Reformers reached pretty epic proportions. Many of the things that the Reformers began to see as the Reformation developed was what they perceived to be a high level of

dependence on things other than God himself... What had covered the pure worship of God, at least in their opinions, was this many-layered, almost like ivy choking out a building in terms of all the things that got substituted in place of God. Now we have the layer of saints, and we've got the stained-glass windows and statues, and many of the relics were of particular offense to the Reformers... This was sensory overload in a sense and very, very much getting away from the simplicity of faith that the Reformers now sought. What they saw, instead of pure faith, was a level of mysticism, magic, superstition — at least that's how they interpreted it. So, what they wanted to do was to help people get back to some of the original ideas of what was the simplicity of worshiping God, and there was no nuancing at the time; it was kind of an either/or — you're either with us or you're against us. And it's kind of a shame, and regrettably priceless works of art were lost in the meantime. But the reason was, is that they felt that statues, well, people were praying to the statues. They felt that was idolatry. People were looking to the stained-glass windows. They were looking to the relics — and how many hands of John the Baptist and knuckles of Peter, and bones, pieces of the cross, enough to fell an entire forest — those were the kinds of complaints that one heard. And so, the iconoclasm, just the tearing down of things, was a way, perhaps it was an unfortunate way, but it was a way to express, “We want to get back to the simplicity of worshiping God.”

Dr. Ryan Reeves

Reformed folks are known especially for their iconoclasm. And I think it's the artist in us all later that is mad that they broke so many statues and pieces of art and stained glass that we wish were still at least in museums, at least in some ways. But the reason that they become iconoclastic is a couple of things. The first and foremost, the central core of it is, when they look at the commandment against graven images, they believe that that's not simply a prohibition against using art or representations of anything in worship, but that it's wrong to do it even in general, that there's something about the making of art for theological reasons or art depicting, in particular Christ, that they find to be inherently blasphemous. Now, why? “Why?” is always the question. You see, Luther had the same position. He thought statues and things were being prayed to, and they were crutches of the old Catholic faith. But Luther's mind was, at least pastorally, we should preach these things out of folks, that they're themselves relatively harmless — they're not going to do any harm to the person; they're just bits of statue — but that if you preach the gospel, eventually their hearts will move from that to Christ. The Reformed perspective is a bit like if you caught your children playing with matches or playing with very sharp knives as like a toddler ... you won't let them play with these things assuming that there will not be any injuries. You will take them from them, even if they weep and wail, rather than let them injure themselves. And so, in the Reformed faith, at times it went iconoclastic because it realized that folks were not simply used to these things, but that they were using them in such an idolatrous way that it was going to forever sort of ground them in this idea that they could pray to saints, and it was just sort of a lock into their old ways of understanding the Catholic faith. So, their model was to take the dangerous things out of their hands, then preach to them why those things were taken. And forever they've been known as the folks who wanted nothing in worship.

But it's not that they hated worship or that they wanted it to be boring or overly plain, it's that they didn't want folks to make idols in the way Calvin says that our hearts are "factories" for idols that will make everything idolatrous. And so, take these things away because they're dangerous and then give them true religion after.

How should Christians today view the role of art in the worship of the church?

Dr. Scott Manor

The role of art in the worship of the church is sort of one of those perennial questions that you see throughout church history. Today, actually, in a recent essay for a major news publication, one author sort of was expressing sadness over the fact that when you look at the church today, so many times you see the church moving away from any sort of artistic representation of the faith. So, ornate floors are covered with carpet. He talks about some baptismal fonts now having bubbles in it, you know, and this sense of Christianity having to be drab and dreary in order for it to be authentic... The point that that author is trying make, and a point that I think is worthwhile for us as Christians to think about today, is that art doesn't necessarily have to take away from worship. We don't worship the art itself, but art can help facilitate worship. He says that, art should be something that is both pleasing to the eye but stirs within our soul the sense of yearning for Christ. And I think if you look at some of the major cathedrals around the world today, if you walk through St. Peter's in Rome, or St. Paul's in London, the Notre Dame in Paris for example, you have these massive, beautiful buildings that are very ornate but are done in such a way that you can sense God's magnitude, his greatness, how small we are in light of how big God is... I lived in Paris for a year and we attended the American Church in Paris, and if you sit in the sanctuary and listen to the sermon in the morning, the sun comes through these stained-glass windows that sort of line the halls of that sanctuary leading up to the pulpit there, and in it you have biblical figures, major biblical figures. You also have figures from church history. And what that does is it serves as a reminder of God's faithfulness to humanity through the work of his people, not because they were great, but because God was great. And I think art is in many ways an opportunity for us to express the beauty of the gospel. The gospel is beautiful, and I think beautiful art can be a good representation of the beauty of the gospel. The important distinction to draw here is that we don't worship the art, we don't bow before a beautiful piece of artwork and worship that, but it is something that is a conduit, it's a portal into proper worship of God, an exuberant worship of God, and an opportunity for us to see the beauty of what he has done in and through his gospel that we can then respond to. And art helps facilitate that.

Dr. James R. Hart

One of my favorite theologians is Hans Urs von Balthasar who has this theory that, in the last 500 years or so of theological discourse, beauty has been marginalized, and in marginalization of beauty there is, therefore, an undermining of goodness and truth because all three of the transcendentals are actually mutually implicative of one

another. So, Balthasar's sensibility was that the marginalization of beauty, which occurs probably most viscerally in worship — but it's in all theological discourse actually — the marginalization of beauty has led to the good no longer being attractive and the true no longer mattering. Balthasar's idea in his theology was to reengage with beauty, with aesthetic theology, and if we bring beauty back from the marginalization it's been experiencing, that once again — and actually embrace it as a transcendental — once again the good will be attractive and the true will matter. So that leads us to think in terms of aesthetics and how they impact theological discourse, how it impacts worship and everything we do.

I believe that beauty plays a major role. It is, as Balthasar says, it's actually the experience of the good and the true. He has a classical definition of what beauty is in terms of form and splendor, the combination of form and splendor, which reminds me of a great quote from Robert Webber who said that beauty is the “eyesight of insight,” which I love that quote. It's the idea that what we see or what we experience is then, it then informs our insight or actually interacts with our insight, our theological insight, our insight of God, our sensibility of who God is and how we become shaped more into Christ-likeness. So, it has that idea. But beyond that as well, beauty also plays a major role in worship. I think we need to be thinking in terms of objective aesthetics in our worship arts, in our preaching, in our liturgy, in our Scripture presentation, in our Scripture interpretation, in our architecture. If we don't think about worship in our architecture, that's the first thing people experience as they walk in the church. If they're not moved by the aesthetic of the church first, then we've maybe lost the opportunity to actually have an aesthetic impact on their lives. But again, the aesthetics are not what's going to win them to Christ. It plays a role along with truth and goodness, or actually, all three is what the Lord uses to bring us to Christ and to make us into Christ's likeness.

Should Christians today embrace Elizabethan culture?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

Elizabethan culture is a world that people love to love, right? It's Shakespeare, it's Renaissance fairs; it has this mystique. Under Elizabeth is when the English nation and the English language really come into their own. And you might say every schoolboy and schoolgirl who has to learn English is held to that standard of literature and a real high view of English culture in that sense. It's not the last time that that happens in English-speaking worlds, but nonetheless, it's the first real major step forward from England being a more parochial backwater to now being a world power. English culture, Elizabethan culture, though, its positives are its love of literacy, its love of beauty in written form, its love of a generous Protestantism that tries to embrace lots of differences within it. The problem, though, is it's very time-bound. There are all kinds of things that, if we went back to the Elizabethan world, we would find stifling, frankly. It was a very hierarchical world; you have still, very much, masters and servants and peasants and the upper crust and these types of things. There are lots of things that we don't know about, or we overlook, that are time-bound, and

what we end up having is a bit of a rose-colored view of the past, and Elizabethan is one of those times that gets signaled as like “the good days.” I always like to point out this is pre-aspirin; this is pre-medicine — all the things we take for granted. I mean, I can walk to a local pharmacy and get more medicine than probably the entirety of England would have had at once in the Elizabethan’s culture. That’s for self-medication, much less some of the other advances in technology and medicine and other things. It’s also, the problem with Elizabethan culture is you can be proud of it, and you can cherish it, but the idea that you’re going to mimic it, at times just basically privileges a certain time in Western history when, as we know in the 21st century, the global world has taught us so much about how the faith flourishes in different cultures besides just that one. So, I always have a measured respect and a love for it, but a love for it with flaws, and yet I also don’t hold it up as the only standard of culture that ought to be lived, in part because we can’t. We all have iPhones and iPads and computers and all these things that make our world so very different, to say nothing of the globalization that we’re going through. So, I would see it as a good time, yes, but not a time that really has to be emulated or even that necessarily can be emulated, but rather more appreciated.

How did John Knox represent a more “hard line” form of Reformed theology than John Calvin?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

The difference between Calvin and Knox, it’s a really, really interesting one, because they don’t so much differ in substance, though you could probably find some differences there where they aren’t exactly the same. But the Reformed faith in that sense was remarkably broad on that — they would allow for differences of opinion. The difference was more of culture. So, Calvin was maligned and hated in some ways by some folks in Geneva, but by and large, at least after his return from exile, Calvin had a pretty strong hand on the Reformation there from the beginning. He was, certainly by the end of his life, the unquestioned authority when it came to church life and doctrine and things. Knox spent almost the entirety of his life never believing that his home country of Scotland, and eventually his more or less adopted country of England, were ever going to embrace the Reformation as he saw it in places like Geneva. Scotland was thoroughly Catholic and it was run by a Catholic queen, and in England, he was part of the Anglican Reformation under Edward. In fact, many people forget that; Knox was an Anglican priest for five years. He served just * he left Scotland and served as a priest just on the inner border of England up in the north.

But when he goes into exile, he decides that the problem is that they had not gone far enough, and he starts to call, and clamor really, for more change more quickly. People resisted him at first because it seemed to be a bit unseemly to question *The Book of Common Prayer*, for example, when Cranmer is back in prison about to be executed for this. So, they told him to be a little bit slower on this. When Knox goes back to Scotland, though, the other thing is, he is swimming upstream, you might say, and he realizes that the Reformation there has to be more full-throated. It has to be stronger.

He has to grab the bull by the horns, because what he realizes is, short of that, it won't happen. So, Knox's tone, start to finish, is almost always more aggressive, more punchy, more feisty because of the context of him being marginalized and on the outside of most of the culture until later in life. Calvin's language is of a man that's very much in the pilot's seat, you might say, in Geneva, though he's challenged, but never like Knox. So, Knox doesn't so much change Reformed theology, rather he brings a punchy, more aggressive tone of voice to it, we might say, due in large part to the context of the British Isles.

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

Well, John Knox was much more engaged in the battle against Catholicism at the practical level than John Calvin had been. Calvin had been forced to leave France to escape persecution, but he had never really been persecuted himself. John Knox, on the other hand, had been. I mean, he'd been arrested and condemned to serve in the galleys as a galley slave in the French Navy, and so, he had personal experience of suffering from this. So, his own experience made him harder, if you like, and more bitter. And, of course, he'd gone to England and had a powerful influence there but had been forced to leave when Queen Mary came to the throne. So, he had been in exile as well as a political prisoner, and so, his whole personal history was quite different. For this reason, of course, he was more aggressive, shall we say, in his desire to overthrow Catholic rulers. Calvin was trying to persuade them. He tried to persuade the king of France to accept his theological position. Knox tended to think this wasn't going to happen and that the only way that you could actually get what you wanted was by overthrowing these people. So, he was more inclined in that direction. The famous altercation he had with Calvin was over his approach to Queen Mary in England when he wrote a tract against her called, "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women." And, of course, you don't need to read the tract. You can tell from the title what it's about. And Calvin was horrified by this. He thought this was entirely the wrong approach. And Calvin turned out to be right in the end, because when Mary died and John Knox wanted to go back to England, Queen Elizabeth wouldn't let him in the country. And when he wondered why, he wrote to her and asking if he could go back, she said, "Well, you remember that tract you wrote against the 'monstrous regiment of women'?" And Knox apparently replied and said, "Oh, Your Majesty, you're such a wonderful person, it never occurred to me you were a woman," which wasn't really the right thing to say. But it gives some indication of his lack of subtlety, shall we say, and inability to be diplomatic. I think Elizabeth, to her credit, was determined not to make an enemy of Knox more than she had to. She gave him an army and let him go to Scotland and introduce the Reformation there. But Knox was always much more militant in his approach than Calvin ever was. And so that would be it. I think in terms of theology they were pretty much on the same page.

Dr. William Philip

Certainly, John Calvin seemed to be more diplomatic, less inclined to stir up political outrage and so on. Whether some of these things are more to do with personality than theology, it's difficult to say, isn't it? Luther was a much more firebrand person than

Calvin. I think John Knox probably was more like a Luther than a Calvin in that sense... It is a fact that when you talk about the marks of the church, John Knox, in addition to the preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments in his Scottish books of discipline and so on, made discipline, church discipline, one of the marks of the church. And you could argue, well, is that a more extreme thing than John Calvin? It's difficult to, I think, make a big theological point. I wouldn't want to drive wedges between them in terms of theology, but in terms of applying the gospel and the truths of Scripture to the situation in which he lived and the reality of the world in which he was serving and ministering, that was something that they obviously thought was necessary. So, you have to apply the gospel to the real world that you are living in, which is not necessarily the same situation that others are living in. And sometimes, in God's providence, what's required is somebody with that particular strength, that singleness of vision, and that determination to drive something forward, regardless of great opposition, and I think John Knox was that kind of man.

What does the English Reformation suggest to us about the proper relationship between church and state?

Dr. William Philip

The relationship between church and state is a big question, and there are all kinds of different views on that and the way the Reformation took place in different parts of Europe, played out, and the legacy of that is still seen today. In England, because of the particular circumstances of Henry VIII and his well-known marital issues, the church and the state were held together in much more of a way than happened, certainly, even in Scotland and on the Continent. Many would look at that and look at the succeeding history today with the established church in England and in Scotland — although “establishment” means a slightly different thing — to say that, “Well, a lot of the problems you're facing today stem between this unhappy marriage between church and state.” And I think there's no denying that. While the general morality and the worldview of the church or the state throughout, I suppose, the modern era have been more or less the same, certainly in our lifetimes, those two have diverged enormously, and that's why there have been such ructions in the established church in the United Kingdom in the present time because church and politics and so on are very much bound together. I think one looks at that and feels it's an unhappy situation. Nevertheless, you also have to realize that God can use anything and has done, and there have been many beneficial things for the gospel that have come out of churches which have been much more bound to the state. And if God can use Cyrus the Persian Emperor as his servant to further the kingdom of God, he's not going to be stymied by Henry VIII. And, looking back over history, you could equally say Henry VIII was God's servant in bringing about the Reformation, albeit in a very different way.

So, the real issue is, does it matter today? And I think that the answer is that God is at work through churches that are still part of established situations, but it makes very great difficulty for those who are going to be loyal to the gospel. On the other hand,

those who have been free from those particular constraints and problems also face a whole lot of other things... My own view is, I suppose, is you cannot have a church that is aligned with a secular state when the secular state is saying that if you are to be the church, you have to deny the gospel, deny the uniqueness of Christ and just be a general sort of fuzzy religious supporter of the establishment. You can't do that. And if you find yourself in a situation like that, you are going to find great difficulty, strife, persecution perhaps, and I think ultimately a parting of the ways. That's the reality today. It happened centuries ago that way in other places. It's now having to happen today in churches that have been very aligned to the state because what's been possible in the past is just now impossible. So, there are Christian believers, evangelical believers, gospel people in all of these situations. We can't damn people because they're in a church situation that we think is less than ideal. Let me tell you, those people in that situation probably know how much more less ideal it is even than you can imagine. But in God's providence, his people are where they are, and while you might not choose to do things this way, sometimes you've no choice but to get on with it. So, the church and the state can really not harmoniously be together when their aims and objectives and worldviews are very, very different. And the more they become different, the harder that becomes.

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

It's very hard to say how church and state ought to relate on the basis of what the English Reformation did nearly 500 years ago. They were in a situation then where church and state were so inextricably linked with each other that they couldn't be separated without destroying the country. And so, some kind of solution had to be found as to how they were to operate. A lot of people don't realize this, but actually church and state in England were distinct. They were not separate in the way that they are today, but the church ran its own affairs independently of the state, and the sovereign, the monarch, functioned differently in both cases. The monarch was the link, if you like, between the two more than anything else. And the church retained its own autonomy, its own right to establish its doctrine, even its own tax system. The clergy were taxed independently of the state at that time. And I think probably the lesson that there is there for us today is that the church should run its own affairs as much as it possibly can, but at the same time, it can't be divorced from society. It can't operate as if the rest of society didn't exist. And it's finding the way to express this in different times. The English Reformation did what it could in the circumstances obtained at that time. They can't be reproduced now, but I think they give us some idea of the way in which we have to go, the trajectory that we need to have independence without total separation.

Why were the Puritans called Puritans?

Dr. Sean Lucas

We might guess why Puritans were called Puritans. The word "puritan" has at the root "pure." And from the time of Elizabeth I there was a group within the Church of England who disagreed with her strategy of the "middle way" or the *via media*. They

desired greater purification, or reformation, in the Church of England, and so they became known as Puritans. They desired greater purity when it came to the approach to the sacraments. There were certain rubrics that were in place in *The Book of Common Prayer* under Elizabeth's reign that they particularly disliked. Especially kneeling at the sacrament suggested somehow that there was superstition or adoration similar to the old Roman Catholic Church. They wanted that to be purified. They also wanted a greater purity in church discipline. A way of bringing about the purity of the church would be to ensure that all those who were part of the church were actually real Christians, truly converted, and those who were straying to be brought back to their faith through church discipline. The Church of England wasn't as interested in church discipline, and so the Puritans stood for the purity of the church through church discipline. But they also stood for the purity of the church when it came to the preaching of God's Word. They would gather together in what were called "conventicles," where they would encourage one another by reflecting together on biblical texts to be preached, and one man would preach and another man would critique the sermon. And it was a way to grow in their preaching gifts, but also to ensure the pure preaching of God's Word. And so, in each of these ways, the Puritans sought to purify the Church of England. With the coming of King James I, though, and the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, it came clear that the project of purifying the church was not going to happen. And so, in 1604, the Puritans turned their gaze inward and began to desire to purify themselves, their families, their marriages. They became precisionists of sorts, those who desired a precise way of living by purifying their own lives. Having failed to purify the church, they sought to purify themselves, and perhaps the greatest legacy of the Puritans for us today.

Dr. Kenneth V. Botton

Many people attribute the English Reformation solely to Henry VIII and his marital difficulties, which was a kind of a presenting issue, but in truth, it was also the issue of he didn't want divided loyalties between the English nation and the pope, and some people would suggest that this gave him an easy way out. But there were not a few theologians in England that, when they now were presented with this new Anglican Church — in some cases they still considered themselves *The Catholic Church*, as opposed to the Roman Catholic Church — and now you had a church that looked, for all intents and purposes, just like the Catholic Church minus a few saints at the doors and a few other things going on... The Puritans were a group from within the Anglican Church that decided to purify the church. They wanted to root out what they thought was some of the continuing evils of the Catholic Church, and in a simple way, they're called Puritans because they wanted to purify the church, and it was a movement from within the Anglican church to purify itself.

What were the goals of the Puritan movement?

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

The Puritan movement arose in England because of the peculiar nature of the English Reformation. Every church has to deal with three different aspects of its life, you

know, whatever the circumstances are. It has to have a doctrine which is clear; it has to have a pattern of devotion in worship and so on, which again unites people; and it has to have a discipline which ensures that the principles which are laid down are actually carried out in practice. Now, in England there was a doctrine which was established which everybody supposedly agreed to. There was a system of public worship which was imposed on everybody as well. The problem was discipline — how to train the clergy, how to make sure that they were doing what they were supposed to be doing, and that the message of the Reformation trickled down to the average person, that it actually changed people's lives. That's what Puritanism was all about. It wasn't really a movement of doctrine, but rather, a movement of church discipline. And what they wanted, they wanted an educated clergy — preachers and teachers who could go out and teach the Bible to people. They wanted to get the Scriptures into the hands of ordinary people. They wanted education, of course, because no point in having a Bible if you can't read it. So, these things. They wanted to make sure that the administration of the church was carried out in a responsible manner, that people weren't, sort of, creaming off the revenues of the church for their own benefits and so on. So, a complete reform of the system in that way. Making lay people much more involved in the appointment of the ministers and in the discipline of them, really, to ensure that there was quality control, you might say, across the church as a whole, to get a common vision, a common message across. And they wanted to ensure that practices that they regarded as wrong would cease. For example, people interrupting worship on Sunday by holding markets and so on in the market square outside the church, that kind of thing, they wanted that stopped so that people would be focused on the worship of God and on learning in and through the church. So, it was really a movement to raise the standards of worship and doctrine within the church and to teach people to be responsible members, to evangelize, if you like, the ordinary people. And that was always their focus. One of the things they said, they wanted to send ministers out to what they called "the dark corners of the land" because they realized that there were places where the message hadn't really reached, and they were determined to get everybody enrolled, as it were, within the church structure, to have a thoroughgoing reformation of the country as a whole.

Why did Charles I find it necessary to impose the *Book of Common Prayer* in England and Scotland?

Dr. Kenneth J. Stewart

Charles I, acting on the advice of the man he had named archbishop, William Laud, believed that the existing *Book of Common Prayer* was not being followed rigorously enough inside England. Under the reign of Charles' father — James VI of Scotland and [James] I of England — there had been considerable latitude given to Puritan ministers that so long as they used *The Book of Common Prayer* and generally conformed, they would be given liberty to carry on their Puritan ministries. But Charles, having succeeded his father and having, in time, named a new archbishop, William Laud, went in a direction which is described by one word, and that word is "thorough." There was to be a "thorough" conformity to the expectations of *The Book*

of *Common Prayer*, and this meant following the directions for services precisely. It meant conforming precisely to dress codes of what Anglican ministers were to wear. Charles himself had very strong tendencies in the direction of what we would call ritualism, but these were only accelerated by William Laud who was anti-Puritan, anti-Calvinist, and what we would call a “ritualist” Protestant. A Protestant he was, but of a very strict ritualist kind. So, the reign of Charles for English Puritans became a period of oppression. There was not only this strict requirement of fuller conformity, but there was also toleration shown to theological Arminians which had not been permitted under the previous archbishop or under James, Charles’ father. So, they had reasons to be distressed at the level of liturgy and at the level of theology. But these efforts of Charles and William Laud extended into Scotland also. Charles was king of both countries, and as head of the state and as nominal head of the church, he obviously had an opinion, and he had priorities for the churches in both countries. But William Laud technically had no jurisdiction outside England, and it was clearly an act of interference on his part to write a book of prayers, a service book, for Scotland in 1637 which would, if it had been adopted, have had the effect of displacing the *Book of Common Order* which had been in existence since the time of John Knox. So, in 1637 there was great controversy in Scotland when Charles imposed this book on the churches. There was a lot of pushback, we would say, and eventually the introduction of this prayer book had to be suspended because of the opposition to it. But both England and Scotland were subjected to determined efforts by the king and the archbishop of Canterbury to introduce a rigid conformity to liturgical standards beyond anything that had existed earlier. And by doing this, Charles was stoking up opposition which would eventually bring his reign to an end.

What is the significance of the Westminster Assembly?

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

Well, the Westminster Assembly was, in a sense, the realization of the Puritan ideal, the Puritan dream. It was an attempt to regulate the life and to unite the churches of England, Scotland and Ireland into a common Reformed Christianity. And what the Westminster Assembly tried to do was to establish a doctrinal framework, which of course, is the Westminster Confession of Faith, a pattern of worship which exists, a pattern of Christian instruction which comes in the longer catechism and shorter catechism as we know, and basically, trying to ensure that this was spread right across the church as a whole. The difficulty was that the leadership of the Westminster Assembly was basically what we today would call “Presbyterian,” that is to say, they wanted a centralized church where ministers would be responsible to each other, responsible to a common authority so that discipline could be exercised. The problem was that the army, which supported the Puritan cause, was led by people who were what we would today call “Independents.” They thought each congregation, each person, should decide for themselves what kind of discipline and church life they were going to have. And the army, of course, were the only people who could actually impose the decisions of the Assembly. So, in the end, you had a division within the Puritan movement — the Westminster Assembly which promoted a more

centralized, organized or so-called “Presbyterian” system, and the army under Oliver Cromwell which was more loosely oriented, more tolerant, you might say — Cromwell was prepared to tolerate Quakers and all sort of people like this which the Westminster Assembly wasn’t prepared to do. And so, there was a division there, and eventually, the whole thing fell apart. But in the end, where the independent experiment, the Cromwellian experiment, ceased because it couldn’t be applied, the Westminster Assembly’s decisions, of course, were remarkably resilient. And they form the basis, if you like, of radical, reasonably radical, Puritanism in the later 17th century and became the foundation, really, for the Presbyterian tradition today. And in Scotland, of course, its decisions became those of the national church. So, it has had a very long-lasting impact in that respect.

Dr. Larry Trotter

The Westminster Assembly was a series of meetings over a period of years in the 1640s to reform the theology of the English church with participation from the Scottish church as well. And it had representatives from different groups in the English churches, and they worked on five documents, two of which continue to have much influence to our day. The five documents were a directory for public worship, there was a church government, and then the three more well known are the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Shorter Catechism and the Larger Catechism. These two, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism, continue to exercise much influence among the heirs of the British and Scottish Reformations. In fact, the Westminster Confession of Faith became the basis of a number of confessions of faith among Baptists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. So, we hear the echo of that document down to our ages in the confessional statements of a number of different communions. The Shorter Catechism continues to exercise influence because it is so concise, so pithy, and so precise, and it’s an excellent way for parents to teach their children the faith, or ministers to teach their congregations the faith, or even for training of elders and deacons. So, it continues to be an excellent teaching tool to this day.

Was it right for the Protestants to execute Charles I?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

The execution of Charles I in England is one of those watershed moments. I think a lot of folks today look on it too easily as a good thing. But again, I think you have to see where we’ve come. So, in the modern world, if a president, or a legislator, or someone that’s the head of government does something truly illegal, truly wrong, many of us would applaud if they were arrested and held up to the standard of the law that any other citizen would be. This really is a post-18th century view that the government, that the leaders of government, can be held to the same standard as those who are part of the regular rungs of society. You might say the execution of Charles I was the first attempt at doing this because what they held him to account for was treason against the state, was abusing the state, was destroying the state of England, which, prior to this act of executing Charles, it was seen as virtually impossible to

hold a monarch to account for treason. They believed that the monarch when they die would answer to God and God alone, but that if you were to cut the king's head off, hold him to account, to law, that what you're going to do is foment rebellion and just lead everything towards a chaotic end, that it'll just become mob rule. And so, I think on a practical level, it makes some sense. What they're doing is they're saying the king isn't above the law. So, in that sense, it's good. The trouble is, since it's the first act, it's the first time doing it, it has the tinge, the feeling behind it of being a bit radical. I mean, it's hard to read biblical commands about obeying the king and fearing the king in Romans 13 and be just simply, glibly okay with it. But on the other hand, their intentions were that the king is under law, not above it, and to that end, almost universally in the modern world, we say that's a good thing. It's hard, though, to say that it's a good thing to cut a man's head off, but you might say that if you see the king as being a usurper and a breaker of society and trying to ruin society that his execution was what they would have done to anybody in that day. So, on that level, it made a lot of sense for them, but it's such a radical step for its day that most of Europe was just aghast that England would actually take the step of executing the king; bad enough to have him arrested and having gone to war with him, but now to execute him for treason was just "a square peg in a round hole." It was a new thing. And it's a thing we're used to now that the ruler is under the law.

Dr. Gerald L. Bray

Charles believed that he was king by divine right and that he was answerable only to God for his actions. And when the Parliament and the army and people like this condemned him and criticized him, he basically refused to recognize that they had any jurisdiction over him; he thought this was an illegitimate operation from the beginning. So of course, in his eyes, you know, this was entirely wrong. I mean, he went to his death believing to the end that he was right, and those who were attacking him were wrong. That was his point of view. Of course, those who condemned him saw it completely differently. They saw the king as what you might call the "chief executive officer" of the state and not above the law, that he was subject to the law as much as anyone else. And of course, in their eyes, you see, what had happened was that, on many occasions, Charles had promised things to the army, to the Parliament, to the Puritans, and then went back on these things as soon as he could. If he could get out of his promises, he did. And so, they said, "Well, we can't trust this man; if we let him out of our sight, he'll do the exact opposite, and he's done this several times. And there's just no way that we can live with this." And so, they condemned him because they said, "He's broken the law; he's not above the law and he's not prepared to work with the system." Now, in those days, of course, execution was normal. People did this. And so, he was executed. The effect obviously, was to create a martyr. And there are churches in England to this day called the Church of King Charles the Martyr and there's a kind of cult — it's a very minor cult, but it exists — of King Charles, which is very unfortunate because I think most historians today, most objective people would say that Charles was certainly the stupidest person ever to rule England. I mean, he was just pig-headed and couldn't see the limitations of his own policies. And he went to his death not realizing, or not accepting, the limitations of his own position. So, what do you say?

Why did the Westminster Assembly convene during the middle of the English Civil War?

Dr. Thaddeus J. James, Jr.

The Westminster Assembly convened during the middle of the English Civil War. One, the Scots thought that if they were able to capture Charles I that that would bring about the Parliamentary or the Presbyterian form of government into England and Scotland. Well, that failed, but they still did capture him and hold him prisoner. But then, how are we going to bring this form of government together? So, because of all the social change that was going and all the upheaval that was going on, the perfect time to bring Scots and England together was during this time. And the whole thing, again, was bringing the churches together under one rule, so the timing, in God's providence, worked out well despite not being able to keep Charles, and then the throne, going back to England. But the timing was right as far as assembling them to bring the two churches together under one rule.

Dr. Jim Maples

During the English Civil War, the two sides were actually the parliament versus the king and the royal forces. Parliament sought help and aid from the Scots, and this created even a further divide with the king. And the Long Parliament, as it was called, was in session because they refused to leave, even though the king ordered them to disband and go home. And it was the Long Parliament that called the Westminster Assembly to advise them on religious matters. This was, again, part of the original problem between the two sides. And so, they called, or convened this meeting of these divines to actually codify and advise the parliament on religious matters and worship and church polity and so forth.

Dr. Sean Lucas

The English Civil War was going on. The king was fighting against Parliament, and Parliament was in session for a long time. They're known as the Long Parliament. One of the questions that came, in part because of the success of this new-model army that Oliver Cromwell had put together made up of Baptists and Quakers and Fifth Monarchy Men, was what would be the shape of the Church of England going forward? There were several parties represented in Parliament, indeed in the Church of England, who desired to speak into the future of the church. There were the Erastians who believed in a strong church-state union that looked very similar to the Episcopal Church structure that had already existed where bishops found their place in the House of Lords. There were Independents or Congregationalists who were, on the other hand, very suspicious of such a church-state union and desired to return power back to the people as a gathered congregation under Christ to rule their own affairs, established by the state to be sure, and yet independent largely from state control. And then there was a party of Presbyterians who really stood between the Erastians and the Independents, desiring an established church that was separate enough from the state to deal with things ecclesiastical and yet, with enough influence

to be able to speak into the affairs of state. It was the Presbyterians, ultimately, who held the majority in the Assembly, and Parliament was largely supportive of the Presbyterians' goals. They had been convened to not just to chart the way forward but really, at least initially, to revise the Thirty-Nine Articles as a way for the new church to move forward. After working on those Thirty-Nine Articles for a few weeks, it became clear to the Presbyterian party, especially, that this document was not going to suffice. And so, they threw aside the Thirty-Nine Articles and began writing a new confession of faith along with a new directory for public worship and a new form of church government. The confession of faith that they wrote, which wasn't actually adopted by Parliament, was the Westminster Confession of Faith. And so, out of the conflict of the English Civil War and the call of Parliament, one of the greatest contributions to the history of the church was given, the doctrinal standards of Reformed and Presbyterian Christians around the world.

Why did Charles II reject the writings of the Westminster Assembly?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

Charles II rejects the Westminster Standards and all the Assembly's documents, put simply, because they had cut his dad's head off. The fight between Charles I — Charles II's father — and the Parliamentarians, the English Civil War as we know it, gave rise to the Westminster Assembly. When the Westminster folks, when the Parliamentarians won, when they had captured the king, they called for an assembly to come together and to reform the church, to offer, as the text says, the advice of the Westminster Assembly to the government, because the government was still in charge of the church from all the way back to Henry VIII. However, when the Republic failed, and they invited Charles II back, this is why the Westminster Standards are rejected, and they live in kind of a no man's land where they're not embraced in the English culture, in the English churches. In fact, they're more embraced in North American churches than they are ever back in the country of their origin, which is unique for any other confessional document ever. But the reason why is Charles comes to the throne. He then suppresses and pushes down the Puritan movement which had come up with the standards during the time of the republic. So, in many ways, the Westminster Standards became synonymous or a symbol of rebellion. It became a symbol, at least to the king's eyes, of "This is what those folks who started the war are all about; this is their theology." And so, you see things like a licensing of preaching — you can't preach at all unless you have a license from an Anglican bishop. And this is why guys like John Bunyan spend so many years in prison because they rebel against this, they protest against this. But Charles comes to the throne and he says, "You know what? The problem is Puritans and Puritan theology itself." And it's during that time — no wonder — and a little bit before, that so many of them start to come over to the New World; it's they feel as if the standards and the reformation that they had achieved for a short period of time between Charles I and Charles II was now being thrown out, and so Charles II wants to chart a new path away from, in fact, in some ways, away from Protestantism in general... And Charles II and his son James II will actually get into a lot of trouble because they will so chart

a course away from not just Puritanism, but really Protestantism in general, that they'll eventually lose the throne for their whole dynasty. And William and Mary from the family of Orange down on the Continent will come up for the Glorious Revolution and take over.

How did Oliver Cromwell become the Lord Protector in England?

Dr. Ryan Reeves

Oliver Cromwell is the consummate Parliamentary man. In fact, if you go to Parliament today in London there's a big statue of him on a horse out front. He is the symbol in many ways of the man who protected the Parliament from the king. And of course, later in more modern British politics, that's a good thing, Parliament, and the government there is run principally out of Parliament. It's no longer the mere whim of the king or the queen. Well, Cromwell comes to, basically, a conviction that — it's actually quite staggeringly new, in fact, for England — which is that the king or queen can be held under law. See, prior to that, the idea was that the king or queen, they would answer to God alone in the afterlife if they had done wrong or they were evil, this type of thing. But what Cromwell decides, and others alongside him, is that, actually, the government officials, particularly the king or queen, can be held to account. They can be held to treason, for example, if they are destroying the government or destroying the commonwealth. And he comes to this idea that a republic is the best form of government, an elected, sort of, first-among-equals leader, like "Lord Protector," which is the title that he takes. And he refuses the title of king for that reason. But the idea there is that it is a voice of the people through Parliament that could be in concert with the king — yes, perhaps — but Cromwell is pretty convinced that's impossible. And so, what he does is he wants to have a new government, start over, get rid of the monarchy, and go back to this idea of a government "for the people, by the people," to quote the American impression of this. But what his position is, is that the Parliament ought to be the main organ, the main central feature for where the voice of the people is heard. It's still a minority of voices that actually run the government, it's not a pure democracy, but he wants it to be a republic. And so, Cromwell sees himself as a new style of leader that's going to be in charge of government, yes, but not like a king, and he himself can be held under the law going forward. The unfortunate thing is that it was a monumental failure in English history. It only lasted frankly his lifetime, probably through the force of his own will. And his poor son who had to take over after him was not the man that his father was, and eventually the republic starts to descend into chaos, and so, eventually, they invite the monarchy back with Charles II.

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