

UNIT SEVEN

BRITISH REFORMATION LITURGIES

THE MAKING OF THE ENGLISH PRAYER BOOK

- It is highly significant that the production of the Book of Common Prayer was preceded by the publication of the Bible in English – in 1539 an English Bible was ordered to be placed in every church.
- As long as Henry VIII reigned (1509-47), the movement for Protestant reform was driven underground.
- However, Henry's own Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, had been heavily influenced by Martin Luther's teachings.
- Cranmer's approaches in the direction of Protestant doctrine were modest in Henry's lifetime, but in the Prayer Book of 1552 he left the English people a clear expression of Reformation teaching.
- The Prayer Book as we now know it was not drawn up overnight but across a period of more than 100 years.
 - 1544: The First English Litany (responsive prayer of intercession)
 - 1547: The First Book of Homilies, to encourage Biblical Preaching
 - 1547: Epistle and Gospel to be read in English at Mass
 - 1548: "The Order of Communion" – prayers and exhortations in English
 - 1549: *The First English Prayer Book of Edward VI*
 - 1550: The Ordinal (ordination services) was published separately
 - 1552: *The Second Prayer Book of Edward VI* – a more Reformed version
 - 1559: *The Prayer Book of Elizabeth I* – special lessons added for Sundays
 - 1604: *The Prayer Book of James I* – some concessions to Puritan critics
 - 1637: *The Scottish Prayer Book* – Charles I sought to impose this
 - 1645: Suppression of the Book of Common Prayer by the Long Parliament
 - 1662: *The Prayer Book of Charles II* – the Book of Common Prayer as it is now

THE SOURCES OF THE ENGLISH PRAYER BOOK

• Pre-Reformation Sources

- Although they were generally very similar in character, variations on the Roman rite existed across England, principally those of Hereford, York, Bangor and Sarum (Salisbury).
- The Sarum Use became widespread, and Cranmer's original aim was to modify this, but he soon saw that a more radical revision was needed.
- The Sarum Use included four chief service books, the *Breviary*, the *Missal*, the *Manual* and the *Pontifical*.
- From the *Breviary* came the Morning and Evening Prayer services and the Psalter, from the *Missal* has come the Holy Communion service, from the *Manual* have come baptism, marriage and burial services, and from the *Pontifical* have come Confirmation and the Ordinal.
- Whatever sources they may have used, the Reformers maintained a desire to retain as much of the familiar forms and orders as was consistent with their Scriptural principles.

• Reformation Compositions

- Most of the collects are translated from the Roman Missal; Cranmer also welcomed suggestions from Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Calvinists abroad.
- An important Reformation source was Archbishop Hermann's *Consultation* – a German liturgy used by Cranmer.
- Cardinal Quignon's *Breviary* (1535) was also an important source – Quignon was a Spaniard who had revised the daily services at the command of Pope Clement VII.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRAYER BOOK SUNDAY SERVICES

- The services of Morning and Evening Prayer provided for a systematic reading of the Old and New Testaments, and of the Psalms.
- Morning and Evening Prayer
 - Penitential Introduction
 - The Praise section begins with a responsive prayer
 - Reading of the Word of God, with praise responses and followed by the Apostles' Creed
 - Prayer section: the Lord's Prayer, responsive prayer, three collects, prayers for the monarch and royal family and for Christian ministry.
 - Sermon required after the Nicene Creed at the Holy Communion service

- Although the singing of hymns was authorised in Queen Elizabeth's reign, hymns did not feature much in Anglican services until the eighteenth century.
- The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion
 - The Ante-Communion – ministry of the Word and prayer
 - Lord's Prayer and opening collect
 - Ten Commandments with responses
 - Prayer for the Sovereign
 - Collect, Epistle and Gospel of the day
 - Nicene Creed
 - Sermon
 - Offertory Sentences
 - Prayer for the Church Militant
 - The Communion
 - Three exhortations to prepare
 - Invitation to repent
 - General confession of sins
 - The 'Comfortable Words' from Scripture
 - Corporate thanksgiving
 - Prayer of Humble Access
 - Prayer of Consecration
 - Administration of the Bread and Wine
 - The Lord's Prayer
 - Alternative thanksgivings and prayers
 - *Gloria in Excelsis*
 - Blessing
- The Communion Service in 1549 followed the order and structure of the Latin Canon more closely, but Cranmer argued that its meaning and intention had been entirely reformed.
- Opponents interpreted it according to Roman doctrine and suggested that it was not reformed at all.
- The 1552 service changed the structure, and reflected the Reformers' view that *reception* was the essence of the service – feeding on Christ 'by faith with thanksgiving'.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

- To arrange for the orderly reading of Scripture
- The preservation of all that was both old and true
- The simplification of the services
- The purification of the services from things untrue, uncertain, vain and superstitious
- Intelligibility of all that went on (English replaced Latin)
- Uniformity of use for the whole realm
- A desire to promote God's glory and edify the national church

THE COST OF UNIFORMITY IN ENGLAND

• The rise of Puritanism

- The Puritans expressed growing hostility to the authorised forms of service in the Prayer Book and the use of ceremonies not clearly defined in Scripture.
- With the accession to the throne of James I in 1603, the Puritans presented a petition requesting changes in public worship.
- The King was not inclined to take much notice of what appeared to be trivial and needlessly divisive complaints, but some revisions were undertaken, most notably the decision to revise the translation of the Bible.

• Abolition of the Prayer Book

- The years between the issuing of the Prayer Book of James I (1604) and the revision of 1662 saw increased political turmoil.
- Attempts were made to reintroduce practices such as seeing Communion tables as altars and encouraging bowing to the table — Catholic ideas came back to the surface.
- When the monarchy was abolished, the Prayer Book was abolished with it — the *Directory of Public Worship* was established in its place, and Presbyterian influence dominated until the restoration of the monarchy and the Church of England.

• Restoration of the Prayer Book

- Following the restoration, the Savoy Conference of 1661 was convened to review the Prayer Book — it comprised both bishops and puritan ministers.
- The Puritans presented 96 criticisms, but the bishops only conceded 17 points, mainly wording changes — the conference broke up with both sides unwilling to compromise.

- Despite their rejection of so many requests for change, a committee of bishops was appointed by the king to revise the Prayer Book.
- The new Prayer Book of 1662 provided a liturgy similar to that of 1552, but with stringent conditions — many ministers were required to be re-ordained, and some were evicted from their ministries.

JOHN KNOX AND THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

- The Reformation in Scotland was well advanced by 1559, when John Knox returned from Geneva.
- The Scots had been using the 1552 English Prayer Book — it was the only one available in English, and provided a bond with the English Protestants.
- Having previously thought well of the 1552 Prayer Book, Knox noted certain ‘diabolical interventions’, and preference was given in Scotland to his own work, *The Book of Common Order*.
- Knox’s liturgy had been used for his English Congregation in Geneva, and came to be required for all liturgical purposes in Scotland.
- Ministers enjoyed a large amount of freedom, being allowed to use their own prayers, but had to ‘honour’ the liturgy.
- Other features of the service included:
 - The only ‘clerical’ garb worn was a preaching gown
 - Psalms cast into metrical forms and set to common tunes
 - Most of the service conducted from the pulpit
 - Sunday service structured to include a celebration of the Lord’s Supper
 - The word ‘sermon’ meant both lesson and proclamation
 - Provision was made for ‘prophecy’ in terms of an interpretation of the Scripture
 - A disciplinary system was provided, including the ‘fencing of the table’ to prevent the unrepentant from sharing in Communion
 - The communicants sat down at a large table, where the minister took bread and gave thanks