**Anglicans, Presbyterians, and the Puritans**

Christians in 16th Century England were still influenced by John Wycliff, even though he had died nearly 150 years earlier. He was a theologian at Oxford who was a dissenter from the Catholic Church and who had made the first English Bible translation. Humanist educated scholars also had influence, and resentment of papal taxation was strong, so England was white for Reformation harvest. William Tyndale produced another New Testament English translation in 1526, which King Henry VIII tried to suppress. It was published, however, and became the real basis for all subsequent English translations (including the King James Version) before the 20th Century. Since Henry VIII was pro-Catholic, Tyndale fled to mainland Europe to continue his reforming work. He was captured and burned as a heretic. His dying prayer was, “Open the King of England’s Eyes.” The Reformation everywhere sought to put the Bible in the hands, and also languages, of the people.

Henry VIII (ruled 1509-1547) He began his reign as a loyal Catholic and won the title “Defender of the Faith” by writing against the teachings of Martin Luther. However, he struggled mightily to make a male heir to his throne. He had six children with his wife, Catherine of Aragon. The only one that survived beyond infancy was a girl, Mary. Henry sought an annulment from the pope of his marriage to Catherine because she’d failed to give him an heir. Catherine’s nephew, Charles V, was the current Emperor of the Roman Empire, so the pope put off Henry’s request. Since the majority of England was anti-pope, in 1534 Henry obtained an act of Parliament declaring him “supreme head” of the Church of England. Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, grants Henry his annulment. A total of five other marriages were granted to Henry. Only the second of these wives, Jane Seymour, produces a male heir (Edward VI), and Jane dies a few days after Edward’s birth. Positively, however, in 1538, it is ordered that an English translation of the Bible is placed in every church for the people to read.

Edward VI (ruled 1547-1553) He was only nine when Henry VIII died, so the government was in the hands of advisors. They pushed a Protestant program of reform. Archbishop Cranmer writes the Book of Common Prayer, and the Forty-Two Articles. Revisions of these become, respectively, the most influential works, besides the Bible, in English worship and doctrinal standard.

Mary (ruled 1553-1558) She was the oldest child of Henry and so she succeeded her younger half-brother. She was loyal to the Catholic religion of her mother, Catherine, and cousin, Emperor Charles V. Mary repeals the Protestant legislation and recognizes papal authority. She persecutes the Protestants, producing even stronger anti-Roman sentiments in England, and earning her the nickname, “Bloody Mary”. Cranmer is forced to sign a recantation of his Protestant principles, and is burned. He reaches his hand into the fire first because he used the hand to sign the recantation. Many of the “Marian Exiles” find refuge in Geneva, Switzerland and come under the influence of John Calvin.

Elizabeth (1558-1603) She was the daughter of Henry by his second wife, Anne Boleyn. She proved to be one of England’s ablest and most loved rulers. She takes England into the *Via Media*, the “middle road”. This has been the distinction of the Church of England ever since. Papal supremacy was rejected and Elizabeth is declared “supreme governor” of the Church of England. The Lord’s Supper doctrine of transubstantiation is rejected and only two of seven sacraments are recognized. They are baptism and communion.

The Episcopal Churches of the English-speaking world are extensions of the Anglican Church in England. (*Episcopos* is the Greek word for *Overseer*. Episcopal churches take this name because they have a single human leader.)

The Catholic Reformation In Spain the Catholics were in stark contrast to those in Italy. Led by Cardinal Ximenes, it eliminated abuses and raised the moral and intellectual standards of its clergy. However, it also instituted the Inquisition, a terror movement to check the spread of Protestantism. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) replaces the monks, and is known for missionary zeal and excellent schools. The Italian Church implements these Spanish reform policies. When Spain fails to defeat England militarily, this sets the stage for the future; that America (settled by the English, Dutch, Germans, etc.) becomes Protestant (Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Mennonite) while Mexico, Central America, and South America (settled by the Spanish) become Catholic (evangelized and educated by the Jesuits).

Puritans Within the Anglican Church there was agitation against the wearing of prescribed robes in the worship services. As the Marian Exiles return from Geneva, they desire a more aggressive Protestantism and purification of the Church from all that would be a reminder of Rome. Thomas Cartwright becomes their leader. He advocates a change in the Church of England in favor of “presbyterian church polity” (*presbuteros* is the Greek word for *old man* which gets translated “elder”). In other words, the Puritans wanted a congregational church governed by a plurality of elders.

James I and the Church of Scotland The Church of Scotland had been reformed under Calvinist influence. John Knox (leader from 1555-1572) had studied while in Geneva. Christianity in Scotland eventually became known as Scottish Presbyterianism. King James VI of Scotland was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots. In 1603, he unites the thrones of England and Scotland and becomes King James I of England. He saw support for the monarchy in episcopal (single leader) church organization. He declared, “no bishop, no king”. He decided against the Puritans and Presbyterians and supported the Elizabethan religious model. Positively, however, in 1611 he authorizes a new English Bible translation, the King James Version.

The Puritans were growing as a political force and demanded a more radical and immediate reformation of the English Church. Puritan churches were called Congregational Churches. A group of Congregationalists went to Holland in 1609. They rejected infant baptism and established, in Amsterdam, the first recognizable “Baptist Church”. Out of this group came the “Pilgrims” who came to Plymouth on the Mayflower in 1620.