

ACTS Church History I & II

The following gives an overview of the last twenty centuries with some key characters and events. This is very much a superstructure to which the work you do will become the infrastructure. The GOE's (General Ordination Examinations) which tend to be used diagnostically, have over the last ten years neglected questions pertaining to the first fifteen centuries of the Church. These formative years provide however the foundations and framework for who we are as part of, "... the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

In relation to our identity it has been noted by a past Bishop of London Mandell Creighton(1901) that, " the formula which most explains the position of the Church of England is that it rests on an appeal to sound learning". This is not quite the whole picture of course, Henry Henson(1939) commented " The principle of the English Reformation was not so much sound learning as such...but a frank acceptance of sound learning as competent to revise the current tradition, both interpreting afresh the sacred text, and by certifying through independent research the true verdict of Christian antiquity."

These thoughts echo an earlier Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm

"I believe in order to understand"- reason and faith do belong together.

The history of the Church is part of the meta-narrative of God's salvation history and begins in a small city on the edge of the Roman Empire.

1. *Anno Domini 33 The Church begins in earnest in Jerusalem.

*Jewish War against the Romans, Jerusalem destroyed. Masada suicides

*The books of the Old Testament set by the remaining Jewish leaders

*The Church grows and spreads

*2nd Century, Apologists, Gnostics, Heretics (Marcion, Irenaeus), Montanism (Tertullian).

2. *3rd Century, St Alban & other countless martyrs, Diocletian persecution, beginnings of Donatism in Africa, Origen, defender of the faith.

*4th Century, Emperor Constantine, Nicaea, Arianism, Athanasius, books of the New Testament the Canon set. St Anthony – hermits (one who lives in the desert) monks (one who lives alone) however solitude was not a good thing (Gen. 2) so monastic communities were founded.

3. *5th Century, Chalcedon, Nestorius, Appollonarius, Oriental split, Coptic Churches, Jerome translates Bible into Latin the Vulgate, Augustine of Hippo, Pelagius, Patrick, Creeds
*6th Century, Growth of the Papacy, Columba, Benedict, Augustine baptizes King Ethelbert. Islam begins
*Synod of Whitby 664, Jerusalem falls to the Muslims, The Venerable Bede writes his church history in 731.

4. *9th Century, King Alfred the Great translates Christian writings into English.
*11th Century 1054 Roman/Orthodox split –“ filioque”, 1066 and all that
*1099 Jerusalem taken from the Muslims. Knights Hospitallers (St John) and Templars established.
*Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm and Peter Abelard write on the existence of God and the Atonement
*Many new cathedrals are built to the glory of God, both Gothic and Romanesque for various reasons.
* Richard of St Victor – On the Trinity
* St Thomas Beckett murdered Archbishop of Canterbury – Church v State - Henry II
*1187 Jerusalem taken back from the Crusaders (remains under various jurisdictions up to the present day)

5. *13th Century, Francis, Dominic – reformation and teaching
14th Century, Wycliffe translates Bible into English; Hus causes a stir in Bohemia
*15th Century, War of the Roses, continued Papal decay and disarray, humanism and the Renaissance, Erasmus produces a Greek New Testament, the printing press
* Byzantium / Constantinople has finally collapsed in 1452. The Muslim threat is encroaching on Europe. Refugees from the Middle East help add to the state of flux
*1492 Isabella and Ferdinand, remove all Muslims and Jews from Spain, Columbus sails the ocean blue

6. *16th Century...The Protestant Reformation, Luther, Calvin, Loyola, Anabaptists, Munster, Anglicanism, The Counter Reformation, Council of Trent(o)
*Disaffection throughout the remains of the Holy Roman Empire
* Most of Europe is made up of small kingdoms, no Germany or Italy, Spain is divided, England is rediscovering its self identity. Nationalism on the increase
* An Augustinian monk, Martin Luther rediscovers justification through faith, after struggling with assurance. A Dominican monk, Tetzl stirrs up Luther and the fire begins. The Duke of Saxony supports Luther against the Papacy
*King Henry VIII resents Rome’s power, and the English church becomes independent, under God and the Archbishop of Canterbury, rather than the Pope
*Churches in some German states as in other countries where there is state support

either expressly or tacitly declare independence, holding to newly accessible Scripture and tradition, or 'Sola Scriptura' in some cases such as Anabaptists or diverse apocalyptic groups leading to some dire situations eg Munster

CHURCH HISTORY II - 1500 – 2000

Six sessions with a focus on the emerging Anglican/Episcopal Church

1. Thomas Cranmer and the Book of Common Prayer. Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary The Elizabethan Settlement. Roman v. Reformed
2. Jewel, Hooker, King James Bible, Presbyterianism, Puritans, Jamestown, Donne, Laud, Cromwell and regicide, 1662 BCP Protestant/Catholic struggles, William & Mary, The Restoration
3. Wesley, Whitefield, The Holy Club, Methodism
The Revolutionary War, PECUSA emerges from the ashes 1789
4. Evangelical revival, Tractarianism and The Oxford Movement, Biblical criticism, Darwin, American Civil War, Reformed Episcopal Church
5. The First Lambeth Conference, Church Pension Fund, And The Glory Days (?)
1928 Prayer Book, Ecumenism, WCC, Vatican II, Civil Rights
6. Women's ordination, new 1979 Prayer Book, gradual decline, Anglican Communion grows, Lambeth 1998.

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