

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

- continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).
- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
    - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon’s life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn’s strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII's powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England’s ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry’s health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
- (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

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    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

- continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).
- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
    - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon’s life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn’s strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII’s powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England’s ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry’s health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
- (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

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    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

- continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).
- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
    - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon’s life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn’s strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII’s powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England’s ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry’s health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
  - (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
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- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).

- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
    - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon’s life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn’s strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII’s powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England’s ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry’s health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
- (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

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**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).

- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
    - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon's life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn's strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII's powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England's ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry's health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
  - (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
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  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

- continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).
- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
    - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon’s life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn’s strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII's powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England's ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry's health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
  - (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
  
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
  
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

- continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).
- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
    - a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
      - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
      - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
      - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
    - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
      - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
      - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
      - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
  5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
    - a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
    - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
    - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
  6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
    - a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
    - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
    - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
      - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
      - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon's life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn's strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII's powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England's ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry's health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
- (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI.**

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).

- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
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8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
  - b. If Catherine was right about Arthur, then there was no affinity (because they had not consummated the marriage), but only public honesty, which was never dispensed. Henry, then, could have obtained a divorce on Rome's own principles.
  
9. **Anne Boleyn** (1504-19? - 1536).
  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon’s life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn’s strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII's powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England’s ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry’s health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
- (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI” (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry's successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.

English Reformation  
(Ecclesiastical Reformation under Henry VIII)

**I. Introduction.**

- A. The English Reformation is full of colorful personalities.
  - 1. Such persons as:
    - a. Henry VIII.
    - b. Anne Boleyn.
    - c. Thomas More.
    - d. Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary.
    - e. Elizabeth Tudor.
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots, not to be confused with Bloody Mark.
  - 2. And of course many movies have been made that help fill out the settings:
    - a. The Six Wives of Henry VIII.
    - b. A Man for All Seasons.
    - c. God's Outlaw.
    - d. Anne of a Thousand Days.
    - e. Elizabeth R (Regina).
    - f. Mary Queen of Scots.
- B. Out of it comes Anglicanism.
  - 1. A unique form of Christianity, a middle way between Protestants and Catholics, yet clearly a Protestant Church. It certainly saw itself as a part of the Reformed Church in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - 2. Different emphases dictated by the social, political, and economic climates, cause different effects on the thought and direction of a church. The English Church insisted on unification of action, rather than of thought, which gave rise to the Book of Common Prayer.

**II. Background.**

- A. Theological and intellectual background.
  - 1. The Lollards.
    - a. Organized by **John Wycliffe\***, they had never been stamped out.
    - b. Rather, their teachings had circulated in the homes of the more humble people of England through an underground movement throughout the fifteenth century.
    - c. "Their emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and the need of a personal relation to Christ was revived with the emergence of the political reformation in England in the first quarter of the sixteenth century" (Cairnes, 327).
    - d. The Reformation moved most quickly where Wycliffe had the strongest following. The records of the Inquisition showed a trickle of Lollards being turned in during the intervening time. Overall, there was a low level of interest in the Reformation in England and among the English.

2. The biblical humanists.
  - a. Oxford reformers at Oxford University, such as **John Colet** (ca. 1466-1519), dean of Saint Paul's Church, began to study the Bible in the original languages through the help of **Erasmus's** Greek New Testament and to explain it to their people.
  - b. They were extremely critical of the failure they saw in the Roman church and desired to bring reform.
  
3. Biblical Reformers.
  - a. **William Tyndale** (ca. 1494-1536).
    - (i) Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Erasmus, then with Luther, and at last with Zwingli.
    - (ii) He decided to put the Bible in reach of the common people of England.
      - (a) They could not read the Latin Vulgate.
      - (b) Copies of Wycliffe's translation were scarce, and the English language had changed so much that they could not understand it (Kuiper, 222).
      - (c) He published two editions, each of 3000 copies, of his English NT at Worms in 1525.
      - (d) It was translated from Erasmus's Greek NT and was the first printed English NT.
      - (e) It was distributed in England by friendly merchants.
      - (f) In the next 10 years, seven more editions followed, as well as other books.
      - (g) Next, he translated parts of the OT and that in the fact of fierce persecution and bitter opposition.
    - (iii) Finally, his enemies caught up with him, and on October 6, 1536, Tyndale suffered a martyr's death near Brussels.
    - (iv) "His translation did much to further the cause of the Reformation in England and also in Scotland. God's Word again proved to be more powerful than the sword" (Kuiper, 222).
  - b. **Miles Coverdale** (ca. 1488-1568).
    - (i) Studied at Cambridge, where he received a bachelor of canon law in 1513, became priest of Norwich in 1514, entered the convent of the Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523, who probably influenced him in favor of Protestantism.
    - (ii) When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defense.
    - (iii) Shortly afterwards, he left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching (Wikipedia).
    - (iv) In 1535, he published the first complete printed English translation of the OT.

- (v) In 1537, some of his translations were included in the Matthew Bible, which was the first complete printed English Bible.
- (vi) He also edited “Cranmer’s Bible” in 1540.

c. **Luther** (1483-1546).

- (i) Luther’s writings also circulated widely in England by 1525. His books were brought into England by merchants; they were being read in the universities and in the Renaissance circles.
- (ii) “Scholars at Oxford and Cambridge studied his *Babylonian Captivity* with relish because of its criticisms of the abuses of the Roman Church” (Cairnes, 328). In it, Luther acknowledged only two sacraments.
- (iii) In 1521, Henry VIII wrote a tract against this work entitled, *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, dedicated to Pope Leo X, for which the pope gave him the title, “Defender of the Faith,” a title used by Protestant rulers of England since that time.
- (iv) Public burnings of Luther’s books didn’t stop the spread of his ideas, and through them, men such as Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer were attracted to Protestant ideas (ibid.).

d. **Thomas Bilney** (ca. 1495-1531), who had been converted through the reading of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in 1516, began to preach Protestant messages. He influenced other young Cambridge men to think along the same lines as himself.

- e. The direct cause of the Reformation in England, however, was Henry VIII’s desire to have a male heir.
- f. Everywhere the church’s relationship to the state had to be dealt with. Things were certainly no different in Henry VIII’s time.

B. Political background.

1. England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had suffered from warfare:
  - a. The 100 Years War with France (mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 15<sup>th</sup> C), which was fought over the question of how much of France the King of England would rule.
  - b. The Civil War of the Roses in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when the two houses of Lancaster (Red Rose) and York (white) fought for supremacy.
  - c. York dominated for a time (**Edward IV and Richard III**), but it was finally defeated by Henry Tudor (**Henry VII**).
  - d. Henry married the princess of York and became Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty, which left a great mark on English history: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, until finally succeeded by the Stewarts.
2. Henry VII inherited a country devastated by war, so he began by seeking stability: he desired no further war, to improve the economy, to increase military strength.
  - a. He had several daughters, but only two sons: the older he named **Arthur** to invoke the glory of the old days of Camelot, his younger son, he named

**Henry.** The older son received grooming to be king, while the younger son – talented, charming and cruel – was left to himself.

- b. However, in 1503 Arthur died in an epidemic, Henry at 12 becomes the heir apparent. This causes a problem for Henry VII.
  - (i) He had advanced his kingdom through the marriage he had arranged between Arthur and **Catherine of Aragon** of Spain, and she came with a rather large dowry. With the death of Arthur, Catherine and the dowry needed to return to Spain.
  - (ii) He therefore suggested that Henry become engaged to Catherine. But there were two impediments: Catherine was 7 years older than Henry, which was not insurmountable by itself. But it was contrary to canon law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. Henry, therefore, sought for a papal bull of affinity, a special dispensation that would allow his son, Henry, to marry Catherine.
3. In 1509, Henry VII died, and **Henry VIII** succeeded him on the throne.
  - a. He was 18 years old. He married Catherine, which indicates that he was not opposed to her. Catherine was 25 years old.
  - b. At that time, Henry's kingdom, composed of England and Wales, had a population of 4 million, Spain 8 million and France 18 million. The more people one had, the greater the army, which was an index of one's power.
  - c. The government income for the Tudors was 150,000 pounds sterling, France 800,000 pounds sterling, the Hapsburg empire 1,100,000 pounds sterling.
  - d. England, at this time, was merely a second rate power.

### III. Reformation under Henry VIII.

#### A. The King's Great Matter.

1. Henry continued the aims of his father: to bring stability to the realm, and to guarantee the succession of his heir.
  - a. In English Law, a daughter could succeed her father as queen, though it had never happened before.
  - b. In France, the law prohibited this. Because of this, Henry wanted a son.
2. In 1511, Catherine had a son, but he died 7 weeks later.
  - a. In 1516, she had a daughter, **Mary**. She had several more children after this, but only Mary survived.
  - b. By 1525, Catherine was 40 years old, and Henry was concerned for a son. At this point, he turned to the possibility of divorce.
3. When Catherine failed to produce an heir, Henry began to have some theological reflections.
  - a. He believed his marriage was cursed because he had married his brother's wife. He found some texts in Scripture that appeared to support his position, although rejected the law of the Levirate (a woman's marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, to

continue his line; Deu. 25:5-10, from the Latin word *levir*, meaning husband's brother).

- b. He argued that divine law forbade his marriage, though canon law permitted it. He had married Catherine on the wrong grounds, therefore the marriage was cursed and should be annulled.
  - c. There were mixed feelings among those of importance. Some said the king should have what he wanted. Other said not.
  - d. This situation became known as the king's great quest or matter.
4. What was standing in Henry's way?
- a. Canon Law stated that there were three impediments to marriage:
    - (i) Consanguinity: when two are too closely related by blood – this could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (ii) Affinity: when two are too closely related by marriage – this too could be dispensed by the pope.
    - (iii) Public honesty: whenever the public believed that an impediment of consanguinity or affinity existed, even if it didn't really – this could be dispensed by the church.
  - b. Henry had the problem of affinity.
    - (i) The Catholics said the marriage wasn't cursed because it had been dispensed.
    - (ii) Also, her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. In the Medieval Church, there was no marriage if there was no consummation.
    - (iii) Therefore, the Catholics believed there were no grounds for Henry's divorce.
5. Henry sent missions to Rome to obtain his freedom from Catherine.
- a. **Charles V**, the holy Roman Emperor, was displeased by Henry's attempt to be freed from his aunt, and so he invaded Rome in 1527 and captured the pope, **Clement VII**.
  - b. He was determined that Catherine not be humiliated in public.
  - c. Henry's attempts to get the approval of Rome failed. So what was he to do? He could make an appeal to English history to say that the king is in charge of church matters and distance himself from papal jurisdiction.
6. Henry, in the mean time, had fallen in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the sister of one of his mistresses Mary Boleyn, and had decided to marry her.
- a. He put pressure on his minister **Cardinal Wolsey** to obtain a divorce.
  - b. When Wolsey failed, Henry dismissed him, and in 1529, **Thomas More** was appointed chancellor.
  - c. Things became more difficult when in 1532/33, Anne became pregnant. The pressure to put Catherine away became greater.
    - (i) Anne was not the first with whom he had committed adultery.
    - (ii) He also had done so with Anne's older sister Mary, thus creating another impediment of affinity, but this one somehow didn't trouble him.

7. He finally obtained a divorce from Catherine in 1533, when the marriage was officially annulled.
  - a. To keep her from appealing to Rome – an appeal which she almost certainly would have won – he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which repudiated papal jurisdiction in England, and made the king the head of the English church, thus advancing the English Reformation.
  - b. He secretly married Anne in January of 1533, so it is said, and she bore a daughter to the king in September, **Elizabeth**.
  - c. Catherine died in 1536 from cancer.
  
8. Historians note that there really was a loophole for Henry in his quest to divorce Catherine.
  - a. Ordinarily, when one sought a dispensation for consanguinity and affinity, then you would also get a dispensation for public honesty. However, Henry only obtained a dispensation for affinity.
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  - a. “[Anne] maintained a strict control over her maids’ morals and spiritual well-being, chastising Margaret Shelton when she was caught writing poetry in her prayer book. She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors, chaplains, and religious advisers. Her favourite was the religious moderate **Matthew Parker**, who would become one of the chief architects of the modern Church of England under her daughter Elizabeth I. Her reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe, and she was hailed as a heroine by Protestant figures; even Martin Luther viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. She also saved the life of the French radical Nicolas Bourbon, who was sentenced to death by the French Inquisition. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon's life as a favour to the English queen. Bourbon would later refer to her as "the Queen whom God loves". Although she championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English, she dared not challenge the sacred Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. She was also a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundations. She and her ladies would often sew shirts for the poor. . . . Boleyn's married life was stormy; the royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry's frequent infidelities greatly wounded his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress. For his part, Henry found Boleyn's strident opinions about religion and politics irritating, and he saw her failure to give him a son as a betrayal. Her second pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage in the summer of 1534” (Wikipedia).

- b. After her delivery of their stillborn son, Henry accused her of adultery and incest. She was tried, convicted and beheaded in the tower in 1536. Henry had even imported a professional headsman to do the job.

10. **Jane Seymour** (1507/8-1537).

- a. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later.
- b. Seymour was also a Protestant.
- c. She finally produced a male heir, Edward, in October of 1537.
- d. She lived 12 days afterwards and died of complications.

11. **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

- a. In 1540, “Henry VIII's powerful minister, Thomas Cromwell, endeavoring to strengthen England's ties to Protestant Europe, conspired to persuade the king to take the Flemish Anne of Cleves as his fourth wife. Hans Holbein was engaged to paint an entrancing portrait of the princess and the king, as hoped, anticipated meeting his new bride with lustful jubilation. When she finally arrived, however, the princess turned out to be rather more homely than the portrait suggested. ‘You have sent me,’ the disappointed king exclaimed, ‘a Flanders mare!’” (Anecdote.com).
- b. Apparently, her face was left scarred from a bout with smallpox. Sadly, this retarded the growth of Protestantism and marked the end for Cromwell, who was later executed on trumped-up charges of treason. After six months, the marriage was annulled.

12. **Catherine Howard** (1520/25-1542).

- a. Eighteen days later, Henry married Catherine Howard, daughter of a staunch Roman Catholic family.
- b. But by 1540, Henry's health was declining from syphilis (probably the reason for all of his stillborn children).
- c. Catherine was not attracted to Henry and soon found others. She was beheaded in 1542 on the grounds of adultery.

13. **Catherine Parr** (1512/17-1548).

- a. In 1543, he married Catherine Parr. Once Henry was the head of the English Church, there was no longer any resistance to his marriages. After the first annulment, his dissolutions were handled more legally.
- b. Catherine was a devout and sincere Protestant whose strength of character and religious convictions greatly affected her stepdaughter, Elizabeth I. Catherine outlived Henry, who died in 1547.

B. The Break with Rome.

1. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535).

- a. “Sir Thomas More (7 February 1478 — 6 July 1535) was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and a Catholic martyr. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar at Oxford university and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532.

He is recognized as having a major influence on developing equity as an additional legal system in English law. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be the supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor" (Wikipedia).

- b. More had been appointed chancellor in Wolsey's place when Wolsey failed to obtain a divorce for the king from Catherine of Aragon. In 1532, when he knew that the king had determined to pursue separation from Rome, being a good Roman Catholic, he resigned.

## 2. **Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556).

- a. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, believing that Cranmer would support his policies and find solutions to his problems.
- b. "This appointment by Henry, despite the consent of the Pope, shows that he had given up the hope of getting consent for an annulment from Rome. . . . In May, Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Aragon void and Anne Boleyn his lawful wife. In doing this, Cranmer went directly against the Pope's command. In September, Anne gave birth to Henry's second daughter Princess Elizabeth. Cranmer was the godfather" (Wikipedia).

## 3. **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540).

- a. In 1533, Thomas Cromwell drafted the Restraint of Appeals, passed by Parliament, that forbade any churchman or layman to appeal to Rome for any legal matter, effectively cutting off Rome's influence.
- b. This was followed in 1534 by a series of important acts:
  - (i) Restraint of Annates [tax on the first year's income from a benefice, paid by the clergy to the pope] (Thomas Cromwell attempted to have the annates redirected from the pope to the king in 1532, but the House of Lords wouldn't allow this. The act finally passed in 1534, but abolished annates altogether.
  - (ii) The Submission of the Clergy Act: where the clergy were not allowed to formulate church laws without the King's license and assent.
  - (iii) The English Act of Succession: "whereby Parliament decided the heir to the Crown of England from the children of King Henry VIII. The Act made Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, the true successor to the Crown by declaring Princess Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a bastard. The Act also required all subjects, if commanded, to swear an oath to recognize this Act as well as the King's supremacy. Any one who refused to take an oath was subject to a charge of treason. This Act was overridden in 1536, when Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and was stripped of the title of princess following the conviction and execution of her mother. In 1537, Edward was born to Jane Seymour, Henry's third

wife. Since Edward was male and both of his half-sisters had been removed from the line of succession, he became the heir apparent. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, helped to reconcile the king with his two daughters. With the Act of Succession of 1544, Mary and Elizabeth were reinserted into the line of succession behind their half-brother Edward, Edward's children (if any) and Catherine Parr's children (if any). Under the law, however, both Mary and Elizabeth were still illegitimate" (Wikipedia).

- (iv) The Act of Supremacy: "an Act of the Parliament of England under King Henry VIII of England declaring that he was 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England' and that the English crown shall enjoy 'all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity'. Henry, who had been declared 'Defender of the Faith' (*Fidei Defensor*) for his pamphlet accusing Martin Luther of heresy, was now confirmed as head of the Church in England. This made official the English Reformation that had been brewing since 1527, and caused a long-lasting distrust between England and the Catholic Church. The act was a result of Henry's desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII had refused to grant. Another act caused any act of allegiance to the Pope (or any other non-Anglican religion, for that matter) to be considered treason. This act was repealed in 1554 by Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I, who was a staunch Catholic" (Wikipedia).
- (v) These acts effectively cut England off from Rome. None of these changes were theological. Rather, they reflected changes in the way the government would conduct its business. Thomas Cromwell further convinced the king to dissolve the monasteries and to take the wealth for himself.

#### 4. Thomas More's death.

- a. The Act of Succession was a great blow to **Thomas More**. "In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church 'as far the law of Christ allows'. In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request."
- b. "The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness - but his friendship with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her."

- c. “Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.”
- d. “On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*.”
- e. “On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. **Thomas Cromwell**, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.”
- f. “Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that ‘no temporal man may be head of the spirituality’. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): ‘See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself’; while on the scaffold he declared that he died ‘the king's good servant but God's first.’ Another belief is that he remarked to the executioner that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed. More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury” (Wikipedia).
- g. Lest we are too grieved over the death of Thomas More, we need to remember that he was an ardent Roman Catholic, who would have killed all the Protestants, if he could.
  - (i) “More had come to believe that the rise of Protestantism represented a grave threat to social and political order in Christian Europe. During his tenure as Lord Chancellor, he wrote several books in which he defended

Catholicism and supported the existing anti-heresy laws. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England. As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others, some of whom were interrogated under torture in his own house” (Wikipedia).

- (ii) More died a martyr to his Roman Catholic conscience and was canonized by the church of Rome as the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers (Wikipedia).

### C. Theological Reform?

1. In 1536, the Church of England under Cranmer adopted the 10 Articles: “In summary, the Ten Articles asserted:
  - a. The binding authority of the Bible, the three œcumenical creeds, and the first four œcumenical councils.
  - b. The necessity of baptism for salvation, even in the case of infants (Art. II. says that ‘infants ought to be baptized;’ that, dying in infancy, they ‘shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not ;’ that the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians are ‘detestable heresies, and utterly to be condemned.’)
  - c. The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, which are declared ‘expedient and necessary.’
  - d. The substantial, real, corporal presence of Christ’s body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the eucharist.
  - e. Justification by faith, joined with charity and obedience.
  - f. The use of images in churches.
  - g. The honoring of saints and the Virgin Mary.
  - h. The invocation of saints.
  - i. The observance of various rites and ceremonies as good and laudable, such as clerical vestments, sprinkling of holy water, bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday.
  - j. The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead in purgatory” (Wikipedia).
  
2. In 1537, The Institution of the Christian Man (also called The Bishop’s Book), written by a committee of Bishops headed by Thomas Cranmer was published. The purpose of this book, along with the Ten Articles, was to implement the reforms of Henry in separating from the Roman Church and to establish the Anglican Church. It contained the same doctrines as the Ten Articles, along with a denial of purgatory. It was as far as Henry wanted to go. This work was later superceded by the King’s Book.
  
3. In 1539, the Six Articles were adopted by an act of Parliament.
  - a. They were also called the Bloody Statute and the Bloody Whip with Six Strings.
  - b. They reaffirmed Henry’s leaning towards a conservative theology. Although Henry was now in control of the English Church, he did not vary from the

teachings of the Roman Church. The articles reaffirmed the views of Rome on such issues as:

1. Transubstantiation.
2. The reasonableness of withholding the cup from the laity during communion.
3. Clerical celibacy.
4. Observance of vows of chastity.
5. Permission for private masses.
6. The importance of auricular confession.

- c. “Penalties under the act ranged from imprisonment and fine to death. However, its severity was reduced by an act of 1540 which retained the death penalty only for denial of transubstantiation, and a further act limited its arbitrariness. The Catholic emphasis of the doctrine commended in the articles is not matched by the ecclesiastical reforms Henry undertook in the following years, such as the enforcement of the necessity of the English Bible and the insistence upon the abolition of all shrines (both 1541). The Six Articles were opposed by the covertly married Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer; the reforming bishops **Hugh Latimer** and Nicholas Shaxton resigned their sees in response to the act and thereafter spent time in custody. After Henry's death, the articles were repealed and replaced by his son, the protestant Edward VI’ (Wikipedia).
- d. Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves further enforced his position on the articles, since the king was not happy. And it was at this time that Thomas Cromwell fell into disfavor.

4. Finally, in 1543, a revision of The Institution of the Christian Man was published entitled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man. It was attributed to Henry and was very much like the Six Articles.
5. To sum up: Under Henry himself there was little theological change. He did succeed in separating England from Roman authority and in filling church appointments with staunch Protestants, such as Cranmer. But little was done to reform the doctrine of the English Church. This will be left to Henry’s successor: **Edward VI**.

\*Names in bold correspond to Powerpoint slides.