

A Chronology of Events Affecting the Church of Christ from the First Century to the Restoration

These notes draw dates and events from timelines of www.wikipedia.com. The interpretation of events and the application of scripture to these events, as they affect the church of Christ, which was built by the Lord (Matt 16:18), remain the responsibility of this writer.

7. Protestant Reformation: 16th Century to the 17th Century and the Age of Reason

1517 95 Theses of Martin Luther



This act began the Protestant Reformation and led to the founding of the Lutheran Church. The theses protested against indulgences, which were a full or partial remission of temporal punishment for sins which have already been forgiven and granted by the Catholic Church. Luther objected to the abuses in selling and granting indulgences and nailed to the Wittenburg church door. Luther asserted a total dependence on the Bible which generated Anabaptism and Protestantism. Luther taught that salvation came as a free gift of God's grace through faith.

Wittenberg: Melchior Lotter d.J., 1522. [From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

He married, setting a precedent for Protestant priests to marry. In his later years, he became strongly anti-semitic, calling for Jewish homes to be burned, synagogues, burned, money confiscated, and liberty curtailed.

1521 Papal bull

It pleases the Roman Pontiff: the name of the papal bull excommunicating Luther.

1522 Wittenburg began celebrating Lutheran masses instead of Catholic masses.

Luther translated the New Testament into German which he had in 1522, and he and his collaborators completed the translation of the Old Testament in 1534, when the whole Bible was published. Placing the Bible in the common language influenced great changes for the church culture in Germany.

1525 Anabaptist movement began.

The Anabaptists (re-baptised) rejected the practices of wearing wedding rings, taking oaths, and participating in civil government.

They adhered to a literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount and believer's baptism. Believers' baptism was called credobaptism. The doctrine of Anabaptists was considered heresy at the time. Believer's baptism (aka. credobaptism) has passed to many protestant churches and holds that a person is baptized on the basis of his or her profession of faith in Jesus and as admission into a local community of faith.

Believers' baptism contrast to infant baptism by holding that salvation (by grace) and church membership are gifts of God to the recipient only. On the other hand, infant baptism – a sacrament – holds salvation and church membership can pass from parents to child. To Anabaptists, infants are excluded because they cannot hear the gospel message and believe it;

neither can they repent and confess Christ as the Son of God.

Baptists held the believers' baptism has no saving grace, but it is only a public expression of faith, symbolically representing the inner conversion and faith of the person being baptized.

The New Testament teaches explicitly in Mark 16:16 that those baptized are to be believers and those saved must be baptized believers: "16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." Peter taught in 1 Peter 3:20-21 that baptism saves: "21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also." Paul was taught that baptism washed away sins in Acts 22:16: "16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." Finally, Peter preaches that repentance and baptism are essential for the forgiveness of sins in Acts 2:38: "38 Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.'"

Neither believers' baptism nor infant baptism have foundation in the scriptures.

1526 Tyndale's New Testament



From:Foxe's Book of Martyrs

[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

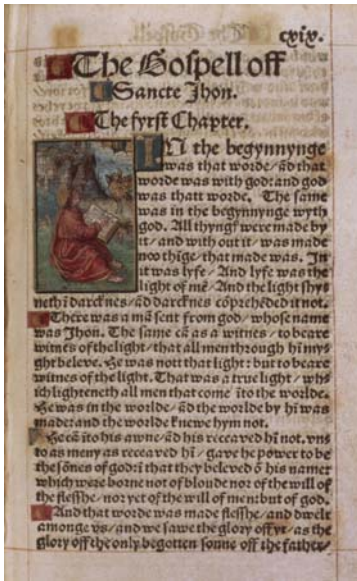
This English translation rejected *priest* for *elder* and *church* for *congregation*. The word *church* returned in the King James translation. Henry VIII banned it.

The word *church* in the New Testament was more appropriately *assembly* or *congregation of called out people*. It comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*: from *ek*, "out of," and *klesis*, "a calling" (*kaleo*, "to call"), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of state.

"It has two applications to companies of Christians, (a) to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, "I will build My Church," Matt 16:18, and which is further described as "the Church which is His Body," Eph 1:22; 5:23, (b) in the singular number (e. g., Matt 18:17, RV marg., "congregation"), to a company consisting of professed believers, e. g., Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:13; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 3:5, and in the plural, with reference to churches in a district." (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

In contrast, the English word *church* derives from an entirely different Greek noun: Middle English *chirche*, from Old English *cirice*, ultimately from Late Greek *kyriakon*, from Greek, neuter of *kyriakos* of the lord, from *kyrios* lord, master. . . (from Dictionary and Thesaurus,- Merriam-Webster: www.merriam-webster.com/.)

One can easily see how this choice of English words led the people down a conceptional path far, far away from the New



First page of the Gospel of Saint John, from the 1526 Peter Schoeffer printing of William Tyndale's English translation of the Bible. [From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

Preparations to burn the body of William Tyndale. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.



The Horizon Book of the Elizabethan World (which credits the Folger Shakespeare Library), American Heritage / Houghton Mifflin, 1967, p. 73 [From Wikipedia, the free

Testament meaning. Therefore, meanings of the word *church*, developing over the centuries, compound our difficulty in understanding the New Testament. These are the contemporary meanings:

1. A building for public and especially Christian worship
2. The clergy or officialdom of a religious body
3. Often capitalized : a body or organization of religious believers: as *a* : the whole body of Christians *b* : denomination <the Presbyterian church> *c* : congregation
4. A public divine worship <goes to church every Sunday>
5. The clerical profession <considered the church as a possible career>

The word for *elder(s)* holds a unique meaning in the New Testament—a meaning now lost to most of the denominational world.

Vine summarized the meaning in the New Testament: ELDER *presbuteros* . . . "an old man, an elder," . . . (3) in the Christian churches [elders] were appointed to have the spiritual care of, and to exercise oversight over, the churches. To these the term "bishops," *episkopoi*, or "overseers," is applied (see Acts 20, v. 17 with v. 28, and Titus 1:5 and 7), the latter term indicating the nature of their work and *presbuteroi*, their maturity of spiritual experience. The divine arrangement seen throughout the NT was for a plurality of these to be appointed in each church, Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5. The duty of "elders" is described by the verb *episkopeo*. They were appointed according as they had given evidence of fulfilling the divine qualifications, Titus 1:6 to 9; cf. 1 Tim 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:2; (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

Comparing the word *priest* in the New Testament to the acquired meanings in the denominations shows a clear difference. *Priest* in the New Testament referred to all the children of God. Vines teaches:

PRIEST; 1. hierous (

“ . . . all believers, from Jews and Gentiles, are constituted "a kingdom of priests," Rev 1:6 (see above), "a holy priesthood," 1 Peter 2:5, and "royal," v. 9. The NT knows nothing of a sacerdotal class in contrast to the laity; all believers are commanded to offer the sacrifices mentioned in Rom 12:1; Phil 2:17; 4:18; Heb 13:15,16; 1 Peter 2:5; (d) of Christ, Heb 5:6; 7:11,15,17,21; 8:4 (negatively).” (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

The Restoration Movement in the 19th century restored these meanings in the church as matters of faith and practice.

encyclopedia]

Almost 300 years after Tyndale presented them in his translation, they attained their original meaning in the restored New Testament church of Christ. He could not overcome the idea of the church as a denomination, capable of dictating doctrine nor the idea of the clergy composed of those with the exclusive right to administer sacraments for a congregation composed of the laity.

1531



He attacked the custom of fasting during Lent, corruption in the hierarchy, celibate clergy, transubstantiation, and images in places of worship; and he advanced a communion liturgy in place of mass. His death illustrated the evil of the church/state bond where princes of Protestant states and princes of Catholic states warred against each other to the death of their people in the name of the same god.

Huldrych Zwingli was killed during the Second War of Kappel.

Portrait of Ulrich Zwingli after his death 1531 by Hans Asper (1499-1571)[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

1534 Henry VIII ; Church of England



He established a new, independent church, the Church of England (Anglican), considered still Catholic but Reformed. Henry VIII wanted an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon so he could marry Anne Boleyn. Pope Clement VII refused the annulment. Eventually, Henry, although theologically a doctrinal Catholic, took the position of Supreme Head of the Church of England to ensure the annulment of his marriage. He was excommunicated by Pope Paul III.

In 1525, Henry VIII became enamoured of Anne and began pursuing her. She resisted all his attempts to seduce her, refusing to become his mistress as had her sister, Mary Boleyn. It soon became the one absorbing object of Henry's desires to annul his marriage to Queen Catherine, so he would be free to marry Anne. When it became clear that Pope Clement VII would not annul the marriage, the breaking of the power of the Catholic Church in England began.

Anne Boleyn, who was the mother of Queen Elizabeth, was beheaded in 1536. [Portrait and some text from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

Portrait of Henry VIII, Hans Holbein the Younger, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

1535 Thomas More

When he refused to accept King Henry VIII as the supreme head of the church, he was executed. In 1535 More was tried and executed for treason by beheading for denying that the king was the Supreme Head of the Church of England.

More coined the word "utopia" - a name he gave to the ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in *Utopia*, published in 1516. He was an important counsellor to Henry VIII of England.

Porträt des Thomas Morus Hans Holbein the Younger From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



1536 Tyndale was put to death.

He opposed Henry VIII's divorce on the grounds that it was unscriptural. Tyndale was seized in Antwerp in 1535. He was tried on a charge of heresy in 1536 and condemned to death. Tyndale "was strangled to death while tied at the stake, and then his dead body was burned". Tyndale's final words, spoken "at the stake with a fervent zeal, and a loud voice", were reported as "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes." [From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

English ecclesiastical authorities ordered his Bible burned.

1536 John Calvin



Bibliothèque de Genève Anonymus; from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Calvinism was born with his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin followed Zwingli and establish the doctrine that led to the Reformed churches. The doctrine is summarized by the Five Points of Calvinism. The five points are often represented by the letters in the word TULIP:

Total Depravity: The original sin of Adam makes all men born totally depraved.

Unconditional Election: God elects those he has predetermined to be saved.

Limited Atonement: Jesus shed blood atones only for the sins of the elect.

Irresistible Grace: The elect cannot resist the grace of God.

Perserverance of the Saints: The elect cannot fall from the irresistible grace of God.

He defined the church as the body of believers who placed Christ as its head. By definition, there was only one "catholic" or "universal" Church. The ministers of the Church are described from a passage from Ephesians, and they consisted

of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and doctors (teachers). To him, the first three offices were temporary, limited to the time of the New Testament. He also believed that the civil and church authorities were separate and should not interfere with each other.

He also advanced a presbytery form of church governance. His teachings influenced directly the Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

1542 Roman inquisition

Pope Paul III established these inquisitions to combat protestantism in Italy and southern France. Local tribunals had the power to try people for heresy.

1560 Scots Confession

This confession led to the church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland is a presbyterian church, following Calvin's principles.

1572 John Knox



John Knox founded the Presbyterian Church, splitting with the Lutherans and church of England for whom he had worked. He had spent time with John Calvin and was influenced by his doctrine and his ideas of presbyterian governance.

John and Alexander Campbell would come from this background to lead the Restoration Movement of the 19th century in America.

The Preaching of John Knox before the Lords of Congregation, 10 June 1559 by Sir David Wilkie. Owned by the National Trust, Petworth House, Sussex, UK.[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]