

SERMON – 10/28/07

Christianity's Family Tree - Anglicanism

We've been journeying together over the past 5 weeks, looking at how the Christian church has developed over the centuries.

- Today we'll continue that journey... but we'll also get a unique glimpse into the way Christianity spread here in the islands!
 - Welcome to Week 5 in our ongoing series entitled, “Christianity's Family Tree – What Other Christians Believe and Why?”
 - Today we'll get to know our Anglican brothers and sisters a little more closely...
- But our story today begins here in Hawaii with King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma.
 - **Alexander Liholiho**, as a member of the Hawaiian royal family, visited England at the age of 15... he attended worship services at Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral in London... and St. George's Chapel, Windsor.
 - It was here that his heart connected with the doctrines & rituals of the Anglican Church... and felt it was more compatible with a monarchical government like Hawaii, than New England Protestantism that had spread so rapidly.
 - **Emmalani** was the granddaughter of Englishman John Young & his second wife, High Chiefess **Kaoana'eha**... she was then adopted by her aunt, Grace Kama'iku'i Young & her husband, Dr. Thomas Rooke.
 - Dr. Rooke was an English surgeon living in Honolulu, serving as the court physician when Emma was born, and a staunch member of the Church of England.
 - It comes as no surprise, then that when these two were married, they issued an invitation to the Episcopal Church (that was the Anglican branch of Christianity in the US) to come to Hawaii.
 - That makes the Episcopal Church the only Christian denomination in Hawaii that was personally invited to come to the islands... everyone else came solely on their missionary zeal.

Before we get too far into discussing the Episcopal Church here in Hawaii, though... let's backtrack a bit, and find out how it came to be a branch of the family tree of Christianity.

- Pastor Adam Hamilton, in his study book on this very series reminds us that Christianity's 16th Century reform movement spread rapidly across the continent of Europe.
 - In the short time following Luther & Calvin, nearly half of Europe had separated from the Roman Catholic Church to form their own churches (predominantly Reformed or Lutheran).
 - Christianity in England began to experience much of the same discontent that it had earlier in other parts of Europe.
 - “Fifteenth century English Christianity had in it much corruption & decay. Many of the devout were saying that the monasteries had outlived their usefulness and that the monks were idle and ignorant. Hundreds of clergy had concubines.” (*Kenneth Scott Latourette's A History of Christianity*)
 - British monarchs were increasingly resentful of the outside influence of the pope in their internal affairs.
 - Earnest people of faith like John Wycliffe & William Tyndale were among the many calling for reform of the church.
- But it was a king's desire for an heir that ultimately led the English church to split from the Roman Catholic Church and become the Church of England.
 - At age 18, King Henry VIII married his brother's widow, Katherine of Aragon. She had multiple miscarriages and one son, Henry, who lived only for 2 months... she gave the king no surviving male offspring.
 - Along came Anne Boleyn, who caught the King's eye... so Henry asked for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine. The pope refused to allow it.
 - So in 1533, Henry decided to ignore the pope, and marry Anne anyway. The pope responded by excommunicating him from the Church.
 - King Henry & the British Parliament in turn removed the Church of England from the pope's control... and declared that King Henry VIII was “the only Supreme Head in Earth of the Church of England.”
- It's important to note that King Henry didn't intend to change any of the church's doctrines or practices... except to no longer have the pope in control.

- He understood the Church of England to be the CATHOLIC Church of England.
- During his reign, a few Lutherans & other Protestants were even put to death, including William Tyndale.
- Henry died in 1547... his sickly son, **Edward VI**, succeeded him (Edward's mother was Jane Seymour, Henry's 3rd wife, in case you were keeping score... she died shortly after giving birth).
- Edward was only 9 when he came to the throne, and he died at the age of 16; but during his short reign, influential Protestants (predominantly Calvinists) came to England, spurring reforms in the Church.
- Clergy were allowed to marry; and the first Book of Common Prayer (a book in the language of the people for daily prayers and worship) was prepared.
- After Edward's brief reign, his older half-sister, **Mary** (Catherine's daughter), came to power.
- Unlike Edward, who was Protestant, Mary held strong Catholic convictions.
- During her 5-year reign, she sought to turn back the Protestant reforms and bring the Church of England back under Roman authority.
- Married clergy were relieved of their duties, and some of the leading reformers were arrested and either beheaded or burned at the stake. It was this persecution that led some to call her "Bloody Mary."
- In 25-years, England had gone from being Roman Catholic to English Catholic to Calvinist Protestant and back to Roman Catholic.
 - The situation could have led to chaos had it not been for the strong & wise leadership of **Queen Elizabeth I**, the half-sister of Mary and Edward, who came to the throne in 1558 and reigned for 45 years.
 - With large numbers of both Catholics & Protestants, Elizabeth tried to forge, in the national church, a middle way (or "via media").
 - The church aimed to draw from both Catholic and Protestant traditions... never returning to Catholicism... but not fully embracing Luther or Calvin either.
 - After Elizabeth's reign, **King James I** came to power. He had a measure of disdain for both Catholicism and the kind of Calvinistic Puritanism that was taking root in England.

- Noting that the most-popular English Bible, the Geneva Bible, was strongly influenced by Calvin’s thought, he authorized a new translation of the Bible that would navigate the *via media* between Catholicism and Calvinism.
- This Bible was finally published in 1611 and is known as the King James Version.

So next Sunday when you arrive to church, you’ll be given a test to name (in order) the English monarch succession... (no, I’m just kidding)... but you may be wondering why I gave you such a long history lesson today...

- It’s important for us to understand the idea of “the middle way” (*via media*) in the Anglican tradition...
 - Last week I showed you how Presbyterians might view Church history... They believed that Luther had not gone far enough in his reforms, so they sought to take the church a bit farther away from Catholicism.
 - Here’s how our Anglican brothers and sisters might view history... that Luther & Calvin went a bit too far, so they sought to navigate a middle path between Catholics & Protestants.
- A few weeks ago I had the privilege of meeting with Father Tim Sexton, the priest of St. Andrew’s Cathedral.
 - I asked Father Sexton about that “middle path”... the *via media* that is such an integral part of Anglicanism.
 - He said to me, “It’s the way we describe ourselves when we’re at our best. It’s not riding the fence, but rather recognizes the tension of holding on to ‘both sides’ of the church...”
 - He also said that the way the Anglican & Episcopal churches approach decisions of faith are by the use of a “three-legged stool” – scripture, tradition & reason.
 - Adding reason as a determining factor is another example of the middle way...
- It could be said that Episcopal worship looks more Catholic than that of other Protestant churches... and that’s understandable, given their history in England...
 - They also see their liturgy in two main parts: the Word & the Eucharist.
 - The hinge piece between the two, said Rev. Sexton, is the “Passing of the Peace”... which literally takes place in the middle of the service.

- “This is where we recognize both that other people are with us, and that the presence of Christ is among us as well. It can be a powerful moment!”
- The Episcopal Church embraces a view of Holy Communion (or the Eucharist) which, though not identical to the Roman Catholic view, is very close to it.
- They allow their clergy to marry... emphasize the priesthood of all believers... and look to Scripture as the center of their faith & practice.
- Father Tim mentioned they had two main services on Sunday mornings... a 10am service in English where they sing the Eucharist... and an 8am service in Hawaiian.
 - I was intrigued about the Hawaiian community at St. Andrew’s... and that’s when he began to educate me on their rich tradition with King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma.
 - I was given a copy of the book From Royal Garden to Gothic Splendor: The History of St. Andrew’s Cathedral, by Rianna M. Williams...
 - It was here that I learned that King Kamehameha IV put together both a Hawaiian language translation of the Book of Common Prayer, and a Hawaiian language hymnal.
 - Both the King & Queen were baptized & confirmed as charter members of this faith community...
 - Though the King died a year later... he was 29. Queen Emma was 26.
 - The Queen was devastated... and spent 2 weeks mourning his death by sleeping in the crypt on the Palace grounds, alongside the caskets of her husband, and only child (who had died suddenly at age 4).
 - Because the King died on St. Andrew’s feast day (Nov.30), the Episcopal Mission in Hawaii decided to make their permanent Cathedral a memorial to him.... (hence, the name, St. Andrew’s Cathedral).
- Finally, one can’t speak about the tradition of the Anglican or Episcopal churches, without also speaking about their worship & prayer life.
 - There’s a Latin phrase: *lex orandi, lex credenda*... which literally means, “The law of prayer is the law of belief.”
 - Father Sexton reiterated to me that prayer is the “basic tool” of Anglican Christians. “It’s our touchstone,” he said.

- It was this area that I asked him to share more with us... so that we could better understand where they are coming from. Here's how he responded...

Our brothers and sisters in the Anglican traditions continue to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who also spent a significant amount of his time on earth in prayer...

- This is where we, too, can learn from them, my friends...
 - How regular is our daily cycle of prayer... of time spent simply communicating with God... speaking heart to heart?
 - There are lots of books & other resources on prayer that can help, if you're interested in going deeper in your prayer life...
 - But the simple challenge for us... or at least for me... is to take the time everyday to connect with God through prayer.
 - It's essential for a growing Christian...
- Thanks be to God for the history, tradition & witness of our Anglican brothers and sisters.
 - May we walk alongside them in our devotional life, as well.
 - AMEN.