



FAITH
IN THE
TOWN

LAY RELIGION, URBANISATION
and INDUSTRIALISATION
in ENGLAND

1740~1830



KS2 / LESSON 3

– *The* **CHURCH** *and* **CHANGE** –

INTRODUCTION

As we have learnt over the past two lessons, society underwent rapid change in the period of the industrial revolution. This was to be a lasting change. The Britain before industrialisation is gone forever: centred around the church, village and the land, where goods were made largely by hand and travel was limited.

As adults we are keenly aware of the dizzying pace of development in our own era: the rapid evolution of digital technology, communication and computing. Our children might not be so aware of this. Many of them can't imagine a world without touch screens and the internet. However, we are living through change just like our recent ancestors in the industrial revolution. A world without smart phones can never be returned to.

We can see that Christianity remained a fixed point in people's lives during the industrial revolution. Communities did not lose their need for the guidance

and support the church had offered for centuries, even as society changed forever. In this lesson we will consider the ways Christian churches in this period were forced to change in order to meet new needs and new ways of thinking. Religion might seem set in stone, unchanging, but organised religion has always had to keep up with the pace of social changes in order to be of use to successive generations. In this lesson pupils will learn about how social development allowed new voices to preach the Gospel. Through conversation you will be able to explore the underlying question of how religion copes with change.



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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Emerging

- Explain why people either did or did not support women preachers.
- Give one reason why people wanted to join the Christian churches.

Expected

- Give one reason why some people did not feel happy with the traditional church.
- Explain why female or humble preachers made a change to the traditional church.

Exceeding

- Give a supported view as to whether new preachers or new churches represents a change to Christian belief.

RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED

- Character cards cut up for each group (**Resources for Pupils, p.03**).
- Highlighters or coloured pencils.
- Questions / statements cut up for each group (**Resources for Pupils, p.09 and p.11**).





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NOTES FOR TEACHERS

1: Women preachers

- a) Show the picture of Elizabeth Fry on a 5-pound note (she was on the note from 2001- 2016) on **p.01 of the Resources for Pupils**. Can anyone tell you why she was chosen? Display the 4 pieces of information below on the screen, ask pupils to suggest which is the most likely reason she was remembered in this way:
- **Elizabeth Fry spoke in Parliament at a time when women had little or no public voice.**
 - **Elizabeth Fry travelled around prisons comforting and teaching prisoners.**
 - **Elizabeth Fry was a Quaker: a Christian group which allowed women to lead, teach and preach.**
 - **Modern prison conditions are considered to be due to Elizabeth Fry's work in the 1800s.**
- b) Copy and cut up the character cards on **p.03 of the Resources for Pupils**. These are female preachers' accounts. Give one card per group / pair. Ask pupils to read their card and create ONE sentence explaining their character's experience. Send envoys to other tables until each table has read or heard about all 3 women.
- c) Begin to read the **Text for Teachers 3, on p.06 of this pdf**, on female preachers to the class. Ask half the class to listen out for reasons why some Christian churches supported women preachers, and the other half to listen out for reasons why some Christian churches did not. Tell pupils to put their hands up as soon as they hear a reason. Stop, repeat the sentence, and if the pupils are correct, start to create a table with two headings: **'In support of women preachers'**, and **'Against women preachers'**. Ask individuals to copy down at least two reasons.
- Alternatively, print the notes and ask groups to highlight points in support of and against women preachers.
- d) Look at the collected reasons for women preaching or not preaching. Give pupils time to talk about whether they find any of the reasons persuasive; do they agree or disagree?





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2: Humble preachers

- a) Read the account of Benjamin Shaw on **p.04 of the Resources for Pupils**. Hand out highlighters or coloured pencils. Ask pupils to highlight or shade information which provide answers to the following questions:

1. **How did Benjamin's views on Christianity change?** *[possible answer – negative towards the established church, became more interested after attending, eventually joining the Baptist church.]*

2. **What seems to have inspired him?** *[Frank Lambert- a preacher who was a 'spinning master' – i.e. not a professional priest; the idea of being saved; the idea he was a sinner; the idea it is not too late to ask for God's mercy.]*

3. **Is any Christian group or church named?** *[Frank Lambert introduces Benjamin Shaw to the Baptist Chapel, or Baptist church, a new church, different to the established church of England.]*

- b) Share the information gathered, so the class can answer the questions. Ask pupils if they can describe what seems to have attracted Benjamin to the Baptist church.

- c) Read Thomas Allen's address to the people of Macclesfield, 1825, on **p.06 of the Resources for Pupils**. Hand out highlighters or coloured pencils. Ask pupils to highlight / shade information providing answers to the questions below:

1. **What are young people doing on Sundays?** *[playing, fighting, not in church]*

2. **What are adults doing on Sundays?** *[stroll around, chat]*

3. **What is Thomas Allen's proposed solution?** *[a law to fine all people above 16 years who are not in church on Sunday. First fine: one shilling; second fine: twenty pounds; third fine: sureties of two hundred pounds.]*

Ask groups to discuss their impressions of what has changed in the Christian churches.

- d) Share the information gathered and answer the questions as a class. Ask pupils to discuss if Thomas Allen is trying to help the working people of Macclesfield? What tone does he use when he talks about them?
- e) Display the Letter from the Bolton Unitarians (**Resources for Pupils, p.08**). Give out three pieces of paper saying:

'They need a bigger church building.'

'They are Unitarians.'

'Some people do not like the traditional church.'

Give these to three individuals – ask them to attach (with blu tac) by the text that supports the statement. Ask the whole class to give reasons from the text why many people have rejected the traditional church. Teach that the Unitarians were another new church.



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2: Humble preachers (continued)

- f) Display the letter by Christopher Thomson (**Resources for Pupils, p.10**). Give three pieces of paper saying:

‘Thomson is a poor man speaking to other poor people.’

‘Thomson argues that the church has not treated the poor with respect.’

‘Thomson suggests that the poor need food, leisure and education to be as good as the rich.’

As above, ask three individuals to attach the statement by the text.

- g) Give groups a few minutes to read back over their notes. Ask half of the class to look for evidence that some people do not like the traditional church. Can they find any reasons why?

Ask the other half to find evidence that new churches are growing. Can they find reasons why?

Listen and share answers.

3: Plenary

Ask groups to discuss their impressions of what has changed in the Christian churches.

Ask each table or group to give their response to this question:

In this time of change, have Christian beliefs changed?





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Text for Teachers 3 : Female Preachers

Women had been preaching since the 17th century. Some churches had more women preaching than others, some had none at all. Women preachers spoke in churches, homes and the open air. They explained Christian teaching and the bible, hoping to welcome people into the Christian faith.

The traditional view of women was at home engaged in domestic duties. Some would have seen women standing up and teaching, often in the open air, as dangerous, both to the women themselves and to the children and husband they were neglecting. Moreover, some churches did not want to look as if they were breaking with tradition, in case this put people off. They wanted to appear respectable and trustworthy. Churches who did not want to look too radical would not use female preachers.

However, some people would have seen women preachers as not 'unladylike' departures from tradition, but part of women's duties in teaching, educating, supporting and caring for others.

It seems that women preachers travelled to many towns, cities and villages, staying with members of the church they were visiting. This shows they had networks of support. Some were exceptionally gifted at speaking to small or large crowds. These women attracted much interest which enabled their churches to gain followers. Many small churches were able to grow due to the work and skill of female preachers. Women were useful when there weren't enough male preachers to cover an area. Women preachers could welcome people to the church before they changed their minds and lost interest.

Women preachers were attractive to young women who had left villages and come to work in towns. They would join churches to find new friends, attracted by female preachers who welcomed them. Some people found attending sermons in the open air more pleasant and less intimidating than a church, especially if they were not familiar with church customs. It did not matter if they had old, worn clothes or didn't know how to behave. Women preachers who preached outdoors gained new converts this way.

However, some people criticized women who attracted rural, unskilled people. They were worried about the impact on the Christian community if large numbers of uneducated, poor and unsophisticated people joined.

The Quakers were the most welcoming to women preachers, recognizing their success in spreading the Christian message. John Wesley, who founded the Methodist church, argued that some women had an 'exceptional call' from God. However, this was also used to argue that most women did not have a call from God, and should not therefore preach.

Some women provided spiritual support and guidance in an unofficial capacity. After the service, run by a male preacher, they would offer refreshments, listen to people's anxieties and pray with them or give advice. Many women unofficially managed to spread the Christian message in this way.