

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1535 July 6 *Sir Thomas More Executed for Treason*

Thomas More, lawyer, Lord Chancellor, and friend of King Henry VIII was beheaded this morning in the Tower of London for the crime of high treason. Thomas More had been in prison for more than a year for his refusal to sign the Oath of Succession. His trial was on May 7, 1535 and it only took the 12 jurors one quarter of an hour to find Sir Thomas guilty of treason.

Sir Thomas never dishonored or criticized his king in public or in writing. His guilt of treason is based on his refusal to accept King Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. Some members of Parliament were reserved with their statements but said that Sir Thomas did not break any laws.

As he reached the scaffold he asked the people to pray for his soul and told the executioner that he forgave him for what he was about to do. He prayed Psalm 51 until the blow came to his neck. His head was then placed on the tower of London Bridge.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offense. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. My offenses truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. That you may be justified when you give sentence and be without reproach when you judge. O see, in guilt was I born, a sinner was I conceived. Indeed you love truth in the heart; then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom. O purify me, then I shall be clean; O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear rejoicing and gladness, that the bones you have crushed may revive. From my sins turn away your face and blot out all my guilt. A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervor sustain me, that I may teach transgressors your ways and sinners may return to you. O rescue me, God, my helper, and my tongue shall ring out your goodness. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise. For in sacrifice you take no delight, burnt offering from me you would refuse; my sacrifice, a contrite spirit. A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn. In your goodness, show favor to Zion: rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice, holocausts offered on your altar.

In an interview with a colleague of Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Rev. Luther reportedly said that Thomas More did his best to destroy the Protestant beliefs of repentance and faith in England. He always preferred a large institutional Church to the priesthood of all believers. His most recent effort to imprison Rev. William Tyndale in Antwerp was successful and he will likely die within a few months. And for what reason? He only wanted to give the people of England the *Holy Bible* in their own language. Sin has made our time on earth very ugly and the Rev. Doctor prays for peace, justice, and that all people may know the depth of God's love and His forgiveness through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Only our Lord knows the depth of faith in the heart of Sir Thomas.

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1535 September 7 Jacques Cartier's Second Voyage - Quebec

It has been less than a year since Jacques Cartier returned with reports of his meeting with the Iroquoian, Chief Donnacona and his sons in the village of Stadacona. When Cartier returned to France with the chief's two sons, Dom Agaya and Taignoagny, there was much excitement about their civilized nature and that the conversion to the Christian faith would be easy. The voyages have the official endorsement of King Francis I.

The crew of 110 with ships adapted for river navigation have reached Stadacona (Quebec). Several of the crew had scurvy and claimed that the remedy from evergreen trees from the natives was healing their sores and lethargy. Chief Donnacona advised Cartier to remain in Stadacona for the duration of the winter but there are reports that the *Grande Hermine* will be traveling up the river to Hochelaga (Montreal) in search of precious metals.

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1535 November 25 - Order of Ursulines Founded

This new Roman Catholic school opened today, St. Catherine's Day, with 28 young women in Brescia, Italy. This is the first school in Europe for the education of girls. The director is Angela Merici. Angela lost her family as a young child and she turned to God in prayer. She maintained her father's farm in northern Italy on Lake Garda.

The dress code for the girls is a long black robe with a white collar and wide sleeves. They call it the habit and wear it as a sign they are a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The curriculum includes prayers, fasting, and required service in the community for those in need of food, medical care, and shelter. They are also taught domestic skills.

The daily prayer for the girls is:

**Saint Angela, you were not afraid of change. You did not let stereotypes keep you from serving.
Help us to overcome our fear of change in order to follow God's call and allow others to follow theirs.
Amen.**

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1535 *Traders Making Bets in London*

Investors are holding weekly meetings discussing the new commodities coming to Europe from the Americas and India. There are weekly auctions involving the exchange of money for the new commodities of sugar, tea, furs, gold, and silver.

As the prices of these trades go up, there is an increase in shipping activities. It has been 33 years since Columbus made his discovery of the natives in the Americas and only 15 years since Spanish silver and gold has strengthened our economy.

Although trading remains informal, records are kept and shared with others in Antwerp and Venice. Over the next 75 years these informal groups will evolve into the London Company and Massachusetts Bay Company to finance the expensive colonization ventures of Jamestown and Massachusetts.