

Tuesday Evening Series
Series #11: The Reformation: The Roots of Lutheranism & Anglicanism
Session #3: The Origins of the Church of England & Anglicanism
Tuesday, January 23, 2018

How old is the Church of England?

The roots of the Church of England date back to the time of the Roman Empire when a Christian church came into existence in what was then the Roman province of Britain. The early Christian writers Tertullian and Origen mention the existence of a British church in the 3rd Century AD and in the 4th Century British bishops attended a number of the great councils of the Church such as the Council of Arles in 314 and the Council of Rimini in 359. The first member of the British church whom we know by name is St. Alban, who, tradition tells us, was martyred for his faith on the spot where St. Albans Abbey now stands.

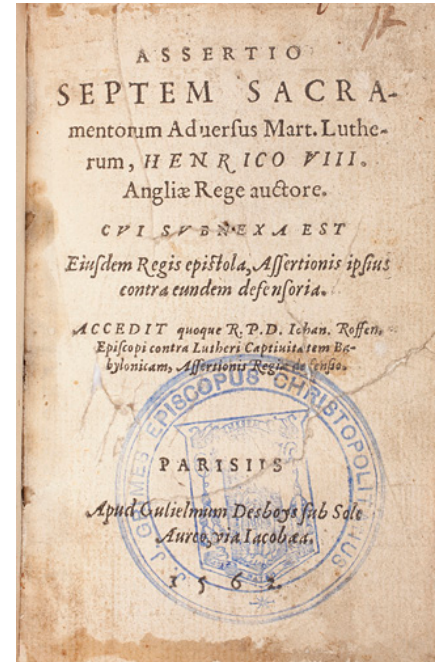
The British church was a missionary church with figures such as St. Illtud, St. Ninian and St. Patrick evangelizing in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, but the invasions by the pagan Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the 5th Century seem to have destroyed the organization of the church in much of what is now England. In 597 a mission sent by Pope Gregory the Great and led by St. Augustine of Canterbury landed in Kent to begin the work of converting these pagan peoples. What eventually became known as the Church of England (the *Ecclesia Anglicana* - or the English Church) was the result of a combination of three streams of Christianity, the Roman tradition of St. Augustine and his successors, the remnants of the old Romano-British church and the Celtic tradition coming down from Scotland and associated with people like St. Aidan and St. Cuthbert.

These three streams came together as a result of increasing contact and a number of local synods, of which the Synod of Whitby in 664 has traditionally been seen as the most important. The result was an English Church, led by the two Archbishops of Canterbury and York, that was fully brought into the Christian Church of the west. This meant that it was influenced by the wider development of the Western Christian tradition in areas such as theology, liturgy, church architecture, and the development of monasticism. It also meant that until the Reformation in the 16th century the Church of England accepted the authority of the Pope.

The Protestant Reformation & the English Reformation

- 1496 – Catherine of Aragon's hand secured for Arthur, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VII
- 1501 – Arthur marries Catherine
- 1502 – Arthur dies of tuberculosis
- 1503 – Henry VII's wife dies; considers taking Catherine, but decides to pass her to his son Henry VIII

- 1504 – Pope Julius II dissolves marriage between Catherine and Arthur
- 1509 – Henry VIII marries Catherine
- 1514 – Boy born to Catherine; dies 6 weeks later
- 1516 – Princess Mary born. She is the only surviving child of Henry & Catherine
- 1517 – Martin Luther's posts his 95 Theses on the door of Wittenburg Cathedral
- 1521 – Henry VIII of England wrote his *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (Defense of the Seven Sacraments) in opposition to Luther and is rewarded with the title Defender of the Faith (*Fidei Defensor*) by Pope Leo X. Henry remains allied with Rome.
- 1526 – William Tyndale publishes a translation of the New Testament in English
- 1527 – Henry VIII requests an annulment from Pope Clement VII of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Despite appeals from Catherine herself, the Pope refuses because Catherine's nephew, Charles V, was the current emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. (Granting the divorce would have been a *very* imprudent move with regard to relations between the Vatican and the emperor.)
- 1531 – Henry makes claims to imperial title and extends protection to clergymen who deny papal supremacy
- 1532 – Act in Conditional Restraint of Appeals (meaning that clergy could no longer appeal to Rome for anything) & Submission of the Clergy (to the Crown). Anne Boleyn becomes pregnant with the future Elizabeth I.
- 1533 – Thomas Cranmer appointed Archbishop of Canterbury; Henry VIII marries Anne Boleyn; Cranmer declares Henry's marriage to Catherine null and void.
- 1534 – St. Ignatius of Loyola founds the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) as part of the Catholic counter-reformation. In November of the same year, Henry VIII issues the Act of Supremacy, declaring him the supreme head of the Church in England.
- 1535 – St. Thomas More is executed for refusing to support the English Reformation.
- 1536 – William Tyndale is burned at the stake for heresy. John Calvin publishes his work of systematic theology in Latin. Henry VIII dissolves monasteries, convents, priories, and friaries in England, Wales, and Ireland, and seizes the land for the crown.



- 1534 – Act of Succession declared that Princess Mary was a bastard child and that Princess Elizabeth was the rightful heir to the throne; Clement VII pronounces marriage between Henry & Anne valid; (November) Act of Supremacy, declaring the monarch as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England—a title still held to this day! In 1535, Henry adds "of the Church of England in Earth, under Jesus Christ, Supreme Head" to his royal style and proclaims himself, not the Pope, to be the head of the Church of England.
- 1536 – Ten Articles; Act Extinguishing the Authority of the Bishop of Rome; Anne Boleyn is executed
- 1538 – Pope Paul III excommunicates Henry VIII on the following grounds:
 - Annuling his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and marrying Anne Boleyn
 - Declaring himself “Supreme Head of the Church of England
 - Persecuting those who opposed the Acts of Supremacy and Succession
 - Dissolving the monasteries
- 1545 – Council of Trent is held to reform and clarify Roman Catholic doctrine. The Council continues until 1563
- 1547 – Henry VIII dies
- 1547 – The First Book of Homilies introduced by Thomas Cranmer
- 1549 – The First Book of Common Prayer is introduced by Thomas Cranmer (attributed to Henry’s reign). Rather Catholic in style and theology.
- 1552 The Second Book of Common Prayer is introduced by Thomas Cranmer (under Edward VI). More Protestant in style and theology.
- 1554 – Edward dies; Lady Jane Grey ascends to the throne, but is executed after reigning only nine days.
- 1554 – Henry & Catherine’s daughter, Mary, takes the crown and becomes Mary I. She restores Roman Catholicism. (Nursery rhyme “Mistress Mary” is said to be about her.)
- 1556 – Thomas Cranmer Executed
- 1558 – Elizabeth usurps the throne, exiles Mary I, and is crowned Elizabeth I; final break with the Roman Church
- 1603 – James VI of Scotland crowned King of England
- 1611 – King James Bible first published and used throughout the English speaking world. It is still officially the “Authorized” version of the bible for both the Church of England and the Episcopal Church.
- 1625 – Charles I crowned King of England, Scotland, and Ireland.
- 1642 – English Civil War breaks out due to issues largely centered on the Church of England's being seen as too Catholic
- 1649 – Triumph of the Puritans & execution of King Charles I
- 1660 – Restoration of the monarchy under King Charles II

When did “Anglicanism” begin?

Good question! Perhaps with the American Revolution.

Major Tenets

- Scripture
- Tradition
- Reason

Resources

“History of the Church of England,” <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-england-glance/history-church-england>

“Timeline of the English Reformation,” http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Timeline_of_the_English_Reformation

“Henry VIII is excommunicated,” <https://www.theanneboleynfiles.com/henry-viii-is-excommunicated/>

“The Reformation,” <http://www.history.com/topics/reformation>

Robert B. Mullin, *A Short World History of Christianity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008)

Dairmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003)