

During this time the church was still for all practical purposes a Catholic church; the only real difference that anybody would notice was the introduction of English.

In 1539, Henry reaffirmed Catholic practice by passing into law the **Six Articles** that affirmed the transubstantiation of the Eucharist (that is, that the Eucharist was mystically transformed into the body and blood of Christ), confession, private masses, celibate vows, and the sanctity of the Eucharistic cup.

The English church, however, would radically change under Henry's successor, Edward VI, the boy king, who's adult advisors were Protestants. He reigned only six years. Under Queen Mary, his elder half-sister, England was declared to be a Catholic country and she assertively went about converting churches back to Catholic practices. Five years into her reign she died and was succeeded by Elizabeth I.

VIA MEDIA **ELIZABETHAN SETTLEMENT**

Elizabeth I acted to heal the wounds of the Reformation. Church attendance was made compulsory and required the use of the Book of Common Prayer. The communion service was written to accommodate Catholics and Protestants, interior furnishings (such as screens) were ordered to be left intact, and some vestments were retained. The Act of Supremacy made the queen 'Supreme Governor' of the Church of England instead of 'Head' of the Church. Although the Elizabethan Settlement did not resolve

every difference between Catholic and Protestant, it did at least make it possible for them to co-exist.

Richard Hooker (1553 – 1600) articulated an Anglican theology of scripture, tradition and reason which remains the cornerstone of the Anglican *Via Media*.

Calvinist Puritans continued to push the church to civil war (1642) and Presbyterianism. Eventually the monarchy and the episcopacy were restored (1660).

The English people have taken their church all over the world. Anglican missionaries carried the Gospel, built schools, and brought medical care to major areas of North America, the Caribbean, Africa, Australia, and Asia.

The Oxford Movement that began in the 1800's advocated for a 'higher' or more liturgical worship, 'catholic' theology, and a social reform ministry.

There are forty-four autonomous provinces in the world wide Anglican Communion that are connected by their relationship with the Archbishop of Canterbury, a version of the Book of Common Prayer, and a common tradition of how we are 'church'.

While the Archbishop of Canterbury is its spiritual leader he has no authority over any province outside of England.

The church today contains elements that are Catholic and Protestant, liberal and conservative theologically, and worship that is traditional and contemporary.

A Short History of the Church in England



*We are a community of
Christian people
seeking to love God
with all our heart, soul,
mind, and strength and
to love our neighbors as
ourselves.*

Trinity Episcopal Church
(Bethlehem Pike and Highland Ave)
708 Bethlehem Pike
Ambler, PA 19002
215-646-0416
www.trinityambler.org

CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND

The Good News of Jesus Christ spread to the British Isles very early. Tradition says that Joseph of Aramethia brought Christianity to Britain and there is evidence that Christian communities were active in the second century A.D. Constantius writes (c.480) of St. Alban being martyred in 304 AD and Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History' also tells of Alban's death.

The Bishops of London, Lincoln, and York attended the Synod of Arles (314). Christianity continued to spread in the 5th century due to the work of St. Ninian in Scotland, and St. David in Wales

The Saxon invasions, beginning c.450, pushed the Celtic Church in Britain back to Cumberland, Wales and Cornwall.

The Saxon King Æthelbert of Kent married Bertha, a Frankish princess, in 560 under condition that she remain a Christian. She brought Bishop Liudhard as her personal chaplain.

At about the same time Columba founded a Celtic monastery on Iona, from which Briton was evangelized from the North.

In 597 Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury was sent to 'England' by Pope Gregory the Great and discovers preexisting Celtic Christians.

It was at the Synod of Whitby in 664 that agreement was largely reached over practices (such as the dating of Easter and

the forms of baptism and tonsure) that were at variance with the Roman Church and to accept the imposition of a diocesan organization on the essentially monastic structure of their church. Although Roman practice was officially adopted at Whitby it would be over one hundred years before many Celtic churches and abbeys would conform.

The life of the church ebb and flowed with each invasion of Danes and then the Normans. The church continued to make gains in England and in the homeland of the invading cultures. Cnut, the Dane who ruled England from 1017 – 1045, was a Christian.

By the time of the Norman invasion in 1066 most everyone would have been nominally a Christian. The church had enough strength and presence that William the Conqueror struggled with the Papacy over appointments and powers.

The Constitutions of Clarendon, instituted by Henry II in 1164, limited papal influence in the realm and established that church members were subservient to the crown and English legal custom.

In a struggle with King John, the Pope placed an interdict on all of England in 1207 which forbid the celebration of the eucharist. John, was forced by the barons to give the church freedom from royal control in *Magna Carta*.

Beginning in the sixteenth century nationalism and reformed theologies from the continent were to batter the church in England for several centuries.

REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

On 23 October 1516, at Wittenberg (in modern Germany), Martin Luther condemned papal indulgences marking the start of the reformation in Europe. In 1521, as a reward for attacking Lutheran ideas, Pope Leo X conferred the title of *fidei defensor* (defender of the faith) on Henry VIII. English monarchs continue to use this title.

In 1529, the English Parliament began to debate the relationship of the Bishop of Rome with the church in England; this debate would occupy the English Parliament for seven years.

It did not settle the matter all at once, but steadily granted powers over the church clergy to the king. In 1531, the clergy of England recognized Henry as the head of the church, and in 1533, Parliament passed the "**Submission of the Clergy**," a law which placed the clergy completely under Henry's control.

In that same year the Archbishop of Canterbury annulled the king's marriage to Catharine of Aragon and Henry married Ann Boleyn, who was already pregnant with his second daughter, Elizabeth.

In 1534 Parliament stopped all contributions to Rome. The Act of Royal Supremacy of 1534 stated that the Crown was reclaiming powers that it had always possessed; powers that Rome usurped during the previous four hundred years - a fact which Henry and his advisors firmly believed.