



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ANGLICAN

Week 2: The Anglican Church is Historic (The English Church at the Reformation)



Anglican Identity: History

- What is an Anglican?
- The irony of this lack of knowledge regarding who we are.



Anglican Identity: History

- Last time, we dealt with the critique which is frequently lodged in some circles that the Anglican Church is Henry's Church.



Anglican Identity: History

- We showed that this charge is baseless—rather, the Anglican Church is an ancient branch of Christ's Church which made many remarkable contributions to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church long before Henry came into existence.



Anglican Identity: History

- This week, we are going to see what happened to the Anglican Church at the time of the Reformation in the 16th-17th centuries.
- The “Long Reformation.”

Anglican Identity: History



- The Protestant Reformation began in 1517 with Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg.
- This set off a firestorm in Germany and beyond—including England.



Anglican Identity: History

- This raises another important question regarding Anglican identity: are we Catholic or Protestant?
- The short answer is yes!

Anglican Identity: History

- It is true that we participated in and were affected by the Protestant Reformation.
- But at the same time, the Anglican Church was careful to maintain significant marks of catholicity (i.e., the 3-fold orders of ministry, the ancient liturgy, etc.)—range of the Ref.





Anglican Identity: History

- Some Anglicans have asserted that the Anglican Church is a *Via Media*, a half-way house, if you will, between Rome and Geneva (Calvin/Reformed).
- There is some truth to this.
- But some Anglicans want to emphasize either our Catholic or Protestant identity.

Anglican Identity: History

- These two are not necessarily contrary to one another.
- That is, most Protestants in the 16th century argued that they were seeking to recover true catholicity by returning to the early Church, getting behind some of Rome's accretions to the faith.

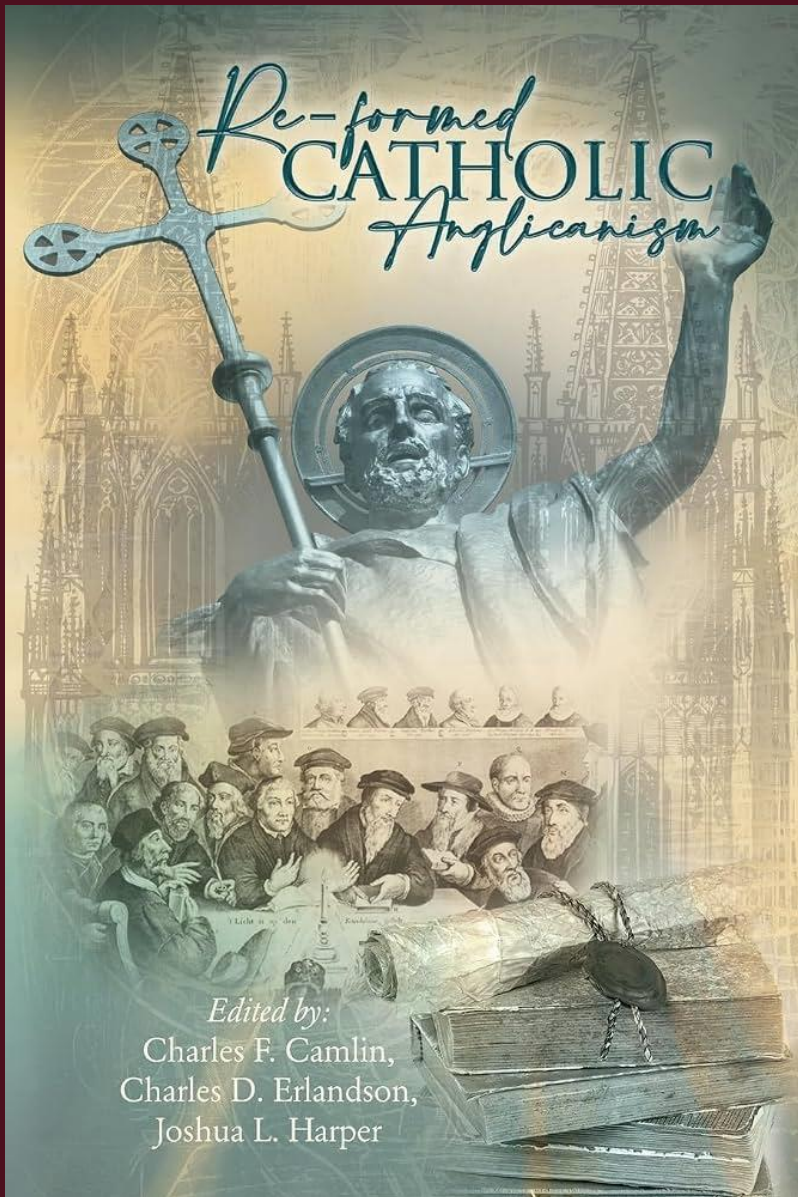


Anglican Identity: History



- One Anglican Bishop of Durham said, *“At the Reformation, the Church of England became protestant in order to become more truly and perfectly Catholic.”*

(William van Mildert, 1826-1836)



Anglican Identity: History

- One of the ways that we have tried to convey this reality is by using the phrase “Re-formed Catholic Anglicanism.”
- We had a whole conference on this a few years ago and produced a book.



Anglican Identity: History

- So let us trace how the Protestant Reformation affected the Anglican Church in the 16th-17th centuries.
- We have already noted that the winds of reform in Germany had swept into England in the early 16th c.



Anglican Identity: History

- Here is where King Henry VIII comes into this story.
- In 1521, Henry actually wrote a work *against* Martin Luther which earned him the title “Defender of the Faith” from Pope Leo X .

Anglican Identity: History



- A number of years later, Henry found himself in an unhappy marriage with no male heir in sight.
- The conundrum of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon (aka “The King’s Great Matter”).

Anglican Identity: History



- Normally, the Pope would be inclined to grant an annulment of such a marriage for a “faithful son of the Church.”
- But the marriage itself was by special dispensation from a previous Pope.

Anglican Identity: History



- Furthermore, Catherine was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella and her nephew, Charles V, was the Holy Roman Emperor.
- This moved Henry to seek an annulment elsewhere.



Anglican Identity: History

- In 1534, Henry, together with Parliament, declared The Act of Royal Supremacy.
- In one fell swoop, Henry removed the whole English Church from the jurisdiction of the Pope.
- This essentially put the Anglican Church back where it had been prior to the Synod of Whitby in 664.

Anglican Identity: History



- Recently, Henry had named Thomas Cranmer as the Abp. of Canterbury.
- Cranmer's instinct was to query the Universities about the legitimacy of Henry's first marriage.

Anglican Identity: History



- The consensus was that Henry never should have been allowed to marry Catherine, giving Cranmer the cover to grant Henry an annulment.
- Of course, as most students of history know, Henry had eyes for someone else all along—Anne Boleyn.

Anglican Identity: History



- Abp. Cranmer had been highly influenced by the winds of reform and did his best to begin reforming the English Church.
- King Henry allowed some reforms but was resistant to others (Roman Catholicism without the Pope).

Anglican Identity: History



- The greatest reform which Cranmer accomplished under Henry was to have the English Bible placed into every parish church.
- Other than that, Cranmer was forced into playing the long game in seeking reform.



Anglican Identity: History

- When Henry died in 1547, he was succeeded by his lone male heir, Edward VI.
- Edward was only nine years old when he ascended the throne (regency council).



Anglican Identity: History

- King Edward's godfather was Abp. Cranmer, who had ensured that he had been catechized to embrace future reforms.
- In 1549, Abp Cranmer issued the first edition of the Book of Common Prayer.



Anglican Identity: History

- Surely, Cranmer had been working on this liturgy for years, awaiting his moment.
- This Liturgy conservatively drew upon the Sarum Rite (of Salisbury) and other sources.



Anglican Identity: History

- Now every English church had a liturgy and a Bible in their own language.
- Cranmer also produced The Book of Homilies, sermons which would reflect the reformed theology of the Anglican Church.



Anglican Identity: History

- After this, Cranmer and his fellow bishops produced a statement of faith called The Forty-Two Articles of Religion (later, 39).
- He also revised the BCP in 1552.



Anglican Identity: History

- Unfortunately, Cranmer's program of reform for England was cut short when Edward died at the age of 15.
- He was succeeded by his half-sister, Mary, who was the child of Henry and Catherine.



Anglican Identity: History

- While Edward had been committed to Cranmer's reform of the English church, Queen Mary was committed the returning it back into the hands of the Pope.

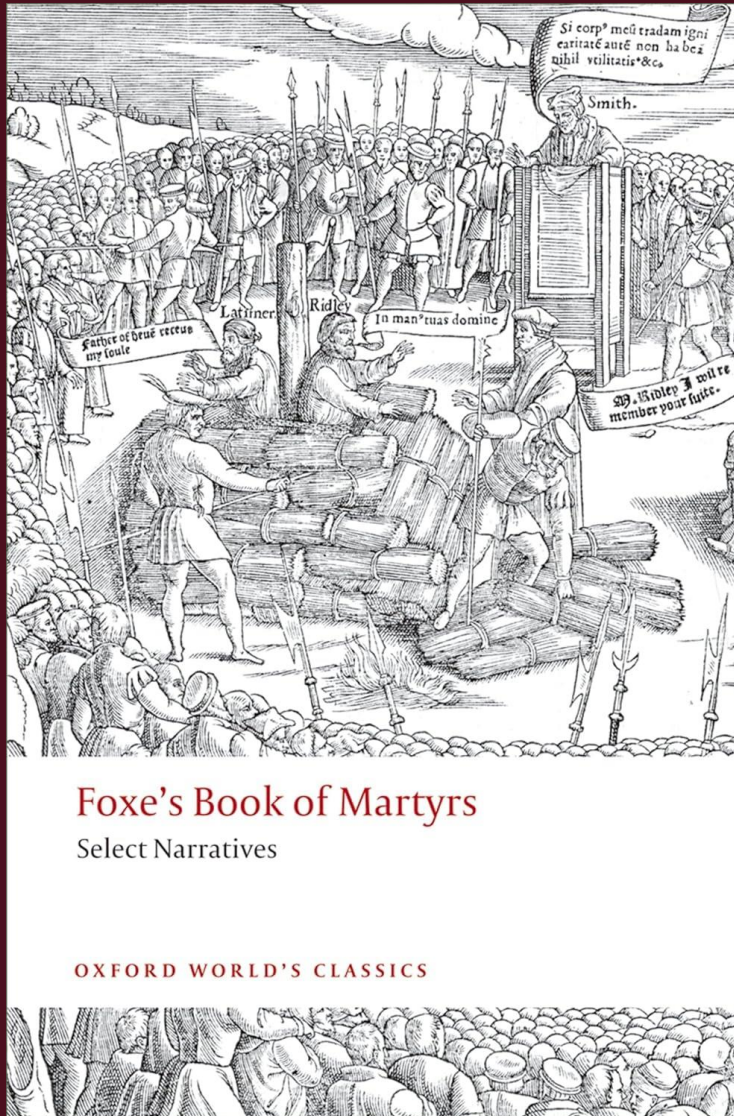


Anglican Identity: History

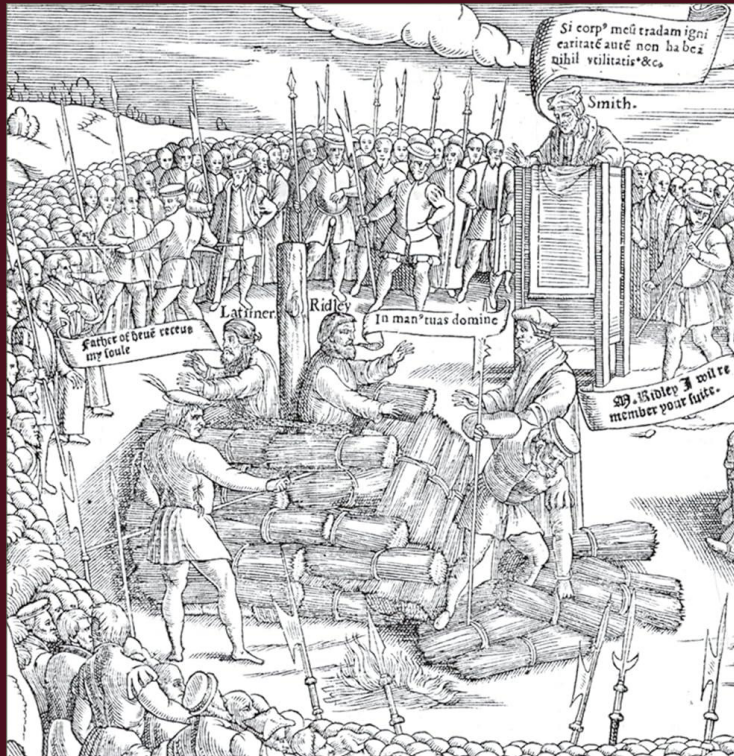
- Queen Mary eventually had Abp. Cranmer and some of the other bishops arrested.
- And following the example of the Spanish Inquisition, she soon set out upon executing those who stood in her way.

Anglican Identity: History

Much of what we know of Mary's persecution comes from *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (which originally had a much longer name but was a master work of Protestant propaganda).



Anglican Identity: History



Foxe's Book of Martyrs

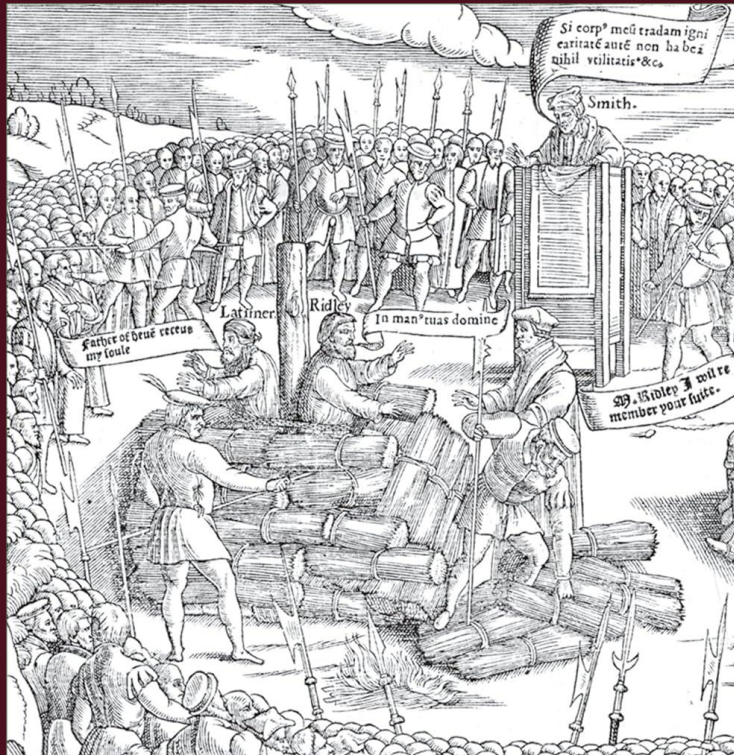
Select Narratives

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



- By the time she was finished, “Bloody Mary” had executed hundreds of Protestants including Abp Cranmer and two other bishops.
- In the end, all of this became abhorrent in the minds of English Christians.

Anglican Identity: History



Foxe's Book of Martyrs

Select Narratives

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



- In God's providence, Mary's reign, like Edward's, ended after only about 6 years.
- She was succeeded by her half-sister, Elizabeth, who had also been influenced by Cranmer and his reforms.



Anglican Identity: History

- In contrast to Edward and Mary's reigns, Elizabeth I was on the throne for some 45 years.
- More than almost anyone else, except perhaps for Cranmer, Elizabeth shaped what we call The Anglican Way today.



Anglican Identity: History

- Surrounded by exceptional advisors, Elizabeth began implementing the reform of the English church.
- The BCP was reissued and under Abp. Matthew Parker, the 39 Articles of Religion were codified.



Anglican Identity: History

- Elizabeth's reforms have become known as "The Elizabethan Settlement."
- In her realm, only the extremes of Roman Catholics and radical Protestants (Anabaptists) were not tolerated.



Anglican Identity: History

- Elizabeth was not without challenges: in 1570, Pope Pius V excommunicated her and encouraged rebellion by Roman Catholics in her realm.



Anglican Identity: History

- And there were Protestants who did not think that the English Church had gone far enough in reform.
- These folks were an early version of what were later called “Puritans.”



Anglican Identity: History

- Despite these challenges, Elizabeth held doggedly to her religious settlement until the very end.
- Since she was unmarried and without an heir, she negotiated the transfer of the crown to her nephew, James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England.



Anglican Identity: History

- When James came to the throne, the Puritans mistakenly thought that they would have an ally in their reforms.
- James agreed to meet with them in the Hampton Court Conference (1604).



Anglican Identity: History

- After listening to their requests, the only “reform” that James agreed to was to produce a new English Bible for the whole realm.
- The King James Version, as it is now popularly called, was issued in 1611.



Anglican Identity: History

- By and large, James, like Elizabeth before him, was able to keep the Puritans largely inline.
- But his son, Charles I, would not be so lucky.



Anglican Identity: History

- King Charles succeeded his father in 1625.
- Charles was not nearly as tolerant of the Puritans as his father or Elizabeth had been.



Anglican Identity: History

- One of his miscalculations was to have his Abp of Canterbury, William Laud, seek to press the Puritans into conformity regarding doctrine and worship.
- Laud became heavy-handed in his tactics and this backfired.



Anglican Identity: History

- By this time, the Puritans had become very powerful in the realm.
- The result was the English Civil War, when the Puritans defeated the king's army.



Anglican Identity: History

- In the end, both the king and the archbishop were executed.
- The Puritans, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell (who had led the Puritan army), took over the realm as a “commonwealth.”



Anglican Identity: History

- Once again, the English church faced a challenge similar to what they had faced under Queen Mary—total religious upheaval.
- The Prayer Book was outlawed, the Articles of Religion were revised, as well as other changes.



Anglican Identity: History

- The Commonwealth lasted from 1642-1660 but eventually fell apart for at least three reasons.
- First, the Puritans did not agree with each other (Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists).



Anglican Identity: History

- Second, Cromwell was strong enough to hold the factions together, but when he died, it fell apart.
- Third, the English people began to long for the monarchy, the Prayer Book, etc.



Anglican Identity: History

- The Restoration began in 1661 with the return of King Charles II (the son of the martyred king).
- The Savoy Conference was held in 1661 to hammer out the differences between the exiled bishops, who we will call Anglicans, and the remaining Puritans.





Anglican Identity: History

- The major result of all this was a revised version of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662.
- Many of the Puritan ministers could not abide by some of these changes and were ejected from the ministry.





Anglican Identity: History

- Towards the end of Charles II's reign, there was much angst about the succession of his brother, James II, who was a committed Roman Catholic.
- After what had happened under Mary, the Brits wanted none of this.





Anglican Identity: History

- Overtures began to be made to James' older daughter, Mary, who was married to William of Orange, to come and take the realm from James.
- William and Mary gathered forces and entered England in 1688.



Anglican Identity: History



- James fled to France and soon William and Mary were jointly offered the English throne.
- This event became known as “The Glorious Revolution.”



Anglican Identity: History

- In light of all this, the Church of England became the “Established Church” but was no longer the “national church.”
- There were now “non-conformist” churches in the realm that were tolerated.



Anglican Identity: History

- As you might imagine, all of this is in the backdrop of our identity as Anglicans.
- This helps to explain why we are so deeply committed to the BCP.



Anglican Identity: History

- It also helps to explain why there is a certain “moderation” within the Anglican Church.
- Typically, only extremes are not tolerated.



Anglican Identity: History

- In the end, the Anglican Way is committed to catholicity—the maintenance of the 3-fold order of ministry and the revised ancient Liturgy are hallmarks.



Anglican Identity: History

- But we were also surely influenced by the Reformation.
- We are committed to the authority of Holy Scripture and the doctrine of justification by faith.



Anglican Identity: History

- We remain separated from the Roman Church because of these and other theological differences.



Anglican Identity: History

- Perhaps we could summarize by saying that the Anglican Church is an ancient church which was renewed and reformed at the Reformation in a conservative way.



Anglican Identity: History

- Next time, we will see how this “Re-formed Catholic Church” made its way to America and around the world.



THE Anglican Bible Study Podcast