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# Anglicans

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## Origins

Tertullian and Origen wrote of an extant third-century Christian Church in Britain. The Romano-British tradition which developed at this time later fused with the Roman influence of men such as Augustine, and with the surrounding Celtic tradition. The Synod of Whitby in 664 was one of the key events that saw these three influences combine to form a distinct English Church, albeit under the authority of the pope. However, it was not until Henry VIII formally split with Rome in 1534 that a distinct Anglican Church developed. He was married to Catherine of Aragon but wished to divorce her because she gave him no male heir. When the pope refused to annul the marriage, Henry VIII passed the Act of Succession and the Act of Supremacy, which recognised himself as the head of the Church of England.

The settlement brought in under Elizabeth I combined Protestant theology with much that echoed the influence of Rome, leading to the saying that the Church was 'catholic and reformed'.

In the nineteenth century three traditions were at work: the Evangelical, emphasising justification by faith and the authority of Scripture; the Catholic tradition, encouraged by the so-called Oxford movement in the 1830s, highlighting elements such as bishops and priests and the sacraments; and, thirdly, the Liberal tradition, which emphasised the use of reason and social and political action. A key trend in the twentieth century was the charismatic movement of the 1960s, which emphasised the role of the Holy Spirit.

## Today

The ordination of women was approved in 1992, but is not accepted in all dioceses of the church, and around one in five priests in Britain are now women. The ordination of women bishops is currently being considered. The ordination of non-celibate homosexual clergy and same-sex blessings is controversial, with many churches, mostly in the southern hemisphere, threatening to leave the Anglican communion over this issue. The Church of England has been having increasing contact with the Roman Catholic Church.

## What the mainstream says

- The Old and New Testaments contains all things necessary for salvation, and are the ultimate standard of faith.
- The Nicene creed is the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
- There is one God, Who is the Maker of heaven and earth.
- Jesus Christ is God from God, begotten, not made.
- Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead.
- There will be a resurrection of the dead.
- The Holy Spirit is the Lord, the Spirit of life.
- After death a person delights in the presence and love of God and of the whole company of heaven.

(Source: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org>)

## Suggested initial Scriptural approach

God sought to show Pharaoh that "there is none like Me in all the earth" (Ex. 9:14), and this uniqueness of the God of Israel is a good starting point with Anglicans, given their acceptance of the Old Testament, but also their divergence from it, not least with regard to the Trinity. It is also helpful to focus on the Bible teaching about death and resurrection, and exploit the tension between this teaching and the false teaching of heaven-going.