Anglicanism

By Sharon Fabian

Caption: Canterbury Cathedral, the cathedral of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, the religious leader of the Church of England

In the United States today, we believe in the separation of church and state. The government makes rules about certain things, but when it comes to religion, people have freedom of choice.

It wasn't always that way. Just a few hundred years ago, church and state were combined in many places.

The Anglican Church in England is one example.

Like much of Europe, England was a Christian country for centuries. There was only one Christian church, the Catholic Church, and most Europeans belonged to it. The Church of England was simply the branch of the church that happened to be in England, but it was all the same church. The Pope was in charge, and everybody was expected to follow his rules.

Then things began to change. The Protestant Reformation swept through Europe, creating new Christian religions. England underwent its share of reformation, too.

The changes in England began during the reign of King Henry VIII. King Henry wanted a divorce. The Pope wouldn't allow it. So King Henry declared that the church in England was no longer subject to the Pope's rule. In 1534, the Act of Royal Supremacy was passed. This act declared that the king, not the Pope, was the head of the church in England. (Later, King Henry VIII became known for his many wives.)

At first the Church of England, also called the Anglican Church, was the same as the Catholic Church in its beliefs and practices. The only difference was that the king was in charge.

Then, gradually, as the changes of the Reformation came to England, changes happened to the Church of England, too. Its beliefs became more based on the Bible and less on the teachings of the Catholic Church. In other ways, it stayed close to its Catholic origins. For example, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were celebrated in the Anglican Church just as they were in the Catholic Church.

The teachings of the Anglican Church came to America with the Jamestown settlers. Here it went through more changes, particularly when it was no longer accepted for the church to import all of its ministers from England. In North America, the Anglican Church eventually became known as the Episcopal Church.

Anglican churches also spread to Canada, Latin America, Australia, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Caribbean. All together, Anglican churches can now be found in 160 countries around the world.

Over the years, the beliefs of the Anglican Church have become a combination of Catholic beliefs and Protestant beliefs. Anglicans still believe in baptism and the Lord's Supper. They still accept the Bible as the final authority on what is right and wrong. The Anglican Church accepts all the parts of the Bible, which it considers to be inspired by God. Anglican Churches still have deacons, priests, and bishops who are considered to be successors to the original twelve apostles. Their prayer book is still The Book of Common Prayer.

The Anglican Church is both a reformed church and a traditional one. It is the unique Church of England, spread all around the globe.
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Questions

1. The creation of the Anglican Church occurred_____.
   A. long before the Protestant Reformation
   B. in the 1900s
   C. after Jamestown was settled
   D. at about the time of the Protestant Reformation

2. Before Anglicanism became the religion of England, England was a_____ country.
   A. Democratic
   B. Catholic
   C. Puritan
   D. Protestant

3. In the beginning, the Church of England was_____.
   A. in charge of the Catholic Church
   B. very different from the Catholic Church
   C. older than the Catholic Church
   D. similar to the Catholic Church

4. From the information in the article, you can infer that the word Anglican means_____.
   A. church
   B. Protestant
   C. religious
   D. English

5. The Anglican Church began when______.
   A. King Henry declared that the king was in charge of the English church
   B. King Henry asked the Pope for a divorce
   C. The United States became independent from England
   D. England first became a country

6. The Act of Royal Supremacy of 1534 declared that the king was______.
   A. the head of the Church of England
   B. allowed to get a divorce
   C. responsible to Parliament
   D. ruler of England

7. The beliefs and practices of the Anglican Church today are______.
   A. exactly like those of the Catholic Church
   B. exactly like those of the Protestant churches
   C. similar in some ways to both Protestant and Catholic churches
   D. none of the above

8. Today, there are Anglican churches in______.
   A. England
   B. the United States
   C. over 160 countries
   D. all of the above