

# Tradition and dissent in english christianity



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Option 1 Tradition and Dissent in English Christianity In what ways has Roman Catholicism been an example of both religious tradition and dissent in England? This essay tackles issues that try to explain tradition and dissent surrounding Catholicism in England since the Reformation. By using general examples and then identifying in more detail Catholic tradition and dissent during this period. The difficulties Catholicism faced and reactions it made against the dominant Protestant presence.

Finally, arguments of tradition and dissent will be discussed in relation to the evidence available. Throughout history we have seen examples of religion being regarded as traditional or dissenting. Christianity in England, before the Reformation, was practised over a period of hundreds of years, as recorded by Bede in 731 AD and continued up to Henry VIII's reign in 1533.

It is therefore understandable to conclude Christianity was the traditional and principle religion in England prior to the Reformation. However, during and after the Reformation England experienced numerous and pivotal changes in religion, politics and society in general. Christianity in particular saw changes to the process and doctrine of the religion resulting in the development and practice of several offshoots.

With each group claiming to be the chosen path if the believer wanted real salvation. During Edward VI's reign for example a ??? determined attempt was made to eliminate former ??? dissent??? (Protestantism) into standard belief and practice.??? p. 80 Over a short period of 20 years Protestantism was developed into the traditional religion and the succeeding queen, Mary I who was Catholic, found it impossible to restore all the former Catholic

traditions that had given way to Protestantism. There are numerous indications that Catholicism (a term created during the Reformation to identify Medieval Christianity controlled by Rome) was the traditional religion at the start of the Reformation.

These included rituals and processions, the Liturgical calendar and the communal way of prayer (described by Roger Martyn 1527-1615 in a recollection from his youth before the Reformation). Another strong indication that Catholicism was the traditional religion was the drastic changes being pushed through by radical religious reformers such as Thomas Cranmer and later Edmund Grindal in order to change this tradition. This was carried out by ordering Catholic objects and property (altars, prayer materials, statues, ownership of church land) be removed, destroyed or expropriated. These objects had been part of the Christian church for hundreds of years. Suggesting the traditional religion during this period before the Reformation was Catholicism. On the other hand, the period from the Reformation also experienced the Catholic religion being regarded as the Dissenter. Christianity prior to the Reformation could have been considered as a slow, inflexible, authoritarian (centrally controlled by Rome) religion; which led the English monarchies, key institutions and figures, and society in general developing and accepting Protestant doctrine as its national religion. By the time Elizabeth I was on the throne, Protestantism was the accepted traditional religion of the Church of England.

Catholicism was portrayed, by reformers, as foreign and superstitious. This became clear when the succession by James II 1685, who was Roman Catholic, resulted in suspicion that Catholicism would replace Protestantism.

A circumstance that allowed Mary II to be placed on the throne reaffirming protestant identity and suppression of Catholicism.

Catholicism has remained as a major religion dissenter or traditional throughout and after the Reformation. Although regarded, by the monarchy and radical reformers, as the dissenting religion from the beginning of the Reformation and up to the 18th century. There is strong evidence that many clergy, parishioners, and even Monarchs (Queen Elizabeth I) combined aspects of both religions.

??? Hooker (key Anglican thinker 1554-1600) argued that Church of England, although reformed and Protestant, was still an authentic continuation of the pre-Reformation medieval church??? (Wolffe, 2008, p83). However by the time of the 18th century religion was becoming less of an attribute of disagreement and saw an increase in small religious groups such as the Evangelicals and Methodists. The Catholic church, although still difficult to practice its religion freely, believed it was the true traditional faith. It was a combination of faith, foreign support and support from other religious figures (see Hooker), that saw Catholicism continuing as a strong dissenting religion in a dominant Protestant England.

Moreover, the relatively relaxed view held by those in power towards dissenting religions allowed their continuation alongside Protestantism. In conjunction with this tolerant perspective there were also demographic changes. The 19th century saw population shifts; the economy moving from agriculture to industry; towns growing sharply; and immigration increased to meet the demand for labour.

All of these things allowed Catholicism, along with other dissenting religions, to grow in members to its church. Questions arise to why and how Catholicism remained such a strong force throughout the Reformation. As Monarchies changed, whether naturally or through force, their supporters and advisers used religion as a tool to suppress or encourage their own policies. This resulted in the Church of England changing from Protestant to Catholic and back again depending on the next Monarchs beliefs and ambitions.

Although Protestantism appeared the stronger (and traditional) of the two religions from the Reformation onwards. There have been numerous Catholic Monarchs who tried to return the Church of England to Catholicism. This suggests that Catholicism was a very powerful dissenting religious force, that worried Protestant monarchs a great deal. The succession of James II in 1685, who was Roman Catholic, was met with a so much mistrust he was replaced. Mary II was placed back onto the throne to restore Protestant identity. Therefore, even though during this period Catholicism was suppressed a great deal, because of its strength and influence it was able to continue as a dominating dissenting religion.

Interpretations of tradition and dissent are crucial to determine whether a religion is traditional or not. Also the interpretations of these terms made by people of the period we are studying. Those of the Catholic persuasion may have believed that their faith was the traditional one because of its historic following around the world the religion had seen.

However the Protestant followers may have believed that their doctrine was actually more traditional as it followed much more closely the teachings of the New Testament. The arguments as to which religion has been the traditional or the dissenting religion since the reformation has more to do with power, financial gain and superiority rather than the teachings of the religion itself. Due to the nature of each of the two religious groups, it has been of utmost importance to obtain the highest amount of followers than the other. This has resulted in both religions becoming rather whimsical towards the requests of potential followers rather than adhering to historical traditional doctrine.

This may also provide one of the reasons for the large explosion of conversions and atheists we now have in our society. In conclusion, the Reformation was such a pivotal time for Europe and England. Not only were advances made in different fields but the way the general populace thought about God was under question. Tradition became dissent and dissent became tradition in this revolutionary time. This affected how Catholicism reacted to these changes in its attempts to maintain its control. A process that makes our interpretations of Catholicism as being traditional, dissenting or both difficult to confirm. Word count 1212BIBIOGRAPHYWolffe, J.

(2008) ??? Tradition and Dissent in English Christianity???, in Price (ed) Tradition and Dissent (AA100 Book 2), Milton Keynes, The Open University, pp. 71-106.??? St. Chad? s and Religious Art??? (2008) (AA100 DVD ROM), Milton Keynes, The Open University. Essay Plan1)Provide example of religious tradition and dissent. 2)Identify Catholic traditions from 16 to 19 century. 3)Identify Catholic dissent from 16 to 19 century. 4)How has <https://assignbuster.com/tradition-and-dissent-in-english-christianity/>

Catholicism remained in England from 16 century. 5)How has Catholicism acted as a dissenting force against Reformation and dominating presence of Protestantism. 6)Identify the different interpretations relative to tradition and dissent. 7)Create own argument and interpretation of material. Student Name: Course Code: AA100PI: TMA: 04Course Name: The Arts Past and PresentRegion Code: