

History: Unit 2

Lesson 9 of 30

# How hard was the settlement to enforce?



# How did the clergy respond to the settlement?



# How did the clergy respond to the settlement?

All members of the Church had to take the oath of Supremacy as part of the **Act of Supremacy** if they were to keep their position in the church. About 97% of the priests did, which shows that the religious settlement was acceptable to most people.

However, only one **bishop** out of about 27 agreed to take the oath. The others all had to step down and Elizabeth hired 27 new bishops. Elizabeth chose Protestant leaning bishops who would enforce the settlement. She also wanted to make sure they were well qualified because there were very few Protestant clergy in England compared to Catholic clergy.



# How did the laity respond to the settlement?



# How did the laity respond to the settlement?

The majority of the **laity** (ordinary people) accepted the Elizabethan settlement and attended church of England services. The wording of the new Book of Common Prayer was purposely vague so it could be interpreted differently by Catholics and Protestants.

Some **parishes** in the north of England were slow to accept the religious settlement and were slow to change to the new services outlined by the **Act of Uniformity**.

Elizabeth made it clear that even she did not want to enforce the settlement too strongly, and she did not enforce fines on **recusants** to begin with.



**What role did the church play in enforcing the settlement?**



# What was the role of Church in enforcing the settlement?

The church had always had their own courts to deal with Church matters, but they also were used to deal with moral matters within families. This included marriage disputes, sexual offences (such as being married to more than one person at a time) and slander (falsely accusing someone of something).

Other criminal offences were normally dealt with by the royal courts.

The Church had to help enforce the religious settlement of 1559. Bishops carried out **visitations** to make sure that priests took the oath of Supremacy and that they were following the Act of Uniformity.

As a result of the visitations, 400 members of the clergy were dismissed from their position.



**How successful was the church in enforcing the settlement?**





# How successful was the church in enforcing the settlement?

In some visitations, where changes had not been made to the physical appearance of the churches, statues were removed and destroyed. Elizabeth again claimed that she did not want people's religious beliefs to be looked at too closely.

From 1559 onwards, visitations took place every four years.

Therefore, Elizabeth's religious settlement made the country Protestant, but did not expect that everyone had to be Protestant. Instead, they had to show **outward conformity**. This means they had to 'appear' Protestant and swear the oath, but in reality, Elizabeth was not intending on **persecuting** people for their religious beliefs. She wanted to find the 'Middle Way'. Elizabeth also realised that she was not strictly Protestant and wanted to retain some of the Catholic elements of the church, such as some decoration.



# Glossary

**Parish** - a small district or area of a county with its own church and priest

**Bishop** - a high ranking member of the clergy who would be responsible for the priests in a particular area

**Visitations** - when bishops travelled to different parishes under their control to inspect the church and ensure the religious settlement was being enforced

**Outward conformity** - when outward actions and behaviour go along with what is expected but may not reflect internal beliefs



# Questions - let's test your understanding!

1. How did the majority of the clergy respond to the religious settlement?
2. How did bishops respond to the religious settlement?
3. How did the laity (ordinary people) respond to the religious settlement?
4. Why was Elizabeth accepting of the idea of 'outward conformity'?
5. Why do you think the religious settlement hard to enforce?

**Challenge yourself:** In hindsight, how successful do you think Elizabeth was in enforcing the religious settlement in the first years of her reign? (Think about some of the challenges that were to begin after 1568).

