

**5 November "Refined by Fire? Anglican and Roman Catholic attitudes to cremation since 1885"**

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Britain was the first modern European country to adopt the widespread practice of cremation, and by 2010, it had become the custom adopted in around three quarters of all funerals. This paper explores the role of early-twentieth century Anglican bishops in advocating this change in funeral customs. Various prominent bishops, including Edward Lee Hicks, Charles Gore and William Temple, were all keen and vocal early advocates. This was at a time when the Roman Catholic Church was still enormously hostile to the practice, which it equated with atheism and inhumanity. Although the Roman Catholic position began to soften from the 1960s, this paper argues that the differing attitudes to Anglicans and Roman Catholics on the issue of cremation reveal significant religious and cultural fault lines between members of these two ecclesial communities, which have hitherto been little explored.