
The Church of England and British politics since 1900

Durham University, 17 August 2015

SUBMISSION 9 DECEMBER 2014

The established Church's involvement in politics has become an issue of increasing contemporary interest. The politics of economic austerity have inspired sustained and collective criticism from senior Anglican clergy of government policy of a kind unseen since the mid-1980s. Simultaneously, developments in ordination and in secular marriage legislation have emphasised and re-politicised the privileges of the church establishment, in particular with regards to the limits of equality legislation. The question of the Church's place in British politics has rarely in recent times commanded such popular attention and consideration, whether it be critical or complimentary.

This conference will contextualise the contemporary debate by considering the various relationships which the Church sought to construct with British politics over the course of the twentieth century. It will consider the personalities and parties, clerical and lay, who populated the 'political Church'. It will establish their multiform aims, aspirations and objectives, their methods and capabilities, their successes and failures. It will reflect on how this 'political Church' sought to engage with 'British politics' as expressed through the institutions and personalities of the state, government and party politics. It will consider the effects of the great demographic, theological, episcopal, social and political shifts of the era, and how these altered the character and purpose of the 'political Church'.

Papers are invited on these themes. As a guide, potential contributors might wish to consider the following:

- Which individuals and groups can be thought to have constituted the 'political Church'? How did different personalities and groups within the Church seek to engage with British politics? For what purposes did they do so? How did changes in Church governance during the century alter the profile and purpose of these political elements within the Church?
- With whom and with what institutions did they seek to engage? What were the junctures of Church-state political interaction (parliamentary, party political, electoral, etc.)? How did the nature of these particular junctures alter the character of the Church's political and parliamentary engagement?
- What did different elements of the 'political Church' consider to be the appropriate relationship of the Church to politics? Did these aspirations within the Church contrast or complement one another? How successfully were these aspirations realised?
- How did the great demographic, social, political, episcopal and theological shifts over the century alter the 'political Church's' engagement with policy-makers?
- What was the effect of increasing religious pluralism and ecumenicalism? How was inter-denominational and inter-faith cooperation or competition manifested in the Church's political engagement?
- Was the Church's political role constructive, complementary or critical? What did 'the Church' seek to achieve from its political engagement, and how successful can it be considered to have been?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Submission 9 December 2014

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The conference will be held at Durham University on 17 August 2015, with lunch and refreshments provided. If you would be interested in speaking at or attending the conference, please contact the address below. Potential speakers are invited to submit a short abstract of no more than 300 words. The initial deadline for submission of abstracts is 9 December 2014. Early expressions of interest would be appreciated. It is hoped that it will be possible to provide some funding as travel bursaries for postgraduate students and speakers.

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