

(p 2) Mine still does: and I am delighted to have *The Courts, the Church and the Constitution* as an unsentimental companion to set alongside it.

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The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology

PAUL AVIS

Continuum, London, 2007, xii + 201 pp (hardback £65.00)

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The author of a book review in the *Church Times* of 17 October 2008 observed that, nowadays, 'ecclesiology is not a fashionable subject'. If that view is correct (as it surely is), this work by Dr Paul Avis supplies a need, as is suggested by its subtitle, 'Essentials of Anglican ecclesiology'. The title itself hints at the author's unashamed Anglicanism and at one of his principal convictions, namely that there is no such thing as a worldwide Anglican Church, rather a communion or family of Anglican churches, which share a common history, attitudes and characteristics.

Dr Avis is well qualified to produce such a study, for he is widely read in Anglican history and in classical Anglican divinity. Moreover, his present appointment as General Secretary of the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity makes him uniquely well placed to be abreast of developments both in the Anglican Communion and in other Christian bodies. This work deserves to be read through from start to finish, for thus the reader can gain some impression of the sweep, scope and coherence of Anglican attitudes. Each chapter can also stand on its own and is available to the reader for future reference. This is, in fact, an excellent resource book, in which may be found the principal texts that in various ways inform and govern the Anglican churches. Some of the material in all but two of the eleven chapters has appeared in other forms in earlier studies by Dr Avis, but it has all been revised, rewritten and rearranged in the light of further reflection and subsequent developments.

Two chapters towards the middle of the work form the core of its treatment of the subject. These chapters, entitled 'The identity of the Anglican Communion' and 'Anglicanism and Eucharistic ecclesiology', are in fact the longest and most substantial. They are preceded by three that set the scene and are followed by four that treat related ecclesiological themes, namely baptism, the ordination of women, the consecration of women as bishops and 'Anglican ecclesiology in the twenty-first century'. At first sight, the two concluding chapters may

seem to be but loosely connected with the rest, but a moment's thought tells us that this is not so. That on 'Jesus Christ in modern Anglican theology' very properly focuses our attention on the one on whom the entire discussion depends, 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour of the world and Lord of the Church' (p 180). This is followed by a thought-provoking, occasionally wistful, chapter – 'Anglicanism in memory and hope' – in which Dr Avis looks ahead further into the twenty-first century.

In his very first chapter, Avis refers to 'the great formative theologians of Anglicanism, among whom Richard Hooker is, by common consent, supreme' (p 6). That sentence prepares us for the balance and moderation of Avis' attitude and for his view of the distinctive qualities of Anglicanism: its wide embrace, its claim to identity with the primitive Church and its difference from Rome. Hooker has had a truly seminal influence, and as such there is an elusive quality about some of his work; this may well have contributed to what Dr Avis calls 'the slightly elusive reality of Anglicanism' (p 59), certainly to the 'modesty of Anglican ecclesiology' (p 155). How George Herbert would have agreed: see his poem 'The British Church'. Add to these two qualities the English predilection for understatement, which permeates attitudes in this country, and one is all the more grateful for this reasoned exposition of the Anglican way.

Among more recent Anglican thinkers, Dr Avis frequently refers to Archbishops William Temple and Michael Ramsey. His balanced treatment of anomalies in the life of the Church is reminiscent of Archbishop's Ramsey's words that 'a little untidiness is the price which the Church can bear to pay for its power to present the one Catholic faith with sensitiveness to the difficulties of an age'.⁸ So Avis is not legalistic; he can allow room for what he clearly considers to be anomalies, such as the communion of children who are not yet confirmed, even lay presidency (if this is eventually practised in any diocese). Even serious anomalies test but do not shake the general mind of Anglicans as expressed in our authoritative documents and common life.

This is not to say that Dr Avis' treatment of some modern controversial issues is without asperity; he is clearly critical of what he considers the low level of consultation and of theological consideration before the ordination of women to the priesthood in England, and critical, too, of the general belief in The Episcopal Church that the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson was a purely local matter; critical also of the argument against the ordination of women as priests and bishops that relies on the support of churches that do not themselves recognise Anglican orders. More positively, his chapter entitled 'Anglicanism and Eucharistic ecclesiology' is truly illuminating; through both his treatment

8 AM Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple* (London, 1960), p 91.

of the eucharistic doctrine of Cranmer, Jewel and Hooker, at a formative stage in the history of the Church of England, and his persuasive exposition of the view that the Eucharist makes the Church in the sense that the Eucharist may properly be regarded as a means of grace whereby members of different communions may grow into full ecclesial union.

This glance at some of the themes in Dr Avis' book may indicate why it should be on the reading list of those responsible for the shape and ordering of Anglican life in the years ahead. We belong to a family of self-governing churches, which constitute a fellowship or communion, conciliar not pyramidal in shape, with a heritage both catholic and reformed, mindful of our continuity with the past and aware of our need to draw on this heritage as we face the future.

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Religion and the Constitution: Establishment and Fairness

KENT GREENAWALT

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Establishment and Fairness is the second volume in a two-volume work by Ken Greenawalt, *Religion and the Constitution*; the first was subtitled *Free Exercise and Fairness*.⁹ It is principally addressed to lawyers in the United States and contains a comprehensive analysis of each set of factual circumstances that may raise questions under the First Amendment's prohibition of establishment.¹⁰ Why might it be important for lawyers or scholars of law and religion outside the United States? Because it is not just about positive law. General chapters ask why US law says what it does and how that law may continue to develop into a workable set of principles that promote a central virtue – fairness (certainly a British virtue, as well¹¹).

Greenawalt effectively rebuts the argument that the non-establishment provision of the First Amendment was intended to protect state religious

9 K Greenawalt, *Religion and the Constitution: Free Exercise and Fairness* (Princeton, NJ, 2006).

10 These range from 'religious words and symbols in public places' to 'tax exemptions and deductions'.

11 J Tilley and A Heath, 'The decline of British national pride', (2007) 58 *British Journal of Sociology* 672 ('fair and equal treatment of all groups in society').