

Space does not permit more than one example of the approach adopted to each area covered. When considering the upbringing of children, the central question considered is how the right of a parent to determine a child's upbringing according to his religious beliefs is balanced against the right and duty of the state to protect children from harm and to act in their best interests. Both jurisdictions have well established systems of child protection legislation, in which pursuance of a chosen religious belief is subordinated to the overriding need to protect a child from harm. The author is particularly interested to detect whether the approach in England, with its established church, differs from that in the United States.

Examples of statute law proscribing certain religious practices are to be found in both jurisdictions: in the United States, snake handling (a central tenet of the 'Holiness' Church) is outlawed; in the United Kingdom, female circumcision is unlawful following the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. But it is to the case law, which in turn provides the detailed examples of how courts have sought to strike the balance, that the interest of the reader is drawn.

Case law in England and Wales, for example, within the wardship jurisdiction, and latterly under the Children Act 1989, concerning the dilemma arising from cases where Jehovah's Witness parents refuse permission for their child to receive blood transfusions, is covered in full. The commentary is informed, and enhanced, by regular reference to articles in legal journals and texts.

The ground on this subject, as on every other covered within the work, is thoroughly tilled, with the result that the reader is given a comprehensive and digestible account of the law.

In addition to providing a guide through the maze of case law on each of the subjects covered, *Family, Law and Religion* moves to the higher ground for an overview of the subject. The conclusion is drawn that the lack of a written constitution in England, combined with a well developed *parens patriae* jurisdiction, appears to result in a more child-focused approach in England than in the United States. The absence of a written constitution is seen as liberating the English judges to provide more protection for the child on those occasions when the rights of parents to bring up children according to their religious beliefs, conflict with what is seen to be in the best interests of the child.

This reviewer has no hesitation in recommending this work both to the general reader and to the practitioner who may need a comprehensive analysis of the many areas in which the interests of the law, the family and religion coincide.

Andrew McFarlane QC

*CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON LAW REFORM* edited by PAUL R. BEAUMONT, Paternoster Press, 1998, xiv + 154 pp (£14.99) ISBN 0-85364-852-2.

This book has emerged from the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship, having originally been conference lectures. As an amateur in matters legal, I found it well worth reading, both for the information which it contains and for the stimulus it provides to engage Christians with the actual manufacturing of law. It is all very well praying for justice-and-peace, but how do you enshrine the prayer in law? Many will be fairly familiar with the attempts to express Christian social responsibility in areas such as divorce and 'age of consent', but here are less well-trodden and more collective paths such as the environment and company law.

Quite why the particular subjects were chosen is a bit obscure but I guess they show the interests of the participants at the time. For that reason I would have liked a final chapter which drew the others together and reflected on theoretical lessons learned. Neither the foreword by Lord Mackay nor the short introduction by the

Editor really perform that task. Is there an emerging ethical method on which the contributors are agreed? What summary there is concentrates on better personal relationships in the different areas of concern; that is indeed part of the picture, but there is much more to be said about Christian ethics of principle and/or Christian ethics of consequence when applied to law.

Teresa Sutton starts the collection with a clear historical survey of mainly well-known Christian attempts to reform the law: Wilberforce, Fry and the like. She points out how Seebohm Rowntree provided indisputable factual information which eventually led to reform; that, joined with personal commitment, was the key.

Julian Rivers examines the degree to which a Bill of Rights is desirable for the United Kingdom. At times I found the chapter too technical, but it is nevertheless fascinating and includes discussion of the extent to which excessive concentration on rights makes for a selfish and litigious culture. What arrangements encourage and assist people to live morally valuable lives and who defines moral value? Older Bills of Rights tend to concentrate on protection from an over-intrusive state, but recent ones may go as far as rights to self-determination for minority groups. In the end, the author concludes that a Bill of Rights is undesirable because it would be hostile to duty, virtue and the common good.

David Harte provides a useful summary of recent environmental legislation. As with the previous section, he emphasises duties as well as rights, thus the principle of 'making the polluter pay'. Is there a distinctively Christian perspective? Answer: it should certainly 'be possible to determine whether secular solutions are at least compatible with Christian imperatives' (p 69). And there can not only be realism about human sin, but also a vision both of saved individuals and of the world itself redeemed.

The chapter by John Warwick Montgomery on suicide and assisted suicide uses material from Brian Clark's play *Whose Life is it Anyway?*, although he omits to mention the send-up of the chaplain in the play, who is pictured calling the patient 'God's chosen vessel into which people could pour their compassion'. Lord protect us from banal religion! He quotes the very moving reflection by Lord Hailsham on the suicide of his brother and concludes that if we err, we should always do so on the side of preserving life.

The book ends with a longer chapter on Corporate Governance by Stephen Copp. How do the various stakeholders have influence on a company and how can it serve 'society as a whole'? He rather too briefly strays into William Temple and into liberationism, but spends most of the chapter describing the various concerns (chief executives paid thirty-three times that of the average industrial worker in the UK etc) and the way in which Christian theology may contribute to thinking. The keynotes are good relationships, justice and the interests of society at large. Would the companies still make money for their shareholders? The author seems to believe that they would.

I am not sure whether it is lawyers or Christians who have an authority problem, but the notes are excessive in number and length, making the reader's task more difficult. It is, however, a good collection and a very welcome balance to all the personal piety which gets churned out these days.

The Very Revd Christopher Lewis, Dean of St Albans

*THE ANGLICAN CANONS 1529–1947* edited by GERALD BRAY, Church of England Record Society Vol. 6, in association with the Ecclesiastical Law Society, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1998, cxii (including introduction) + 990 pp (£95 .00) ISBN 1-08511 5-557X. [Copies are obtainable by members of the Ecclesiastical Law Society from the Treasurer at £24].

During the eighteen years in which your reviewer acted as Legal Assistant to the Governing Body of the Church in Wales, one of the problems which he regularly