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1

Introduction: Mapping the Issues

Despite the frenetic pace of recent constitutional change in a country renowned hitherto for its constitutional conservatism, the United Kingdom remains locked constitutionally so far as religion is concerned in the geopolitics of the late seventeenth century. According to the rhetoric of the times, a Protestant country was rescued in 1688 from popery by a foreign army led by a Dutch prince married to the daughter of the fleeing Roman Catholic king. Parliament insisted in 1689 on the Protestant character of the monarchy, and subsequently provided in 1701 for what it planned to be a perpetual royal Protestant succession. This reinforced an alliance against the Catholic powers in continental Europe by prohibiting Roman Catholic succession to the throne or even a sovereign's ability to marry a Roman Catholic, and required sovereigns to subscribe to the Church of England. On the parliamentary union with Scotland in 1707, the sovereign's obligation was extended to supporting the Presbyterian Church of Scotland – in the form of an oath still sworn by a new monarch immediately on accession to the throne. Similarly, sovereigns at their coronation swear an oath dating from 1689 to uphold the rights and privileges of the Church of England.

It is the argument of this book that it is time to look again at the relationship between the state and established religion in the United Kingdom. While the forms of establishment in Scotland and England are very different, both represent past political solutions to issues of church/state relations long overtaken by subsequent changes. Although in many respects the original character of the establishments is attenuated, both establishments persist and in more than vestigial form. The model of virtually complete separation of church and state in Scotland has allowed that Church to accommodate itself more easily perhaps to a denominational rather than a dominant status as its pre-eminence

declined. Things are very different in England. There, establishment took the form of a confessional state where the Church of England and the executive were joint partners in the task of governance and Parliament was the ultimate referee for both.

The treatment throughout concentrates particularly on the *constitutional* implications of the discussion. The United Kingdom is unusual in the extent to which its higher constitutional structures fuse civil government and a particular clerical Christian organization. The head of state is a Christian and Protestant monarch who is also the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, summons the Church's legislature, appoints all its most senior office holders and has direct sway over a number of churches that are free from episcopal oversight. The sovereign also approves the Church's laws whether in the form of parliamentary Measures or extra-parliamentary Canons.

The head of state as monarch of England has to be a member of the episcopal Church of England and cannot marry a Roman Catholic. As monarch of Scotland, however, there are no such requirements, though an oath has to be sworn to support the continuance of the non-episcopal and presbyterian Church of Scotland. It is therefore commonly joked that, while the monarch believes in bishops when in England, the monarch believes the opposite on crossing the border to Scotland.

Two archbishops and twenty-four bishops of the Church of England sit in the United Kingdom legislature, but there is no similar representation there for any other religious groups in England, and none at all for any religious groups in the cases of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. No other sovereign legislature gives room as of right to representatives of religion.

The constitutional issues relating to Scotland on the one hand and England on the other are very different. Indeed, some commentators feel that the only reform required is that England should adopt the Scottish model where the Church of Scotland is said to be independent of the state. This typically Scottish vision does not do justice either to the extent to which the histories of the two countries differ or the degree to which state and church remain interwoven in England. In addition, as explained in Chapter 6, establishment in Scotland is less controversial (if controversial at all) because it is less visible whereas in England establishment has a much greater salience. Furthermore, as Chapter 7 explains, the common understanding of the position of the Church of Scotland may lag behind important recent changes in judicial attitudes towards the status of that Church even under the Church of Scotland Act 1921, thought to confer a very full form of legal autonomy upon it.

Consequently, much of the argument of the book concentrates on the position in England which has 85 per cent of the United Kingdom population, if conducted simultaneously with an eye to arrangements in Scotland and comparable European countries. That said, however, what follows is not a tract for or against church establishment. Polemics (Buchanan 1994; and Hobson 2003) can say a lot about authors' states of mind but are not usually designed to address remedies rather than articulate grievances. Similarly, in its defence of establishment a recent (and possibly semi-official) account of the Church of England treats the issue as either retaining all of the present arrangements or totally abolishing them (Davie, M. 2008). More solemnly, no doubt, the present book attempts to examine just what are the *range*, today, of the vital policy questions about the state's relations with organized religion, and what seem to be the *options* for responding to them.

Furthermore, it is not the argument here that establishment is necessarily incompatible with religious *liberty*. While that may once have been the case, no-one could maintain that it continues to be true (Ahdar and Leigh 2005). What is, however, more questionable is how far establishment is compatible with religious *equality*, a different question and still a live issue in the United Kingdom (Morris 2008a). Interestingly, human rights instruments have so far concentrated on the former rather than the latter, but although the two concepts are often treated as synonymous they are not. How far equality considerations should be addressed will, accordingly, be among the themes in this study.

As ever in the case of what are essentially political problems, timing is important. Normally, there are few naturally occurring stimuli to cause root-and-branch reviews of long-established and deeply entrenched mechanisms like church establishment. However, two reasons make the case for review now particularly compelling. First, incidents of high profile (if still rare and atypical) acts of Islamic terrorism spur discussion about the place of religion in the European nation state, the latter itself grappling with the effects of an increasing globalization on its vision of its own identity. Secondly, there is a purely domestic perspective: although the event is not sought and will itself be deeply regretted, the departure of the present much-respected and long-reigning monarch will expose the underlying assumptions of the British monarchy and its relations with the established churches. A review of some of the more immediate consequences from the point of view of the heir and in the context of how the monarchy may develop has been attempted elsewhere (Morris 2008b). This book, however, investigates the core issues themselves in the belief that it is imperative to order thinking on these subjects so

far as possible. This is both for negative reasons – to be sure to forestall misunderstanding (and perhaps malice), and for positive reasons – to contribute to measured and shared public consideration of how change might be attempted.

The point about public discussion is important. Coronations, for example, are not just private family events of celebratory splendour where the domestic chaplain – in this case the Archbishop of Canterbury – officiates, albeit in front of the television cameras. Rather, coronations have always spoken of how we see ourselves not only in England but throughout the United Kingdom. The 1953 coronation was perhaps the last attempt at imperial glorification, and even then it was an anachronism. The world is now a different place and the United Kingdom will need to take stock of itself. A simple repeat of 1953 would be a failure of imagination and possibly an affront to parts of an unimaginably changed population.

The extent of the political, social and cultural changes do not present merely abstract problems to be glossed away by a Premier Duke's committee sitting in private to organize the coronation. The United Kingdom is no longer, in so far as it ever was, a homogenous society united by a particular form of Christian belief. Since World War II, the United Kingdom has become a place of deeper and wider plurality both as regards belief and unbelief let alone ethnicity. What are the implications of such profound changes for ancient institutions and what are the requirements for new ones? Are these matters for the state at all, or does the extent of society's secularization argue for treating religion as a purely private matter where its representative bodies fall to be regarded like any other civil, voluntary organizations? What is to be made in this context of the government's search for social cohesion, and is it best supported by resort to new forms of 'concurrent endowment' to support different religions simultaneously – preceded to some extent by the old *Regium donum*, discussed at the time of Irish disestablishment, and experimentally (ignorantly?) resurrected in some 'social cohesion' programmes?

The focus is institutional and domestic. This is not to imply that the wider Anglican Communion is not important. On the contrary, so far as the Archbishop of Canterbury is concerned, it has risen to a very high point in the hierarchy of his continuing responsibilities (Hurd 2001). However, though the Communion's difficulties appear at times intractable and often noisy, they are not related directly to the constitutional position of the Church of England in the United Kingdom. True, they may affect domestic views of the Church and its leadership, but the

Communion's affairs do not impact on the constitution. Analogies with the Commonwealth are sometimes pressed but with little relevance. In the Commonwealth's case there is some United Kingdom domestic legislation, for example, on citizenship and, in the Statute of Westminster 1931, for important mutual constitutional conventions. There is, however, no relevant domestic legislation in respect of the Communion and it falls, therefore, outside the focus of this work.

The scheme of the book

To understand how we have got to where we are, Part I of the book examines how church establishment has developed in the UK over the last two centuries and of what it now consists. Chapter 2 charts developments in England since 1800 where the longer perspective suggests that externally a gradual, if unplanned, institutional separation took place between the Church of England and the executive but not between the Church and the state more largely considered. Change of the former kind continues. Notably, the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, signalled in 2007 that he wished to withdraw from an active role in the appointment of senior Church of England officials – a change that calls further into question the rationale of episcopal membership of the House of Lords and the position of the Crown.

Internally, the emergence (in the case of the Convocations, the *re*-emergence) of representative forms of governance can be viewed as the Church of England's counterpart response to the increasing democratization of the parliamentary franchise and the progressive dissolving of starker hierarchical styles. The gradual inclusion of the laity – ultimately into synodical form from 1969 – stemmed from the increasing implausibility of regarding Parliament as representative of the lay membership of the Church of England. That Parliament should be preferred to the General Synod as representing the laity was a position still maintained if only by a small minority of MPs in 1974 when Parliament approved the important Worship and Doctrine Measure. As society changed, so did the Church, though it continues to struggle to agree about changes in gender roles and whether practising homosexuals can validly undertake a priestly vocation. Although still a minority among stipendiary full-time priests, women are now a majority of the total ordained. Recent decisions of the Synod make it clear that women can be expected to start becoming bishops within a decade.

Chapter 2 looks also at the Church of England's involvement in education. Strictly, education is not a constitutional matter in the same way

as the other topics. At the same time, the Church's role exemplifies by exception how its institutional significance in social and community care has declined as the state has moved into areas of poverty relief, health-care and family law formerly provinces of the Church. How far religious organizations should have a role in what is in practice an almost entirely publicly funded service is at present recurrently controversial. From the point of the Church of England, however, its association with education is seen as part of its mission to society, the more understandable when its historic role is appreciated. Religious schools are an instance where religious freedom and equality have resulted in an increasing variety of religious schools as the statutory criteria have had properly to be applied impartially. The role of the 'faith' dimension in social provision has an increasing salience in contemporary discussion of religion and the public square, and is addressed in the section on 're-establishment' in Chapter 14.

Chapters 3 and 4 investigate what exactly is the current law and practice of establishment, looking accordingly at the roles respectively of the monarchy, the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. These chapters describe how establishment is articulated in the modern political system. What they describe is a minimally adjusted inheritance from a pre-modern society. Much can be accounted for by the relative absence of discontinuity in England's constitutional arrangements – no successful invasion since 1066, a religious reformation that substituted monarchical for papal headship of an existing church, a civil war that restored a limited monarchy leading to republican political realities within apparently regal forms. Because England has not experienced state failure as in, say, France, it has not been necessary to start all over again at any point and the old forms have therefore persisted with such minimum adjustment as may have been unavoidable in any particular instance – in the case of the coronation oath without actual parliamentary sanction. Their survival is not therefore the result of deliberate decision but the default outcome of the elapse of time. In that sense accidental, it does not follow that they have to be revisited root and branch. At the same time, they have but a timeworn, decaying legitimacy in modern society and, although it is often maintained that the constituent parts of establishment have to be regarded as a take-it-or-leave-it package, that view is not sustainable and does not have to be accepted. It follows that it is sensible to have in mind the possible directions and content of change in order to prepare for action as and when opportunity arises.

Chapter 5 explains the finances of establishment. A common fallacy is that the state supports the Church of England – though not perhaps

the Church of Scotland – out of taxation. Not only is this not the case in Britain but it is truer as the chapter explains of certain other church/state regimes elsewhere in Europe. While there are money flows from the state to the established churches, they occur according to impartial principles that are equally available to all denominations. In practice the Church of England is the largest beneficiary: it has the more numerous public service chaplaincies and, because it possesses by far the larger share of churches that qualify for Heritage grants, it has the largest share there too. However, these flows are accompanied by some counter-flows: chaplains have to be trained for the priesthood, managing schools requires diocesan oversight and support. Moreover, the two established churches face continuing and serious financial challenges, partly because their congregations are both diminishing and getting older. This has caused the Church of Scotland to begin a review of whether it should maintain its commitment to full parochial coverage throughout Scotland. The Church of England's large historic patrimony has helped to keep the more drastic options at bay though it has done much to combine cures and reorganize its parochial network. The largest call on the patrimony is nowadays clergy pensions, a fact that has required imposing a greater burden on current parishioners who have responded gratifyingly so far, though, as in Scotland, the ageing of members of the Church of England does raise the question of longer-term viability. The most acute area of potential difficulty is the Church's ability to maintain its built inheritance. There is also the point that, the more present parishioners bear the costs, the more they will expect to determine spending priorities, and the more they may opt for policies that benefit active members of the Church rather than service to the nation as a whole. There are the seeds there of a conflict between a growing denominationalism on the one hand and an ultimate parliamentary control favouring the larger service role and being reluctant to see the Church walk away with resources originally willed for that purpose but devoted to narrower aims. This could come to a head if the Church thought of opting for disestablishment and still expected to keep all of its patrimony when the Irish and Welsh disestablishments were accompanied by measures of disendowment.

Two chapters on Scotland – 6 and 7 – consider, first, the form and content of establishment in Scotland and, secondly, the extent to which recent decisions by the courts have begun to put glosses on the Church of Scotland Act 1921, which was thought to guarantee a complete separation between that Church and the state. The 'Scottish model' is not, accordingly, what it was once thought to be. Moreover, the actions of the House of Lords in the Scottish *Percy* case appear to show the beginnings

of what may be a profound change of judicial attitude. Whereas formerly the 1921 Act was held by the courts to exclude judicial intrusion, changes in the law derived from new species of European Union (EU) legislation have caused the courts to look behind the 1921 Act and limit what was formerly thought to be the operating autonomy of the Church of Scotland.

Nor are such changes confined to Scotland. Although not judicially initiated, the Church of England has also had to face up to changed state expectations of its employment practices as a result of EU law. Long-established concepts of parson's freehold and entirely clerical systems of discipline are giving way to legal codes that have sought to place all employed persons irrespective of occupation on a common basis. So far this is to be accomplished not by the direct application of the secular law but by the Church of England adapting its own law to conform to the objectives of the secular law (Church of England 2005). While this preserves the form of legal autonomy, it does not preserve its substance as the Church's code is clearly subordinate to the secular framework. It remains uncertain how far these pressures of legal standardization and harmonization will go. At the same time, the tendencies are not all in the same direction as controversies and some litigation about acceptable forms of 'religious' dress have shown. At the time of writing, whether an Employment Tribunal decision upholding a local registrar's right to refuse to officiate at same-sex civil partnerships on religious grounds will itself be upheld remains to be seen. In general, what is occurring is a process where the courts are having to pick their way in a rights environment between competing claims that cannot all be satisfied. Fear of the implied threat of rights approaches to traditional religious preferences was, of course, one of the reasons why the Church of England and others expressed serious reservations about the Human Rights Act 1998, though they had to settle for what was a wholly declaratory rather than mandatory provision in s. 13. These tendencies are one of the reasons for heightened religious sensitivities about what are increasingly seen as secular intrusions into what was regarded as justifiable religious exceptionalism and rights. Such concerns persist even where the courts have made it clear that the Church of England is not a public authority for the purposes of the 1998 Act.

Part II seeks to give some depth to policy analysis by examining not only disestablishment processes in the UK itself but also church/state relationships in Scandinavia, the group of countries in Europe whose ecclesiastical history most closely resembles our own. Chapter 8 charts the processes of the two disestablishments – Ireland 1871 and Wales

1920 – that have already occurred in the UK. It seeks to identify the significant features that led to disestablishment in each case and, by implication, how far such features may be relevant today.

In hindsight, the two disestablishments appear not as models for, or precursors of, a larger disestablishment but, rather, the product of particular regional conditions at the time. Well before the 1860s it was evident (including to the House of Lords) that maintaining an Anglican church establishment in Ireland was beyond the reach of principled defence. Until Gladstone decided to remove what was a grievance for the overwhelming majority of the Irish population, disestablishment had been latterly resisted particularly because of the implications it was thought to have for continuing the establishment in England. In Wales aggressive forms of nonconformity became yoked politically to Gladstone's new Liberal coalition, one of whose principal components was the nonconformist vote, especially after franchise extensions from 1868. In that case, however, the arguments were by no means all one way, and the House of Lords felt justified in declining to pass the necessary legislation. As a result, a much-sought disestablishment could not occur at all until the House of Lords' powers were clipped in 1911 and even then did not take place until 1920. Because intervening changes had removed many of the political aims of disestablishment, the victors were perhaps privately left wondering whether the measure was indeed justifiable in the circumstances obtaining when they succeeded.

Both disestablishments included measures of disendowment whose ostensible logic was based on the contention that the successor churches, being entirely voluntary organizations, could not lay claim to monies received to support their former established missions to address whole populations. There was much confusion about disendowment during the passage of the Irish Bill, and unsuccessful moves in the House of Lords to devote the proceeds to 'concurrent endowment', that is, for the benefit of all Christian including Roman Catholic denominations. The first Welsh Act was quite clearly punitive but the intervention of World War I and subsequent changed political circumstances resulted in much ground being recovered so that the Welsh Church did not commence its new life in actual poverty.

It is difficult to envisage quite the same circumstances in either case recurring in England. Such proponents of disestablishment as exist rarely focus on endowment issues. Even the National Secular Society in the form of disestablishment it espouses does not desire to impoverish the Church of England. There is no apparent hostility to the Church on grounds of its wealth, perhaps because there is a more general

appreciation that its financial condition is in fact somewhat precarious. However, if the Church itself sought disestablishment, then it is almost certain that the future of its endowments would come into contention and it may be that it is this consideration among others that will act to restrain internal proponents of the more extreme and complete forms of disengagement from the state.

Chapter 9 concentrates on developments in Scandinavia and the extent to which Protestant establishments have changed and undergone disestablishment. The experience of Scandinavia is especially relevant not only because the countries exhibit the sort of constitutional fusion seen in the UK but also because in Sweden there has been a recent disestablishment of former structures. The chapter's account emphasizes a point made implicitly throughout the book's references to practice in other countries: there is not and never has been any single model of church establishment, and each settlement has been the unique product of local political circumstance. What the chapter also shows, however, is that to some extent changes such as Swedish disestablishment that appear climactic are much less so in practice. The same could be said, for example, of disestablishment in Wales where the *civic* status of the church remained little changed and its overall position could be said to have improved. This may suggest that modern disestablishments occurring in relatively benign circumstances are more about re-presentation or, more crudely, makeovers designed to give above all the appearance (and to some extent no doubt the reality) of fundamental change. That may be less true in the Swedish case, however, where secularization had already gone a long way and almost all the accommodations had already been made.

Part III attempts the policy analysis necessary to help identify the options for change in the UK. Chapter 10 examines the state of belief (Christian and otherwise) and unbelief in the UK, and considers how best to explain the reasons for the decay in active Christian belief and the extent to which decay may be irreversible. It is often pointed out that the available data have to be approached with considerable caution. Just as Elizabeth I was loath to attempt to make windows into men's souls, so would it be wrong to be over emphatic about what the data can be held to say. It is also instructive to compare the data over time. In 1970, for example, it remained possible for the Chadwick Commission to conclude that nominal support for the Church of England ran to at least half and possibly as much as two-thirds of the adult population in England of whom more than one in four had been confirmed. At that time, one in two children was baptized and about the same proportion of all marriages

took place in the Church of England (Chadwick 1970: Appendix D). As the chapter shows, all these numbers have fallen very substantially and there have also been significant increases in expressed unbelief. Whereas Chadwick had to deal with somewhat scattered data, there has been since a growth of more systematic and regular surveys, especially of the kind associated with the work of Dr Peter Brierley at Christian Research.

While these have confirmed the character and detail of decline, particularly of church attendance, no data of this kind are in themselves explanatory of *why* the decline has taken place. A survey of the literature on 'secularization' shows marked differences of opinion. On the one hand, there are those who emphasize the continuities of belief even if inactive and, on the other hand, those who interpret the evidence as indicative of a permanent decline in religious belief. Clearly, important cultural shifts have been occurring which have included an increased propensity of modern states to express moral values and expected behavioural norms in legal codes, if often strongly coincident with Christian and religiously based ethical systems. One way of understanding the changes is that, over the longer term, the expansion of state functions has progressively encroached on functions hitherto hosted within religious frameworks to the extent that churches are seen as less relevant to the lives of many people. What remains puzzling, however, is the increased *rate* of decline since the 1960s and for which it is doubtful if anyone has yet offered entirely convincing explanations. As the data show, people in Great Britain (and to a lesser extent in Northern Ireland) are now significantly less likely to resort to churches to mark life's rites of passage: baptisms, confirmations, church marriages and church funerals have all declined and appear to be continuing to decline. Constitutionally, the question is what political action seems called for as a result. Chapter 10 uses the device of offering advice to an anonymous statesman to summarize the conclusions that may be drawn and that seem most relevant to political decision making.

Chapter 11 analyses the state of opinion about church establishment, pointing out that, apart from establishment's traditional opponents, where debate occurs at all much of it takes place within the Church of England itself. That debate includes proponents who wish in practice to move the Church into a voluntary status concerned with a ministry solely for its own active members rather than to the nation as a whole. As pointed out in Chapter 5, if the financial circumstances of the Church of England continue to tighten and more of the financial burden falls on active church members, the more such voices may strengthen: why should they pay for facilities which others use free, or when services may

more easily be held in local halls without the cost of shoring up expensive special buildings. However, there is no present reason to believe that such views are in the majority. Further, although traditional opponents of establishment continue to maintain their positions, it cannot be said that disestablishment is in any sense a live issue at large. Nor is establishment of concern solely to Christians: establishment is supported by members of other religions because of the recognized place it gives to religion in public life. At the same time, the constitutional discrimination against Roman Catholics continues to exercise that community and others concerned with religious equality. If their objections are not explicitly couched in terms hostile to establishment, a considerable revision of establishment would be required in order to accommodate them. Although there have been no recent tests of parliamentary opinion, it seems unlikely that Parliament would stand in the way of individual changes initiated and carefully presented by the Church of England itself. The more significant the change, however, the less confident about parliamentary reactions it is possible to be.

Finally, Part IV in Chapters 12 to 14 offers argued conclusions in respect of the range of feasible changes to establishment. Chapter 12 reviews the higher state architecture; Chapter 13 reviews the political representation of religion; and Chapter 14 moves to assess the outlines of a possible final balance. Since there are two partners to establishment, the perspectives of both have to be addressed.

A survey of just what complete disestablishment would entail is Chapter 12's initial focus. It concludes that the disturbance to the Church of England's internal structures would be very great, and likely to produce a crisis of identity and governance which it is doubtful that internal disestablishmentarians either understand or intend. Although disengaging the monarchy and at the same time abolishing the discrimination against Roman Catholics would constitute a very considerable change indeed, such steps would be less harmful to both monarchy and Church than is often maintained. If it were desired to redress Roman Catholic grievances, then there could be no halfway house. For example, it would not be practicable to repeal the ban on Roman Catholic spouses without repealing also the requirement that the monarch should be in communion with the Church of England and have the status of Supreme Governor. But it is not only the position of Roman Catholics that might call for such changes. There are quite separate and at least equally cogent arguments from the changed character of religious belief and unbelief which arguably must come first in the sense that Roman Catholic objections are now but a particular illustration of a general case. In other

words, there are powerful general arguments for disengaging the monarchy from any religious tests and freeing the sovereign to have any religious beliefs or none.

Even if no such changes are made, there is a strong case for looking again at accession arrangements and the coronation. The United Kingdom is so changed a country since 1953 that repeating everything as it was done then seems unthinkable. The Church of England itself may feel that some of the language in the coronation oath prescribed in 1689 is no longer appropriate in a more ecumenical as well as more religiously plural age. But that might be only a starting point for looking anew at the whole process of accession, which would need to have imaginative regard for all the social and cultural changes that have occurred since 1953. Some suggestions are made accordingly, including as to whether the Scottish and Accession Declaration oaths should be retained and how the title *Fidei Defensor* might be regarded.

The principle and practice of political representation of religion in the legislature is analysed in Chapter 13. No other sovereign legislature has formal religious representatives whereas the United Kingdom Parliament has twenty-six Anglican bishops in the House of Lords with full membership and voting rights. The absence of political consensus on future reform of the House of Lords has made governments' approaches to continued episcopal representation cautious. They do not wish needlessly to confront or otherwise upset an entrenched group even by floating options if there is in fact no realistic chance of achieving any alterations to the existing dispensation. Accordingly, successive White Papers have avoided real discussion of principle, apart from registering the obvious point that there would be no place for bishops in a wholly elected house. In this situation, the chapter attempts to analyse the arguments of principle and practice, all of which it argues run clearly against religious representation other than on a principle of individual merit assessed as independently as possible by an independent Appointments Commission against the claims of all other applicants. How bishops might be removed from the Lords is also discussed.

As well as dealing with some lesser features of establishment, Chapter 14 attempts to look at alternative ways – 're-establishment' – of formally recognising the place of religions in, and contributions by religions to, the public commonwealth. The chapter concludes with the device again of addressing an imaginary statesman, this time with suggestions also for the Church of England itself. The argument here as elsewhere is that change is necessary to reflect the character of modern society and that, although it does not have to be climactic, change should be for the

most part at least incrementally purposive. Moreover, the claim is that change can be achieved without the controversy sometimes alleged, and more often than customarily assumed on the initiative of the Church of England itself. In particular, naturally occurring opportunities such as changes of sovereign should be used to address the higher architecture.

To many people, all this may seem an arcane series of subjects rightly consigned to the polite oblivion of the academy. They would be wrong. What is in fact being addressed is a vital part of how our current society constructs its modern identity in ways that make sense to all citizens. The process of change does not have to be dramatic or threatening to any of the parties. Rather, what is at issue is a further constitutional adjustment and realignment of the kind well-precedented in the long development of these islands' polity. Theory, immemorial practice and social reality have so much parted company that they need to be brought back into balance. Accordingly, it is hoped that this book will contribute to help making the choices and actions required as well informed as possible.

The last word might properly go to an Archbishop of Canterbury. On the very day of his retirement in 1974, Archbishop Michael Ramsey initiated the House of Lords debate on the Worship and Doctrine Measure. Among other things, he maintained that the Measure provided

a way in which the link between the Church of England and the State can continue in a form which enables each to fulfil its distinctive role for the benefit of the other, with greater effectiveness in the life of the Church. (HL 14 November 1974 col. 868)

If the state has to be neutral on the last clause, the statement remains a proper ambition for the state and the Church. The problem is to find the means for the times even if the means reach well beyond anything contemplated by an archbishop in 1974.

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