

private, rather than the two realms of Church and State. Rivers encourages some bridge-building, arguing that, rather than rejecting liberalism, Christians need to reclaim it.

Christian perspectives and legal scholarship are well displayed in this collection, in which the essays are hardly well matched but individually offer much that is of interest.

Colin Munro, Professor of Constitutional Law in the University of Edinburgh.

LA LAICITÀ DELL'UNIONE EUROPEA: DIRITTI, MERCATO, RELIGIONE by MARCO VENTURA, G Giappichelli Editore, Torino, 2001, vii + 277 pp. (paperback €20.66) ISBN 88-348-1134-8.

In Britain, discussions of Church and State issues often focus on the concept of 'establishment', even though the term is so problematic that the Archbishops' Commission Report *Church and State* (1970) deliberately tried to avoid using it. In other parts of Europe, including Italy, the equally problematic concept of *laicità*, or similar, is regularly invoked in such discussions. It figures in the title of this book.

Ventura is a law professor at Siena university, and had this book contained biographical information then the reader would have seen the variety and distinction of his work. His intellectually sophisticated study, based on extensive documentation and close reading in various languages, analyses the interweaving of law and religion in the political context of increasing European integration. His exposition unfolds in three main sections, each divided into three chapters, ending with conclusions. In essence, the three sections consider respectively the impact of the European Union on religious freedom, its impact on the phenomenon of religion, and the response of religious groups. The volume's main drawback is that it so brims with ideas that they spill over into the numerous and at times lengthy footnotes, making reading difficult.

First there is a section on the European Union and religious freedom, which includes consideration of the emergence of what is characteristic and shared in that Union, within a trajectory that goes from mythological beginnings to today. The decisions of the international courts in Strasbourg (on Article 9 of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights especially) and Luxembourg are given prominence. Less expected but welcome consideration is also given by Ventura to the economic dimension, recalling the word 'market' (*mercato*) in the title. There are also brief yet significant reflections on the need to renew methodologies for 'ecclesiastical law', going beyond inherited classifications and the dominance of the Church/State approach. This section ends with a subtle discussion of '*laicità europea*', the expression, really, of the principle of democratic pluralism from which the right to religious liberty derives.

The second section examines the European Union and religion, going beyond an analysis based on the place of fundamental rights so as to assess the wider impact of law on religion. Here it is a question of looking at how the organisation of the Union touches on the religious concerns of individuals and groups, at the level of practice as well as theory. This second section is more novel than the first, and discusses subsidiarity and changing notions of State sovereignty. The analogy with the economic, 'market', dimension is again present, and it will be taken up in the Conclusions.

The third and last section sustains this wide horizon, considering how the religions concerned respond to the European Union. Religious groups adopt different strategies, and for some what is at stake is no less than giving Europe 'a soul'. Ventura rightly identifies a strong and increased involvement by the Roman Catholic Church; he might have added that some Protestants see this as a threatening development. He does, however, raise the twofold question (in a long footnote) of whether or not ecumenism favours European integration and integration favours ecumenism. The theme of the Union's '*laicità*', in its organisation and laws, reappears in considering the different forms of co-operation and involvement with religions. The tension between democratic pluralism and the religious drive to have divine or natural law applied is evident in such important matters as sexual orientation, employment, education, and bioethics. Ventura adopts a rather all-embracing pluralism, but other solutions can be supported.

This book, densely argued and highly conceptual, is a good sample for British ecclesiastical lawyers of the kind of discussion not uncommon elsewhere in Europe. If it sounds unfamiliar and different, then Ventura has established one of his main challenges: progress in Europe must include acceptance of 'the other'. As it happens, Ventura is also involved in editing *Daimon*, the Italian annual periodical launched in 2001, devoted to the presentation and comparison of the laws of the different religions. Relating to Eastern religions is a pressing task for law in Europe, recalling (as Ventura notes) the uneasy relationship of Europe to Asia in ancient mythology. The restrictive dominance of inherited 'Church and State' discussions may be coming to an end.

Fr Robert Ombres OP, Blackfriars, Cambridge

LAW AND RELIGION: CURRENT LEGAL ISSUES VOLUME 4.
 Edited by RICHARD O'DAIR and ANDREW LEWIS, Oxford University Press, 2001, xliii + 561pp (Hardback £80) ISBN 0-19-924660-2

The ever-important impact of religion on the law demands constant awareness. Law and religion is a relationship *semper reformandum*. The impressive volume edited by Richard O'Dair and Andrew Lewis contributes immensely to this everlasting process. Outstanding scholars in law as well as in religion make the book a fascinating source of information and ideas. Challenging is the very number of the thirty contributors to the proceedings