

## An Anglican evangelical identity crisis

The Churchman-Anvil affair of 1981-1984

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AN ANGLICAN EVANGELICAL IDENTITY CRISIS

The Churchman-Anvil Affair of 1981-1984

By Andrew Atherstone

Latimer Trust. 82 pages. £3.50

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'Timely' is a word that immediately comes to mind on reading this booklet.

It records events which, at first glance, some may consider to be of limited, peripheral interest. For the discerning reader, however, it is a presenting example of many of the major issues facing evangelicals at present.

For the uninitiated it tells the story of how the journal *Anvil* came into being, following disputes over the editorial breadth of *The Churchman*, the flagship Anglican evangelical journal published by the Church Society.

The author perceptively traces the roots of this split back to the 'broadening' of evangelicalism in the 1970s, which followed the change of direction taken by many Anglican evangelicals after a national conference at Keele in 1967.

A veritable 'who's who' of names are mentioned and quoted in the 68-page narrative, via letters, newspaper articles and minutes of meetings that have been carefully researched.

Those who attended NEAC5 at All Souls, Langham Place, in November 2008 will recognise the way history has a tendency to repeat itself (even down to those who delight in citing their evangelical 'credentials'!).

Here is the real value of the booklet — particularly for those who are too young to have followed events at the time. As the author suggests in his conclusion, the Churchman-Anvil 'affair' shines a spotlight upon the 'contrasting, and sometimes irreconcilable, attitudes to Anglican evangelical identity'.

As such, it contributes to our understanding of the issues being wrestled with among evangelicals today.

**Andrew Wilson,  
Sidcup**

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