

## EDITORIAL

By the time this issue of the *Journal* reaches members, the final group of sessions of the Sixth General Synod of the Church of England will have ended. Matters of considerable importance to the Church and, in particular, those concerned with ecclesiastical and canon law, will have been discussed and far-reaching decisions will have been made.

In the field of legislation the vexed passage of the Churchwardens Measure will, one hopes, have resulted in its reaching calmer waters (see notice on page 430 for a London Lecture to be given by James Behrens on 13th September). The draft Clergy Discipline Measure (note change of title) will have been given further consideration in a form markedly different from the present quasi-criminal procedures. The date for the coming into force of the Care of Places of Worship Measure 1999 (peculiarities being given the option of coming under faculty jurisdiction or being subject to secular listed building consent) and its accompanying rules should be known. In addition the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules will have resulted in considerable modification to the rules made in 1992. This measure and the two sets of rules will do much to justify the continuation of the exemption of churches from the need to obtain listed building consent.

Relations between Church and State were also due to feature in a debate on reform of the House of Lords and the Archdeacon of Tonbridge was introducing a debate asking the House of Bishops 'to initiate further theological study on the episcopate, focusing on the issues that need to be addressed in preparation for the debate on women in the episcopate of the Church of England.'

On the other hand the publication of *Common Worship* has brought to an end the present review of liturgical practices, although authorisation is expected for 'Public Worship with Communion by Extension', which will be of considerable benefit to rural parishes sharing one priest.

The wide-ranging measures, rules and debates referred to above, which I hope will stimulate articles and letters to the Editor, indicate how closely the Church of England is still linked to the State. Disestablishment could not be achieved by a one-clause bill!

A full report of this group of sessions and of the first group of the Seventh General Synod to be held in November will be included in the next issue of the *Journal*. That will be the last report by the Legal Adviser to General Synod, Brian Hanson, who retires at the end of the year.

With the Human Rights Act 1998 coming into force on 2nd October, the European Convention on Human Rights will be directly applicable in English courts with likely consequences for those concerned with ecclesiastical administration. Bearing in mind the importance of human rights legislation and principles, the General Committee decided that the next residential conference (Trinity Hall, Cambridge on 30th March–1st April 2001) should be on 'Religious Liberty and Human Rights'. Full details of the conference with the names of the distinguished speakers appear on page 485. An introductory article by Mark Hill appears on page 431.

A second Roman Catholic and Anglican Colloquium on 'Clergy Discipline' was held at Windsor in May and copies of the proceedings will again be made available in due course.

This leads me on to the International Conference on 'Church/State Relations in Europe' which is being held at Christ Church College Canterbury from 13th–15th September. During the conference a reception is being held by the Society. This Conference is fully subscribed but a report will be included in the next issue of the *Journal*.

The Society is again cooperating with the (Roman Catholic) Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in presenting the Lyndwood Lecture which will be

hosted by them on this occasion. It is being held in London on 27th October 2000 and a booking form is included with this issue. See also page 416.

Following the successful day conference on the deployment of the clergy, it is hoped to publish some of the papers read at it in the next issue of the *Journal*. It is also hoped to include one or more of the London Lectures 2000.

At the Annual General Meeting in March the Chairman expressed concern that there were no active working parties meeting at present. Working parties are the life-blood of the Society and, with modern methods of communication making it easier for them to function with members in different parts of the country, he hoped they would soon revive as the London Lectures have. In view of the interesting and sometimes controversial questions now facing General Synod and the Church at large, there would seem to be every incentive for renewed activity. In addition to the topics being debated in Synod, remarriage and clergy confidentiality are producing considerable discussion.

Following lengthy discussions by members of the Editorial Committee it has been decided to make certain alterations to the appearance of the *Journal*, notably to the front cover, the contents being set out in detail inside. Some improvement in the quality of the paper, the type size used for the footnotes and the size of the individual issues will also be noted. It is intended to seek the reaction of members to the changes at the residential conference. I should also like to take this opportunity of thanking all the members of the Editorial Committee, the referees, proof-readers and others who do so much to help in the production of a journal which, members tell me, should make them proud. I am also glad to welcome Lynne Leeder to the Editorial Committee and to say how honoured we are that Richard Helmholz, Ruth Wyatt Rosenson Distinguished Service Professor of Law at the University of Chicago, has agreed to join the Editorial Advisory Board

Those concerned with the administration of ecclesiastical law will be interested in an article by the late Librarian of the Middle Temple, Janet Edgell, on the establishment and development of the Ecclesiastical Law Centre which she did so much to advance. Discussions are now taking place as to how the work should be carried on; see my enclosed letter.

Finally may I commend the suggestion made by the Treasurer that subscriptions be paid by direct debit. This will avoid the risk of the *Journal* not being delivered because a subscription has not been renewed in time.

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