

EDITORIAL

This issue, number 35, marks the completion of the first volume of the Journal under my editorship. Arrangements for binding will be circulated when the Indexes have been prepared. The shelf space now occupied by the Journal and the increasing size of individual issues is testimony to the renaissance in the study of ecclesiastical law. It is a comfort to know that the Journal, so carefully nurtured by Michael Goodman over many years, is in such good heart and continues to provide a broad mix of articles and comment on ecclesiastical law and related disciplines.

Reformation scholarship has never been as vital as it is now and the Society was delighted that Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch of the University of Oxford, and Professor Eamon Duffy of Cambridge accepted invitations to deliver the Temple Talks last December. Already well known from their numerous publications, each speaker brought a fresh – and at times controversial – insight into the affairs of the Church at the time of the break with Rome. Their lectures are reproduced in this issue. The Society is privileged to play host to academics of such distinction and it is a particular pleasure to record that the Archbishop of Canterbury, patron of the Society, will give the next Temple Talk on the subject of Richard Hooker. The date is yet to be finalised. Further details will be circulated in due course.

In counterpoint to the complementary papers on the Reformation is Bishop John Inge's article considering the place of the sacred in society now, in the second Elizabethan age. Parallels can be drawn regarding the insistent way in which religion continues to permeate contemporary life. The rising tide of secularism may be little more than an urban myth. Moving from the general to the particular, Jacqui Humphreys considers what may be another old myth – that of the right to marry in the parish church. I would welcome readers' comments on the detailed legal analysis on which Miss Humphreys mounts her case.

The expanding comment section covers several diverse matters – from the theology of burial to freedom of expression – and includes a consideration of the consequences of the House of Lords' decision in *Aston Cantlow* as well as a challenging reflection on the use of rural churches. There is plenty of food for thought and material for debate, as well as the regular book reviews, case notes and conference reports.

A significant alteration to the calendar of events hosted by the Ecclesiastical Law Society is the change in date for the residential conference. It will take place significantly earlier next year on **28-30 January 2005**. Please note this date in your diaries and note also the change from the frugality of our customary student accommodation to the more sumptuous surroundings of the Waterside Hotel in Bath. The provisional title for the conference is *Mission Impossible*, an exploration of law as a tool for mission, and the many and varied experiences of the Society's membership should stimulate a fruitful exchange.

Finally mention should be made of the Lyndwood Lecture to be held in the Throne Room at Archbishop's House, Westminster, on Monday 15 November 2004 when the speaker will be the Right Revd Dr John McAreevey, Bishop of Dromore. This biennial collaboration with the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland is a practical instrument of ecumenism and a reminder of the importance of the recovery of our understanding of the events and consequences of the Reformation.

Mark Hill
Editor