

EDITORIAL

General Synod goes through periods when it is highly involved in legislative work and this appears to be one of them as Brian Hanson makes plain in his report on the last three sessions (p 681).

Among current proposals are those for reorganising the Church's disciplinary procedures in respect of the Clergy, a tribunal of three to be substituted for the Consistory Court. One of the Society's Working Parties made recommendations (4 Ecc. LJ 510) to the group under the chairmanship of Canon Hawker whose report *Under Authority* was generally approved in November, although Synod expressed the view that doctrinal offences should continue to be dealt with as at present. Any change to a system which affords built-in protection for an incumbent accused of an ecclesiastical offence which could lead to loss of livelihood calls for the most careful scrutiny, particularly as General Synod has only recently resolved not to proceed to the abolition of the Parson's Freehold. The Working Party clearly still has a role to fulfil here.

The proposals to alter the balance of power in cathedrals also attracted submissions from another of the Society's Working Parties (4Ecc L J 504) and further representations may be made in the light of the Howe report.

While it may not be easy for additional members to join these Working Parties at this stage I do suggest that there is scope for a Working Party to be formed to consider the *Turnbull* proposals for re-shaping the Church of England's structures at national level now contained in the draft National Institutions Measure upon which dioceses have been asked to comment by 1st October 1997. Other topics considered by General Synod recently may lead to the formation of new Working Parties, as may the subjects to be discussed during the course of the Manchester Conference in March (p 613 and p 663).

A new development in the life of the Society took place on 2nd November when a lecture on *William Lyndwood and the Provinciale—Canon Law in an undivided Western Church* was delivered to a joint meeting of the Society and the (Roman Catholic) Canon Law Society. The lecture was given by Mgr Brian Ferme, the distinguished Professor of Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. It was well supported by members of both societies and graced by the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio and our own President. Much of the credit for this highly successful occasion must go to the Ven. Hughie Jones whose inspiration it was and to Fr Robert Ombres O.P. who is a member of both societies and who chaired the meeting. The lecture itself, which appears on p. 615, and the opportunity for a convivial lunch, were much appreciated by those whose differing allegiances were forgotten in the warmth and intellectual stimulus which the occasion generated. My hope is that this will only be the first of such joint meetings.

Much interest has been expressed in the book reviews appearing in the Journal. It is not easy to spot every publication that merits a review and I encourage members to write to the Books Editor David Harte (whose address appears on the inside cover) whenever they come across a book which they consider would be of interest.

There has been a growing response to my request for articles on *Notable Ecclesiastical Trials*. Offers to write on the Voysey Heresy Trial, the Colenso case, the Gorham Judgment and *Bland v. Archdeacon of Cheltenham* have already been forthcoming. Do please consider adding to what I hope will become an established series. The Trial of the Seven Bishops and the Trial of Bishop Edward King spring to mind and there are many others. Do let me know if you propose to embark on one of them so that others can be prevented from choosing the same subject.

I have been asked to draw attention to a Conference to be held at the University

of Wales in Cardiff from 4th to 6th April 1997 on a cultural response to death, dying and disposal. Its aim is to attract those involved in anthropology, archaeology, law, medicine, philosophy, history, social psychology and theology. Details can be obtained from Stephen White, Medico-Legal Unit, Cardiff Law School, Southgate House, Bevan Place, Cardiff CF4 3UQ.

Finally, Norman Doe is researching for a book, *Canon Law in the Anglican Communion*, aiming for publication to coincide with the Lambeth Conference 1998. It is a comparative study of all the constitutions and canons of national and provincial churches, as well as a sample survey of diocesan regulations and judicial decisions. He would be extremely grateful were any member of the Society, with knowledge of Anglican churches overseas, to contact him at the Law Faculty, Museum Street, Cardiff CF1 1XD with information which they consider may not be drawn from the formal legal documents themselves.

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Editorial Committee: Michael Goodman (Chairman), James Behrens, Timothy Briden, Rupert Bursell, Norman Doe, David Harte, Mark Hill, Hughie Jones, Stephen Pix, Peter Moore and Thomas Watkin.

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RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE

14th to 16th March 1997

UMIST CONFERENCE CENTRE, MANCHESTER

Practical Parish Problems – Gospel and Order

Bookings are coming in fast, but there is still room for more members to attend. Please register soon – if you have mislaid your form please telephone the Executive Officer (01865 242444) for a replacement. Those already registered are reminded that the balance is payable on 1st February.