

## EDITORIAL

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WILL ADAM

As volume 23 comes to a close, so does the current editorship—only the third since the *Journal* began in 1987. The development of the *Journal* from a slim pamphlet to a thrice-yearly substantial volume with international and academic reach has been well rehearsed over the years. This development and growth has gone hand in hand with the growth and increased importance of the study of law and religion around the world and the present issue illustrates the breadth of law and religion studies.

It was back in 2003 that I first began to contribute case notes to the *Journal* and ten years after that that I became its editor. Back in 2003 the method of dealing with copy was a mixture of paper and email, and the instructions for contributors required articles to be sent on floppy disks. The *Bishopsgate* questions were still very much in force, and A and B were resolutions under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 rather than lists under the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2020. Over the course of nearly two decades there have been many changes, not least the burgeoning of religious cases (mainly on freedom of religion or belief) brought in the European Court of Human Rights. The spotlight on religious freedom can, I think, be shown to have brought both religious law and religion law, or the internal laws of religious bodies and state or other regulation of religious behaviour, into that same spotlight.

This third issue of 2021 again has an admirable spread of content, illustrating the range and reach of our discipline. An article based on Professor Norman Doe's lecture on the Court of Arches takes us into the history of the English church courts; Charles George QC, at the time the Dean of Arches, gives a response from, as it were, the inside. The Ecclesiastical Law Society's COVID-affected conference on the reform of marriage law has produced two articles, by Professors Rebecca Probert and Nick Hopkins (along with his colleagues at the Law Commission) to go with Professor Russell Sandberg's article in the last issue. The case for reform is well made. In an age marked both by simplification (of ecclesiastical legislation at least) and by bewildering complexity of choice, regulations surrounding marriage that reflect the realities of life as lived while enabling religious organisations to continue to offer (with integrity) marriage that is recognised in law will be welcome.

In other articles in this issue, Rebecca Riedel examines the duty to prevent radicalisation, the Prevent Duty, brought about under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, noting its shortfalls and potential unintended consequences. In a major article, Professor Ana María Vega Gutiérrez, from La Rioja in Spain, looks at humanism and how this venerable concept has come to a new prominence in the inter-faith work of the Catholic Church. To many contemporary ears, particularly in the United Kingdom, humanism has become synonymous with atheism, but this has not been and is not necessarily the case. The humanism expounded by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020) and in his Abu Dhabi Declaration with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar (4 February 2019) is a concern for the flourishing of human beings whoever and wherever they are. This is reminiscent, for the ecumenist, of the catchphrase of the 'Life and Work' movement: 'Doctrine divides, service unites'. This is to be welcomed. Inter-faith co-operation is to be lauded. But for Christians this cannot be an excuse to jettison work leading to the reunion of a divided Church and a recognisable full, visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ.

As I lay down my editorial responsibilities I would like to pay tribute to all those who have made the *Journal* what it is. To my predecessors, Mark Hill and the late Michael Goodman; to the editorial board; to the Ecclesiastical Law Society; to the contributors—both regular and occasional, particularly those who produce the various discrete sections come rain or shine; to colleagues at Cambridge University Press; and to Dr Hester Higton, our long-serving and long-suffering copy-editor. Ben Harrison will take it from here and I am sure that the *Journal*, and you its readership, will continue both to grow and to flourish.