

EDITORIAL

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Questions about the appropriate nature of the relationship between a state and religious bodies are as common now as they have ever been. As we move out of the year of commemoration of the anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta and as the first two female diocesan bishops take their place in parliament among today's barons (and baronesses), there is comfort in the knowledge that, amid great change, there is continuity.

In this first issue of 2016 the place of religion in a legally ordered society comes under the spotlight in a variety of ways. Professor Rafael Domingo, in a detailed article, puts forward an argument about the balance of power between the religious and the secular based around the concept of the 'suprarational'. Peter Smith discusses the difficulties that courts have found in seeking to adjudicate on the suprarational using tools of justice that are not used to dealing with such matters. Professor Paul Avis demonstrates that complexity is present within the structures of a religious body such as the Anglican Communion. It is not only difficult to work out how church and state relate – how church and church or how individuals relate within churches takes some serious thought too.

In the first issue of each volume this *Journal* carries reports of various synods and other church governing bodies. This year we are fortunate to have a report from the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia, provided by Garth Blake SC, a member of our distinguished editorial board. Readers will be sorry to hear, however, that one of our longest-serving contributors, Ivor Guild WS, died last year. Ivor has been our correspondent from the Scottish Episcopal Church since volume 4 (1996–7). His contribution will be missed but he is remembered with affection and thanks.

The *Journal's* editorial board met in Cambridge in September 2015 and I would like to pay tribute to the members of the board and to thank them for their continued support and encouragement. As readers of the *Journal* we have enjoyed and been informed and stimulated by articles on a wide range of topics, reviews, case notes, reports and comments over nearly thirty years. Submissions of articles for consideration for publication are welcome as we continue to grapple with the relationship between gospel and law, letter and spirit, church and state.