

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*METHODIST DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**From the Reverend Brian E. Beck*

Dear Sir,

Readers of my address to the Society printed in the *Journal* for January 1993 may be interested to know that the Methodist Conference has now enacted legislation to amend disciplinary procedures for ministers along the lines I outlined in my address, although plans to introduce a further process to deal with complaints about competence have been postponed for the time being.

In the course of my address I noted that the disciplinary process was exclusively in the hands of ministers and did not venture to predict how long that long-standing tradition would survive. Events moved much faster than I anticipated, and in June this year the Methodist Conference finally approved revisions which permit lay people to participate in disciplinary and appeal committees. This represents a very significant shift in attitudes. Only ten years ago such a proposal was rejected outright.

Yours faithfully,

BRIAN E. BECK
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 7 July 1993

*ECCLESIASTICAL LAW AND THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION**From Dr Hanns Engelhardt*

Dear Sir,

I cannot but endorse, wholeheartedly, what you wrote in your Editorial to Number 13 of *The Ecclesiastical Law Journal* viz 'to be consistent, we should probably also be including contributions from the Episcopal Church in Scotland and the Church of Ireland, and maybe made on occasion, other Provinces of the Anglican Communion'. Living myself in the outbacks of Anglicanism, so to speak, I am strongly convinced that questions of ecclesiastical law play an important rôle in the relationships between the Provinces of our Communion, too. There is e.g. the Convocation of American Episcopal Churches in Europe, existing and working alongside the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe. It has not been possible, until now, to set up a unified Anglican jurisdiction on the Continent though this was envisaged about a quarter of a century ago, prior to the formation of the Diocese of Europe by amalgamating the former Diocese of Gibraltar and the Jurisdiction of Northern and Central Europe. The existence, side by side, of two separate Anglican jurisdictions gives rise, time and again, to problems of canon law. In his article on 'The European Community and the Church of England', also published in No. 13 of the *Journal*, Canon Nurser urged the setting up of a working party concerning the future of the Diocese in Europe. Here might be another reason recommending this.

Moreover, the Anglican Communion lacks, as it seems to me, what was accomplished for the Lutheran World Federation 36 years ago, namely a comprehensive survey of the constitutions of its member provinces together with an exposition of its nature and constitution as a whole, and a study of the views of ecclesiastical law on the basis of its fundamental documents and formularies. The Anglican Consultative Council once had a list of Anglican consultants on 'Canon Law and Constitutions' drawn from the various Provinces of the Anglican Communion. From 1971, as far as I know, the Council published a Particular Information on 'Canons, Regulations and Constitutions' as a part of Anglican Information. This Particular Information contained reports concerning recent developments in the ecclesiastical law of the Provinces. Unfortunately, it was discontinued some time after 1980. If it were possible to set up, once more, a list of consultants who would be able, and willing, to supply information about the ecclesiastical law of the Provinces, this would provide valuable material which could form the basis of further study. Our Society is the only body, as it seems to me, which is able set up such a collection of materials. The question of expenses should not be prohibitive. If the consultants of the Provinces would provide information and material, not much more would be needed than someone who would receive these informations and keep an index of what was received. This should not require too much work and space (for storing).

It would be particularly useful if the consultants were able to offer, in the beginning, a concise description of the constitutions and canons of their respective Provinces presently in force. These descriptions, together with a description of the constitutional development of the Communion as a whole (Lambeth Conference, Anglican Consultative Council etc.), could be published in a volume showing the present state of the Anglican Communion regarding its canon law. This volume might be a starting point for further studies.

Yours faithfully,

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