

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This will be the last edition of The Record for which The Revd William Neill has shouldered the responsibility of editing and production. It is now a year since he intimated to the Council his wish to relinquish the post of Editor, and as the person who was going to fill the gap until David Mill took over this autumn no-one will have been more grateful than I that Willie has continued during 1986. The successful development of The Record since it replaced Liturgical Review in the spring of 1982 is entirely his achievement, and I doubt if any of us can realise fully how much time and work it has involved. The church Service Society is deeply indebted to him for the way he has pioneered this new and valuable contribution to liturgical discussion in Scotland.

Two changes have taken place since Mr Neill asked that a new Editor be found. One is that The Revd David Mill, having been appointee Clerk to the Presbytery of Greenock, will not be able to take on the additional work involved in editing The Record. The other is that Mr Neill himself has been called to a new charge, St Andrew's in Ayr, so will not be in a position to handle the production side of the magazine - a task he had kindly agreed to continue to do in Edinburgh. This means that we now have to find a new person - or new team - with responsibility for both editing and production. The Council hopes this will be possible in time for the next issue to appear in the spring, and is happy to put on record its appreciation of all that Willie Neill has done for the Society.

Probably not all our members are aware of the efforts our Secretary has been making in recent years to bring the Society to the notice of new ministers and divinity students. The result has been a gratifying increase in membership from the ranks of the newly ordained; but our numbers surely ought to be much larger still. It is difficult to believe that there are fewer than three hundred people who share the interests and concerns of The Church Service society, and that there are not many more who would value the exchange of views and sharing of

experience which The Record now provides. Perhaps we could all make more effort to talk up the Society and suggest to non-members that they consider joining.

Most of us in parishes are aware that a lot of interesting developments are taking place in contemporary worship, and wish that we knew more about them. Most of us are aware that liturgical books are being published in large numbers but do not know which would be helpful. Most of us value the refreshment and stimulus of an occasional day conference. And we should remember that the Society is not for ministers only. almost every parish must have some members in the pews who appreciate the fundamental place of worship in the church's life and would welcome learning more of it; many must have organists who feel isolated in their ministry of music.

The most recent issue of 'Grow', the news-sheet of the Adult Education Committee, reports the results of a survey conducted in forty parishes last winter to discover "the educational needs of the people in the pew". The topics said to arouse least interest - and therefore least demand for adult education - were prayer, doctrine and the meaning of worship. the consensus was that "people felt they knew what worship is all about". If they do, they are more fortunate than they realise. The Church Service Society can claim with justification to have done much for the order and seemliness of Scottish worship in the 120 years of its existence; but order and seemliness emerge as very partial victories if worship is the topic of least interest to the church's membership. I believe the task of the Society now is to dispel the notion that interest in worship is an escapist alternative to church renewal, and persuade people that the very basis of renewal lies in worship. For this far-reaching task we need a membership that is as strong and broadly-based as possible.

David M Beckett