

Preface

Ireland is famed for its high level of church attendance. Once seen as 'the land of saints and scholars', it is now, regrettably, famous for a strident and intolerant form of religiosity. And indeed how few signs of true Christianity we can see around us. Here, in particular, and in the modern world in general, being a Christian is a difficult business. An all-pervasive secularism makes it difficult for us to think in a Christian way about the world in all its aspects (particularly in the academic sphere) and also makes it difficult to think in a Christian way about all we do in our daily lives. Yet Christ calls us to express his Lordship in everything and has promised His help through the Holy Spirit, no matter what conditions we may have to face.

Those of us involved in the work of the Irish Christian Study Centre are determined to encourage committed Christian thinking and living and to respond positively to the challenges around us. We do so by organising conferences, lectures and seminars and by making the resources of our substantial library of books, international periodicals and tapes available to the general public. For some time we have been aware that there is no Irish evangelical periodical which provides clearly-written, well-researched articles for the general reader. The *Journal of the Irish Christian Study Centre*, which you are now holding, is an attempt to bridge that gap.

Each issue (we hope there will be two per year) will normally contain at least four major articles, some of which will be papers already given at the Study Centre, and from time to time we intend to devote issues to one particular theme. In addition there will be an opinion section to allow readers to respond to our articles or to initiate discussion on matters of vital Christian concern. The review section will concentrate on important recent books, both Christian and secular, and on controversial and seminal works whether recent or not, but will also consider such other things as films and television series. In our news section we will give advance notice of ICSC activities and those of similar organisations.

We would like, through the *Journal*, to encourage Christians in Ireland to start writing, not only articles on theological, academic or practical matters, but also poetry and other imaginative writing. We will, of course, welcome articles from other parts of the world as well.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the *Journal* and will find it helpful in your Christian life. If you do, we invite you to take out a regular subscription and to encourage your friends to do the same.

John H. Gillespie,
Chairman.