

News from Keston College

In the last issue of *RCL* Bernard Tidball wrote of the new Communications Centre which has just been built, improving the look of our premises, as well as the efficiency of our work. When the building opened in January, we appointed a new Information Officer, Mrs Alyona Kojevnikov, to take over from Miss Mavis King, who resigned her part-time appointment because she felt the job needed to be full-time. Happily, Miss King remains with us, creating the new post of book editor. Paul Lucey takes over as Archivist from Mrs Kojevnikov.

Tim Sainsbury, MP, and his wife visited us on 19 October and said they were impressed with the rebuilding of the old canteen, the money for which had been provided by one of their family trusts.

The news of the death of Archbishop Fulton Sheen in New York on 9 December caused the older hands among us to think back to the origins of Keston College. We give thanks for the life and witness of this wonderful man. In his 84 years God accomplished much through him and he touched the hearts of millions. In 1969 he invited me to lecture for a semester at St Bernard's, his diocesan seminary at Rochester, New York. This was the first public recognition of the way my life's work could be incorporated into the concerns of the Church. At just the right time he gave me stability and encouragement, and talks with him led to the establishment immediately upon my return to Great Britain of what became Keston College. No year passed since without some token arriving of his continued support and affection.

As some readers may have noticed on the cover of our last issue, we have rapidly filled the vacancy for an Orthodox Patron. Dr Methodios Fouyas has just been appointed as Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, and has graciously consented to follow his predecessor as a Patron. The link with Keston College was not new, as only in 1979 he had reviewed one of my books in the theological journal, *Faros*, of which he was editor.

Not everything is so encouraging. I find the lack of any visible public response to my book on Lithuania, *Land of Crosses*, distinctly disheartening. If this were a nation of three million people in Africa and similarly

deprived of its religious liberty, the outcry would resound daily in our newspapers. Because the repression comes from the Kremlin, no one seems to care. But this was why we established our work in the first place, and I suppose it is salutary to be reminded just how much is still to be accomplished.

My wife and I visited Alan Scarfe at Wheaton, Illinois, for a week at the end of November, and we were made very aware of the real difficulties which he faces in persuading people in the USA to help him establish even a small permanent branch of our work there. Just as with us here five years ago, Alan in his turn now knows that he has a first-class board behind him, and he knows they will back him fully during the awkward period when public support seems to be coming in so slowly. Yet there is no similar organization in the USA or Canada and there can be no doubt about the importance of keeping on with what Alan has undertaken.

Occasionally we have the privilege of taking part in a really impressive public occasion. Such an opportunity came to me at the end of December, when, assisted by Sam Hanchett, I was able to make a presentation about Russian Christians and our work to a great gathering of 7,000 young people at the TEMA Congress, or "Mission 80" in Lausanne. This was an inspiring way for me to undergo the transition between the '70s and the '80s. I hope I was able to convey something of the experience of the suffering Church to the youth of every country of Western Europe. Some of these Evangelical Christians found it difficult to accept that God could be working also through people of traditions different from their own, specifically through Pope John Paul II, but the discussions on this question after were very worthwhile.

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