

# News from the Centre

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## *This journal*

The most important news from the Centre since I last wrote is that the future of *Religion in Communist Lands* is now assured. Our confidence is reflected in the fact that this issue is eight pages longer than the last. Nos. 4 and 5 will come out as a double issue.

Since the beginning of 1973 we have received approximately the £3,000 of new cash donations and subscriptions which we need to ensure publication of the six issues for this year. This is what the printing, postage, advertising and all incidentals will cost until the end of the year, but we need to remind ourselves that all the research and salary costs are being covered by those who donate under deed of covenant and the small number of religious organizations which support us. Basically, as from the first, it is still the committed individual who makes our work possible.

*Religion in Communist Lands* is now going to 1,500 supporters. New subscribers have mostly given far above the minimum figure and we are most grateful for this. If only now we could find some way of pushing up the number of subscriptions to where it should be (5,000 is a realistic minimum for a world-wide organization like ours), the journal would then begin to subsidize some of our basic work – a goal we must continue to pursue. Particularly we hope for a much greater response from church bodies than there has yet been and here I think our existing friends can help us. Also, the response from the United States has been small and we urgently need help to promote our work there.

## *My visit to Africa*

Since I last wrote, my major personal undertaking has been an eye-opening visit to Africa. The programme was exhausting. In this list “meetings” means public lectures, private consultations, press interviews, official lunches – any identifiable occasion on which I was “on duty”:

- Malawi – no meetings in one day
- Rhodesia – 11 meetings in three days
- South Africa – 88 meetings in 21 days
- Kenya – four meetings in two days.

In all, there were 103 meetings in 21 working days, with three days of travel and three free days.

Never before on a foreign trip have I felt that the CSRC had so much to contribute pastorally in a local situation as in South Africa. Although sponsored on this visit by the South African Council of Churches (which is basically critical of the policy of apartheid), I was nevertheless able to speak frankly also with some influential members of the Dutch Reformed Church and the government itself, including the Prime Minister. As elsewhere, I reached a comparatively small number of people, but wherever I went the enthusiasm of their response had to be experienced to be believed. I was in constant contact with the South Africans – black and white – who most needed to know about the Centre's work and who have influence to support it. I hope at some time in the future that it may be possible to write more about this.

### *The Bitter Cup*

Here is some excellent news for every parish with which the CSRC is in touch. My friend Roger Hurrell has produced an outstanding documentary film on religion in the USSR with the above title. It lasts just over three-quarters of an hour and, backed up by books and other information from us, would make a first-class evening. Our staff is physically simply not able to respond to all the invitations which come our way (though we do our best). Here, at last, is a more than adequate substitute.

Concentrating on the life of the Russian Baptists, Roger Hurrell tells their story objectively, clearly and with immense restraint. As so often happens, the careful approach has led to something far more moving than a deliberate playing upon the emotions. When I saw the preview I felt overcome. Roger Hurrell has made extensive use of my book, *Faith on Trial in Russia*, and as I saw the film the book came alive under my eyes. Visually, the *Bitter Cup* uses the limited available material most imaginatively. There is no reconstruction, but stills are well used. The long filmed sequences of worship, both in registered and unregistered churches, are the highlight.

The CSRC is now taking bookings for this film. There is no formal hire charge, but collections for the Centre's work will be taken when the film is shown and exhibitions of our books and this journal should be organized to accompany it. Please write to us for further details.

### *Future meetings (July-September)*

22 & 29 July : the Director preaches at St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall.

6-8 September : private conference on co-ordination of research on religion and communism at Chur, Switzerland.

21-24 September : the Director visits Holland. 21 : lecture on "Religion in the USSR and the International Agencies" at the Interdoc conference, Noordwij. 22 : address to all-day Anglican Deanery conference, Amsterdam. 23 : 11 a.m. sermon at St. John and St. Philip Episcopal Church, the Hague. Possible meeting in Rotterdam in the evening. Further engagements may be added to this programme.