

- 22 7.00 p.m. Christine Waine at Zion Baptist Church, Chatham.
 26 Director addresses the BCC Conference at Swanwick, Derbyshire.
 July 10 7.00 p.m. Director at Southwark Diocese Conference Centre, Blackheath.
 21-24 Director lectures at International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne.
 30 5.15 p.m. Director addresses the Annual Conference of the Modern Churchmen's Union, Hoddesdon.

Director Visits Australia and New Zealand

One of the most encouraging developments in the life of the Centre to date was my visit in March and April to Australia and New Zealand.

Initially I was invited out by a small group of concerned people in Melbourne. Professor Graeme Clark had read some of my books and wanted the Church in Australia to benefit from the Centre's work. He took the idea of the invitation to the Victorian Council of Churches, which adopted it and arranged a full programme in the Melbourne area. Councils of Churches in Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland followed suit. In New Zealand a committee in Auckland arranged a programme which was keenly taken up by the universities throughout the country. This resulted in a rich opportunity to talk to all sorts of gatherings.

The problem was not how to raise enthusiasm for the Centre's work but how to prevent the intensity from submerging the Director for good. In my 36 days in the two countries I addressed 27 public meetings and gave 20 university and theological college lectures, with twelve sermons fitted in on the Sundays. There were no less than 40 press, radio and TV interviews. In between these I fitted in over 50 private interviews and working meals. The programme contained an average of no less than $4\frac{1}{4}$ engagements per day.

I could not have been sustained at such intensity over the five weeks there without the certain knowledge that the response was everywhere exceeding that of comparable meetings in other parts of the world. I estimated that the average attendance was double, or at universities treble, the attendance which I would have expected for similar meetings in Britain. The response, measurable in the numbers of those wishing to subscribe to this journal, was probably four times what I am used to receiving. At the moment of writing, there have been no less than 450 new subscriptions from the two countries, with more coming in all the time.

For the Centre, then, the last few weeks have seen a major step forward. The Council and staff will be reviewing fully the ways in which we must respond to these new opportunities. Australia and New Zealand may be geographically isolated, but they are intensely concerned to be in the main stream of developments in international affairs. The Centre can play a modest role in this by its output and by remembering these countries when thinking about its development plans. We shall not fail our hundreds of new friends – and perhaps even more importantly, we shall ensure that believers in the communist world know of this response and benefit from the great encouragement which it will give them.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

Letters to the Editor

Mikhail Agursky writes from Moscow:

I greatly appreciated the brilliant article by Sir John Lawrence (*RCL* Nos. 4/5, 1973). It is a very careful although brief analysis of the situation. He is certainly right about the gradual decline of the Marxist ideology in the USSR. But he underrates the influence of the process of its corruption – it is creating enormous cynicism among people. Besides, the author is most likely unaware of some non-institutionalized cults in this society, both among intellectuals and non-intellectuals. Such intellectual cults include the pagan idolization of great writers, artists, the idolization of science and so on. These cults are none other than the sublimation of traditional religious faith. One also finds among non-intellectuals a cult which takes the form of simple fetishism with industrial goods – cars, television sets etc. – for its objects.

Such cults are certainly not institutionalized, but nevertheless they do exist. All this is leading to a high level of religious syncretism.

Unfortunately Sir John Lawrence has made a mistake about the background of anti-Zionist propaganda when he thinks that it is directed only against the Jewish emigration. Indeed, this propaganda means more than it says. It reflects the deep roots of right-wing nationalism, which is the secret ideology of the extremely influential ruling group (see my articles in the *New York Review of Books*, 30 November, 1972 and *Jerusalem Post*, September, 1973).

2 April, 1974.