

News from Keston College

There were no seven blasts on the trumpet, but the walls came tumbling down—not this time at Jericho, but at Keston College. The old slum block, comprising children's toilets and contiguous shacks, all long since derelict, is no more. Not even seven blows of the hammer of Mr Sudsbury, our builder, could accomplish it, for part of the skilled undertaking was to save no fewer than 4,000 bricks, so that what eventually replaces these buildings will have an outer wall identical in colour and texture to the existing structure.

On 13 May we were honoured to receive a first visit from our Patron, the Chief Rabbi Dr Immanuel Jakobovits. In an impressive ceremony he spread cement and truly laid and dedicated the foundation stone of what we hope will be a splendid new building on the old site. This last stage, for the present, in the improvement of our premises will see the conversion of unused space to provide the housing we need for our library and archives, as well as the construction of this new building for research studies. Despite two generous gifts from trusts last year, we still have less than half the £90,000 or so that this new work will cost, so we go ahead again in faith.

At the dinner for the Chief Rabbi after the ceremony, he spoke movingly of the co-operation between the major faiths which Keston College symbolized in the struggle for religious liberty. "Communists," he said, "like us, proclaim the brotherhood of man, but this is a mockery when they deny the fatherhood of God, the only factor which can ever unite us."

I write with sadness of the assassination of our Patron, President Tolbert of Liberia, whose obituaries did not make clear the strong Christian leadership he once gave before his country sadly degenerated under various pressures. Joyful news, however, was contained in a warm letter from the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, who has graciously consented to become a Patron, just as his predecessor did.

A staff change has been the recent arrival from Birmingham of Malcolm Walker to take up the post of librarian-archivist: we now hope that Paul Lucey will eventually be freed to return to Soviet research.

Keston College continues to receive good publicity in the media. Among recent examples have been an article by Eric Morgenthaler in the *Wall Street Journal* and my half-hour broadcast on BBC Radio Four in the Lent lecture series entitled "Bringing it Home". Both of these kept our staff busy acknowledging letters from the many people who were kind enough to write. Jane Ellis wrote a most important article on Father Dimitri Dudko published on the feature page of *The Times*.

Keston News Service continues regularly every fortnight to publish current information on religious life in Eastern Europe. It came as something of a surprise to find that we were about to compile the hundredth issue. *KNS* has recently expanded to include more background information. Like the journal it has, we believe, built itself a reputation unique in the English language as an organ which carries out its appointed task. The massive inflation in printing and postage costs must somehow be countered to keep this work going in its present or an improved form. Some, but not all, of this can be found from increased subscriptions, so it is more than ever imperative not only that our friends should renew on time, but that they should all be missionaries in the cause of finding new subscribers. We are obliged to increase our annual subscription and membership to £9 for next year, but the Council will shortly be reviewing the whole of our publication policy and we shall take the earliest opportunity of informing our readers of any changes to be put into effect in 1981.

Meanwhile, the research staff continue with salaries at a level which is sadly often a deterrent against finding new people, but they do have improved working conditions in which to continue building up an overall picture of religious life in the Soviet Union and many other parts of Eastern Europe. We very much want to plug the remaining gaps. The hundred issues of *KNS* have shown a decline in the overall degree of religious liberty in some of the countries we study. Let us hope and pray that this trend is reversed well before the two hundredth number.

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MICHAEL BOURDEAUX