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Editorial

Keston Institute is approaching the completion of an ambitious three-year project, funded by an American trust, to conduct a survey of religious belief and practice in all the regions of the Russian Federation. Our Russian-led team of researchers is working through a systematic programme of field trips, involving well-planned visits and individual interviews, and producing lengthy reports, with facts and figures, to provide an analysis of a thoroughness and comprehensiveness never before achieved.

The year 2000 should see the completion of the basic research work. This issue of *RSS* is devoted to the findings of the project. Eleven articles cover a selection of faiths, major and minor, reporting on how they are experiencing revival in different parts of the Russian Federation and putting them into their recent and more distant historical framework. We look at areas of Russia where Orthodoxy is flourishing and where it is stagnating; we cover Catholics, Protestants and peoples from non-Christian traditions; and we show that various myths have little foundation. One assertion, commonly heard today, is that the 'sects and cults' in Russia are all of foreign origin: 'Rerikhism' is an example of a thoroughly Russian New Religious Movement. One of our researchers, Aleksandr Shchipkov, observes (in Keston's popular magazine *Frontier*) that the phrase 'to be Russian means to be Orthodox' is chiefly used by Russian patriots and nationalists rather than by practising believers. As our project is showing clearly, Russian Orthodoxy does not predominate outside the European Russian heartland, and has established only a superficial presence throughout much of Siberia.

Last year Revd Canon Dr Michael Bourdeaux retired as Keston's director. He is still the director of the research project and is centrally involved in bringing it to completion. In his article in this issue of *RSS*, 'Religion revives in all its variety: Russia's regions today', he raises the curtain on the picture being built up – one of almost bewildering complexity – and places the whole project more fully in its context.

May 2000

PHILIP WALTERS

Notes on Contributors

Michael Bourdeaux, the founder of Keston College (as Keston Institute was originally known), remained its director until his semi-retirement in 1999. He is the author of many books on religion in the Soviet Union and most recently co-editor (with John Witte) of *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: the New War for Souls* (Orbis, Maryknoll, 1999).

Felix Corley is a writer and broadcaster on religious affairs in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. His book *Religion in the Soviet Union: an Archival Reader* was published by Macmillan and New York University Press in 1996. Since 1999 he has been editing the Keston News Service.

Sergei Filatov, born in 1951, graduated from the Departments of Psychology and History at Moscow State University and then worked in the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences. He is now a senior researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and director of the Sociological Centre of the Moscow Public Scientific Foundation (*Moskovsky Obshchestvenny Nauchny Fond*). He is head of the research team of the Keston project investigating religion throughout the Russian Federation.

Roman Lunkin was born in 1976. He is attached to the Sociological Centre of the Moscow Public Scientific Foundation (*Moskovsky Obshchestvenny Nauchny Fond*) and is a member of the research team of the Keston project investigating religion throughout the Russian Federation.

Anton Prokof'yev was born in 1976. He is a postgraduate student at Moscow State University and a member of the research team of the Keston project investigating religion throughout the Russian Federation.

Lawrence Uzzell succeeded Michael Bourdeaux as director of Keston Institute in April 1999. A graduate of Yale University, he is a journalist by training. He moved to Moscow in 1992 and wrote increasingly on issues of religious freedom. In 1995 he was appointed Keston's Moscow representative and editor of the Keston News Service. In 1998 he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the enactment and implementation of the new Russian law on religion of 1997. He is a member of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Lyudmila Vorontsova graduated from the History Faculty of Moscow State University. She is the author of a series of books on religion in medieval Russia and has organised exhibitions of medieval Russian art. Since 1989 she has worked at the

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Analytical Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. She is a member of the research team of the Keston project investigating religion throughout the Russian Federation.