

Editorial

Almost the whole of this double issue of *RCL* is devoted to papers delivered at the Ampleforth Conference held in August 1990. The Conference took place at a unique historical moment. The communist structures had crumbled, but what was to replace them was hardly yet discernible. Christians East and West paused to draw breath, take stock, and prepare for the future.

About half the Conference papers are here. Selection from a strong field was difficult. We chose those papers which posed questions, challenges or methodologies for the future rather than those which concentrated on analysing the past. Many excellent papers unfortunately had to be excluded on these grounds; but those here presented are facing the same way — towards the Europe of the 21st century — and complement each other in ways that are thought-provoking now and potentially fruitful for the years ahead.

Important perceptions in these papers help towards an assessment of the legacy of communism and towards a definition of the tasks now facing Christians. We are beginning to realise to what extent the human individual was disorientated under communism and to what extent human values were distorted. Misdirected violence and the unpredictable expenditure of emotional energy are two of the forces which the churches must now seek to harness and channel creatively. The Trinitarian understanding of man and his role in society, explored by Fr Galeriu, will be of central importance here. Important too are the ideas of Géza Németh about the creative potential of the cross-fertilisation inherent in religious pluralism within a given country: the good side of the coin whose 'obverse is today's growing inter-ethnic and interdenominational violence. The tasks of the churches are clearly immense. At the same time they must avoid temptations and dangers. There is the danger that the churches will (often unwittingly) become compromised because of a too close identification with this or that political party or political philosophy. A sense of optimism characterises the Ampleforth papers, however: the very survival of religious faith in so many forms throughout Eastern Europe surely gives grounds for hope, as Pastor Tranda hints, that the churches have been saved for some great task. This is nothing

to do with denominational triumphalism: it is a humble recognition that Providence is at work in history.

Some of the papers are of course factually dated, having been written a year ago. But this does not compromise the essence of their message for us in 1991. Versions of the papers by Father Leo Chamberlain, Cardinal Basil Hume and Archbishop Šuštar are also being published in *The Ampleforth Journal*, Spring 1991, as is the paper by Christopher Cviic which is not among those included in *RCL*.

One article in this issue of *RCL* is not an Ampleforth paper. Professor Codevilla's analysis of the new Soviet Law on Freedom of Conscience, promulgated last October, finds a natural place in this volume, however, in that it describes the new framework within which religious activity can now go forward in the Soviet Union.

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This is the penultimate issue of our journal under its present title. From 1992, the journal is to be relaunched as a quarterly under the title *Religion, State and Society: the Keston Journal*. We are delighted to have the support of Carfax Publishing Company in this new venture.

The newly-launched journal will reflect the conviction of the College that the experiences of religious communities in their encounter with communism will be central to the evolution of the new Europe and of the western world in general in the next century. The tackling of social, cultural, ethnic, political and ecclesiological problems is in future going to be a cooperative effort, in a way which was hitherto impossible, involving the religious communities of both East and West. Religious communities in Western Europe, the USA, Australasia and Latin America will have much to learn from the way in which their counterparts in the East have tackled such problems in the past, and vice versa.

Religion, State and Society: The Keston Journal will of course continue to monitor the experiences of religious communities in communist and formerly communist countries throughout the world. But it will also serve as a forum for debate on issues of global concern, with input from both East and West. The journal's agenda will thus include the theoretical and practical consequences of the East-West encounter in the context of these wider areas of mutual concern.

Please refer to the leaflet accompanying this issue of *RCL* for information on how to renew your subscription to the journal in its new incarnation.