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The Immigration Crisis in Europe and a Hungarian Case Study

Larry L. Winckles

Contributing Editors

Canon Michael Bourdeaux

Keston Institute,
Oxford

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The largest percentage of refugees seeking asylum in the European Union are fleeing the war-torn Middle Eastern and North African countries of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. They have escaped with only what they can carry, and often have had to pay human traffickers to transport them by boat to European shores. Countries that are members of the European Union (EU) are obliged to follow the requirements of the Dublin Accord, which states that asylum seekers must register and be processed in the first EU country that they enter. In addition to asylum seekers, economic immigrants have sought to take advantage of the refugee crisis in hopes of gaining entry into Europe as well. In 2015 over one million migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea, with the majority entering during the second half of the year through Greece (85 percent) and Italy (15 percent). Most governments were unprepared to deal with such a massive influx of immigrants.

From Greece to Hungary

Greece, in particular, is in chaos, and does not have the resources to adequately process immigrants nor secure its borders, thereby opening up a Balkan route into the European Union. Immigrants travel from Greece through Macedonia and Serbia, eventually arriving at the Hungarian border. What started with a hundred per day escalated by early September 2015 to well over 10,000 per day. At the beginning of 2015, according to Hungarian law, illegal immigrants were to be transported to refugee camps where they were to be registered and where they were to have the opportunity to apply for asylum. In the case of economic immigrants, asylum applicants were to be denied and deported. Those granted asylum receive residence permits and become eligible to work and receive social benefits.

Hungary Overwhelmed

Hungary managed to adequately manage the influx of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers until two new circumstances intervened. First, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on 31 December 2015, announced that Germany would welcome Syrian, Iraqi, and Afghan refugees. Germany has a much stronger economy than Hungary, has more job opportunities, and is able to provide many more social benefits and much more support to refugees. The message seemed to be clear: "Come to

Germany!" Second, thousands of people attempting to move north through the Balkans to Germany overwhelmed border controls in Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia.

Hungary Blocks Its Border

It was at this point, on 16 September 2015, that, after having registered almost 400,000 arrivals, Hungary officially sealed its border with Serbia, erecting a razor-wire fence along the entire border between the two countries. At the same time, the Hungarian Parliament enacted laws that made illegal border crossing a crime punishable by imprisonment and deportation, rather than a misdemeanor involving transportation to a refugee camp for legal processing. The Hungarian military was also authorized to support the border patrol and police in stemming the flow of immigrants from Serbia. While not able to use deadly force to subdue border violators, they were authorized to use other deterrents including water cannons, tear gas, and truncheons. European leaders and human rights organizations have criticized Hungary for its poor treatment of immigrants. In response, Hungary has defended itself for not allowing immigrants to travel on to Austria by saying it was adhering strictly to the Dublin Accord.

Desperate Immigrants in Hungary Make Their Own Way

Hungary's fence did divert many immigrants through Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria on their way to Germany. But many others who had entered Hungary before the fence went up refused to be processed in Hungarian refugee camps, attempting instead to make their way to Germany. Austria's ban on immigrant transit, in turn, led to a brisk business for human traffickers, who offered to transport individuals or groups from Hungary to Germany for a large fee. This worked for some people, but unfortunately for others it did not, as evidenced by the 71 refugees who died in a sealed refrigerator truck on 27 August 2015 on the road from Budapest to Vienna.

The attention of the world became focused on Hungary. Immigrants who were not in camps in Hungary began to gather at the main train stations in Budapest and in several other large cities. By the last week of August 2015, well over 3,000 people had camped out at Budapest's Keleti Train Station, with

(continued on page 2)

Immigration Crisis in Europe *(continued from page 1)*

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One aid worker at the Greek-Macedonian border reported many of the refugees have heard about Christianity but have never encountered a Christian in person. They are curious and ask, “Where are the Christians?”

smaller groups located at other city train stations and in some nearby parks. Finally, a large group of over a thousand immigrants decided that they would leave the squalid conditions of the Keleti Train Station, setting off for Austria on foot. Eventually the standoff was broken when Austria and Germany agreed to suspend the rules for humanitarian reasons, allowing immigrants in Hungary free passage out of the country. On 5 September Hungary also provided 100 buses to transport immigrants from railway stations and the highway to the Austrian border.

At the same time, many other immigrants in other parts of Hungary, as well as those not yet in the country, were still desperate to reach Germany. Rail service was resumed to the Austrian border, and immigrants with tickets were allowed onto trains. So, day by day railway stations filled up with immigrants who were merely there in transit, waiting for the next train to the border in hopes that there would be space for them to board. Unfortunately, human traffickers were—and still are—also hard at work.

Greek Actions of Late

Meanwhile, the daily flow of immigrants crossing from Greece into Macedonia declined in the winter of 2015-16, in part due to colder weather and in part due to a strike of ferry workers responsible for transportation from Greek islands. Frontex forces (the European Union body responsible for border protection and security), now deployed at the Greek-Macedonian border, are carefully checking documents and only allowing people from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan to pass. All others are returned to Athens by bus. This has led to a thriving document forgery business, preying on individuals who are indeed economic immigrants rather than refugees.

Europe Divided

Europe is deeply divided over the current immigration crisis. Leaders of some countries are motivated by an ethical and moral imperative to receive refugees. Leaders of other countries, however, believe that the current refugee crisis is tantamount to a Muslim invasion of Europe. They insist that Arab nations need to be the ones offering assistance and granting asylum, and that Greek and Italian coastal borders must be secured. Not only Hungary but Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic have taken a hardline stance opposing the acceptance of more Middle East refugees. Still, this anti-immigrant position has not stopped the flow of immigrants, but rather diverted it through Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria, en route to Germany.

Who Is Helping?

Europe is facing a political and humanitarian crisis of monumental proportions. The reality is that thousands of people continue to risk their lives trying to reach Germany, and at every step of the way they are in dire need. In the case of Hungary, relief groups and concerned citizens, as well as

tourists from abroad, joined in spontaneous efforts to provide for the needs of immigrants. The Hungarian government made little effort to assist immigrants who were not at one of the refugee camps. So early in the summer of 2015, concerned Hungarians and other residents of Hungary organized a grassroots effort to offer aid to immigrants. This NGO, Migration Aid, worked to provide medical care, food, blankets, and shelter to immigrants gathering at railway stations and detention centers. In addition, faith-based organizations have assisted in various ways as they are able. Their grassroots collaborative effort, Christians for Migrants, also ministered at the main detention point in southern Hungary near a village called Röszi. In addition, numerous independent volunteers ministered to immigrants, including university students and tourists who happened to be in Budapest at the time.

In the wider context the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has established refugee camps in several countries. Non-governmental organizations like the Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, World Vision, and the Salvation Army have deployed personnel and volunteers. Some European church groups and mission organizations, such as One Mission Society, have sent volunteers and aided in relief efforts. But it has not been enough.

“Where Are the Christians?”

More volunteers and more resources are needed. But the politics of fear and rising ultra-nationalism in Europe (and abroad) are keeping many people from even caring about the situation. As one aid worker at the Greek-Macedonian border reported, many of the refugees have heard about Christianity but have never encountered a Christian in person. They are curious and want to know more. Many ask, “Where are the Christians?” This indeed is a good question. Where are the Christians?

Throughout the Old Testament God called his people to show kindness and compassion to strangers and foreigners. The New Testament affirms this call, with particular injunctions for care for widows, orphans, the poor, and the oppressed. The Free Methodist Church in Hungary, which I serve, affirms this biblical position and encourages its congregations and members to demonstrate the love of Christ by engaging in compassionate ministries directed toward immigrants of any kind, as well as other needy populations, either on their own initiative or in partnership with other like-minded organizations.

What Do the Hungarian People Think?

At the same time, many people in Hungary are opposed to letting any immigrants into the country, and indeed, object to helping even those who have already entered the country. Some immigrants have been subjected to insults and violence, and scattered anti-immigrant graffiti has appeared in Budapest. Four objections in particular are raised: 1) the people coming in are either ISIS, al-Qaeda,

or Taliban terrorists; 2) they are not Christians and therefore should be helped by people and countries of their own faith; 3) helping some immigrants will only encourage more to come; and 4) immigrants are breaking the law, and lawbreakers should be punished, not assisted. These sentiments mirror those of the Hungarian government.

What Is Wrong with This Picture?

It is important to state that the four reasons listed above are not biblical. Fortunately, as noted, there are Hungarian believers who realize this and who are working sacrificially to help those in need.

1. Some terrorists may indeed be among the more than one million refugees who entered Europe in 2015, just as some “home-grown” terrorists also pose threats. It should be kept in mind that those who perpetrated mass shootings in Columbine, Colorado; Sandy Hook, Massachusetts; Oslo, Norway; and Charleston, South Carolina, were not immigrants, but were fellow citizens of those they terrorized. The problem is not terrorists per se, but societies that are broken, and no part of the world is exempt from this brokenness. Our societies need to be restored, and compassionate Christians can help in that restoration.
2. When Jesus was asked “Who is my neighbor?” he responded by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritans were despised and hated by the Jews. They had a different faith. They lived in their own area, which Jews hesitated to pass through. But it was a Samaritan who helped the wounded traveler. Jesus concludes the parable with a question and a command. “Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?” He said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10: 36-37). (All biblical citations are from the New International Version.)
3. Christians are commanded to give generously. The Apostle Paul writes, “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9: 6-11).
4. Individual Christians may not have the ability to affect the legal status of refugees. That typically is the job of the government. But Christians do have a responsibility to demonstrate the love of Christ. Jesus said that those who minister to others in need are also ministering to Him. Matthew 25:35 reads, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

The Gospel of Jesus Christ brings everyone to the same level. In Galatians 3:28 Paul writes: “There

is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” So in God’s eyes no distinction exists between Hungarians and Syrians or between refugees and citizens of a country. It may be argued that this verse is referring to believers, not to everyone. And this is true. But it is important to remember that some of the refugees are Christian; the Great Commission instructs Christians to make disciples of all nations; and Christians no longer live under the law, but under grace.

Should not that grace be demonstrated to immigrants as well? Christians should not be afraid. Christians should do what is right. And Christians should love as Jesus loved, showing compassion to the poor, the homeless, the lost, the sinner, the foreigner, and even immigrants. In responding to the refugee crisis Christians should keep in mind Philippians 2:1-5: “If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.”

What Else Can Be Done to Help?

Free Methodist World Missions, like other churches and ministries in Hungary, have received many inquiries about the immigration crisis in Hungary. People want to know what they can do to help. Some want to send money. Others want to come to Hungary to help with relief efforts. Many are looking for guidance. It is hard to give specific advice, however, because the situation has been changing dramatically and almost daily. Still, some suggestions come to mind.

1. Pray: Download the document, “10 Ways to Pray for Refugees,” from the International Association for Refugees at <https://www.iafr.org/toolbox/articles-handouts>;
2. Give: Make an online donation to an organization that is working directly with the refugees, such as: The Free Methodist Bishops’ Crisis Response Fund (<https://fmcusa.org/bfund/> and specify “Refugees in Hungary”); Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (<https://www.ncm.org/refugees.html>); One Mission Society (<https://onemissionsociety.org/give/Middle-East-Refugee-Fund>); The Mission Society (<https://www.themissionsociety.org/give>); The Salvation Army (<http://donate.salvationarmyusa.org/european-refugee-relief>); Samaritan’s Purse (<http://www.samaritanspurse.org/disaster/refugee-crisis-in-europe/>); World Relief (<https://refugeecrisis.org>).

(continued on page 4)

Immigrants and Refugees by Definition

Larry L. Winckles

The term *migrant* refers to any person moving between countries, for any reason. *Immigrants* are those people who come into a country, whereas *emigrants* are those people who leave a country. *Refugees* are a special class of *immigrant*. They are those people who are fleeing from their home country because of some type of persecution or danger, usually for religious, political, ethnic, or ideological reasons and who seek asylum or legal protection in another country. *Economic immigrants* are those people who leave their home country in search of a better life and economic prosperity elsewhere. *Economic immigrants* do not qualify for asylum and generally cannot easily gain legal residency in another country (or in the European Union). *Illegal immigrants* (also referred to as *border violators*) are individuals who enter another country either without applying for asylum or without having the appropriate entry visa. The distinction is that *border violators* can now be charged with a criminal offense and be imprisoned, whereas *illegal immigrants*, if detected, would be registered and sent to a holding camp for further processing. In this article the term *immigrant* will be used to include both *refugees* and *economic immigrants*, as their specific status is not clear until after an asylum hearing.

Immigration Crisis in Europe *(continued from page 3)*

worldrelief.org/); and World Vision (<https://donate.worldvision.org/syrian-refugee-crisis-1/>).

3. Sponsor: Readers in the United States should note that their government allows its citizens to help directly in immigrant resettlement only in the case of family members. Otherwise, only refugees who have officially been granted asylum are eligible for potential relocation. Statistics show that less than one percent of refugees who are granted asylum are relocated to another country. Most stay in the country that grants them asylum. However,

it is possible to work with refugee relocation agencies in the United States that place refugee families and arrange for support services. For a state by state listing of U.S. agencies that assist refugee resettlement see: <http://cwsglobal.org/our-work/refugees-and-immigrants/welcoming-communities/refugee-and-immigrant-offices/>. ♦

Larry L. Winckles is the Europe Area Administrator of Free Methodist World Missions. He and his wife, Katie, have served in Budapest, Hungary, since August 2000.

A Mission of Mercy to Refugees Passing through Serbia

Mission Society missionaries Charlie and Miki Chastain and their three children serve in Estonia. While they were making plans to attend a meeting in Albania, news of the refugee crisis in Europe began to make headlines. “Miki and I felt very strongly that we needed to try to do something to help. We decided, instead of flying, to drive from Estonia to Albania, because that route basically goes straight through the heart of all of the refugee migration heading toward Western Europe,” said Charlie. The Chastains loaded their mini-van and drove the roughly 3,700 miles to Albania and back. Donations from individuals and churches from eight countries provided the funds for Charlie and Miki to purchase blankets, clothes, food, and heaters to distribute.

“We stopped in Belgrade, Serbia, near the main train station. A lot of refugees were in the parks there. One German organization was set up to assist refugees, so we just asked, ‘How can we help?’ They were in need of bread, so my daughter and I walked from bakery to bakery and bought as much bread as we could,” said Charlie. “We traveled on to Preshevo, near the Macedonian border, where there were 8,000 refugees waiting for a bus to take them to Croatia. Ten thousand more refugees were expected to arrive that same night.”

Because buses are not allowed to transport refugees across international borders, refugees are

let out at the Serbian-Macedonian border. They then have to walk seven kilometers to a camp. Once they have been registered at the camp, they walk 15 kilometers to another bus stop. The children are either being carried or having to walk with their parents, who are also carrying all their supplies. “When we were in Preshevo,” remembered the Chastains, “It was cold and pouring rain. When everyone got off of the bus, they had to walk through the mud and rain to get to the camp. We saw children without shoes, families sleeping under storefronts, and everyone was soaking wet.”

Charlie said, “One of the volunteer coordinators in Belgrade asked me, ‘Why are you doing this?’ I looked at him and said, ‘Well, why are you doing this?’ He said, ‘Because I believe that God is alive.’ I said, ‘That’s my answer, too, my friend.’”

“A lot of talk in mission circles is the importance of trying to reach least-reached peoples. Most of the time that means trying to reach those who live in Asian or Muslim contexts. But for those of us who are working in Europe, the least reached are coming to us. We would love nothing more than the opportunity to show Christ’s love to them.”

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Missionaries Charlie and Miki Chastain serve in Estonia with The Mission Society, Norcross, Georgia.

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The Changing Face of Church and Mission in Eurasia

Mykhailo Cherenkov

Up until now, post-Soviet space has been a blank spot from the perspective of the universal Church. Everyone knows about Mr. Putin. Some know about his friend, Patriarch Kirill. But no one sees beyond these political symphonies of Christianity, much like those who cannot see the forest for the trees. When the talk is about Christianity, then the focus is on the gilded domes, photos of well-fed priests, recollections of defending traditional values, as well as vague notions of Russian spirituality. Rarely are concerns raised about Christian mission, and this despite the fact that, after the collapse of

the U.S.S.R., this territory was seen as the most promising in terms of missionary activity.

I do not think that today easy answers exist for such questions as: What is the basis of the strategic significance of this region for the history of global Christianity? Why is this region worthy of our interest? What are the reasons for investing in the development of its local churches and ministries? Most of the answers to these questions lead us back to the memorable date of the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., when the “Evil Empire” collapsed and the Iron Curtain fell, when vast expanses of Eurasia

welcomed those who sought to spread the Word of God. A quarter century has passed since then, and the memory of those times is fading. Indeed, not a single memory will remain of those times.

The situation in the former Soviet Union has changed considerably. In lieu of aggressive atheism, what now prevails are no less aggressive manifestations of the traditional titular religions: Orthodox Christianity and Islam. In place of *perestroika* (restructuring or reformation), we are now witnessing the return of the KGB (rechristened FSB), that does not seek to reform, but rather to reconstruct the Soviet empire.

In the Wake of Ukraine's Maidan Revolution

Another significant event in the region has recently rocked the whole world: Ukraine's rejection of Russian tutelage in its Maidan Revolution of 2014 and the subsequent war waged by Russia against Ukraine. As much as Russia would like to transform post-Soviet space into Soviet territory, forces are at work trending against a revived Soviet Union.

With Ukraine, Europe might once again become Christian. With Europe, Ukraine might once again become European. Ukraine without Russia might finally become Ukrainian. Russia without Ukraine risks entering into barbarism, going dark, losing face, and embracing brutality. Without Russian Orthodoxy, the Ukrainian religious map will be different. Russia without Ukrainian Orthodoxy loses its special status.

Mission Misques

As it turned out, the main efforts of missions went to the maintenance of the spiritual communities that were inherited from the Soviet Union. For national elites of the former Soviet republics, such Christian ministries and churches were seen as residual forms of colonialism. Evangelism in the Russian language points directly to Moscow as a cultural and religious center, even without consciousness of the political implications of witness exclusively in the Russian tongue.

Today, many have criticized Western missions for disseminating not so much the gospel as Western culture. But at the same time, the reverse is true: consciously or not, Western missions supported Soviet-era structures and communities which are bound by Soviet history and today's Russia as the successor of the Soviet Union. With the Maidan Revolution as a backdrop, the map of Eurasian Christianity reflects a variety of divisions. Russia aspires to preserve or recreate sway over Soviet successor republics that are nevertheless reluctant to take orders from Moscow. Ukraine, Moldova, and the Baltic states are oriented to the European Union. Georgia is fearful of Russia. Armenia is more fearful of Turkey. Central Asia is trying to maneuver between Soviet-era overlords and resurgent Islam. All these post-Soviet republics speak their own languages and revere traditions that they are retrieving from the pre-Soviet era.

It turns out that Christians who dreamed of the end of the Soviet Union and the advent of religious

freedom, who persevered in the hope of a new life in a post-Soviet era, did not think through viable alternatives. They were products of Soviet enculturation more than they cared to admit. They did not have ideas of their own about how society could and should be changed, including through missionary efforts, Christian education, and social service.

Church Divisions

Today, churches have become hostages of disparate political regimes and are now seriously divided along several lines. Some prefer order, while others prefer freedom. As regards biblical projections of end times, some are pre-millennialists, while others are post-millennialists. And some are wedded to existing church establishments, while others envision a new outworking of the Kingdom of God.

Events in Ukraine have intensified these divisions. The return of religion to the public space has not brought unity to the Russian Orthodox Church. Rather, as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation, the Moscow Patriarchate fears loss of control of its numerous Ukrainian parishes and their income. The engagement of churches in social and political issues has led inevitably to the question: Which side is God on?

In almost every post-Soviet country, the church enjoys the highest trust of the population. No ruling power can resist taking advantage of this fact. On the one hand, Christian churches may now participate in the formation of a renewed vision of cultural and social life. On the other hand, the public and parishioners are increasingly disappointed with political Christianity. The highest confidence in the moral and spiritual authority of the church exists alongside distrust in its political positions. In search of spiritual support, people are drawn to the church, only to discover that it already has been politicized; it already has been bought and paid for.

New Versions of Orthodox and Evangelical Faith?

In Russia widespread nominal belief has become infected with an explosive mixture of nationalist-Orthodox-Stalinist beliefs. Believers who oppose this trend have been marginalized and either survive on the fringes of an unholy, new church-state amalgam, or cherish a simpler faith beyond church walls in what amounts to a spiritual internal exile.

In this regard, we can talk about post-Soviet post-Orthodoxy – the end of the Orthodox tradition. Atheism disrupted long-held spiritual Tradition and compromised the institutional church. If Christianity does make a comeback, it will encompass a return to its pre-institutional beginnings, and to the gospel in communion with other Christian traditions. This is so because Orthodoxy without catholicity is not imaginable, and without reformation, it is not feasible.

Stalinist Orthodoxy has exhausted itself. But in Russia, evangelical Christianity, as well, has failed

(continued on page 6)

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The Changing Face of Church and Mission in Eurasia *(continued from page 5)*

The peoples and cultures of Eurasia should be part of a larger, global Christian community, overcoming Soviet-era isolationism in part by opening the door to completely new connections.

to materialize. Evangelical Christianity, created in the image and likeness of Orthodox sectarianism, is condemned to follow after the Russian Orthodox Church on the same path with little influence. Alternatively, a new demand exists for new versions of Orthodoxy and Protestantism, which could help each other to revive authentic forms of Christianity in today's environment of almost total disillusionment with church institutions. Disappointment with the Russian Orthodox Church and with Russian Protestantism can give birth to a quest for authentic Christianity; the allure of power and spiritual triumphalism can give way to repentance and humility.

Russian Christianity is in a deep crisis and is not likely to be able to offer anything even to its own parishioners, much less to society at large. Furthermore, it has absolutely nothing to offer other Christian traditions or neighboring countries. There is no longer room for illusions about the mysterious Russian soul and the spiritual depth of its Orthodoxy. Those who foster naive ideas of the messianic role of Russia are cruelly deceived because Russia has not emerged as the source of spiritual awakening in

Eurasia. It is only by shedding its imperial ambitions and false messianism that Christian Russia will succeed in undergoing its own renewal and serving its neighbors.

In terms of spiritual witness, what can be done for the diverse peoples of Eurasia? We can honor and respect their unique cultures and encourage creative, original approaches to Christian mission, and at the same time include them in enriching global communication. The peoples and cultures of Eurasia should be part of a larger, global Christian community, overcoming Soviet-era isolationism in part by opening the door to completely new connections.

Eurasia is the unbreakable, indivisible unity of Europe and Asia. Its value is not in a separate, exclusive path, but in its points of East-West intersection. It is precisely these points of intersection that can give birth to the future of Christianity in the wake of the demise of the secular, Soviet experiment. ♦

Mykhailo Cherenkov is Vice-President for Education and Strategy, Mission Eurasia/Association for Spiritual Renewal, Irpen, Ukraine.

Response to Mykhailo Cherenkov, "The Changing Face of Church and Mission in Eurasia"

William Yoder

Outsized Generalizations

I am struck by the generalizations in Brother Mykhailo's article. For example, in reference to the post-Soviet Union since 1991, he claims "not a single memory of those times will remain." This assumes that the world's historians will be struck with massive amnesia. Much is vague: How were Western missions in Russia "bound by Soviet history"? Do these missions behave differently in Ukraine? Russian parishioners are "increasingly disappointed with political Christianity." But Ukrainian Protestants are also extremely political on Facebook.

Cherenkov is often hard to decipher. What is the new evangelical order coming into being in Ukraine? How is it different from North American evangelicalism? I think, for example, of the Charismatic movement's "apostles" and "prophets" touring through Ukraine prophesying the demise of Russia. Cherenkov claims that "Eurasia is the unbreakable, indivisible unity of Europe and Asia." But Eurasianism is the ideology of Alexander Dugin and other Eastern-oriented, Russian nationalists.

Cherenkov writes: "Russian Christianity . . . has absolutely nothing to offer other Christian traditions or neighboring countries." Is that not arrogant? Pope Francis met with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kyrill in Havana on 12 February 2016. Apparently, the Vatican takes Russian Orthodoxy much more seriously than does Ukrainian Protestantism.

Cherenkov expresses concern for inter-church relations, which is laudable. But he does not extend his support for cross-denominational efforts to

Ukraine's largest church body: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate. Precisely because this church is well-represented on both sides of the East Ukrainian divide, it is best-equipped to foster reconciliation within Ukraine.

A Civil War or a Proxy War?

For Russians, Cherenkov's charge of "war waged by Russia against Ukraine" is pure propaganda. How can this not be a civil war? The territory of what we now call Ukraine has been divided roughly along the Dnieper River for over a millennium. Actually, the conflict in Eastern Ukraine is both a civil war and a proxy war. It is true that the vast majority of those fighting on both sides are citizens of Ukraine. But it is also a proxy war because Russian citizens and a few others are fighting on the side of East Ukrainian separatists, while U.S. citizens, Canadians, Poles, and Balts are fighting on, or otherwise aiding, the post-Maidan Ukrainian government. Further complicating the issue, Russian citizens (Chechens) are fighting on both sides in the conflict.

Cherenkov writes, "In Russia, widespread nominal belief has become infected with an explosive mixture of nationalist-Orthodox-Stalinist beliefs." True, such tendencies exist. One example is Moscow's Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, who spoke out against this very mixture and was deposed by Patriarch Kyrill in December 2015.

Support for War and Support for Peace

In Ukraine, Patriarch Filaret of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate has made inflammatory remarks regarding the people of

Russian parishioners are "increasingly disappointed with political Christianity." But Ukrainian Protestants are also extremely political on Facebook.

Russia, calling for a holy war. Both his church and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church have officially gathered funds for the purchase of ammunition. The Greek Catholic faith, strongly repressed during the Communist era, survived through its exile existence, mostly in North America after 1945. That faith was compromised by its support for the Ukrainian fascist movement during World War II and its genocide against Poles. Greek Catholic priest Mykhailo Arsenych, for example, has made extremely fascist statements in recent years. Indeed, he belongs behind bars.

I think, as well, of U.S. Senator John McCain describing Russia in February 2016 as “the enemy.” By way of contrast, just after his visit in Cuba, Russian Patriarch Kyrill pleaded for reconciliation between his country and the United States. Russian Evangelical Christians-Baptists, as well, are making moderate and conciliatory statements, for example, those made by the denomination’s President Alexey Smirnov in an interview published in Moscow’s *Protestant* on 17 March 2015. Russians regard the enmity against them as artificial, a creation of powerful circles in the West struggling for even greater economic and geo-strategic advantage. How prophetic it would be if, instead, evangelicals in Ukraine and Russia would raise their voices jointly in the name of reconciliation and peace.

Russia or NATO to Blame?

Cherenkov claims Russia is seeking a “reconstruction of the Soviet empire.” I see no indication of that in the Baltics or on the border with Poland. On 5 May 2005, Vladimir Putin reported on German television: “People in Russia say that those who do not regret the collapse of the Soviet Union have no heart. And those who do regret its demise have no brain.” Someone struggling to resuscitate the Soviet Union would speak otherwise. NATO, on the other hand, broke its 1990 oral agreement in which it promised that it would move “not an inch” eastward from Germany. It is now poised in Varna, Estonia, less than 150 kilometers west of St. Petersburg. The Soviet Union gave up its East European sphere of influence, while the U.S. did not keep its part of the deal. Mikhail Gorbachev will resent until his dying day that breach of good faith. Russian behavior in

Ukraine (2014) and Georgia (2008) needs to be understood in this context.

Cherenkov is wary of the idea of Russian messianic aspirations and warns that “Russia without Ukraine risks entering into barbarism.” However, it is very difficult for Russians to attribute a saving character to Ukrainian society. The Russian perspective is that the violent revolution on Maidan in February 2014 occurred less than ten months prior to elections that were scheduled for December and that were to include international monitors.

Fascist “Browns” and Communist “Reds”

Ukraine has millions of Western-style democrats, some of them evangelicals, but it also has a problem with its ultra-rightist “browns.” Before 1941, as well as after 1946, the West’s concrete actions lent credence to the slogan that “brown is better than red.” That position has enjoyed a mighty public revival in the Baltics and in Ukraine since 1990. Revisionism was obvious on 7 January 2015 in Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk’s strange comments on German TV: “Russian aggression in Ukraine is an attack on world order and order in Europe. All of us still clearly remember the Soviet invasion of Ukraine and Germany. That has to be avoided.”

But not all fascism was Nazi: World War II also featured Italian, Croatian, Slovak, and Ukrainian fascists, among others. Russians correctly prefer “red is better than brown.” The Soviet victory over Nazi Germany was morally far superior to a victory of brown over red.

It would be good if Cherenkov could explain the role of Ukraine’s Secretary of National Security Oleksandr Turchynov, who is a Baptist, among the semi-fascist Azov Battalion in the war-front city of Mariupol? Reports claim he is a commander. In addition, Ukrainian Pentecostal pastors such as Gennady Mokhnenko clearly support the semi-fascist Right Sector.

In closing, it is hardly innovative to attempt to recreate American-style church conditions in Ukraine or elsewhere. It would be much more creative to give serious thought to ways evangelicals could thrive and grow in the less-than-ideal setting of Eurasia. ♦

William Yoder is press representative for the Russian Evangelical Alliance, Moscow, Russia. He resides in Orsha, Belarus.

How prophetic it would be if evangelicals in Ukraine and Russia would raise their voices jointly in the name of reconciliation and peace.

Russian Orthodox Thought in the Context of Modernity

Kristina Stoeckl

Orthodox “Collectivism” Revisited

Collectivism is often taken to be an intrinsic feature of Orthodox culture, a kind of national characteristic that becomes most visible during Communism throughout Eastern and Southeastern Europe but represents in reality the social, political, and cultural legacy of the Orthodox religion. Soviet academic Jurij Lotman has expressed the view that Russia and the West are bearers of two distinct religiously motivated cultural patterns, which in the West give rise to individualism and a continuous cultural development from Renaissance to

Reformation to Enlightenment, while the Orthodox East remains caught in collectivism, passivity, and a medieval mindset with outbursts of radical modernization.¹ Orthodoxy is said to have prevented individual expression, political emancipation, and modernization. In contrast to this generally held opinion may be juxtaposed a more differentiated analysis of the confrontation between the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition and modernity. In this case, Communist totalitarianism represents a watershed for Orthodox thought, and as a result of

(continued on page 8)

Russian Orthodox Thought in the Context of Modernity (continued from page 7)

its impact, Orthodoxy today should be interpreted as distinctively *modern*, even though it has often been regarded, and has regarded itself, as pre- and anti-modern in confrontation with the West. Instead of documenting modern/pre-modern divides, the task of scholars of Orthodoxy should be to study how and with what consequences Orthodox thinkers today partake of modernity – rendered problematic and ambiguous through the experience of totalitarianism.

Projections of Western Decline

Looking at the larger picture, it should be noted that comprehensive theories of the rise and decline of world civilizations are a scholarly phenomenon of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Works like Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1926) and Arnold Toynbee's *The World and the West* (1953) are the clearest examples of this genre, which in 1993 was unexpectedly revived by Samuel Huntington. A brief review of their works will reveal that they share basic views on Orthodox Eastern Europe and on the Western experience of modernization.

Spengler, Toynbee, and Huntington on East-West Incompatibility

"Semi-occidental" was Spengler's judgment of Russia in *The Decline of the West*, a work that exemplifies the cultural pessimism of the early twentieth century. Spengler was clearly fascinated by Russia and by the Orthodox religion, which he credited with the potential to reject the modern social paradigm.² Toynbee shared Spengler's assertion that Russia was not a full member of Western civilization, instead seeing it as a "sibling" Byzantine civilization. This Byzantine legacy was not only responsible for Russian anti-Westernism; it also determined Russian political culture, which Toynbee described as totalitarian and autocratic.³ Huntington, in his reflections on the world order after the Cold War, shared Toynbee's view. According to Huntington, the Cold War ideological divide obscured an issue which was historically pertinent for Russia, namely, the question of its belonging to the West or to a distinct Slavic-Orthodox civilization. Huntington developed the image of a distinctively Orthodox civilization in Europe, incompatible with Western values of liberty and democracy.⁴

What all these works have in common is the argument that Orthodox Eastern Europe, and Russia in particular, is essentially different from the West, and that attempts to become more like the West, to modernize, have produced ambiguous results. The reforms of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, they hold, like those of Alexander II and Mikhail Gorbachev, did not penetrate Russian society.

The Eurasian Movement

The Eurasian movement, akin to the thinking of Spengler, Toynbee, and Huntington in certain respects, was founded in 1921 by a group of young Russian émigrés who sought to formulate an

alternative both to the restoration of the old regime, as was the program of the White Guards during the Russian Civil War, and to the social, political, economic, and cultural program of the West. The cornerstone of their theory was the idea that Russia, defined by its Orthodox heritage, ought to take a leading role in the formation of a new geopolitical space called Eurasia, inaugurating a new epoch in world history which would end the domination of the West.⁵

Overcoming Soviet-Era Intellectual Isolation

Unlike Russian émigré thinkers, Soviet scholars of a philosophical and theological inclination were severely restricted until the end of the 1980s in their access to works in philosophy and theology from the West and from Russia's pre-revolutionary past. "Suspect" works were kept in special sections of state libraries, the *speckhran* (from *special'noe khranenie*, special storage), which could only be accessed with special permission. Academic Sergei Khoruzhij recalls that during his student years in the 1960s, everybody interested in philosophy was aware of these "hidden treasures." Especially the study of the Russian religious philosophers of the Silver Age was almost imperative, and despite their forbidden nature and the difficulty of obtaining their texts, these authors were read and discussed.

In the 1960s, cultural scholar Sergei Averintsev was involved in the publication of the *Soviet Philosophical Encyclopedia*. Together with like-minded scholars, among them Sergei Khoruzhij and Vladimir Bibikhin, Averintsev worked on Western Christian thinkers and on Russian philosophers of the Silver Age. The project of the *Philosophical Encyclopedia* was important, Khoruzhij recalls, because it allowed researchers to read the works of Russian religious philosophers and Christian mystics like Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa, even if they then had to give a Soviet take on their writings.⁶ "This was our own little crusade," Averintsev would later say about the *Philosophical Encyclopedia*.⁷

The Quiet Quest for Ideological Alternatives to Marxism

Besides the encyclopedia, there were other government-sponsored projects in which scholars were employed translating and relating Western philosophy. Bibikhin recalls these episodes both fondly and critically. On the one hand, they offered an opportunity to read otherwise inaccessible literature and provided invaluable food for thought. On the other hand, these projects, especially when it came to Russian religious thinkers, seemed designed to shape their ideas into an official canon that could be read in support of Russian nationalism and, as an anti-individualist philosophy, of Communism. "The ones in power started to look for ideological alternatives to Marxism early," Bibikhin writes in his article, "For Administrative Use."⁸ As early as 1973 political strategists started to consider Orthodox

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patriotism an easy way out of the ideological dead-end. Especially with regard to an ideological underpinning for the Soviet army, state organs busied themselves with the elaboration of ideological alternatives. Scholars translated and reviewed *speckhran* literature, their texts being published in a series with the signature DSP (*dlya sluzhebnogo pol'zovaniya*: for administrative use), with numbered and limited editions carefully distributed among state officials. Since the authorities imagined that Orthodoxy could provide a particularly useful ideological background for patriotism, research in this field was intensified. Bibikhin recalls that at the end of the 1970s religion was a particularly well-financed part of the DSP series.⁹

Besides Orthodox writers, Western authors also were being reviewed and translated. Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer were translated for a publication on contemporary Protestantism. In 1974, Bibikhin began to translate Martin Heidegger, and together with his colleagues he also worked on Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jose Ortega-y-Gasset, Jean Paul Sartre, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. In 1976, key authors of European structuralism and post-structuralism, Umberto Eco and Jacques Derrida, were translated.¹⁰ The employees of the Department for Scientific Information and Study of Foreign Literature of the Soviet Academy of Sciences prepared digests of Western philosophy and social science that would then be studied and commented upon by “official” scholars. Bibikhin recalls that the translators were painfully aware that they were not writing for a reading public, and that, above all, they were working years behind scholars in the West.¹¹ Despite reservations about the disjointed and ideologically restricted nature of the project, Bibikhin recognized that the work opened up a window on the West, especially for those who would not otherwise have received permission to travel to the West.

Bibikhin’s memories make clear how immensely important access to Western human and social sciences was for those scholars working in the Soviet Union who found themselves at the margins of the official Marxist-Leninist canon. It provided them with an outside perspective on their own situation as scholars, and on the absurdity of being confined to a closed library, not even allowed to take home their translations and papers.¹²

Fears of Religion Coopted for Secular Purposes

In 1994 Khoruzhij published an article, “O Maroderakh [The Looters],” as a protest against the superficial re-appropriation of religious philosophers during the late-Soviet and Yeltsin period.¹³ The main point of criticism was the fact that Communist ideologues had turned themselves into Christian thinkers. In the 1980s Bibikhin was already suspicious of religious renewal under state tutelage. In a 1989 essay, for example, he criticized

the political use which was made of the Russian religious philosophers by rival circles of “patriots” and “cosmopolitans.”¹⁴ For its part, much of Russian Orthodoxy has moved along the well-trodden path of pre-revolutionary and pre-totalitarian models of defining an Orthodox identity in congruence with the Russian state and in contrast to a modernizing West. A considerable element within the Russian Orthodox Church today takes this position, its most radical formulation being Orthodox fundamentalism.¹⁵

Orthodoxy in the Service of Russian Nationalism

By way of explanation, a great number of religious dissidents were not liberal in their opposition to Communism, but nationalist. Nationalist religious dissidents saw themselves in the tradition of the Slavophiles, anti-Western in attitude and not strictly opposed to the Soviet regime. The authoritarianism and anti-Westernism of the Soviet government appealed to many Orthodox nationalists who asserted that Orthodoxy must be superimposed on existing structures.¹⁶ In the Brezhnev era this nationalist view of Orthodoxy moved into the orbit of government propaganda. Historians have explained this “policy of inclusion” by saying that Orthodoxy provided a welcome nationalist and anti-Western ideology at a time when Marxist-Leninist ideology was losing its mobilizing power.¹⁷ The promotion of Russianness and Orthodox religious identity, undertaken in journals such as *Vekhe* [Assembly] and *Zemlya* [The Land], naturally produced tensions in the multi-ethnic and multi-national Soviet empire. As a consequence, anti-semitism and tensions between Soviet Russian and Muslim citizens increased. Meanwhile, a whole new genre appeared in literature known as village prose, which mourned the passing of the Russian village and praised peasant values. A prominent representative of this genre was Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970 and expelled from the Soviet Union in 1974. Solzhenitsyn’s stand as a Russian Orthodox nationalist became ever more evident following his return to Russia in 1994.

The Russian Orthodox Church, headed by Patriarch Pimen since 1972, wholeheartedly supported nationalist trends. Gradually, the Orthodox Church intensified its activities in parishes, religious themes became increasingly present in the media, and in 1988 the thousandth anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in Kievan Rus’ marked the culmination of the special relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet state, with a joint celebration by Patriarch Pimen and Gorbachev.¹⁸

Against the background of the special state-church relations in the late Soviet period, it is quite plain that the Russian Orthodox Church met the collapse of the Soviet Union from a position of ambiguity. On the one hand, the end of Communism meant freedom in the practice and teaching of religion, previously

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In the 1980s Bibikhin was already suspicious of religious renewal under state tutelage.

Orthodox fundamentalists rely on the notion of a “golden age” to which Russia must return. This implies the restoration of the pre-1905 Russian empire, full-fledged autocracy, imperial structures, a privileged status for the Russian Orthodox Church, and state-Orthodox paternalism.

The Moscow Patriarchate is best characterized by its striving for power, its pragmatism, and its religious nationalism.

confiscated property was handed back, churches and monasteries re-opened, and many citizens became interested in religion. On the other hand, the collapse of the Soviet regime brought to the fore the extent to which the Church had compromised itself in collaboration with the authorities, causing a loss in image. The promise and peril faced by Orthodox in this new era was an object for sociological research and political discussion throughout the 1990s, which accentuated the fundamental contradiction between the Russian Orthodox Church’s self-image of being Russia’s national church and its largely ineffective claim to offer religious guidance in a period of economic and political transition.¹⁹ In general, the scholarly consensus is that the Church is mainly preoccupied with regaining power in the Russian state, playing on ideological schemes like *symphonia* and on the correspondence of religious and national identity, showing little concern for the individual needs of believers suffering from social injustice.²⁰

Making the Case for Orthodox Modernization

More positively, the year 2000 marked the beginning of the inner renaissance of the Russian Orthodox Church with the issuing of a document called *The Bases of the Social Concept for the Russian Orthodox Church*.²¹ *The Social Doctrine*, as the text is commonly known, lays out the Russian Orthodox Church’s position on a variety of socio-cultural phenomena, encompassing a whole range of issues from state and law to secularism, from culture to bioethics.²² The mere existence of the text suggests the view that the Orthodox Church should modernize itself, that it should no longer remain in a position of rejection of modernity and instead take a stand on contemporary problems, has been gaining ground among Orthodox theologians.²³ In substance, however, the difficulties which the Russian Orthodox Church continues to have in its confrontation with modernity are very apparent in *The Social Doctrine*. It is striking, for example, that in its definition of Orthodox community, the authors of the text do not draw on any of the twentieth-century theologians, not on Bulgakov’s vision of a socially active Church, and not on the ecclesiological theology of the Russian diaspora. Instead, they cite theologian Alexsei Khomyakov and other nineteenth-century sources. It thus seems safe to say that *The Social Doctrine* is above all a carefully weighted document which tries to steer clear between extreme conservatism and radical reformism. The fact that it won the support of both conservative and moderate forces in the Russian Church testifies to this. It illustrates the general strategy of the present Russian Orthodox Church to take a pragmatic stance on contemporary problems while in substance maintaining a conservative attitude.

Orthodox Fundamentalism

A serious issue for Orthodoxy today is fundamentalism within its fold. The Russian

sociologist Aleksandr Verkhovskij explains that Orthodox fundamentalists rely on the notion of a “golden age” to which Russia must return. This implies the restoration of the pre-1905 Russian empire, full-fledged autocracy, imperial structures, a privileged status for the Russian Orthodox Church, and state-Orthodox paternalism.²⁴ Another critical observer of Orthodox fundamentalism, Konstantin Kostjuk, points out that a key concept for this ideology is *pravoslavnaya derzhavnost*, only inadequately translated as “Orthodox state-power.”

Russian Orthodox fundamentalism is based on a theocentric understanding of the world according to which Church and state are interpreted as intrinsically related, and Orthodoxy is understood as a cultural and geo-political concept, providing ideological justification for Russia’s claim to renewed superpower status in the world.²⁵ Kostjuk even suggests that Russian Orthodox fundamentalism is, from a historical point of view, really at its strongest today, prepared by the nationalization of the Orthodox religion already during the Soviet period.²⁶ Needless to say, this understanding of the role of Orthodoxy comes hand-in-hand with Russian nationalism and anti-semitism.²⁷ Russian Orthodox fundamentalists have also made ties with ex-Communists. The link here is Stalinism, in itself profoundly anti-semitic, autocratic, and nationalist. Thus today the Moscow Patriarchate is best characterized by its striving for power, its pragmatism, and its religious nationalism.

In Summary

In summary, Russian Orthodox thought in the twentieth century witnessed diverse trajectories. Today in post-Communist Eastern Europe, in an atmosphere of political, philosophical, and theological renewal, different trends from the history of Orthodox thought are being revived, including Slavophile and Eurasian ideologies, Russian religious philosophy, patristics, and debates relating to émigré theology. My main assumption has been that what we are dealing with is Orthodoxy’s confrontation with modernity, sharpened by its experience with totalitarianism.²⁸ Contemporary Orthodox thought can reach from an outright rejection of modernity to an informed and challenging engagement with it.

Orthodox thinkers are faced with the challenge of having to formulate an understanding of the Orthodox tradition in between the extremes of Orthodox fundamentalism and Western-style modernization. Post-totalitarian Orthodox thought is conscious of the totalitarian potential inherent in religious fundamentalism as well as in the modern political project, and against this background some Orthodox thinkers try to give a double response, *no* to fundamentalism, and *no* to political modernism. ♦

Notes:

¹Jurij M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspenskij, “Rol’ dualnykh modelei v dinamike russkoi kul’tury (do

kontsa 18-ogo veka) [The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture until the End of the 18th Century]" in *Trudy po Russkoi i Slavyanskoi filologii*, ed. by V.I. Bezzubov (Tartu: Uchen. Zap. Tartuskogo Gos. Un-ta, 1977).

²Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 2000), 792.

³Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial and the World in the West* (New York: New American Library, 1976), 159.

⁴Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (No. 3, 1993), 22-50.

⁵Sergej S. Khoruzhij, "Zhizn' i uchenie L'va Karsavina [The Life and Work of Lev Karsavin]," *Posle Pereryva. Puti Russkoi filosofii* (St. Petersburg: Aleteiya, 1994), 160.

⁶Interview with Sergei S. Khoruzhij, Moscow, 15 June 2005.

⁷Vladimir V. Bibikhin, "Dlya sluzhebno pol'zovaniya [For Administrative Use]," *Drugoe nachalo* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2003), 196.

⁸Bibikhin, "Dlya sluzhebno pol'zovaniya."

⁹Bibikhin, "Dlya sluzhebno pol'zovaniya," 193.

¹⁰Examples of titles include *Contemporary Protestantism*, 1973; *The Dialectics of Hegel in the Contemporary Philosophical Discourse of the West*, 1974; *The Ontological Problematic of Language in Contemporary Western Philosophy*, 1975; *The Philosophy of Kant in the Present*, 1976; *Some Problems of Foreign Aesthetics*, 1976; *Contemporary Phenomenology: Its Current State and Perspectives, A Critical Analysis*, 1977; and *Contemporary Personalism and Religion*, 1977.

¹¹Bibikhin, "Dlya sluzhebno pol'zovaniya," 188.

¹²Bibikhin, "Dlya sluzhebno pol'zovaniya," 189.

¹³Sergej S. Khoruzhij, *Posle Pereryva. Puti Russkoi filosofii [After the Break. The Ways of Russian Philosophy]* (St. Petersburg: Aleteiya, 1994), 256.

¹⁴Vladimir V. Bibikhin, "Svoi i chuzhie [Of One's Own and the Foreign]," *Drugoe nachalo* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2003).

¹⁵Christopher Selbach, "The Orthodox Church in Post-Communist Russia and Her Perception of the West: A Search for a Self in the Face of an Other," *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 10 (2002), 131-73; Vasilios Makrides, "L' "autre" orthodoxie: courants du rigorisme orthodoxe grec.," *Social Compass* 51 (No. 4, 2004), 511-21; Konstantin Kostjuk, "Pravoslavnyi fundamentalizm [Orthodox Fundamentalism]," *Polis* 5 (No. 58, 2000), 133-54.

¹⁶Zoe Katrina Knox, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 56.

¹⁷Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia. Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 16. See also Alexander Yanov, *The Russian New Right: Right Wing Ideologies in Contemporary Russia* (Berkeley: University of California, 1978).

¹⁸Thomas Bremer, *Kreuz und Kreml* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2007), 136. See also Knox, *Russian Society*, 57-74.

¹⁹For a very informative and complete study of the development of the Russian Orthodox Church in the

1990s, see Kathrin Behrens, *Die Russische Orthodoxe Kirche: Segen für die 'Neuen Zaren? Religion und Politik im Postsowjetischen Russland (1991-2000)* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2002).

²⁰In 1992, the journal *Voprosy Filosofii* organized a round-table on the topic "Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Russia." There, the sociologist Furman pointed out that Orthodox believers had a tendency to prefer authoritarian rule and restricted democracy and were generally anti-Western and nationalistic. Dmitrij E. Furman and Sergej B. Filatov et al., *Voprosy filosofii* 7 (1992), 6-33. In another study of the political positions of the Russian Orthodox Church, A. Ignatov sees mostly anti-Western, anti-democratic, and fundamentalist tendencies. "Pogoslovskie argumenty v politicheskoi bor'be [Theological Arguments in the Political Struggle]," *Voprosy filosofii* 5 (1997), 15-30. The main point of the article, "Religious Discourse in Russian Mass-Media: Entropy, Simfonia, Ideokratia," by Alexander Agadjanian is that there is a political consensus between the Russian Church and government about the necessity of order and a unified state ideology. Religion is seen in the light of a larger task of maintaining the integrity of the state. *Starye tserkvi, novye veriushchie. Religiya v massovom soznanii postsovetskoi Rossii*, ed. by K. Kaariainen and D. Furman (Moscow: Letnii sad, 2000), 116-47.

²¹(<https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/141422.html>.)

²²For two insightful studies of this document by Alexander Agadjanian, see "Breakthrough to Modernity, Apologia for Traditionalism: the Russian Orthodox View of Society and Culture in Comparative Perspective," *Religion, State and Society* 31 (No. 4, 2003), 327-46; and "The Social Vision of Russian Orthodoxy: Balancing between Identity and Relevance," in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. by J. Sutton and W. van den Bercken (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 163-82.

²³An important figure in this respect is Metropolitan Kirill (Gundyaev) of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, former head of the Office for External Affairs, and now Patriarch. See Konstantin Kostjuk, *Der Begriff des Politischen in der Russisch-Orthodoxen Tradition* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005).

²⁴"The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Nationalist, Xenophobic and Antiwestern Tendencies in Russia Today: Not Nationalism, but Fundamentalism," *Religion, State and Society* 30 (No. 4, 2002), 333-45; and "The Orthodox in Russian Nationalist Movements," 2003; (<https://religion.sova-center.ru/publications/194EF5E/194F193>).

²⁵Kostjuk, *Der Begriff*, 122-28.

²⁶Kostjuk, "Pravoslavnyi fundamentalizm."

²⁷Not all Russian nationalism is religious. For a classification of Russian nationalist movements, see Alexander Verkhovsky, "Ultra-nationalists in Russia at the Beginning of the Year 2000," 2000; (<https://www.panorama.ru/works/patr/bp/fin-re.html>.)

²⁸See also Kristina Stoeckl, "Modernity and Its Critique in 20th Century Russian Orthodox Thought," *Studies in East European Thought* 58 (No. 4, 2006), 243-69; and "The Lesson of the Revolution in Russian Emigré Theology and Contemporary Orthodox Thought," *Religion, State and Society* 35 (No. 4, 2007), 285-300.

(continued on page 12)

Polish Protestants in a Catholic Context *(continued from page 11)*

Postscript: The author recommends a recently published article relating to Russian nationalism and Orthodoxy: Alexander Mikhailovsky, "The Pressure Valve: Russian Nationalism in Late Soviet Society," Eurozine (9 December 2015); <https://www.eurozine.com/articles/2015-12-09-mikhailovsky-en.html>.

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from Kristina Stoeckl, Community after Totalitarianism;

The Russian Orthodox Intellectual Tradition and the Philosophical Discourse of Political Modernity (Frankfort am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), from pp. 16, 24-26, 91, 110-13, 116-18, 120, 122-26, and 131-33.

Kristina Stoeckl is assistant professor of sociology at the University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria, and author of The Russian Orthodox Church and Human Rights (2014).

Polish Protestants in a Catholic Context

Wojciech Kowalewski

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The Need for Reconciliation

The community of love which seeks to create space for freedom, for "openness to the other," is another pressing issue in all post-totalitarian countries. Romanian Evangelical Church Bishop Christoph Klein has observed that national reconciliation in the various Central and East European countries is "one of the most important tasks, one of the decisive mission assignments for the church of Jesus Christ. The church which forgets this mission and puts national, political, and egoistic interests in self-preservation before this task of reconciliation, incurs guilt and remains outside God's blessing."¹ In the same vein, Waclaw Hryniewicz, head of the Ecumenical Institute of the Catholic University of Lublin, bemoans "a mentality marked by a constant looking for outside enemies," "fear of freedom and otherness," and Polish Catholicism's "tendency towards exclusiveness in understanding truth and salvation."² Conflicts impeding reconciliation not only involve Catholic versus Protestant, but "historic" Reformation Protestant versus "free church" Protestant, and Catholic and Protestant wariness of New Religious Movements.

Thus the context of newness demands rethinking not only the crucial relations between the Christian church and a society in change but also among various religious communities, so as to be "God's transformative agents" in the midst of this change.³ Commenting on the post-totalitarian context, Karol Toeplitz argues that a clear language of dialogue and openness is lacking.⁴ One can say that due to the sharp polarization of the previous epoch, the fear of "the other" still affects people's views of different denominational groups. Learning dialogue does not come easy in a church as divided as Poland's.

Protestant Minority Status

What is also quite an important factor that often troubles Christian minorities is the daunting size of the Catholic Church in Poland, which sometimes leads to an exaltation of the national church at the expense of other expressions of faith. Some Protestants, deeply affected by their minority status, their "fear of rejection," and their survival-oriented mentality, seek broader social acceptance by softening Protestant emphases that run counter to traditional Catholic culture.⁵ On the other hand, some members of the Protestant minority lift their experience of faith as biblically normative and doctrinally more correct than Polish Catholicism.

Baptist publicist Ryszard Tysnicki notes that certain stereotypes within various Christian communities, fed by lack of knowledge and lack of relationships with others, often lead to judging other churches as "unfaithful," "not spiritual enough," or even "idolatrous."⁶ In this context, a minority status may become more pronounced, limiting possibilities for dialogue. Still, some attempts at reconciliation and a greater openness to "the other" have come to the fore.

Protestant Church Growth

Baptist minister Miroslaw Patalon, who writes widely on the shift to postmodernism in Polish culture, has attempted to apply the concept of the "open church" in his ministry. Thus, he stresses openness and acceptance of differences in his church in Wroclaw. Services no longer follow a traditional order, but rather have become informal meetings with a Christian message. Needless to say, not everyone in the congregation was keen on abolishing old forms. Nevertheless, the church has grown in numbers, attracting especially "alternative" youth and sometimes people from the peripheries of society. Because of the special role of art in today's culture, this church's walls are decorated with abstract paintings. Patalon is attempting to bridge the gap between evangelicalism and the post-modern world and Catholic culture. Patalon believes that the ecumenical movement can open new doors for Protestantism in general.⁷ Not surprisingly, his approach is deemed quite radical and controversial in Polish evangelical circles.

Unfortunately, for the purpose of numerical growth, some evangelicals in Poland have put too great an emphasis upon new methods and styles of reaching unbelievers while lacking a wider vision of mission. Wlodek Tasak notes that an emphasis upon church growth without an equal emphasis upon discipleship (qualitative church growth) will not produce lasting fruit. For example, between 1986 and 1998 the Baptist church in Poland grew 34.4 percent, but at the same time it would have experienced much greater growth had it not lost so many of its new converts. Therefore, Tasak argues that a sole emphasis upon evangelism (stressing numerical growth) will fail unless it is accompanied by deeper pastoral care for people.⁸

New Approaches to Evangelism

In research conducted by Miroslaw Patalon, Polish Baptist ministers were asked how new converts came to their churches. A majority of 51

The daunting size of the Catholic Church in Poland sometimes leads to an exaltation of the national church at the expense of other expressions of faith.

percent answered through personal contacts with a Christian rather than through formal evangelistic meetings organized in a church building. It seems that evangelistic services, so popular earlier, are not as effective today.⁹ Patalon's finding also suggests that effective evangelism today requires a more personal involvement within the framework of broader cultural and social witness.

Patalon argues for a greater balance between words and deeds in evangelism, stressing the need for more openness to new experiences, new forms of worship, and a new understanding of the work of evangelism. He writes, "Evangelism is not a short- or a long-term act. It's my life which either is or isn't evangelism. Such an assumption has at least two main implications. First, I am set free from stressful and artificial acts of evangelism, which allows me to be myself. Second, my every thought, word, or act is motivated by that and hence becomes a proclamation of my faith."¹⁰ Such an approach resembles the concept of "lifestyle evangelism,"¹¹ "incarnational evangelism," stressing the use of "channels of relationships to share the gospel through both words and deeds,"¹² and "presence evangelism."¹³

Protestant Social and Political Involvement

In some ways the shift after 1989 from centralized planning to a free market significantly transformed and revived the Polish economy. But it also contributed to high unemployment, new patterns of inequality,¹⁴ a widening income disparity, a fall in real wages, inflation, and as a result, the emergence of the "new poor." For those who have not fared well in Poland's transition to a market economy, the psychological and emotional consequences of the new inequalities in wealth and opportunity have spelled a sense of meaninglessness, powerlessness, and alienation. In light of these high social and psychological costs of the transition, a great need exists to find ways to link practical social responsibility with active and purposeful mission, but "in a manner which does not abuse the vulnerable."¹⁵ The church, in its concern for society's most vulnerable, needs to develop a new vision of holistic (evangelistic and social) ministry.¹⁶

While Roman Catholic social doctrine has been carefully crafted over many years, Polish evangelicals today increasingly take to heart their own need to address questions of Christian social and political involvement. This growing awareness of social responsibility is evident in the work of Tomasz Debowski. Many aspects of Protestant social doctrine, he notes, are deeply rooted in moral values and are relevant to the struggles the Polish nation is facing today. Respect for the law and thoughtful reflection on work, politics, freedom, and tolerance are some examples of concerns Polish Protestants now take seriously.¹⁷ In considering theology of mission in the post-Communist era Protestants now give serious attention to the relationship between economics and Christian faith, the functions of liberal democracy, the need for a positive contribution to civil society, and, most of all, the importance of fostering genuine and caring communities concerned with holistic ministries.

Post-Communist Culture Shock and the Protestant Response

Polish sociologist Grzymala-Moszczyńska has

clearly articulated the "cultural shock" that Polish society faced following the demise of Communist rule, including a feeling of confusion and helplessness, a sense of being uprooted, uncertainty, the stress and strain of adapting to new economic realities, and increasing inter-generational conflict.¹⁸ Theologian Miroslav Volf, commenting on the tasks faced by East European churches after 1989, believes Christianity was ill-prepared to tackle what he referred to as "cold-blooded economism."¹⁹ Partly to blame for this inadequacy was the strict Communist policy of rule from above that produced in many people a psychological state of "learned helplessness," "an attitude... that nothing can be done... to improve an unfavorable and unbearable situation." Such an attitude led many Christians to comply with state-imposed taboos, subjects that should not be discussed.²⁰

Given this background, it is understandable why the question arises: "Can a Christian be involved in social and political life?" From a Reformation perspective, a positive attitude toward work, a commitment to the rule of law, and an obligation to maintain right relations with others, all may be seen as necessary aspects of the believer's involvement in social life.²¹ In this light, remaining isolated from others and indifferent to social injustice is hardly a credible option. After the fall of the centrally planned economy, with all its consequences, it is virtually impossible to sustain so-called "areas of silence."²²

Given this context, the question today should not be whether a Christian can or cannot address economic issues, but rather, in what ways can Christians positively contribute to social transformation while remaining true to their values and beliefs. The question of the relationship between Christian faith and economic transformation is a complex one, but nevertheless very important for a society in transition. There seem to be three dominant issues that come to the surface in various discussions of this relationship: business ethics, the work ethic, and social justice issues in relation to the "new poor."

The Lutheran Church in Poland is especially active in social ministries. Through six regional centers it oversees a wide range of social work ministries including nine orphanages, 17 diakonia centers, three pre-schools, and six rehabilitation centers.²³ The church's mission statement, "Diakonia of the Lutheran Church in Poland," clearly states that responsible faith in obedience to Christ calls for ethical action.

Direct Evangelism or Holistic Mission?

A growing number of Christian initiatives in Poland promote Christian ethical principles within various professions. Examples include the Businessman Association, the Christian Education Association, and the Evangelical Soldier's Association. The tension between those promoting a focus on direct evangelism and those favoring a more holistic understanding of mission may be seen in a heated discussion between a Polish Christian senator and the elderly principal of one of Poland's Bible colleges. The two differed on the question of who is on the front line of Christian mission: full-time ministers of religion and missionaries, or believers involved in public life such as Christian politicians, educators, and businessmen. Missionary Malcolm Clegg notes:

(continued on page 14)

The church, in its concern for society's most vulnerable, needs to develop a new vision of holistic (evangelistic and social) ministry.

The question today should not be whether a Christian can or cannot address economic issues, but rather, in what ways can Christians positively contribute to social transformation while remaining true to their values and beliefs.

A very significant element of the missionary agenda in the years to come will be the development of appropriate forms of Christian presence in the public square that will enable believers to make positive contributions in Poland's political, economic, and cultural life.

"The doors to the schools and universities, the health system, sports, the arts, or the media are open, maybe as never before, for those who would professionally and sensitively walk through them, be they nationals or missionaries." However, the problem often faced by the church is that not only well-qualified laborers are lacking, but also that church leaders often do not see the doors.²⁴ Thus, a very significant element of the missionary agenda in the years to come will be the development of appropriate forms of Christian presence in the public square that will enable believers to make positive contributions in Poland's political, economic, and cultural life.

Polish Protestant International Ties

Polish evangelicals not only are increasing their interaction with their fellow countrymen outside their fellowship, but they increasingly seek international ties which enable them to broaden their perspectives. Polish Baptists, for example, have entered into an agreement with American Baptists to form a strategic partnership for the purpose of strengthening local Polish congregations. This Western help includes resources, practical training, and support for various mission efforts such as English-language programs, camps, construction projects, and children's ministries. Many global parachurch organizations are also active in Poland including CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ), Youth for Christ, and Habitat for Humanity which all contribute greatly to mission development, not only on a national, but on an international level. What is important to note, however, is that such global partnerships are only effective when they work to become indigenous. A good example of such a development is Młodzież dla Chrystusa [Youth for Christ] which has created a completely local ministry called Jeden na Jeden [One on One]. This particular ministry develops relationships with children from difficult backgrounds, helping in their development towards healthy maturity.

Community-Based Projects

A growing number of Christian community-based projects are proving to be very successful. One example is Christian Children's Club, an initiative of the Christian Education Centre "Diamond" founded by Ryszard Gutkowski, former secretary of the Baptist Union of Poland. "Diamond" has three clubs in various cities, sponsors many camps for children from dysfunctional families, and has organized several successful conferences for those interested in children's ministry. One of the significant ways in which many churches reach out to their communities has been through English-language schools. Since a growing number of Poles desire to study English, church-sponsored foreign language instruction has provided an effective way for churches to build relationships with local communities while at the same time providing a popular service.

The Daily Bread Foundation is a good example of a community ministry run by an evangelical church in a small town in Poland. For years this congregation tried different forms of outreach, including street evangelism and use of Campus Crusade's *Jesus* film. However, it became obvious that the local community

was quite hostile towards such activities. As a new approach the congregation identified a felt need in the town: growing poverty. Its new outreach to the town's poor centered on donations of bread and other items in short supply. This new approach to being salt and light involved going to where people are, instead of waiting for people to come to the church. The local community has welcomed and deeply appreciated this congregation's efforts. The church has not only gained respect, it has seen improved relations with the local Catholic priest.²⁵

Unfortunately, many evangelical churches in Poland are still reluctant to undertake charitable outreach unless it directly translates into church growth. In an interview Baptist pastor Patalon noted the example of one evangelical church which, after years of being involved in providing food for homeless people, ceased doing so because it did not result in new church members. Patalon critically refers to such an attitude as Christian "anti-witness" that lacks honesty and integrity.²⁶

In Summary

Since 1989 Poland has been undergoing a variety of deep, unprecedented transformations, which continue to impact all spheres of life. The shift from Communism to post-Communism has been examined in terms of the growth of civil society, the shift to a market economy, and the dismantling of restrictions on religion. Aftershocks coming in the wake of the political and economic transition have included an identity crisis, self-absorbed individualism, consumerism, social fragmentation, and a growing gap between rich and poor. Thus, the results of post-Communist reforms have been mixed. Positive developments, including civil liberties and a growing market economy, have also led to serious social costs associated with these changes, including high levels of unemployment and the emergence of "the new poor." The post-1989 Polish transition, in both its positive and negative outcomes, poses new challenges for the church, Catholic and Protestant. Increasing secularization, globalization, and pluralism threaten all Christian confessions. This process of change inevitably leads to a slow erosion of the privileged position of the Polish Catholic Church as the only power capable of shaping and sustaining Polish national identity. At the same time the post-1989 transition challenges evangelical communities to move beyond their "ghetto mentalities" in order to engage culture, to serve the "new poor," and to be a witness to all ranks of Polish society.

Notes:

¹Christoph Klein, "Turning to God for Renewal in Mission in Central and Eastern Europe," *International Review of Mission* 87 (No. 347, 1998), 477.

²Waclaw Hryniewicz, "The Challenge of Our Hope – History and Eschatology: An East European View," *Roczniki Teologiczne* 47 (No. 7, 2002), 93-110.

³Peter Kuzmic, "Twelve Theses on Kingdom Servanthood for Post-Communist Europe," *Transformation* 16 (No. 1, 2000), 34-39.

⁴Karol Toeplitz, "Problemy z dialogiem [Problems with Dialogue]," *Mysł Protestantcka*, No. 4 (1997),

The post-1989 transition challenges evangelical communities to move beyond their "ghetto mentalities" in order to engage culture, to serve the "new poor," and to be a witness to all ranks of Polish society.

15-27.

⁵Tadeusz Zieliński, "Między fascynacją a niechęcią. Problem stosunku polskich protestantów do katolicyzmu [Between Fascination and Reluctance. The Problem of Attitude of Polish Protestants towards Catholics]," *Mysł Protestancka*, No. 4 (2000), 4.

⁶Ryszard Tyśnicki, "Ekumenizm – dlaczego ma sens [Ecumenism – Why It Makes Sense]," *Słowo Prawdy*, No. 3 (2000), 8-11.

⁷Mirosław Patalon, "Kontrowersje wokół przyszłości Kościoła [Controversies about the Future of the Church]," *Mysł Protestancka*, No. 4 (1999), 12-24.

⁸Włodek Tasak, "Dlaczego Kościół traci ludzi? [Why Is the Church Losing People?]," *Słowo Prawdy* No. 4 (2000), 11-13.

⁹Mirosław Patalon, "Polscy pastory baptyśczeni wobec wyzwań postmodernizmu [Polish Baptist Ministers in the Light of Postmodern Challenges]," *Baptyścyczny Przegląd Teologiczny* 1 (2002), 26-39.

¹⁰Mirosław Patalon, "Postmodern Trends in Communicating Christianity," *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 2 (No. 1, 2001), 29.

¹¹Joe Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1993).

¹²Timothy K. Beougher, "Lifestyle Evangelism" in Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen, eds., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), 578.

¹³Raymond P. Prigodich, "Presence Evangelism" in Moreau et al., *Evangelical Dictionary*, 785.

¹⁴Frances Millard, "Social Policy in Poland" in Robert Deacon, *The New Eastern Europe. Social Policy Past, Present and Future* (London: SAGE Publications, 1992), 141.

¹⁵Ann Morisy, *Beyond the Good Samaritan: Community Ministry and Mission* (London: Mowbray, 1997), ix.

¹⁶Robert McIntyre, "Globalisation and the Role of the State - Lessons from Central and Eastern Europe," *The Ecumenical Review* 53 (No 4, 2001), 485.

¹⁷Tomasz Dębowski, *Zarys myśli społecznej Kościołów protestanckich w Polsce w latach 1945-1995 [An Outline of Social Thought of Protestant Churches in Poland between 1945 and 1995]*

(Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Arboretum, 2002), 67ff.

¹⁸Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, "Poland as Cross-Cultural Context: Theology and Economics in Transition from the Communist to the Post-Communist Era," *Religion in Eastern Europe* 15 (No. 5, 1995), 20-24.

¹⁹Miroslav Volf, "Fishing in the Neighbor's Pond: Mission and Proselytism in Eastern Europe," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 20 (No. 1, 1991), 26-31.

²⁰Grzymała-Moszczyńska, "Poland," 21 and 70.

²¹Tadeusz Szurman, "Kościół ewangelicki w Polsce wobec integracji europejskiej [Evangelical Churches in Poland in the Light of European Integration]," *Ewangelik*, No. 2 (2003), 30-44.

²²Juraj Kusnierik, *Evangelicals in Central Europe*, unpublished SEN Research Paper (Bratislava, Slovakia: 1999), 5.

²³Jan Szturc, "Wanda Falk – dyrektor Diakonii Kościoła w rozmowie z Janem Szturcem [Wanda Falk – Director of the Church's Diaconia in an Interview with Jan Szturc]," *Ewangelik*, No. 4 (2003), 49ff.

²⁴Malcom Clegg, "Understanding the Times – Research into the Impact and Direction of Christian Mission in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe at the Turn of the Century," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Sheffield, Cliff College, 2001.

²⁵Magdalena Krzysiak, "Missiological Issues Facing the Polish Church Today," unpublished M.Th. dissertation, The Queen's University of Belfast, 2002.

²⁶Mirosław Patalon, "Nie można być przykładem żyjąc w izolacji – wywiad z Mirosławem Patalonem [You Can't Be a Witness Living in Isolation – an Interview with Mirosław Patalon]," *Słowo Prawdy*, No. 6 (2001), 7.

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from Wojciech Kowalewski, Transforming Mission in Post-Communist Context. Towards an Integrated Approach (Berlin: VDM Verlag Dr Muller, 2009).

Wojciech Kowalewski, Ph.D., University of Wales, is director of Pastors2Pastors, a leadership development ministry based in Wrocław, Poland.

Book Review (continued from page 16)

contrast it with Protestant belief and practice. Nor does Elliott mention any non-Orthodox IDPs in his discussion, although there must surely have been a significant number of Roman Catholics, a few Protestants, and some Muslims among the people displaced by the wars. Instead, his work is almost purely descriptive, and thus he allows the contrast between a Western Protestant approach to space and a Georgian Orthodox approach to shine forth in the descriptions he provides, without overt comment about the differences.

I believe this is an effective method of presentation, and Elliott's work is very useful for

(among others) Western Christians working among refugees and other displaced persons in the Eastern Christian world. We need to remember not only that displacement is a much more severe problem to someone with an Eastern mindset than it might be to a Westerner, but also that Eastern Christendom provides means of coping with displacement that we Westerners would never think of, means from which we too could learn. ♦

Donald Fairbairn, Professor of Early Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina

Book Review

Curtis Elliott, "Theologizing Place Displacement: Reconciling, Remaking and Reimagining Place in the Republic of Georgia." Ph.D. dissertation, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2015, Reviewed by Donald Fairbairn.

For 20 years Curtis Elliott has been part of the Salvation Army's work in concert with the Georgian Orthodox Church to assist internally displaced persons within Georgia.

For 20 years Curtis Elliott has been part of the Salvation Army's work in concert with the Georgian Orthodox Church to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Georgia. The displacements stem from conflicts with Russia which undermined Georgia's territorial integrity: in 1992 in Abkhazia (on the Black Sea in the northwest corner of Georgia, very close to Sochi, Russia, where the 2014 Winter Olympics were held) and in 2008 in South Ossetia (in north central Georgia, on the southern flanks of the Caucasus mountains). Elliott reports that 270,000 people (nearly five percent of Georgia's population of 4.3 million) were displaced by these two conflicts.

This work is a Ph.D. dissertation written at Asbury Theological Seminary. Elliott focuses on the significance of place in people's religious and cultural identity, arguing that "without places, theologies would only be abstractions unrelated to the lived experiences of people" (p. 26). Combining field interviews of IDPs from Abkhazia with background information on the religious and political history of Georgia and Abkhazia, he concentrates on the significance of borders, lost homes, and lost graves, that is, the inability of IDPs to visit the graves of their departed relatives, in the religious identity of IDPs.

Elliott's first two chapters deal with methodology used in displaced persons field research and a very helpful historical overview of Georgia, focusing on the development of its Christian identity from A.D. 300-600, the impact of Arab conquests on the Christian kingdom from 650-850, and more recently on the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, especially the 1992 Abkhazian War and the 2008 South Ossetian War.

Chapter three treats the history of Abkhazia and the way the Abkhaz-Georgian War led to disruptions in urban relationships in the region of Gali (a buffer between Abkhazia and Georgia, settled in the 20th century by Georgians). The chapter also describes the ministry of Father Archil, a Georgian Orthodox monk who ministers covertly to both Georgians and Abkhazians in Gali. His ministry involves the use of religious artifacts and icons to reassert the presence of Georgian Orthodoxy in Gali and to create a sense of shared religious identity between the two ethnic groups.

Chapter four treats the nostalgia with which IDPs view a lost home and the role that faith plays in people's attempts to re-create a sense of place and home after their displacement. It also addresses the role of domestic icon corners in fostering a sense of spiritual space.

Chapter five deals with graveyards and the re-making of sacred space. The cemetery is important in Georgian Orthodoxy as the place where Jesus will meet the dead and raise them to life, and the place for collective expressions of grief and regular acts of religious devotion paid by the living to their dead relatives. IDPs from Abkhazia, who could not visit the graves of their relatives there, came to revere alternative graveyards where IDPs in their new locations paid their respects to their departed relatives.

Chapter six deals with the theology of place, focusing especially on the role of icons in Orthodox theology and practice. The theology of the icon is based on the fact that God has become visible and material through the incarnation, with icons being regarded as the central expression of Orthodox theology. They are regarded as the borderland between earthly and spiritual existence, as the "in between" space between heaven and earth, and as a window into heavenly realities. As a result, the icon is fundamental to Father Archil's strategy of navigating the border between Abkhazia and Georgia. Just as people are displaced because of war, so also icons are displaced from their proper resting places, and the return of icons to their homes represents and fosters peace in border spaces. Icons further provide a way of thinking about borders, homes, and graves that enables IDPs to cope with their loss of place.

Elliott's work is very successful in describing the religious dimensions of human displacement and in explaining the efforts of Georgian Orthodox IDPs (and those who minister to them) to re-claim a sense of place. His understanding of Orthodox theology and practice is accurate and profoundly sympathetic. Perhaps surprisingly (considering that Elliott is a Protestant writing his dissertation at a major evangelical seminary), the work never seeks to assess or evaluate Orthodox practice, or even to

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Asbury University
One Macklem Drive
Wilmore, KY 40390
Tel: 859-858-2427
E-mail: emark936@gmail.com
Website: www.eastwestreport.org
Mark R. Elliott, Editor
Ray Prigodich, Book Review Editor

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